In Their Majesties’ Service
The Career of Francesco De Gratta (1613–1676) as a Royal Servant and Trader in Gdańsk

Michał Salamonik
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Abstract
This study analyses the administrative and economic career of Francesco De Gratta (1613–1676) as Royal Postmaster, Royal Secretary, and trader within the postal and fiscal systems of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This investigation focuses mainly on his network and career strategies and is based on various sources from a number of European archives and libraries, mainly those situated in Italy, Poland and Germany.

The study presents the family De Gratta and the familial social actions that Francesco used in order to root his children and family in the Polish-Lithuanian noble culture. Next, the analysis shows that the career of Francesco De Gratta was inextricably correlated with the establishment of the early modern royal postal system in Gdańsk (the city of Gdańsk fulfilled an important bridging role within the Poland-Lithuanian Commonwealth) as well as his close contacts with different Polish kings and queens.

The career followed distinct stages, tying him ever closer with the Crown, the nobility as well as the merchants in Gdańsk. It all started with his position as Head Postmaster in Gdańsk, in 1654. In 1661, he became Postmaster General of Royal Prussia, Courland, Semigallia and Livonia. After these initial steps, Francesco immersed in creditor activities and close contacts with the Royal Prussian cities, royal authorities, and not the least different Polish mint masters. He also got involved in the potash trade with his later son-in-law Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki, first as his factor and later as a co-owner of Wodzicki’s company. The study finally traces his social and economic advancement by the analysis of Francesco De Gratta’s legacies and their importance for his heirs’ social status.

The summary compares the career of Francesco De Gratta with that of other postmasters and mint masters of Italian origin in Poland-Lithuania.

Keywords: De Gratta, Career, Network, Nobility, Merchants, Early Modern Times, Royal Mail, Postmaster, Mint Service, Credit, Potash, Royal Secretary, Poland-Lithuania, Brandenburg-Prussia, Baltic Sea, Italy, Poland, Gdańsk.
Acknowledgments

Writing of a PhD thesis is a long, draining and sometimes even a painful process, especially when one does discover some part of the text was saved incorrectly. However, it is also – or rather foremost – a great time, when one does meet new people, visits new places as well as learns how to produce a thesis.

Indeed, under the four and a half years, I had the pleasure to meet several interesting persons and with some of them I have gained a friendship. Most importantly, I would like to thank my supervisors Heiko Droste and Piotr Wawrzeniuk for their patience, comments and suggestions. Especially Heiko, who did help me exceedingly much throughout these past years. Your comments and specific dialogs with you encouraged me to discover new paths as well as kept me moving forward. Nextly, I should thank all of my colleagues and administrative staff from the School of History of Contemporary Studies at Södertörn University, especially Per Bolin, Christina Douglas, Maria Nyman, Lars Ekdahl, Kekke Stadin, Madeleine Hurd, Anne Hedén, Martin Wottle and Lisa Stålnacke, and the fellow PhD candidates: Marco Nase, Francesco Zavatti, Julia Malitska, Rahel Kuflu, Karin Johnsson, Martin Andersson, Josefine Hägglund, Patrik Höglund, Ann-Judith Rabenschlag, Nadezda Petrusenko, Yuliya Yurchuk, Anna Kharkina and Fredrik Bertilsson. Also the other PhD candidates I met via Södertörn University, especially of note are Emilia Pawłusz, Łukasz Sokołowski, Maarja Saar and Péter Balogh. Furthermore, my special appreciation goes out to my opponents – Magnus Linarsson from the halftime seminar and Wojciech Tygielski from the final seminar. Lastly, I would like to thank the Nationella forskarskolan i historiska studier vid Lunds universitet – all of the senior scholars, administrative staff and fellow PhD students for the timely seminars, courses and conferences. Here, a special greeting should go out to my friend Margaret Wallace Nillson, who read through the final manuscript. Maggie a huge thanks! Regarding the overall language review, I would like to
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During my studies, I had the occasion to research in different archives in Europe. This was an amazing and sometimes challenging experience to go through all of the rules which differed from country to country, city to city and from private to state institutions. Therefore, I am ever so grateful for the help from archivists and librarians that I met during this time. In order to be able to afford these valuable research phases I have received additional funding. Thanks here to the Nationella forskarskolan for its mobility grant and the time I spent at Toronto University – principally at the magnificent Robarts Library; next the Swedish Institute for a grant to do research at the Gdańsk Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences and finally, the Helge Ax:son Johnsons stiftelse for grants to complete archival research in Germany and finishing the dissertation. Last but not least, large thanks go out to the Baltic Sea Foundation that granted the project: Information Infrastructure in the Baltic Area. Nodes, News and News Agents, c. 1650–1700 where my PhD thesis was concluded.

To those dearest to me
Rönninge/Flemingsberg, February 2017
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Conventions and Glossary

Personal names
The surname of the family of De Gratta is spelled according to modern Italian spelling rules. One may find other forms such as: ‘Grata’ and ‘Grato’ in the sources and previous research. Regarding the nobiliary particle, besides the particle ‘De’, the particle ‘Di’ can be also found in the De Grattas’ private and official documents. Sometimes, there is no nobiliary particle in the sources at all. However, taking into consideration that the De Gratta family possessed an Italian noble title, the noble particle will be used throughout this thesis. Consequently, the Italian version of personal names of the De Gratta family members will be used in the thesis, as follows: De Gratta: Giovanni Antonio (in German: Johann Antonius, in Polish: Jan Antoni), Francesco (in German: Franz, in Polish: Franciszek), sons to Francesco and Agatha van Classen: Paolo Antonio, Alessandro, Giovanni Antonio and Francesco Jr., daughters to Francesco and Agatha: Anna Maria, Eufrosina and Elisabetta.

This same rule will be applied when it comes to the names of other persons of Polish and foreign origin (Italian names – Italian spelling rules, French – French spelling rules, German names – German spelling rules, Dutch – Dutch spelling rules and Polish – Polish spelling rules). Concerning the names of monarchs, their modern English forms are used in the thesis.

Geographical names
In the thesis the Polish name of Gdańsk will be used. The form Gdańsk appears frequently in the contemporary sources written in Polish, the form Danzig/Dantzick appears in German, and Dantiscum/Gedanum in Latin. The Polish names together with their equivalents in German, Belarusian, Ukrainian and Russian (specifically in brackets when used for the first time) are kept for those cities located in Poland-Lithuania, including the Royal (Polish) Prussia. With regard to the Brandenburgian and Habsburgian cities from this time, German names are used with their equivalent from the Polish,
Russian or Lithuanian (in brackets when used for the first time). The common English versions of the names of other cities in Poland-Lithuania as well as in contemporary Europe are employed. Names of rivers, geographical regions, mountains and seas are kept in their present English form. Below is a list of the most often used geographical names in the thesis – the italicized forms are used throughout the text.

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Titles and Offices
Whenever possible, the English equivalents of titles and offices are used (original names in brackets).

Currency
In the early modern period, the currency of Poland-Lithuania (here presented in the descending sequence) consisted of: dukat or czerwony złoty (red złoty), talar (thaler), złoty (gulden, florin), grosz, ort, szóstak, trojak, dwojak, szeląg and denar.¹

Sources
All sources quoted in this thesis remain in their original version.

Main Actors
Because of the great number of actors that appear in the dissertation, the main actors (besides the Gratta family members) together with their functions will now be listed.

**Bandinelli, Angelo Maria** – a Royal Secretary, the Postmaster General of Poland-Lithuania, engaged in the silver trade with Francesco De Gratta

**Balaban, Aleksander** – a Lwów merchant, engaged in the potash trade

**Becker, Johann Friedrich** – engaged in the potash trade with Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki and Francesco De Gratta

**Bianchi, Giacinto** – the Senior Notary of the Royal Treasury, engaged in minting affairs with De Gratta

**Burattini, Tito Livio** – the owner of several mints in Poland-Lithuania, engaged in minting affairs with De Gratta

**Cinacchi, Giovanni** – trader in Cracow and Warsaw, engaged in minting affairs with De Gratta

**Lamoral II, Claudius Franz of Thurn and Taxis** – the Habsburgian Postmaster General, Brussels

**Ledel, Friedrich** – a Gdańsk merchant, engaged in the potash trade with Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki and Francesco De Gratta

**Montelupi, Carlo** – a Royal Secretary, the Postmaster General of Poland-Lithuania

¹ Compare with Peter Paul Bajer, *Scots in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 16th-18th Centuries, The Formation and Disappearance of an Ethnic Group* (Leiden, 2012), p. XXVIII. In the thesis, the currency abbreviations will be used as follows: złoty – zł; florin – fl; grosz – gr.
Saltzsieder, Johann – a Gdańsk Postmaster
Somigliano, Giovanni Abondio – the Habsburgian Postmaster in Hamburg
Vrints, Johann Baptista – the Habsburgian Postmaster in Hamburg, Somigliano’s son-in-law and successor
Abbreviations

APG Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku
APG, BA Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku, Bibliotheca Archivi
ANK Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie
ANK, AP Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie, Acta Pinocciana
APT Archiwum Państwowe w Toruniu
APTor, Archiwum Państwowe w Toruniu, Archiwum Szczanieckich
ASczan z Nawry
ASL Archivio di Stato di Lucca
ASL, AM Archivio di Stato di Lucca, Archivio Mansi
ASL, AS Archivio di Stato di Lucca, Archivio Sardi
ASV Archivio di Stato di Venezia
BG PAN Biblioteka Gdańska Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Gdańsk
BJ Biblioteka Jagiellońska Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków
Bibl. Czart. Biblioteka Książąt Czartoryskich w Krakowie
BnF Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris
BSL Biblioteca Statale di Lucca
BUW, GR Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Warszawie, Gabinet Rękopisów
BZR Bischöfliches Zentralarchiv Regensburg
FZATTR Fürstliche Thurn and Taxis Zentralarchiv, Regensburg
GStAPK Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin-Dahlem
KB Kungliga biblioteket, Stockholm
MPM, AfS Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, Archief van de familie Schilders
NAL British National Archives in London
StAHH Staatsarchiv der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg
ZNiO Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In the late 1640s began the remarkable career of Francesco De Gratta (1613–1676). He exploited a number of possibilities offered by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, becoming Royal Postmaster and Secretary, which also allowed him to expand his trade and credit activities. This thesis follows and analyses how De Gratta’s career unfolded and how he used his family as well as a number of executors and benefactors in his social and economic advancement.

