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Noble Matrimonial Policy at the Royal Court in Dresden during the Reign of King Augustus the Strong (1697–1733): Public Affairs, Private Interests

BY ANNA PENKAŁA-JASTRZĘBSKA 

The aim of this article is to analyse the changes taking place in the marital policy of the nobility as followed by the court of Augustus II, king of Poland and grand duke of Lithuania. The election of a member of the Saxon Wettin family to the throne of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth radically changed the balance of power there. The representatives of new, but politically involved, circles started looking for career opportunities as state officials and the chance to join the royal court, both in Warsaw and in Dresden. The marital strategy of Polish magnates to ally with foreign families, notably those already associated with the court of Electoral Saxony in Dresden, was one of the methods of seeking advancement and influence. An analysis of the examples of careers developed at the royal court allows us to identify the mechanisms by which the King himself tried to build a loyal party in the Commonwealth using private, personal links to himself and to his family. The policy of intentional steering of marriage strategies, which has not been analysed so far, turned out to play a fundamental role in this goal. International marriages gave individuals and their families chances for preeminent advantages (as with transregional nobles all over Europe), but private links with the King were crucial for personal careers and were forged through marriage to members of his family, both legitimate and illegitimate.

Finding a suitable candidate for marriage, in the context of the realities governing the social systems of the eighteenth century, could both determine one's own success and constitute an important element in building the prestige of one's family.¹ Making efforts to woo someone — especially from a family with an established financial and political position — was a sign of good sense and ambition. This policy is particularly visible in the actions of the members of influential magnate families in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. They saw in marital alliances a chance to develop their private careers or gain property, but also to build a strong party capable of exerting influence at the royal court.² The historical development of political clientelism in the eighteenth century has

1 Research for this article was carried out under the NCN [Narodowe Centrum Nauki/National Science Centre] grant No. UMO-2021/41/ B / HS3/00253: 'Women's Noble Court in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Saxon Era. Structure, People, Culture, Functions'.

2 The complicated social relations through which attempts were made to pursue private interests and to influence political matters in Poland-Lithuania have already been characterised by Antoni Mączak, *Klientela. Nieformalne systemy władzy w Polsce i Europie XVI–XVIII w.* (Warsaw, 1994); Urszula Augustyniak, *Dwór i klientela Krzysztofa Radziwiłła (1585–1640). Mechanizmy patronatu* (Warsaw, 2001); Dariusz Makilla, 'Dwór' i "patronat". Dwa historycznie — socjologiczne pojęcia w historyczno — prawnym naświetleniu', in Ewa Dubas-Urwanowicz and Jerzy Urwanowicz (eds), *Patron i dwór. Magnateria Rzeczypospolitej w XVI–XVIII wieku*, (Warsaw, 2006), pp. 179–86; Bożena Popiołek, 'Najniższy podnóżek, służa i więzień pański. Klientalne listy prośbne czasów saskich', *Krakowskie Studia Malopolskie* 16 (2011), pp. 151–66; Urszula Kicińska, 'Relacje patron-służa w świetle

been also deeply examined.³ One particular issue, so far not analysed by researchers, is the issue of conducting elite/aristocratic marital policy in relation to the selection of royal heads of state from foreign princely houses, that is, the familial relations between Polish magnates or nobility and foreign aristocratic families. It allows us to illuminate the importance of noble marital strategies in allowing representatives of this social group to penetrate international social circles, as well as the role marriages with foreigners played in building private careers.⁴ The choice of this particular period for analysis — the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (the reign of Augustus II in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth), when changes were taking place in the structure of royal circles (both in household and government) — allows us to grasp the mechanisms of joining the Polish royal court, based in this period both in Warsaw and in Dresden, as well as the possibilities and mechanisms of pursuing private interests with the monarch himself. Placing these activities in the broad context of family policy will allow us to assess the significance of initiatives undertaken by a wide range of the magnates' relatives and in-laws.

Within the context of the theme of this special issue, 'privacy' is understood primarily from the point of view of the sphere of individual interests pursued at the royal court and the use of private relationships to advance these interests. Unofficial activities, carried out solely through personal contacts and relationships, were of particular importance. The use of private relations turned out to be the only way of gaining political promotions and honours for the closest family members. These unofficial arrangements and private relationships are difficult to grasp, and require the multifaceted analysis of many different source materials. It is because many private activities and matters become palpable only by presenting them in a broad political, social and family context. Overall, this article will argue that international marriages gave individuals and their families chances for preeminent advantages (as with transregional nobles all over Europe), but private links with the King were crucial for personal careers and were forged through marriage to members of his family, both legitimate and illegitimate.

Historical Context

The growing interest in getting married to foreigners — although still on a small scale — can be seen already in the first half of the seventeenth century. This period, however, was characterised by low mobility when it comes to migration related to marriage. A characteristic pattern emerged, in which selected representatives of foreign noble houses migrated to the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania, to join in marriage with representatives of selected

korespondencji ekonomicznej Elżbiety z Lubomirskich Sieniawskiej, kasztelanowej krakowskiej', in Iwona Maciejewska (ed.), *Tożsamość kobiet w Polsce. Interpretacje*, vol. 1: *Od czasów najdawniejszych do XIX wieku* (Olsztyn, 2016), pp. 61-74; Urszula Augustyniak, 'Znaczenie pokrewieństwa w układach nieformalnych w Rzeczypospolitej i pol. XVII w. Na przykładzie Radziwiłłów birżańskich', in Stanisław Bylina (ed.), *Kultura staropolska-kultura europejska. Prace ofiarowane J. Tazbirowi w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin* (Warsaw, 1997), pp. 205-11.

3 The development of patronage and clientelism in this period can be found in the following studies: Shmuel Eisenstadt and Louis Roniger, 'Patron-Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22 (1980), pp. 42-77; Dionysios Stathakopoulos, 'I Seek Not My Own: Is There a Female Mode of Charity and Patronage?', *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 60 (2012), pp. 381-95; Gottfried Schramm, 'Adel und Staat: ein Vergleich zwischen Brandenburg und Polen-Litauen im 17. Jahrhundert', in *Schichtung und Entwicklung der Gesellschaft in Polen und Deutschland im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert, Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 74 (1983), pp. 59-81; Stefan Samerski, 'Die Landespatrone der böhmischen Länder: Geschichte — Verehrung — Gegenwart', *Bayerisches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* (2010), pp. 105-13.

4 For more on this phenomenon, see Anna Penkała-Jastrzębska, *'Za cudzoziemca iść ...'. Migracje a polityka małżeńska szlachty państwa polsko-litewskiego* (Krakow, 2021).

magnate houses. Women taken as wives by the magnates most often came from areas directly bordering the Commonwealth (Moldavia, Hungary, Germany).⁵

The situation changed significantly in the second half of the seventeenth century, when various Polish noble families were more and more willing to seize opportunities to establish a marital relationship with representatives of foreign houses. This state of affairs was influenced by several factors: from the conditions created by a royal court where people of different origins congregated, through increasingly reliable use of social contacts maintained by relatives and in-laws, to individual efforts to obtain consent for finalizing a marriage with a foreigner. In the second half of the seventeenth century, the first of these factors seemed to be of greatest importance. The chances of arranging international marriages were provided by contacts with the court, where, thanks to royal spouses who were foreign women — Marie-Louise Gonzaga (d. 1667),⁶ Eleonora Maria of Austria (d. 1697),⁷ and Marie-Casimire de La Grange d'Arquien (d. 1716)⁸ — there were opportunities to establish social relations that could, in certain cases, result in marriage. At that time, many young ladies from abroad appeared in the Commonwealth (including Felicitas Maximiliana, countess von Trauttmansdorff; Thérèse-Dorothée d'Arshot de la Rivière de Héer et de Houmont; Marie-Anne de La Grange d'Arquien; the sisters Jeanne-Marie and Marie-Catherine de Béthune, and many others). Around these successive foreign-born queen-consorts flourished the careers of women belonging to the Queen's Bedchamber, developing as a separate institution with the consent of their royal spouses. However, the number of marriages to foreigners concluded within the court was small and limited only to wealthy nobility and magnates, most often those previously related closely to those within the royal circle. Court culture directly influenced the formation of this type of attitudes — the undisguised fascination with French culture, the disappearance of the language barrier, and finally the formation of a common culture of trans-regional European elites.

The First Years of the Eighteenth Century: Changes at the Royal Court

In the eighteenth century, the scale of aristocratic Polish migration resulting from marrying foreign nobles continued to expand. This state of affairs was influenced by a number of factors, including the fact that relations with foreigners began to be available also to

5 Mentions of the marital policies of that time can be found in the following studies: Jacek Wijaczka, 'Vaterland oder Familie? Das Dilemma des Fürsten Bogusław Radziwiłł (1620–1669)', *Biuletyn Polskiej Misji Historycznej* 8 (2013), pp. 75–98; Valentin Constantinov, 'Małżeństwo Marii Lupuz Januszem Radziwiłłem', in Marcin Nagielski and Karol Żojdź (eds), *Radziwiłłowie w służbie Marsa* (Warsaw, 2017), pp. 151–60; Włodzimierz Dworzaczek, *Lelivici Tarnowscy od schyłku XVI wieku do czasów współczesnych* (Tarnobrzeg, 1996), p. 23.

6 See Jan Gintel, *Cudzoziemcy w Polsce. Relacje i opinie*, (Kraków, 1971), preface; Dorota Quirini-Popławska, *Działalność Włochów w Polsce w I połowie XVI wieku na dworze królewskim, w dyplomacji i hierarchii kościelnej* (Kraków and Wrocław, 1973); Tomasz Ciesielski, 'Propagandowy wymiar uroczystości dworskich w pierwszych latach panowania Augusta III', *Więki Stare i Nowe* 8, no 13 (2015), pp. 46–68; Urszula Augustyniak, *Wznowienie i królowie rodacy. Studium władzy królewskiej w Rzeczypospolitej XVII wieku* (Warsaw, 1999), pp. 160–61.

7 Mirosława Kamecka-Skraina, *Królowa Eleonora Maria Józefa Wiśniowiecka (1653–1697)* (Toruń, 2007); Kazimierz Piwarski, 'Eleonora Maria Józefa', *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. VI, pp. 223–6; Rotislav Smíšek and Monika Konrádová, 'Habsburgowie i Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki: przyjazd arcyksiężniczki Eleonory Marii do Rzeczypospolitej w 1670 roku jako sposób komunikacji symbolicznej', *Historia Slavorum Occidentis* 2/9 (2015), pp. 101–36.

8 Michał Komarzyński, *Piękna królowa Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien Sobieska 1641–1716* (Kraków, 1995), p. 20; Paweł Tysza, 'Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien Zamojska, czwarta ordynatowa zamojska', in Anna Kalinowska and Paweł Tysza (eds), *Maria Kazimiera Sobieska (1641–1716). W kręgu rodziny, polityki i kultury* (Warsaw, 2017), pp. 11–36; Jarosław Pietrzak, 'Zamojski dwór Marii Kazimiery d'Arquien w latach 1658–1665. Uwagi wstępne nad jego organizacją, funkcją i znaczeniem', *Res Gestae. Czasopismo Historyczne* 8 (2019), pp. 52–53; Andrzej Kersten, 'Maria Kazimiera de la Grange d'Arquien zwana Marysienką', *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. XIX, pp. 637–44.

representatives of the nobility who were slightly less wealthy, but politically and socially involved. The political situation caused by the transfer of the political, social and cultural centre associated with a 'moving' royal court — based in this period in both Warsaw and Dresden at different times — was of fundamental importance. When drawing up the background for the phenomenon under discussion, one should also emphasise that the magnates and wealthy nobles themselves noticed the growing benefits that could be brought about by marrying a foreigner. In many cases they appeared to be much greater than those which a marriage to a representative of the native nobility could bring them.

When analysing the basis of the efforts to choose the right partner by representatives of the nobility in the Commonwealth, it is worth referring to one of the letters of Joanna Przebendowska, addressed to Józef Wandalin Mniszech (d. 1747), the Grand Marshal of the Crown. In her letter, Przebendowska briefly summarised the numerous expectations that the representatives of the nobility had towards marriage. The noblewoman, conveying Christmas greetings for a master of the hunt via the Grand Marshal, expressed the hope that the next year would be an opportunity for him to meet a foreign woman, a 'piękną, grzeczną, ładną i miłą damę, także i bogatą, i aby miała wszystkie cnoty' ('*a beautiful, polite, pretty, and sweet lady, who is also rich and in possession of all the virtues*').⁹ A model candidate for marriage for the nobility is therefore not only a wealthy and influential person, but also possessed of impeccable manners and a pleasant disposition. In practice, however, long-term interest outweighed character traits and marital alliances needed to be in line with family politics. Thus, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, the trends in marrying representatives of foreign families changed significantly. The relationships established at the court of Augustus II were of a different nature than the careers developed under the Sobieski family in the previous reign. This was already made manifest by the methods of establishing a position and acquiring contacts at court. At the court of Marie-Casimire and John III (Sobieski), mainly people of French origin were recruited, who either came to the Commonwealth at the Queen's personal invitation or already had private contacts with representatives of magnate families.¹⁰

In contrast, at the court of Augustus II, people of German origin dominated, naturally, as the court was based in Saxony. Nevertheless, numerous Saxon ministers responsible for the efficient functioning of the apparatus of government began to appear in Warsaw.¹¹ In the first years of his reign, a number of unfavourable opinions were expressed about the King's immediate circle and those directly responsible for the implementation of his policies in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The hostile attitude towards the German ministers could to some extent be a result of the negative assessment of Augustus II himself, who was seen in the Commonwealth as the perpetrator of a political catastrophe.¹² The impoverishment of estates, especially during the Northern War, did not win any more sympathy for him.¹³

9 Ossolineum Institute Library in Wrocław, 2661/I, Joanna Przebendowska to Józef Wandalin Mniszech, Dresden, 5 April 1740, p. 13.

10 Penkała-Jastrzębska, 'Za cudzoziemca iść ...', pp. 97-124.

11 Foreign artists also came to the royal court: see Alina Żórawska-Witkowska, 'Foreign Musicians at the Polish Court in the Eighteenth Century. The Case of Pietro Mira', in Gesa zur Nieden and Berthold Over (eds), *Musicians' Mobilities and Music Migrations in Early Modern Europe. Biographical Patterns and Cultural Exchange* (Bielefeld, 2016), pp. 151-69.