Aim

The present study aims to analyse the course of the administrative and economic career of Francesco De Gratta as the postmaster, Royal Secretary, and a trader in the postal and fiscal systems of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth through an investigation of his network and career strategies. In general, the discussion of Francesco De Gratta’s activities within the social, economic and political spheres together with his career possibilities are investigated against the social, administrative and economic development of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In particular, the assumption is made that the social sphere based on the family’s relationships is connected with the economic sphere related to Francesco De Gratta’s trade affairs and activities within the Polish-Lithuanian mint system. Whereas, the administrative development is based on his activity in the royal postal service. Moreover, his function as a Royal Secretary will not only add specific facts to understanding of Francesco De Gratta’s particular networking actions, but it will also show the internal mechanisms of the early modern state’s governance, social structures in Poland-Lithuania, and the city-state relationship between Gdańsk and the Commonwealth.
The career of Francesco De Gratta is inextricably correlated with the establishment of the early modern royal postal system in Gdańsk. The De Gratta family was in charge of the postal system in Gdańsk and Royal Prussia for some 70 years – from late 1640 until 1712, when Paolo, the De Gratta family’s last postmaster, died. The time frame of this study is limited to the period from the late 1640s until the mid-1670s and will cover the period of Francesco De Gratta’s postal activity that saw a tremendous build-up of the family’s position among the influential and wealthy in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The national postal systems were created throughout Europe in the early modern period. These central, organised infrastructures were the result of the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), which underlined the sovereignty of subsequent European countries over their own respective territories. Around the same period, an attempt to create such a postal infrastructure was made in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Gdańsk became the second main postal node of the Commonwealth in the mid-seventeenth century. The first postal node was formally organised in Cracow nearly 100 years before Gdańsk’s was established.¹

Previous research has stated that Francesco De Gratta was nominated for the position of Head Postmaster in Gdańsk in 1654 and became the creator of the royal infrastructure there. The present study, which is based on a wide range of official documents and other archival material that has not been used in the studies on the creation of the Royal Mail in Gdańsk so far, will undermine this view and will show the complexity of the activities of De Gratta. The way in which De Gratta received one of the most prestigious functions in the city and indeed in the whole of the Commonwealth seems to be pivotal for an understanding of how the early modern state functioned. Because of this, it is highly relevant to analyse Francesco De Gratta’s career in Poland-Lithuania, beginning with his Royal Postmaster’s function, continuing with the position of Head Postmaster in Gdańsk, and ending with the function of Postmaster General of Royal Prussia, Courland, Semigallia and Livonia. In my opinion, the career of Francesco De Gratta as the postmaster should be analysed together with his other activities in the economic and the social spheres in order to show a wider perspective on his postmaster function.

Gdańsk was the city where Francesco De Gratta lived and pursued his businesses. Gdańsk was Poland’s window to the world, mainly because of its

¹ There will be more about postal systems in Chapter 5.
harbour, which was a transfer hub for products and raw materials from the continental Poland-Lithuania to the western regions of Europe. In the early modern period, the city was formally a part of Poland-Lithuania. However, it remained quite independent, especially in relation to its internal and external politics. At the same time, the city of Gdańsk gained many privileges and special rights from the Polish Kings throughout the centuries. In particular, the fact that the city had already developed its own postal system in the late medieval period should be kept in mind while analysing the establishment of the Royal Polish Mail there. In addition, Gdańsk was a multicultural centrum with substantial religious freedoms, and this is why it became home to many migrants and refugees from different places in Europe. It is, in particular, this bridging role of Gdańsk for the Baltic Sea Region during the early modern period, which can help to explain the many opportunities for newcomers in the pursuit of business adventures. The city had become their platform, not only for economic activity, but also for cultural and social exchanges.2

From this analysis, the bridging function of the city remains the backdrop for such migrant activity and trading movements, especially with relation to Poland-Lithuania. In such a light, Gdańsk will be perceived in the thesis as the place for Francesco De Gratta’s activities, and Poland-Lithuania as the space of his administrative career.

Italians in Poland-Lithuania

Impostors, who kept postal offices, created newspapers arbitrarily and for their benefits, administered mints and produced coins.3

In these words, the activity of Italians was described by the Polish nobility in 1667.4 Thus the main spheres of activity of the Italian merchants in Poland-Lithuania were not only silk trading, art and craft as often depicted, but also concerned the postal, monetary, news and diplomatic services. Italians were one of the major immigrant groups in the Commonwealth and their main settlements remained in Cracow, Lublin, Lwów (Ukr. Lviv) and Poznań (Ger.

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2 More information about Gdańsk in Chapter 2.
4 Fabiani, Warszawski dwór, p. 89.
Posen) during the early modern period. However, as this study will demonstrate, there were a small number of migrants of Italian origin even in Gdańsk. The largest migrant groups in Greater Gdańsk were of English, Scottish and Dutch origin, especially the Mennonites, who migrated in larger numbers because of the religious wars in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, the reason for this situation seems to be associated with not only the religious situation, but also the lingual one.

In his study on language aspects of the formation of Italian merchant networks in late medieval and early modern Europe, Francesco Guidi-Bruscoli depicted ‘the Low German area, between the Low Countries and the Slavic world’ as an exceptional area on the economic map of Europe where Italian was not one of the business languages. Therefore, in the face of the language situation in this part of Europe, Francesco De Gratta’s knowledge of Italian can be not seen as ‘an essential prerequisite’ to pursuing his businesses in the city of Gdańsk, but rather as a barrier. However, the situation looks opposite if one considers his language skills as a qualification required to conduct De Gratta’s broker activity within Poland-Lithuania. Francesco was able to speak Polish and German besides Italian, which made it possible for him to undertake activities both in the German-speaking Gdańsk and Royal Prussia as well as Polish-speaking Poland-Lithuania. In addition, his interests in Italy as well as his large Italian network demonstrate that he remained well-connected to other Italian newcomers living in Poland-Lithuania at that time, and that he conducted broker activity for Polish nobles with some Italians living in Europe. Nevertheless, as the present thesis will show, Francesco De Gratta was most likely born in Gdańsk, although his father, Giovanni Antonio, was Italian. Francesco’s origin in Gdańsk was often mentioned in different sources written in Italian. Consequently, one may argue that even if Francesco was ‘di Danzica’,


6 More about migrations to Gdańsk See Chapter 2.


8 Compare with Guidi-Bruscoli, Creating, p. 66.

he was a part of the Italian community in Poland-Lithuania because of his father’s origin.

Wojciech Tygielski, while describing the Italian community (zbiorowość) in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, highlights the issue of the multisphere activities of its members.\(^\text{10}\) The Italian merchants were engaged in different activities and occupations, such as artists, entrepreneurs and traders. Tygielski shows that this community was very diverse and is not easy to systematize, because Italians often changed their activities or were active in many areas.\(^\text{11}\) This is why it can be difficult and even in some cases impossible to analyse subsequent spheres of Francesco De Gratta’s activity separately. Nonetheless, this study has chosen to present Francesco De Gratta’s activities separately in subsequent chapters according to the accumulative network-based approach. More specifically, the network relationships between different actors and Francesco De Gratta in more than one sphere are presented in two ways: (1) separately, where his familial, postal, credit, trade actions will be discussed in the subsequent chapters, and (2) conjunctively when presenting his network-building strategies from all of his activities in the final discussion of the thesis.

Research Questions

The present thesis concentrates on three research questions:

1. How did Francesco De Gratta pursue his career in Poland-Lithuania?
2. How can his career be related to the institutional practices of the noble republic?
3. How were his different activities and occupations interconnected with each other and what role did the different networks play in them?

This study’s goal will be to define the postal and monetary systems in Poland-Lithuania, and the administrative and economic career of Francesco De Gratta will be this study’s main focus.