12 The Central Archives of Historical Records in Poland (*hereafter* AGAD), Archiwum Publiczne Potockich, Ms. 163a, t. 44, newspaper from Gdańsk, 6 June 1711, p. 50.

13 Czesław Wróbel, 'Postać króla Augusta II Wettina w opiniach i relacjach', *Studia Historyczne* 49/3-4 (2006), pp. 255-74; Urszula Kosińska, 'Z dziejów stosunków polsko-pruskich w ostatnich latach panowania Augusta II. Misja Franza Moritza von Viebahnna w Saksonii i Polsce w latach 1727-1729', in Ryszard Skowron (ed.), *Polska wobec*

A significant group of courtiers interested in arranging marriages with Polish noblewomen were Saxon ministers, figures closely associated with the new court and Augustus II himself. Undeniably, the Saxon field marshal Jacob Heinrich von Flemming (d. 1728), who immediately found his way around the realities of the Commonwealth, made the greatest of careers.¹⁴ His arrival in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was influenced, among other ways, by Jan Jerzy Przebendowski, a political newcomer who in 1684 had married Jacob Heinrich's cousin, Margareta Elisabeth von Flemming,¹⁵ the daughter of another Saxon field marshal, Heino Heinrich von Flemming (d. 1706). In the new political arrangements, having such a close relationship with a prominent Saxon courtier gave Przebendowski new chances of rising in the Wettin political camp after the election of Augustus II in 1697. Augustus needed such people, as he put forward his candidacy for the crown after the death of John III Sobieski in 1696.¹⁶ As a result, it was Przebendowski who brought the younger marshal Flemming over to the Commonwealth, because of these close family relations. Jacob Heinrich von Flemming soon integrated himself within the political circles of the Commonwealth and in 1702 even married a Polish magnate, Izabela Franciszka Sapieha. A relationship with Flemming, avidly building his career alongside August II, was very attractive for the Sapieha family. Flemming showed them numerous proofs of trust: as early as 1698 he helped the Sapieha family in their conflict with other members of the Lithuanian nobility, using the Saxon army to do so. Above all, moreover, once he was named a minister in Dresden, getting married to a Polish magnate seemed to be an excellent political manoeuvre. Flemming saw potential profits in the broad influence of the Sapieha family in Lithuania, which could bring him many political benefits. The Sapieha family themselves consented to the marriage all the more readily because the high-ranking Saxon minister seemed to be an excellent intermediary in relations with the royal court. However, maintaining good relations between the spouses turned out to be very problematic. Soon after becoming Flemming's wife, Izabela Franciszka began to suffer from mental health problems.¹⁷ Flemming distanced himself from his spouse and initiated a procedure that would end the unlucky relationship. The premature death of the couple's son also contributed to the crisis of their marriage.¹⁸ The politics of the Sapieha family did little to help to maintain the marriage either, as they, despite their close relations with Flemming, opposed Augustus II in 1703 and decided to support the Swedish side during the Great Northern War. As early as 1715, the castellan of Trakai, in Lithuania, Kazimierz Antoni Sapieha (d. 1739), wrote about the end of this quintessential trans-regional marriage, informing a correspondent in a letter that 'Flemming z żoną swą cale się rozwodzi' ('Flemming and his wife are

wielkich konfliktów w Europie nowożytnej. Z dziejów dyplomacji i stosunków międzynarodowych w XV–XVIII wieku, (Kraków, 2009), pp. 483–94.

14 Władysław Konopczyński, 'Jakub Henryk Flemming', *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. VII, pp. 32–5; Kazimierz Chłapowski, *Urzędnicy centralni i nadworni Polski XIV–XVIII wieku. Spisy* (Kórnik, 1992), p. 38.

15 Adam Perłakowski, *Jan Jerzy Przebendowski podskarbi wielki koronny i dobrodziej ostrowski. Szkic biograficzny* (Kraków and Ostrów Wielkopolski, 2014), pp. 37–38.

16 Teresa Zielińska, 'Feldmarszałek Jakub Jerzy Henryk Flemming w środowiskach magnatów polskich', in Kazimierz Bartkiewicz (ed.), *Polska — Saksonia w czasach Unii (1697–1763). Próba nowego spojrzenia*, (Zielona Góra, 1998), pp. 116–22.

17 Agata Muszyńska, 'Odpowiedni czas na małżeństwo w poglądach polskiej i litewskiej magnaterii w XVIII wieku', *Pisma Humanistyczne* 12 (2014), p. 76.

18 For more information on the circumstances of Flemming's efforts to annul his first marriage, see Maria Śladowska, 'Polityka Augusta II wobec Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce i stosunków Rzeczypospolitej z Kurią Rzymską w świetle korespondencji króla z kardynałem Annibalem Albanim w latach 1716–1721', *Kronika Zamkowa* 1–2 (2009), pp. 132–33.

divorcing').¹⁹ The rumours turned out to be true and soon the spouses were finally separated, and after several years of living apart, the troublesome marriage was annulled.²⁰

During the subsequent years of the reign of Augustus II, the previously noted negative feelings towards the ministerial representatives of the Saxon court changed. A Saxon party did gradually develop in the Commonwealth, willingly staying loyal to the King and gaining court offices at the Dresden court. These factors were directly reflected in the increase of personal contacts, including those sealed through marriage. Moving the social and cultural centre to Dresden only intensified the efforts of the Polish magnates to establish private contacts with foreign nobles connected with that court. Entering into such relationships was an element of prestige policy, an attempt to strengthen the importance of the family, a way of satisfying personal ambitions, and finally, of symbolically standing as equals alongside a broader European aristocracy.²¹

Interestingly, religious confession did not play any decisive role in this case. Polish members of the court were Catholic, but there were examples of marriages between Saxon Lutheran noblemen and Polish Catholic noblewomen at this time: Tekla Róża Radziwiłł and Jacob Heinrich von Flemming in 1725; or Antonina Czartoryska and Johann Detlev von Flemming in 1744. It is worth remembering that even the King's own marriage was 'mixed', since his wife refused to become a Catholic when he did. In the case of marriages of people of different faiths, reservations were introduced in marriage arrangements pertaining to the spouse's freedom to profess his or her current religion and the issue of the future religious education of resulting offspring.²² In practice, prenuptial agreements with foreigners gave priority to the rights of the Polish nobility, giving the right to religious upbringing of children, for example, only to the mother.²³ In each of the aforementioned marriages, the origins of the groom and the faith he professed did not in any way translate into a distinction between the religion held by male and female descendants who were all brought up as Catholics. The privileges brought by staying and settling in the Commonwealth outweighed religious scruples.²⁴

Forging More Personal Connections with the Sovereign

Unlike the few career trajectories at court we find that were based on family connections, new personalities quickly began to gain importance in royal circles, marking their presence especially during Augustus II's stays in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. High ranking examples in the royal circle included Konstancja (d. 1707) and Urszula Katarzyna Bokum (d. 1743), daughters of the Polonised Johann Heinrich von Altenbockum (d. 1685)

19 The Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv, Archive of the Sapieha family from Krasiczyn, fond 103, file XXIX / 23, Kazimierz Antoni Sapieha to Izabela Sapieżyna, née Połubińska, Grodno, 16 October 1715, [unpaginated manuscript].

20 Izabela Franciszka Flemmingowa, née Sapieha, after divorcing Flemming, still dealt with his new in-laws, the Radziwiłł family. She was still referred to in documents as the wife of the Equerry of Lithuania (Flemming's title). Her brother, Józef Franciszek Sapieha, represented her interests: AGAD, Radziwiłł Archive, X, manuscript 813, pp. 1-34.

21 Jacek Staszewski, *Polacy w osiemnastowiecznym Dreźnie* (Wrocław, Warsaw and Krakow, 1986), pp. 51-65.

22 Penkała-Jastrzębska, 'Za cudzoziemca iść ...', pp. 50-51.

23 AGAD, Radziwiłł Archive, XI, Ms. 128, p. 6; *Pamiętniki króla Stanisława August. Antologia*, ed. M. Dębowski, transl. W. Brzozowski, intr. A. Grześkowiak-Krwawicz (Warsaw, 2013), p. 158, Dagmar Freist, *Glaube — Liebe — Zwietracht. Konfessionell gemischte Ehen in Deutschland in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Munich, 2017).

24 For more on the rules for raising noble children in the Commonwealth, see Ewa Dubas-Urwanowicz, 'Podstawy prawne opieki nad dziećmi w państwie polsko-litewskim', in Bożena Popiołek, Agnieszka Chłosta-Sikorska and Marcin Gadocha (eds), *W kręgu epok dawnych. Dzieciństwo* (Warsaw, 2014), pp. 67-78.

and Konstancja Tekla Branicka. Both Konstancja and her sister grew up in different cultural and social conditions than those foreign aristocrats who came to Poland only on the occasion of getting married. Both of them had learned the Polish language at home, but they also communicated efficiently in German and French — an additional advantage enabling them to quickly adapt to the international environment of the Dresden court, where they usually stayed for several months each year.

Urszula Katarzyna made the greatest career in contacts with foreign courtiers.²⁵ Although she married, in 1695, Prince Jerzy Dominik Lubomirski, the Deputy Pantler of the Crown (d. 1727), she quickly was drawn into the more intimate court circles of Augustus II in Dresden and soon started an affair with him. The couple even had a child, which ensured Urszula Katarzyna a permanent place at the royal court.²⁶ Thanks to her intimate contacts with the King, in 1704 she also gained the personal title from the Emperor, princess of Cieszyn, which came with certain legal privileges.²⁷ Emotional relations thus translated into honours and positions. Augustus II also decided to provide for Urszula Katarzyna's husband: Prince Lubomirski received command of the Royal Guard and in 1702 the office of Crown Chamberlain. Despite this, the couple's relationship finally ended in annulment and eventually, in 1722, Urszula Katarzyna remarried, this time to Ludwig Friedrich of Württemberg, a prince ten years younger. Even many years after the end of her emotional relationship with Augustus II, Urszula Katarzyna continued to socialise with the most important persons of the Dresden court, including the King himself. The King regularly asked about the health and condition of the Princess and sent her perfunctory information on current plans related to political issues.²⁸

Urszula Katarzyna's contacts at the court of Dresden would also be beneficial to other close relatives of her first husband. It was especially visible in the case of Aleksander Jakub Lubomirski (d. 1772), son of the castellan of Krakow, Hieronim August Lubomirski, and the aforementioned sister of Urszula Katarzyna, Konstancja Bokum. Already during the Great Northern War (1700-1721) when Augustus was deposed in 1706 (regaining his throne in 1709), Aleksander Jakub had been held as a hostage in Saxony, and it was at this time that he came under the care of his aunt at the court in Dresden. When his father, Hieronim August, joined the Wettin party (which worked to restore Augustus II to his throne), young Lubomirski was able to return to the Commonwealth. The period of education spent at the Wettin court, however, had a profound influence on his further career. Lubomirski was also helped by his close relationship with the royal son, Prince Frederick August (died 1763), with whom he travelled to France in his adolescence in 1714.²⁹ Extensive contacts with the court also resulted in the selection of a candidate to become his wife in 1719: Countess Karoline Friederike von Vitzthum und Eckstädt (died 1759). A key factor was that the young woman was the daughter of Friedrich, Count Vitzthum von Eckstädt (died 1726), a close friend and favourite of

25 See Heinrich Theodor Flathe, 'Lubomirska, Ursula Katharina, Fürstin von', *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 19, (Leipzig, 1884), pp. 333-34.

26 For the King's relationship with Urszula Katarzyna, see Werner Patzelt, 'August der Starke und die Reichsfürstin von Teschen', *Mitteilungsblatt des österreichischen Heimatbund Beskidenland* 186 (2006) pp. 16-19.

27 Janusz Spyra, 'Śląsk Cieszyński w okresie 1653-1848', in Idzi Panic (ed.), *Dzieje Śląska Cieszyńskiego od zarania do czasów współczesnych* (Cieszyn, 2012), vol. IV, p. 56.

28 Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, Geheimes Kabinett, loc. 2094/190, Augustus II to Urszula Katarzyna Lubomirska, née Altenbockum, Frauenstadt, 4 November 1719, p. 16.

29 Marian Lech, 'Lubomirski, Aleksander Jakub', *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. XVIII, pp. 1-2.

Augustus II.³⁰ Aleksander Jakub Lubomirski quickly received several offices in the royal household of the Commonwealth (Master of the King's Kitchen and later Sword-Bearer of the Crown); he also received several appointments as *starost* (a local administrator, appointed by the Crown).³¹ After the wedding, Lubomirski spent most of his time in Dresden, gradually resigning from the offices held in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and selling some of his estates. His decision was to some extent facilitated by the possibilities offered to him in Saxony from 1729, especially in Royal Saxon Army. Further making use of or strengthening his international connections, he also spent a lot of time in France, making himself at home in social circles there.³²

When entering the royal court in Dresden, representatives of the Polish nobility tried to present themselves in the best possible way in this alien environment, often with the help of relatives and in-laws. This is perfectly illustrated by the example of Katarzyna and Marianna Bieliński, daughters of Ludwika Maria Morsztyn (d. 1730) and the Grand Marshal of the Crown, Kazimierz Ludwik Bieliński (d. 1713).³³ Initially, thanks to the position and actions of their parents, the daughters' contacts with the pro-French faction at the Polish court were greatly facilitated, launching them at court successfully. Their mother Ludwika Maria was the daughter of the Grand Treasurer of the Crown, Andrzej Morsztyn, and Catherine Gordon de Huntly,³⁴ both members of the pro-French party of Queen Marie-Louise Gonzaga.³⁵ During the election of 1697 the Bieliński family had remained loyal to the pro-French party, supporting the candidacy of Prince François-Louis de Bourbon-Conti.³⁶ They were therefore initially dissatisfied with the election of Augustus II.³⁷ The new king, however, gradually won their loyalty, by giving attractive offices to Bieliński: first the post of Court Marshal of the Crown, then that of Grand Marshal of the Crown. The attitude of his resourceful wife, Ludwika Maria, was of particular importance for the position of the family. Brought up in France — where her father, Jan Andrzej Morsztyn had escaped after the election of John III Sobieski and became one of secretaries of Louis XIV — she was at ease with foreigners. During the first years of the Northern War, she deftly manoeuvred between the camp favouring the installation of Stanisław Leszczyński as king, and the party of Augustus II. After the latter returned to the throne of the Commonwealth, she maintained close personal relations with him, consistently building up her position at court. The King even invited her privately to his son's wedding in 1719.³⁸

30 Friedrich Vitzthum von Eckstädt also carried out diplomatic missions for Augustus II to Sweden and Saint Petersburg.

31 Lech, 'Lubomirski, Aleksander Jakub', pp. 1-2.

32 See Sławomir Górczyński, 'Naturalizacje Polaków we Francji XVII–XVIII wieku', in Mirosław Nagielski, Andrzej Rachuba and Sławomir Górczyński (eds), *Świat pogranicza* (Warsaw, 2003), p. 241.