\(^{10}\) Tygielski, Italians, p. 159; Tygielski, Włosi, pp. 177–178.
\(^{11}\) Tygielski, Włosi, pp. 177–178.
Previous Research

There is no profound biographical study of Francesco De Gratta’s activity and functions in Poland-Lithuania. Even the *Bibliografia critica* by Sebastiano Ciampi, which was the first systematic study of Italians in Poland-Lithuania, does not include any information about the De Gratta family at all.\(^{12}\) However, there are some shorter biographical entries as well as a limited number of articles about Francesco De Gratta in particular and the De Gratta family in general.\(^{13}\) Francesco De Gratta’s postal function, as well as the development of his career, still remain undiscovered topics, especially concerning his engagement in establishing and controlling the postal service in Gdańsk and his various credit activities. Even his role in the monetary system of Poland-Lithuania lacks any profound study. One can find some references to De Gratta’s engagement in the transport of silver made by Rita Mazzei\(^{14}\) or Cinzia Cesari\(^{15}\). The ownership of the house (Kamienica) in Gdańsk is discussed briefly by Dąbrówka Lipska\(^{16}\) and Irena Fabiani-Madeyska\(^{17}\). De Gratta’s coat of arms is presented briefly by Teodor Żychliński.\(^{18}\) In her study, Maria Hennel-Bernasikowa presents Francesco De


\(^{15}\) Cinzia Cessari, *Mercanti lucchesi ad Amsterdam nel ’600: Girolamo e Pompeo Parensi* (Lucca, 1989).


Gratta’s role in the saving of the royal tapestries. Next, De Gratta’s function as the Royal Secretary to the Polish monarchs can be found in works by Karolina Targosz and Bożena Fabiani. Altogether, even though these publications usually only mention De Gratta occasionally, they include important and often very specific facts about his several activities. However, these facts often are based just on single documents and therefore, they will be verified and contrasted with other archival materials in this volume.

The literature on Gdańsk’s postal history should be analysed separately in order to present Francesco’s postmaster function which is perceived as essential to this study. In general, the research on postal history in Gdańsk is rather sparse and includes only a little information about Francesco De Gratta. There are only a few publications which include more general facts about the creation and development of the information infrastructure in the city and the region of Royal Prussia. One of the most comprehensive works on this topic is a publication on the development of the Royal Mail in Gdańsk written by Kazimierz Lenartowicz in 1924. Lenartowicz based his work solely on German sources. However, his study still remains the only one on this topic written in Polish. Other examples of previous research that were found relevant to this thesis are works by Gerhard Schüler, Heinrich Stephan, Wilhelm H. Matthias, Paul Simson as well as the archive of the postal journal *Arkiv i Postväsendet* [Archive of postal services]. However, one may observe that the Polish royal mail service is superficially described in these publications. Some other works will complement the background of

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21 Fabiani, *Warszawski dwór*.

22 Kazimierz Lenartowicz, *Historia królewskiej poczty w Gdańsku od r. 1654 do 1793 pisana na podstawie niemieckich źródeł historycznych* (Gdańsk, 1924).

23 Gerhard Schüler, *Danzigs Postgeschichte und Poststempel* (Hamburg, 1913).


this research. The publication by Lech Zimowski, who describes the development of the post and communications on the Polish territories throughout its history, the work by Aleksander Śnieżko, who created a historiography of the Polish postal system, an article by Edward Hadaś about different postal systems in Gdańsk, an article about postmasters’ finances by Heiko Droste and an unpublished dissertation about the postal service in Poland-Lithuania during the reign of Sigismund August Poniatowski by Rafał Zgorzelski. The research about the Gdańsk press service by Karl Heinz Kranhold includes important information on the development of the royal postal office in Gdańsk that will also be used during the discussion of the De Gratta family’s postal activity. For this purpose, there will be also some other works employed besides that by Kranhold. These publications will be complementary to the analysis of the archival sources, especially considering the overall development of the postal service in the Commonwealth.

There are a number of works which offer an overview of the Polish-German history of Gdańsk throughout the centuries by Carl Tighe, Hannes Saarinen and by Karin Friedrich. These not only depict the complexity of this city’s history but also combine two perspectives (German and Polish) on the city’s development. Moreover, there are several publications about

32 Lech Zimowski, Geneza i rozwój komunikacji pocztowej na ziemiach polskich (Warsaw, 1972).
33 Aleksander Śnieżko, Historiografia poczty polskiej (Warsaw, 1958).
37 Karl Heinz Kranhold, Frühgeschichte der Danziger Presse (Münster, 1967).
40 Hannes Saarinen, Bürgerstadt und absoluter Kriegsherr, Danzig und Karl XII. im Nordischen Krieg (Helsinki, 1996).
Gdańsk and Pomeranian history in a number of languages. In particular, the economic and social situation of the city in the Hanseatic period is presented comprehensively in an anthology about Gdańsk merchants\(^{42}\) as well as in the publications about the history of Pomerania edited by Gerard Labuda\(^ {43}\) and the history of Gdańsk created by Gdańsk historians and published in both Polish\(^ {44}\) and English\(^ {45}\) versions. The contacts between the city and Poland-Lithuania are dealt with mostly in the works of Maria Bogucka\(^ {46}\) and Andrze


Wyrobisz\textsuperscript{47}. The political development in early modern times will be presented on the basis of several publications about early modern Poland-Lithuania including its international relations\textsuperscript{48} and Europe\textsuperscript{49}. These publications will be used mostly in order to present the city of Gdańsk as a bridge.


Considering Francesco De Gratta’s potash trade, a publication by Paul Cernovodeanu will be used to show how such trade developed in the Duchy of Wallachia, as well as to trace potash trading routes during early modern times. Furthermore, the specific terms around the potash trade will be presented in an analysis of different dictionary entries. The royal factoratus function will be explained on the basis of the study about the Baltic maritime trade by Milja van Tielhof and of Gdańsk’s European trade by Bogucka. The Polish-Lithuanian economic development including the system of hiring of mints will be analysed on the basis of several studies. Furthermore, De Gratta’s Gdańsk citizenship will be discussed with the help of Bogucka’s study about foreign merchants residing in Gdańsk. Francesco De Gratta’s familial social actions will be presented on the basis of a study by Lindsay O’Neill. These publications give specific facts about the potash trade itself and also show how one was allowed to pursue such trade.

50 Paul Cernovodeanu, *England’s trade policy in the Levant and her exchange of goods with the Romanian countries under the latter Stuarts (1660–1714)* (Bibliotheca Historica Romaniae Economic History Section Studies, 41/2) (Bucharest, 1972).
52 Milja van Tielhof, *The ‘Mother of all Trades’, The Baltic Grain Trade in Amsterdam from the Late 16th to the Early 19th Century* (Leiden, 2002).
55 Maria Bogucka, Obcy kupcy osiedli w Gdańsku w pierwszej połowie XVII w., *Zapiski Historyczne*, vol. 37/2 (1972), pp. 59–82.
Lastly, one may notice that almost a century ago, there was planned an edition of biographies of Italians in Poland (‘Włosi w Polsce’). The first (and the last) of such biographies is a publication on Tito Livio Burattini by Antoni Hnilko. However, other publications on the particular Italian merchants in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, especially those concerning: Sebastiano Montelupi and Girolamo Pinocci continue with this tradition (however, not as a part of the planned edition). The first far-reaching comprehensive publication that presented the collective picture of Italians in Poland-Lithuania under early modern times in Polish is the book by Tygielski. Beside the mentioned publications, the article by Andrzej Pośpiech about Italian secretaries of John III Sobieski includes specific facts about how the function of a secretary was perceived at that time and how it helped in one’s career development, and therefore, it will also be frequently used in this dissertation. All of these studies will be employed as the framework for a comparison of the development of Francesco De Gratta’s career in this thesis’s subsequent chapters. Furthermore, an analysis of the international networks of Italian merchants in the early modern Europe was recently undertaken by Mazzei, which also will be used to some extent, especially when it deals with the regional and European scale of Francesco De Gratta’s activities. Finally, several other publications will be employed in

57 Tygielski, Włosi, p. 37.
59 Danuta Quirini-Popławska, Działalność Sebastiana Montelupiego w Krakowie w Drugiej Połowie XVI Wieku (Cracow, 1980).
61 Tygielski, Włosi. However, there are some older publications that also attempted to show the collective biography and history of Italian migration to Poland-Lithuania, see, for example, Jan Ptaśnik, Z dziejów kultury włoskiego Krakowa, Rocznik Krakowski, vol. 9 (1907), pp. 1–147.
63 Rita Mazzei, Itinerar Mercatorum, Circolazione di uomini e beni nell’Europa centro-orientale 1550–1650 (Lucca, 1999); Mazzei, La trama; Rita Mazzei, Traffici e Uomini d’Affari Italiani in Polonia nel Seicento (Milan, 1983).
reference to various actors that were present in De Gratta’s networks. As one can observe, the previous research about the activities of particular

Italians in early modern Poland-Lithuania is rather satisfactory and gives many interesting facts that link Francesco De Gratta with other actors. These publications will be mostly employed in the discussion on De Gratta’s credit network as well as the collective picture of Italians in the Commonwealth.

Altogether, the previous literature about the family De Gratta is extensive as regards the number of publications, but very limited in consideration of the actual knowledge about his life and activities. Once again, Francesco De Gratta often is only briefly mentioned in most of the studies presented here and his activities were never the subject of extensive archival research. Moreover, the majority of the studies are old and include several gaps and mistakes. They have been solely based on the archival sources written in one particular language and often present just one national perspective. As an example, the literature about Gdańsk is often written from national – German or Polish perspectives. While the Polish scholars emphasises the Polishness of Gdańsk and the city’s links to Poland-Lithuania, German scholars presents Gdańsk more as an independent Prussian and Hanseatic city. In addition, on the one hand German research often treats the creation of the Royal Mail in Gdańsk superficially, and on the other, Polish historians seldom analyse the Gdańsk Royal Mail in their studies about the development of the Polish-Lithuanian Mail. Consequently, even though Gdańsk remained the biggest city in the Commonwealth, only a little space is devoted to its development in the Polish postal publications. Indeed, in the city’s history and the historiographical traditions, one can also observe the reason why there has been no profound research on De Grattas so far. Lastly, the


65 Compare with Friedrich, The Other, pp. 5–8, 63.
secondary literature about the De Gratta family in general and Francesco in particular has not examined career development or the family’s social status, either in Gdańsk or in Poland-Lithuania, but rather limits itself to presentation of the basic facts of Francesco’s professional life.