33 Adam Przyboś and Leszek Kukulski, 'Morsztyn (Morstin), Jan Andrzej', *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. XXI, p. 814.

34 Barry Robertson, 'The Gordons of Huntly: A Scottish Noble Household and its European Connections, 1603–1688', in David Worthington (ed.), *British and Irish Emigrants and Exiles in Europe, 1603–1688* (Leiden and Boston, 2010), p. 190.

35 Roman Krzywy, 'Kurtuazyjnie bądź frywolnie. Jan Andrzej Morsztyn jako świadek kariery Marii Kazimierzy d'Arquien', in Kalinowska and Tyszka, *Maria Kazimiera Sobieska*, p. 40.

36 Aleksandra Skrzypietz, *Franciszek Ludwik, książę de Conti — 'obрани król Polski'. Saga rodu Kondeuszów*, (Katowice, 2019), pp. 268-69.

37 Aleksandra Skrzypietz, *Francuskie zabiegi o koronę polską po śmierci Jana III Sobieskiego* (Katowice, 2009), p. 173.

38 Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Dresden, Geheimes Kabinett, Loc. 2090, vol. 36, August II to Ludwika Maria Bielińska, wife of the Grand Marshall of the Crown, Dresden, 6 June 1719, fol. 25r.

The activity of Ludwika Maria Bielińska, née Morsztyn, translated into social contacts and, consequently, the matrimonial choices of her children. The first of the Bieliński daughters, Katarzyna (d. 1761), drew together the international contacts established by her mother through a marriage to the French envoy, Jean-Victor, baron de Besenval, in 1716.³⁹ Her future spouse — already close to the royal entourage as the French ambassador to the court of Augustus II — established contact with Katarzyna's father, Kazimierz Ludwik Bieliński. For the Frenchman, this relationship was therefore primarily important in his policy of entering into closer relations with the nobility of the Commonwealth, thus facilitating the conduct of diplomatic affairs. However, it was the attitude of the future bride's mother, Ludwika Maria, who strongly favoured the Frenchman, that was of crucial importance. Not only were private interests at stake here, but also efforts to bring Augustus II and Besenval closer together. The role of key intermediaries in establishing this relationship was to be played by both of the Bieliński sisters, Katarzyna and Marianna, the royal favourite.⁴⁰

Marianna was another member of the Bieliński family who easily found her way around international circles, known after her first marriage as Marianna Denhoff,⁴¹ later Lubomirska (d. 1730). Although she did not enter into an international marriage, she nevertheless managed to enter into the Dresden court through an informal relationship. Despite her important marriage to the Grand Chamberlain of Lithuania, Bogusław Ernest Denhoff (d. 1734), she started an affair with King Augustus II.⁴² Marianna's love affair however, led to the breakdown of her marriage, finalised with a divorce in 1718. After the breakup of her first marriage and the cooling of her relationship with the monarch, Marianna decided to remarry, this time to the later Field Writer of the Crown, Prince Jerzy Ignacy Lubomirski (d. 1753).⁴³ The couple were married in 1719.⁴⁴ After the breakdown of her relationship with the King, though Marianna no longer had such a high position at the court in Dresden, she was still invited to private meetings with the King and took part in official celebrations.⁴⁵

The brother of the two Bieliński sisters, Michał (d. 1745), was also involved with the Dresden court. His marriage was concluded within the closest circle of Augustus II, involving the natural daughter of the King himself, Maria Aurora Katarzyna, Countess Rutowska (d. 1746). She was the illegitimate daughter of the King and a Turkish woman, Fatima. Augustus II, who always desired to sort out his private affairs without scandal, ordered Aurora's mother to marry Johann Georg von Spiegel and thus his natural daughter grew up in Saxony as Maria Anna von Spiegel. When the girl grew up, she received the title of Countess Rutowska from the King. Her marriage to Michał Bieliński came about despite the open reluctance of some members of the Bieliński family, who had predicted from the very beginning that the

39 Bożena Popiołek, *Kobiety świat w czasach Augusta II. Studia nad mentalnością kobiet z kręgów szlacheckich* (Kraków, 2018), p. 228.

40 See Józef Andrzej Gierowski, *Traktat przyjaźni Polski z Francją w 1714 r.: studium z dziejów dyplomacji*, (Warsaw, 1965).

41 Despite its German sounding name, the Polish branch of the von Dönhoff family were thoroughly polonised in the sixteenth century.

42 Sources indicate that Marianna Bielińska also maintained a close relationship with Augustus II's rival for the throne, Stanisław Leszczyński.

43 The prenuptial agreement between Marianna Bieliński and Jerzy Ignacy Lubomirski, National Archives in Krakow, Department I, Castr. Crac. Rel. no 174, pp. 1477-82.

44 After the death of his wife, Jerzy Ignacy remarried in 1737, this time to Johanna Maria von Stein zu Jettingen.

45 Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Kyiv, fond 254, part 1, Ms. 5, *Gazety cudzoziemskie z Drezna*, 2 March 1718, fols 66-66v.

proposed marriage would not bring the groom any spectacular profits. The then Cup-Bearer of the Crown, Franciszek Bieliński (d. 1766),⁴⁶ Michał's brother, saw no significant positives in this proposal, and was particularly reluctant. However, Ludwika Maria, the prospective groom's mother, who as we have seen was close to the King, had a completely different outlook on the matter. She not only became directly involved in marital negotiations, but also looked at the union between her son and the royal daughter with great hopes. The realization of mutual interests was crowned with a prenuptial agreement, written in 1724.