Theoretical and Methodological Assumptions

Career Theory

Careers frequently lie at the centre of interest in historical studies which investigate the patterns of careers as the forces that shape them. At present, the term ‘career’ is often linked to someone’s professional development and working-life experience. Thus, this term is commonly seen as: a ‘sequence of training, education, jobs, and non-market work that has marked the lives of individuals from when they began schooling or entered the work-force until their retirement’. This is of course a ‘modern’ interpretation of the term ‘career’, whose historical origins can be traced back to the second half of the nineteenth century. The historical changes that occurred during the long nineteenth century, seen in the French Revolution, industrialization, and the end of the ancient feudal regime, are the precursory and crucial events that formed a working-life concept. However, when it comes to earlier historical periods, the career concept is often too broadly used without any substantial theoretical discussion. In many cases, it is simply treated as a synonym for social mobility.

According to Andrew Laird, the term ‘career’ comes from the Italian word: ‘carierra’ and referred to the working life or employment history for the first time in the 1660s, see Andrew Laird, Re-inventing Virgil’s Wheel: the poet and his work from Dante to Petrarch, in Philip Hardie and Helen Moore (eds), Classical Literary Careers and their Reception (Cambridge, 2010), p. 138. The origin of the word ‘carriera’ is often seen to lie in Latin ‘carriaria’ which means a road and ‘carrus’ – a chariot, wagon, see, for example, Hampus Kristoffer Tullberg, Bidrag till etymologisk lexikon över främmande ord i svenska språket (Lund, 1868), p. 281; Louis A. Busacca and Mark C. Rehfuss, Postmodern Principles and Teaching Considerations for 21st-Century Career Counselling, in Louis A. Busacca and Mark C. Rehfuss (eds.) Postmodern Career Counselling: A Handbook of Culture, Context, and Cases (Alexandria, 2017), p. 331.


Brown, Leeuwen and Mitch, The History, p. 3.

According to Joel Shinder, who analysed the career line formation in the Ottoman bureaucracy, ‘early modern career’ is ‘not to be confused with professionalization’. He notes that: ‘with the clustering of offices held and with the appearance of a particular order of office-holding it is possible to speak of career line formation’. Shinder describes the indicators of the career line formation as follows:

These incipient career lines were characterized by the specialization and, in some cases, transferability of skills acquired during in-service training. The office-holders worked full time in the one service area, achieved tenure, and were promoted through stratified ranks at rates dependent upon their personal backgrounds, modes of recruitment, and training. Most significant was the increasing inclosure of the participants through endogamy and patronage for the monopolization of preferential employment and advancement opportunities.

Thus, beside the skills and abilities, the career development of an individual was not deprived of patronage and endogamy and was still focused on monopolising of specific occupations. This description is perceived as opposite to the ‘modern’ career. Instead of skill-based division of labour and professional occupations which characterise the ‘modern’ career, the early modern career depended on patron-client dependences, the strict system of titles and offices (stratified promotion) limited to a narrow social group linked by endogamy and patronage as well as inheritance of offices. Consequently, one should emphasise that patronage, which was based on the hierarchical social structures, was vital among the power elites through early modern times. Moreover, even if the assumptions of Shinder in his study are limited to the Ottoman bureaucracy, some features described above are also relevant to the investigation of De Gratta’s career in the administrative sphere of Poland-Lithuania.

Between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, the early modern states appeared, with a more centralized and structured administration, based on a more regular system of offices. One can observe that the bureaucratic system of the state administration grew in parallel with the mercantile and

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71 Shinder, Career, p. 222.
72 Shinder, Career, p. 222.
capitalistic economy. During this specific period of time, a number of offices appeared that were no longer only perceived as feudalistic, but as expert-oriented in nature. There will be more about the expert office systems and the postmasters as such experts, along with other differences between ‘modern’ and ‘early modern’ careers later on. Furthermore, the social status, ethnicity, and gender still played enormous roles in an individual’s working life and possibilities to choose an occupation, but during this period some changes in the system of office holders are visible. In the case of Francesco De Gratta and other postmasters of foreign origin, their origin in foreign countries – as one shall see from the outcomes of this thesis – did not limit their possibilities to develop their careers within the postal and monetary systems. On the contrary, it seems to have improved their chances of advancing in the Commonwealth’s administration.

Hence, the early modern system of offices was connected to the financial dependences, a hierarchical society and a system of patron-client relationships, where offices were simply inherited or bought. However, it is rather a simplification to state that the offices were obtained only within the patron-client system. There was a competition, and even if the functions were hereditary as the example of De Grattas will show, a special education, training and network contacts were needed in the same way as financial resources or patronage in order to develop one’s career. Furthermore, as Hilde de Ridder-Symoens states in her work on training and professionalization: ‘inheritance of a profession was considered a guarantee of qualification, cohesion, and loyalty towards an individual’s own social group and his superiors’. Thus, the inheritance of an occupation was not only a common familial practice, but also a social one, where the members of a particular social group were interlinked and dependent on each other. Moreover, the loyalty towards a particular social group was also confirmed by a practice of inheritance, by which the next generations continued to monopolise various occupations. This can be clearly seen in De Grattas’ postal activities.

Moreover, when it comes to the concept of an administrative career in the institutional structures of the early modern state, the definition proposed by Paul D. McLean, who analysed career strategies of senators in Poland-Lithuania, is seen as relevant to this study. According to McLean: ‘actors

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75 Ridder-Symoens, Training and Professionalization, p. 170.
develop careers by negotiating new connections with various prestigious others [...] thereby moving through these network structures [...] up the social hierarchy. In such a way, the career should first of all be seen as the mutual interdependence between actors and not as limited to a one particular sphere of activity. This is how the focus on the actions of the individual actors could be considered ‘in terms of patterns of relationships among individuals (or families) and among types of social networks’. Thus, the approach based on the social networks and social mobility developed between old and new actors operating within the particular organisation/institution/society requires a debate of the types and goals of the networks formed by the career strategies. Therefore, the study on Francesco De Gratta’s career calls for research first of all on the types of connections/relationships to various actors as well as his network-based relationships to map his social mobility in the space of the noble society.

The Noble Society

In the state-building theories, Poland-Lithuania and its noble governance system is often described as a failure. Even the Commonwealth’s development in the seventeenth century is usually depicted in terms of gradual destruction. Such claims, surely, are made with hindsight concerning the partition of Poland-Lithuania between their neighbouring empires (the Russian Empire, the Habsburg Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia) at the end of the eighteenth century, which saw the demise of the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, in the seventeenth century, some changes such as those in postal and monetary systems were implemented, from which this study takes its starting point. During early modern times, the noble republic offered promising possibilities for social, political and economic careers for many newcomers. Consequently, the seventeenth century can still be seen as a flourishing time for the governmental development of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and therefore newcomers had a good chance of developing their careers within state structures.

The social structure of Poland-Lithuania was dominated by the nobility. This is why the terms: noble republic and noble society are applied in my thesis.

77 McLean, Widening, p. 173.
78 McLean, Widening, p. 167ff.
to depict the governmental system of the Commonwealth.\textsuperscript{79} According to
Antoni Mączak, one of the leading Polish historians who studied the
development of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the de-urbanization,
the lack of integrity as well as the local dominance of noblemen (szlachta) led
to political disorganisation.\textsuperscript{80} This is why, in comparison to other contempo-
rary European countries, internal social fragmentation and strict limitations
on royal power can be observed. One should note that the institutional
structures of the Commonwealth were developed by the noble elite and
limited to the noblemen’s actions. In a similar way, Mączak depicts the
absence of cooperation between the noble and merchant elites in the central
Crown’s institutions.

Likewise, Thomas Ertman, who compared state-building processes in
Poland and Hungary to other European countries, highlights the privileged
status of the nobility in the Commonwealth, and states as follows:

\begin{quote}
They [Poland and Hungary] simply accelerated the flow of state functions
and state authority away from structurally weak monarchs and towards
self-governing local political communities and their national represen-
tatives, the Diets, Both were made up exclusively of members of one
privileged social group, the nobility.\textsuperscript{81}
\end{quote}

Ertman defines such a state-building system as patrimonial constitutionalism:

\begin{quote}
[Where] nominally public institutions and tasks are appropriated by
narrow groups of local elites pursuing their own private interests and
operating through representative bodies.\textsuperscript{82}
\end{quote}

To continue with Ertman’s discussion, it was the higher nobility, and especially
the magnates, who ‘possessed the resources to derive the greatest economic

\textsuperscript{79} Poland-Lithuania is seen here as an example of a noble republic, see Michał Kopczyński
and Wojciech Tygielski, Absolutyzm w nowożytnej Europie – idea czy rzeczywistość?, in
Michał Kopczyński and Wojciech Tygielski (eds), \textit{Rzeczpospolita – Europa, XVI-XVIII
wiek, Próba konfrontacji} (Warsaw, 1999), p. 11.
\textsuperscript{80} Antoni Mączak, Pierwsza Rzeczpospolita: władza i przestrzeń, in Michał Kopczyński
and Wojciech Tygielski (eds), \textit{Rzeczpospolita – Europa, XVI-XVIII wiek, Próba
konfrontacji} (Warsaw, 1999), pp. 16–17.
\textsuperscript{81} Thomas Ertman, \textit{Birth of the Leviathan Building States and Regimes in Medieval and
advantage from restrictions placed on city dwellers and the rural population. As a consequence ‘the lesser nobles proved unable to defend themselves either politically or materially against the great families of the realm’. In such a way, they became totally subordinated to the higher nobility. Thus, early modern Poland-Lithuania as a space for Francesco De Gratta’s career was dominated by the higher nobility and lacked strong central institutions. However, the higher nobility hardly shows up throughout this study. This may mean that actors of foreign origin initially sought contacts with merchants and lesser nobility, who, even if they lacked political influence, still enjoyed webs of contacts and knowledge about the domestic milieu.