Although the prospective bride, born of the ruler's informal relationship, was getting married without the status of a full-fledged member of the royal family, Augustus II was financially involved in the terms of her marriage contract. The property details included in the document were quite attractive, compared to the financial terms of other marriages agreed at that time by Polish nobility. Augustus II undertook to pay his daughter a dowry of five hundred thousand silver *tymf*. For the groom, additional declarations that Augustus II made regarding his daughter's dowry were of particular importance. One of the conditions, which seemed to be particularly favourable for Bieliński, assumed the possibility of leaving as much as half of the dowry in his hands, even in the event of his wife's death without an heir. According to the King's dispositions, the future couple was to receive, 'aby w Warszawie mieli gdzie rezydować, dwór jaki z obciami, *et cum necessariis aliis requisitis*'⁴⁷ ('a manor house with cloth furnishings, and with the necessary other requirements, so that they have a place to reside in Warsaw'). However, Maria Aurora's marriage to Michał Bieliński was not successful and the relations between the spouses gradually deteriorated. Only a few years after the wedding, efforts were made to annul the ill-fated marriage.⁴⁸ The union was formally ended in 1729 allowing both of them to remarry. The first to take advantage of this was Maria Aurora, who by 1732 had already become the wife of Claude Marie-Noyel, count of Bellegarde and Entremont.⁴⁹

The union of Bieliński and Maria Aurora was not the only one to emerge from the close circle of Augustus II in the 1720s. The ruler's private interests slowly became a factor influencing the intensification of migration between the Commonwealth and Dresden. One example of such migration was the appearance at court of Wilhelmina Maria Frederica von Rochlitz, the illegitimate daughter of the Saxon elector John George IV and Magdalena Sibylla von Rochlitz.⁵⁰ After the untimely death of her parents, her uncle — the new Saxon elector and Polish king, Augustus II — became interested in the girl's fate. His involvement in arranging her marriage was common knowledge.⁵¹ The candidate chosen for the girl was Piotr Dunin (d. 1737). Dunin was not a major figure politically or financially, and it was his brother Jakub (d. 1730), the Crown Referendary (already permanently residing at the court), who did much

46 Chłapowski, *Urzędnicy centralni i nadworni Polski*, p. 157.

47 Sachsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Dresden, Loc. 03686/05, [unpaginated manuscript].

48 Sachsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Dresden, Loc. 03686/05, [unpaginated manuscript]; there are documents there related to this marriage, which confirm, among other things, the appointment of a dowry for the bride in the amount of 500,000 *tymf*.

49 The much commented on case of Bieliński's divorce from Maria Aurora, Countess Rutowska, is discussed by Bożena Popiołek in 'Z kraju i ze świata. Krakowskie nowiny rękopiśmienne z 1729 r. jako źródło do historii mentalności społeczeństwa czasów saskich', *Rocznik Historii Prasy Polskiej* 15 (2012), p. 35. NB: the article includes an incorrect date of the couple's divorce (1735): in 1732, Rutowska was already the wife of Claude-Marie Noyel.

50 See Jan Zieliński, 'W sprawie Heliodorów', *Studia Norwidiana* 32 (2014), p. 188.

51 Antoni Józef Rolle, 'Rodzina Malczewskiego', *Sylwetki i szkice historyczne i literackie. Seria IX* (Krakow, 1893), p. 185.

more to seek royal favour and advancement for Piotr.⁵² He remained very close to the King, participated in his private ceremonies, dinners and spectacles, and successfully implemented royal policy in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.⁵³ Augustus II tried to build a party loyal to himself with the help of people like Jakub Dunin, enticing supporters with offices, fortunes and hopes of advancement. Meanwhile, the politically and socially passive Piotr Dunin had little influence on either the course of his own marital negotiations or preparations for the ceremony. Again, it was Augustus II and his circle who turned out to be much more involved in drawing up the marital contract between the Polish nobleman and the King's niece. The King even directly participated in the process of arranging the marriage, specifying the conditions under which Wilhelmina Maria would move to the Commonwealth. He also pressured Dunin to finalise the marriage negotiations soon. Royal interference was reflected in the prenuptial agreement, concluded by both parties in 1720. Based on surviving materials it is difficult not to conclude that the royal circle was the more influential party, while Dunin simply accepted the conditions proposed to him. Dunin himself and his candidacy were constantly promoted by his brother, as well as the Radziwiłł, Mniszech and Szembek families associated with him.⁵⁴ Marrying a royal relative gave Piotr Dunin a politically advantageous position, which was intended to facilitate his contacts with the royal court and, naturally, with Augustus II himself. However, he failed to take full advantage of this opportunity, due to several factors. His enterprising brother Jakub, who helped him in private and political matters, died in 1730. Nor did Piotr acquire much of a fortune as a result of his marriage, and his political influence remained very limited. Furthermore, the death of Augustus II also changed the balance of power: Augustus III chose people for his party differently than his father.⁵⁵ The marriage also failed to secure benefits for the family as a whole; it did not help the other two Dunin brothers, Jan and Józef, make political careers either. This example shows that even a politically oriented marriage was no guarantee of success nor a gateway to a great career. Individual steps and continuous readiness to act, as well as the ability to quickly respond to opportunities that arose, were of fundamental importance. Neglecting these activities translated into political passivity, despite the best personal connections.

In the 1720s, the Polish nobility closely followed the actions of courtiers in the immediate vicinity of Augustus II in addition to these representatives of the Dunin and Bieliński families. Reports concerning efforts to win the hand of another illegitimate royal daughter, Anna Orzelska (d. 1769), were especially closely followed.⁵⁶ Taking into account the favour Augustus II had shown to his in-laws thus far, marrying her could bring a number of benefits,

52 Jakub Dunin was politically very active and quickly gained the recognition of Augustus II. He mentioned his royal favour already when assuming the office of Crown Regent in 1713, which was given to him as a form of 'aplikacji [...] glorią natchynęgo starości domu naszego' ('application [...], using the glory of our old house'), although this appointment would not take place without constant 'guarding of the court'. The Kórnik Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences (*hereafter* BK PAN), Ms 417, Jakub Dunin to his mother, Zofia Duninowa née Manowska, Warsaw, 29 March 1713, fols 2-3v.

53 Władysław Konopczyński, 'Dunin, Jakub ze Skrzynna', *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. V, p. 474.

54 See Bożena Popiołek, *Dobrodziejki i klienci. Specyfika patronatu kobiecego i relacji klientalnych w czasach saskich* (Warsaw, 2020), pp. 108-14.

55 In the era of Augustus III, a new model of functioning of the royal court and its surroundings developed. During the reign of Augustus II, there was no queen's court, something which in the case of previous rulers had played an important role in establishing important informal political and social relationships. This was now re-established by Augustus III's queen, Maria Josefa of Austria. For more on the specifics of the court during the reign of Augustus III, see Penkała-Jastrzębska, 'Za cudzoziemca iść...', pp. 305-79.

56 Maria Czaplińska, 'Orzelska, Anna Katarzyna', *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. XXIV, pp. 300-01.

which was widely understood among the Polish nobility. Certainly an attractive dowry and promises of the granting of administrative or court offices for the prospective groom were enticing. There were whispers in the Commonwealth of numerous candidates soliciting the royal daughter's hand, including Michał Serwacy Wiśniowiecki.⁵⁷ The court elites, however, speculated that the King himself would rather have Franciszek Bieliński as Anna's husband.⁵⁸ As already noted, not much earlier (in 1724), Franciszek's brother Michał had married another natural royal daughter, Maria Aurora, Countess Rutowska. The Bielińska sisters, Katarzyna and Urszula, also remained close to the court. The inclusion of another Bieliński in the extended royal family seemed to be natural. However, none of these reports were true. In the end, none of the Polish magnates married the well-endowed girl. Anna Orzelska was not in fact married off until 1730, when her hand was given to Friedrich Karl Ludwig, duke of Holstein-Beck (d. 1774).⁵⁹

In 1730 however, yet another of Augustus II's illegitimate daughters, Friederike Alexandra, countess von Cosel (d. 1784), did marry a Polish nobleman. The bride's mother was Countess Anna Constantia von Brockdorff, formerly countess von Hoym, now countess von Cosel, a well-known figure in the Dresden court. Augustus II had granted his daughter the title of countess, as he had done to Maria Aurora. Friederike Alexandra became the wife of Jan Kanty Moszyński (d. 1737), Grand Treasurer of the Crown. In this case, the choice of the candidate was not accidental. Moszyński had served Augustus II faithfully and managed to make a career as an official, despite the lack of an impressive financial base.⁶⁰ He was first made chamberlain and later granted several appointments as *starost*.⁶¹ Even before his marriage to Friederike Alexandra von Cosel, he had already received two lucrative offices from the King: first that of Grand Carver of the Crown, and then Court Treasurer of the Crown. Marrying the royal daughter was to be the next stage in Moszyński's career and a means to bind him even more fully within the royal circle. On his wedding day, however, Moszyński received only the Order of the White Eagle from Augustus II. Yet, the lack of special privileges granted on the wedding day did not imply complete royal indifference. Ultimately, the marriage brought Moszyński some benefits: after the wedding, Augustus II made him the *starost* of Ujście, an important town in the northwest, and the couple were given a residence in Warsaw from the King. Yet the new royal son-in-law was not granted any new offices. Nevertheless, from the point of view of the King's own private interests, Jan Kanty Moszyński marrying the countess von Cosel fulfilled its task: he remained faithful to the King until the end of his life.⁶²

57 National Archives in Krakow, Department I, Sanguszek Archives, portfolio 231/5, Priest Karp to Marianna Sanguszkowa née Lubomirska, Warsaw, 9 October 1724, p. 82.

58 National Historical Archives of Belarus in Minsk, fond 694, part 7, Ms. 8, Anna Katarzyna Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszków to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Łuków, 19 September 1725, fol. 141v. Franciszek Bieliński was also only married in 1730, to Dorota Henryka Radziwiłłowa née Przebendowska, widow of the voivode of Nowogródek, Jan Mikołaj Radziwiłł (d. 1729).

59 He was the younger brother of Frederick William, duke of Holstein-Beck (died 1749), who also married a Polish noblewoman, the widowed Princess Ludwika Czartoryska née Łoś.

60 It is worth noting that Moszyński has a close kinship with Franciszek Maksymilian Ossoliński (his uncle), private secretary to King Augustus II (and later resident in France at the court of Louis XV). Jan Kanty was born from the union of Aleksander Michał Moszyński and Teresa Ossolińska.

61 Andrzej Link-Lenczowski, 'Moszynski, Jan Kanty', *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. XXII, pp. 118-19.

62 When the King died, in 1733, Moszyński, as the Grand Treasurer of the Crown, received the crown insignia, Kórnik Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Ms. 990, Kommissya z Konstytucji Seymu blisko przeszłego. Pacificationis Przy Złożeniu Kleynotow Rzeczypospolitey a Oddaniu Skarbu Koronnego Jaśnie Wielmożnemu Jm panu Janowi Kantemu Moszyńskiemu podskarbiemu Wielkiemu koronnemu R. 1733, [unpaginated manuscript].

The Final Years of the Reign of Augustus II

The final years of the reign of Augustus II in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were a period of visible changes to matrimonial customs amongst the nobility. Ladies from the court of Dresden in Saxony still enjoyed the attentions of Polish noblemen who wanted to get closer to the King's inner circle. The presence and activity of the Poles had become part of the rhythm of life of the Saxon court. An entrance into court society, joining factions, and looking for opportunities for promotion to offices, all had a visible impact on decisions concerning marriage. This process is perfectly reflected, for example, by the path chosen by the Grand Chancellor of Lithuania, Prince Michał Fryderyk Czartoryski (d. 1775), who took his first political steps alongside the Saxon Field Marshal Jacob Heinrich von Flemming.⁶³ It was thanks to the favour of the Saxon field marshal that Czartoryski received the office of Deputy Chancellor of Lithuania in 1724, a post that gave him influence at the royal court.⁶⁴ The well-educated and ambitious Czartoryski was looking for various chances to get closer to the court of Augustus II. Stanisław August Poniatowski, commenting on Michał Fryderyk's above-average involvement in political and social affairs, wrote scornfully that the magnate 'był jedną z osób najbardziej w całym królestwie zajętych zabieganiem o swą popularność' ('was one of the people most busy with promoting himself in the whole kingdom').⁶⁵ It was thanks to persistence and long-term efforts that in 1726 Michał Fryderyk Czartoryski married Flemming's niece, Countess Eleonora Monika von Waldstein (d. 1798). She was the daughter of Count Johann Joachim (d. 1763) and Anna von Waldstein (d. 1745).⁶⁶ The happy conclusion of the marriage, which was to create a connection with a foreign house, was for Czartoryski a sign of prestige and a reason for pride, as it would have been for many magnate families.⁶⁷ Yet again, a key role was to be played by the groom's connections with Jacob Heinrich von Flemming, which, in the opinion of the Czartoryski family, could bring Michał Fryderyk some powerful political benefits.

Staying close to the royal circles and the Saxon court turned out to also be a determinant of the marital arrangements of Aleksander Józef Sułkowski (died 1762), who began his career at this court, and resided for a long time in Dresden before getting married.⁶⁸ A barely sixteen-year-old girl was selected in 1728 as a suitable candidate for a nobleman who was, until recently, of little significance: Maria Franziska von Stein zu Jettingen (d. 1741).⁶⁹ Preparations for the wedding quickly reached the ear of public opinion. The planned marriage

63 At that time, Michał Fryderyk was also looking for contacts with other influential figures in the political arena of the Commonwealth. In 1724 he made a ceremonial 'entry into the Grodno starosty' ('wjazd na starostwo grodzieńskie'), for which ceremony he invited Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, son of the former Grand Chancellor of Lithuania. AGAD, Radziwiłł Archives V, Ms. 2579/ I, Michał Fryderyk Czartoryski to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Siedlce, 3 June 1724, p. 1.

64 Dębowski (ed.), *Pamiętniki króla Stanisława Augusta Poniatowskiego*, p. 58.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 58.

66 See Stefan Jerzy Buksiński, 'Między Sarmatyzmem i Oświeceniem: Czartoryscy w latach 1693-1764', *Prace Naukowe. Filologia Polska. Historia i Teoria Literatury* 1 (1985), p. 40.

67 Czartoryski remained close to Flemming until the latter's death in 1728. Later, he also took part in the efforts made by Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł to take over the office of the Grand Equerry of the Crown after Flemming. AGAD, Radziwiłł Archives V, Ms. 2579, Michał Fryderyk Czartoryski to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Siedlce, 9 August 1728, pp. 20-21.

68 For more on the career of Aleksander Józef Sułkowski, see Adam Perłakowski, *Kariera i upadek królewskiego faworyta. Aleksander Józef Sułkowski w latach 1695-1738* (Kraków, 2013).