Patronage and Career

In the labyrinthine sociopolitical system of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, being well-connected and embedded in a patron-client network was important for launching anybody’s career. Therefore, some of the theoretical assumptions in this thesis will also concern the patronage relationships which, besides promotion in the parliamentary system of the Commonwealth, constituted a way to develop one’s career. The literature on patronage in early modern times is extensive, therefore, I will limit myself to Mączak’s study, which I see as the most productive here. According to Mączak, patronage ‘may be understood as a routine way of exercising power and authority at a time when the public and private were not yet clearly separated’. Not surprisingly, Poland-Lithuania as the republic of nobles is often perceived by historians as a place where the patronage and clientele system was broadly practised. Patronage is seen here as a ‘structure based on hierarchy, kinship and corporation’. The client is presented as a ‘social climber or at least a person striving to gain some profit and/or object of value’ and the patron as someone who could ‘secure the fundamental needs of material existence, or even survival, for themselves and for their families.

83 Ertman, Birth, p. 298.
84 Ertman, Birth, p. 299.
86 Mączak, From Aristocratic Household, p. 316.
87 Mączak, From Aristocratic Household, p. 317.
88 Mączak, From Aristocratic Household, p. 317.
in a difficult social environment. Mączak provides two types of such a patron-client relationship: the political clientage and poor man’s clientage. As the reader will later observe, Francesco De Gratta’s economic and credit activities as well as the political clientage went frequently hand in hand with the development of his administrative career. De Gratta used his financial credit as a tool to enlarge his networks and strengthen his links with noble and merchant milieus. Furthermore, it was on the recommendation of different actors that De Gratta acquired his function and developed his trade businesses. In addition, Mączak also states that the Polish magnates – who de facto also operated with De Gratta – often played a role as brokers between patrons and clients, which kept them in a powerful position regarding the lower nobility. Finally, he concludes that while ‘in most countries local/ regional powers bases were in decline …) in Poland-Lithuania a constellation of factors – in particular, the size of the country – created perfect conditions for the consolidation of local patronage bases’. Besides the size factor, the military situation should also be taken into account. As Ertman highlights in his study, the Commonwealth was not threatened by the neighbours until the seventeenth century. This factor should also be seen as a reason for the stratification of the nobility. To sum up, Mączak’s suggestion about the state building process in Poland-Lithuania is worth presenting here. He describes the Commonwealth as an ‘informal federation of patrons’ which supported their clienteles in their career choices.

Seen through such a prism, the complaints made by Polish nobles about the actors of foreign origin, who retained some of the royal offices, were nothing more than an attempt to eliminate foreigners from the sphere of aristocratic power. In other words, the nobility felt threatened by newcomers, who often rapidly established careers in the state structures while staying in close contact with the King and contributing to the financing of the royal court.

89 Mączak, From Aristocratic Household, p. 317.
90 Mączak, From Aristocratic Household, p. 318.
91 Mączak, From Aristocratic Household, p. 327.
92 Ertman, Birth, p. 292.
93 Mączak, From Aristocratic Household, p. 326.
94 Compare with Tygielski, Włosi, p. 179.
Experts

While decentralization of political power continued in Poland-Lithuania, changes in the monetary (mint), postal as well as communication systems took place. According to Droste, during the time studied in this volume, postmasters became state servants who were ‘privileged members or associates of the Crown, [but were not perceived] as civil servants in the modern sense’95. Furthermore, taking into account Anthony Giddens’s theory on expertise, the Royal Mail can be analysed as an expert system. Within it, an expert (postmaster) was obliged to finance (credit) and to run the royal (postal) service and in return, he received royal privileges (monopoly) and protection from the King.96 In such a way, a postmaster was seen as both a state servant and an entrepreneur. In fact, the postmaster was obliged to develop the state postal infrastructure on the one hand, while on the other hand, he was also expected to make the mail service generate private profits. Similarly, mint masters, who hired mints and minted coins, did this not only for the Crown’s sake, but also for their own profit. Thus, the system oscillated between the interests of the individual and the Crown. This is why the expert/servant perspective clearly links the career and the state building theories as well as patron-client relationships. These theoretical starting points should be seen as complementary and not as mutually exclusive. Indeed, Francesco De Gratta pursued his career in the early modern state bureaucracy and linked his patronage relationships with the development of his economic businesses. This is why the noble republic of Poland-Lithuania not only caused him difficulties in developing his professional life and his administrative career, but offered him a range of possibilities to enlarge the profits, as discussed in the subsequent chapters.

The career of Francesco De Gratta, who appears frequently in the sources as a Gdańsk merchant and trader (and not as a nobleman), will be presented in this thesis as the career of a merchant-originated actor (expert) who operated within the noble republic system. As this thesis shows, the title of the postmaster was hereditary and the Italian-originated families were (besides Montelupi) not naturalized to the Polish nobility before they had received their postal offices. Finally, the above discussion allows one to make the assumption that Francesco De Gratta possibly balanced his working life

96 Droste, The Terms, p. 124.
between noble and local merchant spheres at the same time in order to pursue his administrative career as he developed his economic (trade) career.

Lastly, this thesis should be seen as a contribution to the historical research focusing on the Polish-Lithuanian state in the context of migration. Indeed, this study analyses the Commonwealth’s development from a merchant and migrant perspective instead of the Polish noblemen’s perspective, which is often solely taken into account when discussing early modern Poland-Lithuania. Moreover, social advancement together with financial legacies are perceived in the thesis as the outcomes of De Gratta’s career. In such a light, De Gratta’s administrative and economic career demonstrates his strategies for rooting his family in Gdańsk and Polish-Lithuanian contexts and gives an understanding of his function in Polish-Lithuanian society.

Method

Social Network Analysis (SNA) searches for different relationships/ties between actors. According to Niklas Stenlås, there are two ways of using this particular method – a quantitative method which measures individual/group network-based contacts, and a qualitative one based on the analysis of the network’s contents and functions within a particular milieu/society. The latter offers many possibilities to use it in the analysis of someone’s career development. In contrast to other network methods, SNA allows for identification of types of one’s relationships. Therefore, in this volume the SNA will be primarily employed to specify De Gratta’s familial social actions and to combine them with his trade activities.

Nevertheless, one may remember that not every relationship is a network. ‘The word network is merely used as a metaphor, a trendy term to attract potential reader’ states Mike Burkhardt in his contribution to the volume on the commercial merchant networks in late medieval and early modern Europe. According to him, such criteria as: voluntary participation, a shared goal, beneficial transfer of resources, flat hierarchies, at least two ties among participants in the network and lack of formal membership should be met in

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97 Niklas Stenlås, Det sociala nätverkets logik eller vad händer i sociala nätverk?, in Peter Aronsson, Solveig Fagerlund and Jan Samuelson (eds), Nätverk i historisk forskning-metafor, metod eller teori? (Växjö, 1999), p. 17ff.
order to establish that a network exists. Burkhardt also states that ‘the
foundation of the network is a flow of resources’, which means that ‘a social
network is a dynamic pattern’ and in its consequence, such a network ‘is a type
of social organisation where the position of the individual within the group is
not determined by hierarchically stipulated patterns, but only by his or her
access to resources’. This is how SNA focuses on the social actions and
reactions of actors as well as their collective operations including the social
status of actors. This in turn means that ‘the network analysis is not directed
towards the attributes of agents […] profession or social status, but rather what
consequences relations with other people have in terms of success or failure,
the sense of well- or ill-being, influence or powerlessness and so on’. Therefore, SNA appears here as a highly relevant analytical tool – in addition
to the patronage, kinship and power relations that were discussed earlier – to
map Francesco De Gratta’s personal network actions in the different spheres
of his activity, and especially to place his actions in relation to other actors as
well as the institutional development of Poland-Lithuania. More specifically,
the aspects of the kind, function, resources, and the goals of Francesco De
Gratta’s networking activities can in turn shed light on the development of his
individual career and at the same time on his collective actions.