69 Jiří Brňovják, 'Heraldika Alexandra Josefa Sułkowského Vizualizace titulárního vzestupu polského magnáta ve světle říšských a českých panovnických privilegií', in Dariusz Nawrot and Grzegorz Madej (eds), *Zapomniani księżęta? Sułkowscy w XVIII-XX wieku* (Katowice, 2016), p. 37.

with a noblewoman who had belonged to Queen Christiane Eberhardine's closest circle as a member of her household (the Queen died in late 1727), was perceived by the nobility as well-thought-out element of the game played by Sułkowski, intended primarily to satisfy his social and political ambitions. Maintaining social contacts was of interest to both Aleksander Józef and Maria Franziska which she eagerly took advantage of. Their assimilation was helped by the fact that, thanks to royal patronage, the Sułkowski family had their own residence in Dresden, where they hosted high-ranking and politically significant persons. The couple's marriage turned out to be quite successful and produced eight children.

In the 1730s, yet another royal mistress, Agnieszka Emercjanna Pocijowa (by her first marriage), née Warszzycka (d. after 1759), daughter of Stanisław Warszzycki (d. 1704), Grand Sword-Bearer of the Crown, became widely recognised at court. After the death of her father, in 1709 Agnieszka Emercjanna married Ludwik Konstanty Pocij (d. 1730), the future Grand Hetman and Grand Treasurer of Lithuania.⁷⁰ Her marriage to Pocij did not prevent Agnieszka Emercjanna from maintaining ever closer contacts with the Dresden court. Known as a beauty, she quickly caught the eye of Augustus II himself, becoming his next mistress.⁷¹ Close relations with the King ensured her a permanent place at the court and her migration to Dresden. Agnieszka Emercjanna even had a daughter with Augustus II. The fact that the marriage with Ludwik Konstanty Pocij was not very successful also contributed to her distancing herself from her family circle.⁷² Pocijowa often travelled between Warsaw, Berlin and Dresden, which was regularly reported in handwritten newspapers.⁷³ For Agnieszka Emercjanna, the royal court turned out to be so attractive that she wanted to stay, maintaining influence and carefully cultivating her social relations. Her long absence from Poland fuelled speculations that her relationship with Pocij was falling apart. It was rumoured that over time maintaining a formal marriage with the magnate had become inconvenient for both spouses.⁷⁴ The couple, however, never divorced formally.⁷⁵ The behaviour of the Pocij family allows us to assume that perhaps Agnieszka Emercjanna was in fact handling Pocij's private business in Dresden and he himself indeed supported his wife in keeping her at the King's side. As a royal mistress, she was constantly in close proximity to Augustus II and at the same time she was a valuable contact for her husband Ludwik Konstanty himself and other Polish magnates. In 1730, very shortly after the death of Ludwik Konstanty Pocij, his widow remarried. Her new husband was a Frenchman forging a career in the Saxon army, Field Marshal Joseph-Alexandre de Montmorency de Bours (d. 1759), who also belonged to the court of Augustus II.

70 Prenuptial agreement between Ludwik Konstanty Pocij and Agnieszka Emercjanna née Warszzycki, The National Archives in Krakow, Acta Castrensia. Cracoviensia Relationes, no 133, pp. 194-9.

71 The romance between Augustus II and Agnieszka Emercjanna was known in the social circles of the Polish nobility and was eagerly commented on: see J. Rafałowiczówna, *A z Warszawy nowiny te ... Listy do Elżbiety Sieniawskiej z lat 1710–1720*, intr. Bożena Popiołek (Krakow, 2000), p. 79.

72 Andrzej Sowa, 'Pocij, Ludwik Konstanty h. Waga (1664–1730)', *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. XXVII, pp. 38-47.

73 BK PAN, Ms. 1026, *Gazeta rękopiśmienna z Gdańska*, 17 April 1717, fol. 31.

74 See AGAD, Radziwiłł Archives V, Ms. 11913/ VIII, Ludwik Konstanty Pocij to Jan Mikołaj Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 20 January 1719, p. 1. Such annotations can still be found in the correspondence from 1729-30: see AGAD, Radziwiłł Archives V, Ms. 11913/ X, Ludwik Konstanty Pocij to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, [place not specified], 1729, p. 35.

75 It can look striking that several of the Polish-German marriages examined here either ended in divorce or the partners effectively separated, but this problem should be examined in wider context. When analysing noble marriages more generally, throughout the eighteenth century, the problem of divorce turns out to be rather incidental. See Anna Penkała-Jastrzębska, *Przeciw prawu, tradycji i obyczajowi. Sprawy procesowe szlacheckich małżeństw w księgach sądów grodzkich z terenu województwa krakowskiego w czasach saskich* (Krakow, 2017).

Conclusion

In the first half of the eighteenth century, representatives of Polish noble families were ever more willing to interact with foreign court cultures, taking advantage of various circumstances allowing them to stay abroad. The previously well-recognised figures on the international political and social scene, such as members of the Sobieski, Radziwiłł, Lubomirski, Sapieha and Potocki families — those who had thus far made the most of entering into profitable marriages to open up a number of new paths of advancement — were now joined by others. It was increasingly recognised that marriage with a foreign noble courtier was not only a lucrative arrangement in terms of wealth, but was also a chance to further one's own career. This process perfectly reflected the fact that the magnates began to see themselves as a part of a European community and increasingly aspired to establish closer relationships with a pan-European aristocracy.⁷⁶

The decision to get married into a foreign house was usually dictated by the desire to raise one's own status and find a permanent place in international social circles or to further the family's political ambitions. In the 1720s and 1730s, increased contacts between the Polish nobility and the Dresden court were noticeable. The preserved correspondence indicates that this process also involved people of less influence, those looking for their chance to be noticed at the Dresden court. The above-mentioned examples demonstrate how various motives determined the marital policies of magnates and nobles. While the first years of the eighteenth century saw mostly marriages with foreign military men, as the political situation stabilised and the ties of the Polish nobility with the Dresden court tightened, the scope of these contacts expanded significantly. The system of dependencies functioning within the royal court forced the nobility to look for new pathways to advancement and honours. Notably, Augustus II's tendency of allowing ever more mistresses and favourites to enter the royal entourage brought increased opportunities for seeking royal patronage to people who had so far been distant from the court. Relations with foreigners were given a new meaning by marriages to the King's private circle, his illegitimate children, treated by the ruler as a symbol of trust and patronage for representatives of the Polish nobility, as well as an excellent guarantee of loyalty. The death of Augustus II and the election in 1733 of his son Frederick Augustus II as king (under the name Augustus III) opened a new chapter in relations between Poland and the Dresden court.

There is no doubt that the strategies and tendencies behind the arrangement of marriages with foreigners by Polish magnates and wealthy nobles is an extremely complex issue, revealing another aspect of the functioning of the mechanism of building private individual careers among the privileged classes in Europe in the eighteenth century. Marital policy played an important role in this process: private links with the King were crucial for personal careers and could be forged through marriage to members of his family and illegitimate children. The preserved source materials also allow us to indicate that the next generation, born from these international marriages, was often more at ease with relations with foreigners. The contacts and private relationships these marriages generated for individuals were also successfully used by their close and indeed more distant relatives, trying to make the best possible use of the opportunities in these charged political and social arenas.

⁷⁶ Kazimierz Maliszewski, *Obraz świata i Rzeczypospolitej w polskich gazetach rękopiśmiennych z okresu późnego baroku. Studium z dziejów kształtowania się i rozpowszechniania sarmackich stereotypów wiedzy i informacji o 'Theatrum mundi'* (Toruń, 1990).

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