Next, the aspect of searching for the function of the particular network
together with its institutional setting seems to be the most advantageous
feature of SNA. The central functions of network relationships are: distribu-
tion (handling of the resources between actors), exclusion and inclusion
(structure of network). Both exclusion and inclusion show the structure of
the social networks (social groups, status, place of living) and are related to
aspects such as trust and mistrust between members of a network. Distribution means not only handling of the economic resources between
network’s members, but also (or mainly) exchange of information or material
gifts. Moreover, even if distribution should be beneficial for both sides of a
network, it clearly exposes the position (role) of its members. Likewise, the

99 Burkhardt, Networks, p. 15.
101 Stenlås, Det sociala nätverkets logik, p. 18.
103 Compare with Hasselberg Ylva, Müller Leos and Stenlås Niklas, Åter till historiens
104 Hasselberg, Müller and Stenlås, Åter, p. 21ff.
function SNA applied to the historical context also reveals the kind of relationships (for instance: economic, political, religious, social, cultural) between actors and the environment in which they act rather than power structures. Here, one should add that the special focus of the thesis will be on the social network based on the economic relationships. In order to discuss such relationships, an article by Jari Ojala will be used. Furthermore, the analysis of the functions and kinds of De Gratta’s network relationships to different actors can give an understanding, on the one hand, of the development of his career as well as his position and role in his different activities, and on the other hand of the possibilities that the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth offered persons of foreign origin.

Altogether, according to Ylva Hasselberg, Leos Müller and Niklas Stenlås, the relationships between actors within the particular social network can be described as non-hierarchical, non-formalised and mutual with regard to the type of their contacts that are preserved in their letters. Despite the researchers’ claim that mostly letters include a subtext (‘undertext’) which in turn can be used to show the decision-making processes of network relationships, the thesis will examine several other types of primary sources besides epistolary; for example: economic contracts (often with some attachments) or testamentary dispositions that should be seen as more than mere complementary sources. Even if these sources are formalised to a great extent – they also include some important information about personal relations and are the results of the mutual contacts between particular actors. Having said this, Francesco De Gratta’s individual network is used in the thesis as an explanatory model (special attention will be paid to the types of the relationships between a number of actors and network building objects) to illustrate collective actions.

Next, a brief explanation of how a network unit is constructed and which elements it includes will follow below. This terminology will be used throughout the study and the results will be presented in the form of diagrams (such as the one presented below) in the last chapter.

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107 Comare with Hasselberg, Müller and Stenlås, Åter, p. 16.
109 Hasselberg, Müller and Stenlås, Åter, p. 9.
110 Hasselberg, Müller and Stenlås, Åter, p. 12.
Diagram 1. Diagram of the smallest possible network unit.

According to Burkhardt’s analysis, the circles A, B, C are the nodes of the network unit, wherein B is a star, an important node, and B and C – normal nodes. The connection between two nodes (for example A and C) is called a diad and that among three nodes (A, B, C) – triad. Other central terms in the network analysis are ‘clusters’ and ‘brokers’. The first means ‘groups of nodes which are densely connected with each other’ and the second refers to nodes that are ‘the only one[s] in the mesh that has a relation to a part of another network’. Such a visualization of the network analysis provides a presentation of the most specific dependences and features. Moreover, it allows us to show central constellations between different actors (nodes) in different milieus as well as to show how their contacts (diads) looked at a particular period of time. This is why it is believed that this terminology and visual presentation are especially worth applying when presenting this study’s results. In this way, one can get a clear picture of Francesco De Gratta’s networks as social structures and the most common features of the links between different actors in relation to their network strategies as well as the courses of their careers.

Lastly, some issues of SNA or ‘problematic points’ such as the aspects of participation, time and quality in his contribution in Burkhardt’s view should be considered more closely. Indeed, every person participates in a number of networks and this leads to the categorization within ‘artificial borders and

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111 The diagram made by me according to the description by Burkhardt, see Burkhardt, Networks, p. 17.
112 Burkhardt, Networks, p. 17.
113 Burkhardt, Networks, p. 17.
114 Burkhardt, Networks, pp. 15–16.
boundaries based on our scientific interpretations for research purposes’ as Burkhardt writes in his contribution.\textsuperscript{115} Here, beside the influences of researchers, the source material and its boundaries are the main limitation. In a similar manner, the time of the creation of the records, together with their preservation, should be seen as another limitation. Bukhardt emphasises that the sources that survived to our times are often occasional in their nature and focuses on the historical context in which the sources were produced.\textsuperscript{116} In reference to the sources evidencing De Gratta’s activities, there will be more details later. However, it should be stated now that they are spread over several European archives and libraries and include just parts of the sets of the regular correspondence and economic contracts. Even if the sources are not complete, they can still be considered strong evidence for a long-term network of contacts.

In connection to this, it is necessary to stress that I am fully aware of the issues of representation and centralization of one particular actor and his network to illustrate the system of governance in Poland-Lithuania. However, putting Francesco De Gratta in the central position of the network is intended to present first of all – his strategies and actions while pursuing his career; and only then will I deliberate upon the collective impact of his activities. By using such an approach, it is believed that the actions of an individual will be demonstrated in shifting environments and social contexts, and thus in turn the study will present a larger picture of the ongoing social and administrative practices of the Commonwealth.

\textbf{Approach}

Even though this study does not pretend to be Francesco De Gratta’s ‘complete’ life-time biography, use of biography with a network perspective (\textit{nätverksbiografi}) as an approach to studying De Gratta’s career will be applied throughout this study. Such a perspective will be used in order to demonstrate the relationship between De Gratta and several other actors connected with him in a number of network relationships. According to Eva Österberg, biography in a network perspective is a type of interpretative biography (\textit{tolkande biografi}) that portrays individuals in their milieus and

\textsuperscript{115} Burkhardt, Networks, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{116} Burkhardt, Networks, p. 16.
also sets their relationships in the centre of historical analysis.\textsuperscript{117} Furthermore, these milieus are considered as platforms of interplay between individuals and ‘prestigious others’. In such a light, the biography in a network perspective as an approach to study De Gratta’s working-life will show his contacts and relationships within his network circles as well as place his activities in relation to the outside world.

Sources

In general, the archive materials about the postal infrastructure in Gdańsk and about the activities of Francesco De Gratta in the city in particular are very limited due to damage suffered during World War II. One may stress that for this same reason, the entire collection of the postal documents is missing at the State Archive in Gdańsk.\textsuperscript{118} This is why the investigation of Francesco De Gratta’s activities requires tedious and long-term research not only in Polish archives and libraries, but also in those in Germany, Italy, France, Belgium and the United Kingdom. I have decided to pursue my archival investigation in Poland in the first place and expand it later by further research in the archives and libraries of other countries. Therefore, the collected material covers different sorts of sources (very often just separate documents) located in several archives and libraries both in Poland and outside of the country. However, the location of the archival material does not only cause problems and disadvantages during the archival research; it also maps Gdańsk’s international contacts and consequently trajectories of De Gratta’s own networks and contacts. During the presentation of the sources, I will focus mainly on their character and type, but their provenance and condition will be also taken into consideration. At first, the documents about the De Gratta family will be discussed and later the postal files will be presented.

During the work on the Italian network in Europe, I came across information about some archival materials on Gdańsk’s postmasters in the State


\textsuperscript{118} The collection of postal records and files GAP 300, 26. Poczta (Post) is missing, see Czesław Biernat, \textit{Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku, Przewodnik po zasobie do 1945 roku} (Warsaw–Łódź, 1992), p. 456.
1 – INTRODUCTION

Archive in Lucca, Italy. These sources are of the greatest value to the present study. The Lucca materials have never been used in order to analyse De Gratta’s activity in Poland-Lithuania. In the State Archive in Lucca, there are preserved materials, probably taken back to Italy by Lorenzo Antonio Sardi, nephew to Paolo De Gratta, when he left the city of Gdańsk in the 1720s.

The preservation of the documents in Lucca can be explained by Sardi’s family connections with the De Gratta family and Lorenzo’s particular interest in keeping the documents stating his rights to the legacies of Paolo De Gratta. These source materials consist of several types of sources, besides letters – financial contracts and bills can also be found there. Importantly, this volume includes such significant sources as: the confirmation letter of De Gratta’s nobility, the probate inventory of Francesco De Gratta as well as a list of debts and credits that was created after Francesco’s death in 1676.

Furthermore, one may consider the fact there is no personal archive left concerning the family of De Gratta, and because of that the materials kept in Lucca help to a great extent in reconstructing the family history as well as in investigation of Francesco’s official functions and Italian connections. These materials are used in almost every chapter of the thesis as additional sources illuminating special issues connected to De Gratta’s activities. The list of credits and debts from 1676 is particularly important and will be used frequently in almost all the study’s chapters.

Moreover, some other complementary sources preserved in various Polish libraries and archives will be employed to reconstruct biograms of different members of the De Gratta family as well as to analyse Francesco’s economic activities. Francesco De Gratta’s correspondence with Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki from 1668 to 1674 preserved in the Ossolineum Library in Wrocław – in the Wodzicki’s family archive – will be extensively studied in Chapter 7 concerning the potash trade. This correspondence is written in Polish and includes 26 letters (1668 – eight letters, 1670 – eight, 1671 – eight,

120 Sergio Nelli, Archivio Sardi, Inventario Archivio di Stato di Lucca, viii: Archivi Gentilizi (Lucca, 2000), p. 164. Moreover, according to the last will of Cesar Sardi (an uncle to Lorentzo Antonio) in 1737, Lorentzo Antonio, who was the last postmaster from the Sardi family in Gdańsk, was residing in Lucca at this very time, see NAL, PROB 11/649/234: Will of Cesar Sardi, Merchant Banker of Amsterdam, Holland, p. 193R.
121 ASL, AS, 123, p. 129.
123 ASL, AS, 123, pp. 197–204.
1673 – one, 1674 – one). Furthermore, in the Wodzicki collection, there are preserved other important sources that will be examined in the thesis, for example: the correspondence of Caspar Richter to Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki from 1676 to 1678 consisting of 33 letters in Polish (mostly about legacies, but also about Francesco’s children)\textsuperscript{125}, a contract on the potash trade between De Gratta, Wodzicki and Becker dated 15 November 1669\textsuperscript{126}, the De Grattas’ coat of arms\textsuperscript{127} and letters by Maria Luigia Mollo (sister to Francesco) to Anna Maria De Gratta dated 27 May 1677\textsuperscript{128} and Carlo Mollo to Wodzicki dated 28 May 1677\textsuperscript{129}. The last two letters are written in Italian and show the family relations after Francesco De Gratta’s death. In addition, in the Jagiellonian Library in Cracow, there is preserved a book by Paolo and Alessandro dedicated to their brother Francesco Jr that will be used during the description of Francesco De Gratta’s sons.\textsuperscript{130}

Concerning the postal files that are missing at the State Archive in Gdańsk, it should be noted that some copies of the sources concerning postal issues from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are preserved at the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Gdańsk.\textsuperscript{131} According to the catalogue of manuscripts kept at the PAN Library, these copies were created by different copyists. The comments and annotations on the documents are believed to have been created by Albrecht Rosenberg\textsuperscript{132} (1675–1745), Gdańsk city clerk (syndyk miejski)\textsuperscript{133}. This fact means that the documents were most likely

\textsuperscript{125} ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, pp. 41–266.
\textsuperscript{126} ZNiO, Rkps. 11579/III, pp. 393–395.
\textsuperscript{127} ZNiO, Rkps. 11575/II, pp. 299–302
\textsuperscript{128} ZNiO, Rkps. 11576, pp. 171–172.
\textsuperscript{129} ZNiO, Rkps. 11573, pp. 293–294.
\textsuperscript{131} BG PAN, Ms. 719, pp. 517–642.
\textsuperscript{132} A. Schroth, Katalog der Danziger Stadtbibliothek verfertigt und herausgegeben im Auffrage der städtischen Behörden, i: Die Danzig betreffenden Handschriften (Danzig, 1892), p. 488, 491.
\textsuperscript{133} One of the highest Gdańsk officials, who watched over the debates of the City Council and was responsible for contacts between the Council and Royal Prussian and the Commonwealth’s institutions, see, for example, Stanisław Salmonowicz, Gotfryd Lengnich. Szkic do portretu uczonego, in Salmonowicz Stanisław (ed.), Od Prus
copied in the first half of the eighteenth century. The majority of the documents included in this volume are related to the establishment of the royal postal service in the city. The volume also includes copies of the official documents and postal privileges. These sources will be used during the analysis of Francesco De Gratta’s postal activity. In addition, sources that give information about the postal conflicts between Brandenburg-Prussia and Poland-Lithuania, with a great focus on the development of the Gdańsk office are to be found at the Secret State Archives of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation in Berlin. These materials will serve as complementary ones to those preserved in the PAN Library during the investigation of Francesco De Gratta’s postmaster function in Chapter 5. Furthermore, considering the postal activity of De Gratta’s, the importance of the Regensburg collection of their letters to Somigliano and Vrints should also be highlighted.

The Regensburg collection includes postal records from Gdańsk, Warsaw and Moscow from the years 1624–1779. The documents in Volume I containing sources ranging from 1624–1721 are used in the thesis. This collection mostly includes letters sent by Antonio Giovanni De Gratta, Francesco’s father, both in original and copy versions, created during the period 1647–1651. However, the collection is not limited to Giovanni Antonio’s letters. One can also find letters written by Francesco to Baptista Vrints (Hamburg) – Somigliano’s successor, as well as the Count Claudius Franz of Thurn and Taxis, the Habsburgian Postmaster General (Brussels). Furthermore, there is also preserved a copy of the royal privilege issued for Francesco De Gratta that made him a Royal Postmaster (‘tabellarius’) in Gdańsk. This source is generally missing in the other

136 FZATTR, Postakten 1239.
archives, and was never analysed in the previous literature. Therefore, it will
be the subject of a more in-depth analysis later in the text. In general, the
analysis of these sources can significantly contribute to understanding of how
the royal postal service in Gdańsk was established and transformed, and can
show what role Giovanni Antonio and Francesco played in this process.
Finally, one may ask about the contents of these sources. From his own
correspondence, Giovanni Antonio reported among other things about his
son’s proceedings as well as the development of the postal negotiations
together with his and his son’s contacts with the Polish royal court. There-
fore, the analysis of Giovanni Antonio’s correspondence is crucial to the
understanding of later developments in Francesco’s postal career.

Moreover, the thesis will also analyse the official letters issued by the
Polish kings that are preserved in the State Archive in Gdańsk. The letters
from John II Casimir Vasa (1661), Michael I Korybut Wiśniowiecki (1669),
John III Sobieski (1675) and the Polish queens: Marie Louise Gonzaga (1662)
and Marie Casimire Louise de La Grange d’Arquien (1675) to Gdańsk City
Council that include information about the role of Francesco De Gratta\textsuperscript{138} will
mostly be used in order to show De Gratta’s connection to the royal court
and to trace his relationship with these subsequent monarchs.

The primary archival materials of this analysis besides the list of debts, and
the probate inventory are epistolary sources. The various sets of letters will
be analysed within the context of the subsequent chapters as to their
frequency, provenance of addressees and senders, as well as the type and
nature of the letters, for example: private, official and economic. The fol-
lowing correspondences will be analysed in this thesis: (1) the corres-
pondence between Caspar Richter and Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki, which will
be mostly discussed in order to demonstrate the familial situation after
Francesco’s death as well as to investigate the issues around his legacies
(Chapters: 3 and 8), (2) the correspondence of Francesco De Gratta with Jan
Wawrzyniec Wodzicki from 1668 to 1674, which remains the main archival
source discussed in Chapter 7, (3) the correspondence of Francesco De Gratta
and his father Giovanni Antonio with Giovanni Abondio Somigliano and
Johann Baptista Vrints. These will be the main materials for the analysis in
Chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{138} APG 300, 53/81, 11 a-d (Marie Louise Gonzaga); APG 300, 53/94, 4 and APG 300,
53/95, 9 (John II Casimir Vasa); APG 300, 53/104, 1 and APG 300, 53/104, 8–8a (Michael
I Korybut Wiśniowiecki); APG 300, 53/113, 3 (John III Sobieski); APG 300, 53/126, 3
(Marie Casimire Louise de La Grange d’Arquien).
In addition, beside archival source materials, some published sources will be examined in this volume as well. They will be mostly used for presentation of the development of the city of Gdańsk\textsuperscript{139}, determination of various facts about subsequent members of the De Gratta family and other persons connected to Francesco\textsuperscript{140} as well as De Gratta’s contacts with the Polish monarchs\textsuperscript{141}. The collection of the Polish laws, including the postal regulations and the information about the Polish Indygenat of De Grattas and Wodzicki will also be used in this volume.\textsuperscript{142}

Lastly, some general comments should be devoted here to the language and shape of the sources that have been presented. When considering the condition of this archival material, it is generally satisfactory, although, a few of the letters in the Ossolineum Library as well as the probate inventory in Lucca are partially damaged, but without any significant impact on their contents. Overall, the majority of sources preserved in Lucca’s archive and Regensburg are written in Italian, while the language of sources preserved in the Ossolineum Library is Polish. Moreover, the postal files concerning Gdańsk and Royal Prussia were created in German and the royal official letters in Latin. However, one should remember that Latin phrases can be found irrespective of the language in which the sources are written. This


\textsuperscript{142} Volumina legum. Przedruk zbioru praw staraniem XX. Pijarów w Warszawie, od roku 1732 do roku 1782, wydanego, 8 vols. (Petersburg, 1859–1860).
language complexity presents not only the language sensibility of the members of the De Gratta family, but also the language situation in Poland-Lithuania and in Gdańsk in particular. In addition, the handwriting styles differ greatly; not only from person to person, but also when it comes to the source language. The issues around handwriting styles can in turn be interpreted by the skills of the sources’ authors as well as the overall styles of writing letters, bills, contracts, etc. in a variety of languages. Here, the language is seen as a significant aspect of networking. The language became a way of communication, allowing one to enter other networks. This is clearly shown by De Gratta’s contacts with Wodzicki. Even if De Gratta was less than perfect in his Polish, he certainly used this language in contacts with Wodzicki and as well with Wodzicki’s liaisons. Indeed, in his world, the language was an essential part of his networking strategies.

Finally, the advantages and disadvantages of working with such material sources could be reconsidered with a special emphasis on the time of their creation, different authors, character and provenance. Even though the sources are limited – for the most part, they simply include just single pieces of crucial information or documentation providing a wealth of significant facts regarding De Gratta. In general, the research on merchant families in early modern Europe is problematic at best due to the fact that only a small number of families have left archives that are available for research. This is why most similar studies demand a tedious archival survey and consequently, a reconstruction of family history and personal activities on the basis of separate documents. This thesis attempts to work in just such a manner as this. Here, an effort was made to reconstr De Gratta’s familial history and his different activities on the basis of available source materials. Therefore, the sources have been grouped a priori according to their main topics and taken up in-depth in subsequent chapters. De Gratta’s potash trade with Wodzicki can be seen here as a great example of such thematical grouping. Most assuredly, De Gratta may have pursued various types of trading at different periods of his life, yet it is mostly his potash trade which has the most well-preserved documentation available for research and therefore, it is this trade that is mostly discussed in this thesis. Nonetheless, this thesis tries to present the overall strategies and goals of De Gratta’s trade activities and networking actions, hence it goes beyond his potash trade dealings.
Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of this study lies in the archival sources themselves. Presumably, there might be more archival sources in various archives around Europe that could in turn document additional facts concerning Francesco De Gratta’s life and career. I have limited my study to a number of Polish, German and Italian archives and libraries; however, the wide geographical area of De Gratta’s interactions and businesses indicates that further research in Romanian, Hungarian, but also French and Spanish archives could result in discovering new archival materials that could possibly give some additional insights into his activities. However, I am convinced that the present study gives a full picture of Francesco De Gratta’s career. Additional source material would merely bring more details, but would not alter the findings of this thesis.

Outline

The thesis is divided into nine chapters of which the first is the thesis’s introduction.

The second chapter: Gdańsk – a Bridge presents on the basis of the contemporary narrative sources various aspects of the development of Gdańsk. The geopolitical, demographical, political, the economic and cultural spheres as well as communication are discussed here to show this city’s bridging role.

The third chapter: Family begins with a discussion of the family as the primary social network. Later, Francesco De Gratta’s nuclear family is shown together with his matrimonial strategies regarding his own marriage to Agatha van Classen and his children’s marriages (especially his daughters) as well as the education and careers of his sons. In this way, the family ties between the families De Gratta, van Classen, Bair, Sardi and Wodzicki are shown. Furthermore, Gdańsk citizenship and the nobility, together with Polish Indygenat (naturalization) will be discussed in this chapter.

The fourth chapter: Royal Secretary discusses the royal secretary function. This chapter is a short introduction to the next chapters showing the importance the Royal Secretary title had for the further development of Francesco De Gratta’s career.

The fifth chapter: Postmaster shows Francesco De Gratta’s administrative function in the royal service. The relationship focus of this chapter is between Francesco and Giovanni Antonio De Gratta and the Polish Kings, while discussing the moment of Francesco’s appointment to the function as Head
Postmaster and his subsequent movement up into higher level postings: for Gdańsk and for Royal Prussia, Courland, Semigallia and Livonia.

The sixth chapter: **Creditor** follows Francesco’s involvement in the monetary system of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by mapping several actors (mostly Italians) and their involvement in hiring mints in Lithuania. Additionally, the import of silver to Poland-Lithuania by De Gratta and Bandinelli is also debated here, as well as the loans given by De Gratta to several actors: Prussian cities, Polish monarchs and nobles.

The seventh chapter: **Trader** reconstructs Francesco De Gratta’s business contracts, goods trading, services and directions, and also gives a depiction of the actors involved in the economic transactions with De Gratta. The analysis starts by considering the royal title *factoratus*, which Francesco gained in 1649, and its role in the expansion of his business portfolio, with a great focus on his potash trade with Wodzicki.

The eighth chapter: **Legacy** analyses Francesco De Gratta’s estates and their functions in the local and regional milieus. Four examples of his legacies are analysed in this chapter: the De Gratta residence in Gdańsk, the Potop tapestries, the Italian assets and the list of debtors and creditors from 15 August 1676. The main focus here is on the provenance of the estates as well as the family situation after Francesco De Gratta’s death in 1676. Moreover, a legacy is considered as a network-building object in relation to Francesco De Gratta’s administrative capacity throughout his life.

The ninth chapter: **Conclusion** shows the overall individual network of Francesco De Gratta, established from an analysis of the subsequent spheres of his economic activity and administrative career. The development of Francesco’s network and his contact with several actors at specific periods of time are addressed in terms of career strategies. Here the careers of other postmasters and mint masters of Italian origin in Poland-Lithuania are analysed and compared to Francesco De Gratta’s working life. Lastly, an analysis of the Italian influences on the postal and monetary systems is provided concerning some aspects of the early modern Polish-Lithuanian state development as well as Gdańsk as a place of Francesco De Gratta’s career will be also reconsidered there.
This Citty exceeds (I) in traffickke, (2) plenty, (3) voluptuousnesse, (4) pride, (5) arts.  

Throughout its entire history, Gdańsk – one of the Baltic Sea’s main harbour cities – played a significant role in connecting the North with the South, the West with the East. This city is also frequently seen as a bridge between the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean World. In general, the city can be briefly characterised by its Hanseatic architecture, rich traditions of merchant trade and access to the water channels – the Baltic Sea and rivers – Motława (Ger. Mottlau) and Vistula. These elements strongly influenced the creation of the cityscape and were directly connected with other factors such as religious tolerance and the preservation of the city’s neutrality that in turn differentiated Gdańsk from most other European cities. One can state that these factors had affected the development of the multicultural metropolitan area on the Baltic Sea’s south coast during the early modern period. On the threshold of modern times, Greater Gdańsk became a place of asylum for thousands of refugees and migrants coming from different parts of Europe. One example of such a migrant was Giovanni Antonio De Gratta who migrated to the city at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Gdańsk remained a home for the De Gratta family for more than a century.

The question how, rather than why, the location of Gdańsk on the Baltic coast influenced its growth is the focus of this chapter. In other words,
conditional factors which affected the geopolitical position of this city will be analysed here.

The leading questions are:

1. What role did Gdańsk play in the development of the Baltic Sea Region and especially of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth?
2. How did the city create possibilities for foreign actors to expand their trade and pursue their official careers?

First of all, the overview of the various lines of the city’s development will be presented in this chapter in order to study the relationship between the city and the Commonwealth. Such an overview will give an explanation of the spatial factor of Francesco De Gratta’s career and the environment in which Francesco De Gratta pursued his activities. He called Gdańsk the ‘pleasant city’\(^3\) and it should be borne in mind that he spent almost his entire life there. Furthermore, Gdańsk created a number of possibilities that Francesco exploited during the course of his career and therefore, this city can be perceived as a form of a bridge for his activities as well as a converging point where he was able to meet a large number of traders, nobles and travellers. This role of Gdańsk will serve as a background for the next empirical chapters. Furthermore, an analysis of the function of Gdańsk in De Gratta’s career and his social advancement will be provided in more detail in the final discussion. In addition, one may notice that the analysis of demographic, social, economic, religious and political developments of Gdańsk that is to follow on the next pages correlates with the later analysis of De Gratta’s actions in a more indirect way. However, these developments will be directly associated not only with the cross-border exchanges and cooperation but also wars and conflicts in the region.

In the historiography of the city of Gdańsk, the period from 1466 to 1655 is usually called the city’s Golden Age (\textit{Danzigs Goldenes Zeitalter}).\(^4\) The dynamic growth of the city, the influences of the Reformation and information revolution can be observed during this period. It symbolises the transformation from the medieval cityscape to the early modern harbour municipality. The beginning of this period merged with the Second Peace Treaty of Toruń (Ger. Thorn) in 1466, which ended the Thirteen Years’ War, at which point Royal Prussia together with Gdańsk came under the rule of

\(^3\) ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 235: ‘w naszym milem Gdansku’.

\(^4\) Compare with the terminology and the division into periods of Gdańsk’s history, Cieślak and Biernat, \textit{History of Gdańsk}; Loew, \textit{Danzig}.
the Polish King. The year 1655 connects with the Swedish – Polish war commonly called the Swedish Deluge (‘potop’ in the Polish historiography and ‘Karl X Gustavs polska krig’ in the Swedish historiography). This war devastated Polish-Lithuanian agriculture and at the same time weakened the dynamics of Gdańsk’s trade; therefore, the Deluge is very often associated with the end of the city’s Golden Age. However, even the second part of the seventeenth century can be described as an efficient period in the city’s development caused by the rebuilding of the war-damaged infrastructure. This is why early modern times – a great period for the city – can be considered to be from the mid-fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth century. Consequently, the period of the De Grattas in Gdańsk (ca 1605 until 1712 – from the date of Giovanni Antonio’s arrival in the city until the death of Paolo De Gratta) can be included in the city’s great period (until 1655) as well as the period of Gdańsk’s relative decline and restoration until the Great Northern War (after 1655 to ca 1700).

An overview of a number of trajectories of the city’s development from Francesco De Gratta’s times will be presented in this chapter. For this purpose, several narrative sources will be analysed. They were usually created by actors of foreign origin and pointed out the most important characteristics of the city. Most attention will be paid to the journal by Peter Mundy who stayed in Gdańsk for seven years in the 1640s, exactly the same time during which Giovanni Antonio De Gratta established himself as the Royal Postmaster in the city and Francesco began his postal career. Mundy compared Gdańsk to other European metropolises – Amsterdam and London – and also gave interesting facts about the city’s development and function. Thus, his description will be used here as an illustration of Gdańsk. Furthermore, one should highlight that there is very little information about the city in the letters by Giovanni Antonio and Francesco to various actors. In the correspondence, it was only possible to find some information related to the Gdańsk City Council and the mail service in the city. These types of information will be collected according to their character and presented in the empirical chapters of this thesis. Returning to the early modern narrative sources that are to be analysed in the present chapter, one should keep in mind that such stories were directed towards the domestic audience of the foreign authors. Consequently, they included many more comparisons than Gdańsk domestic publications. Finally, these sources mentioned fundamental facts as well as curiosities and thus provide broader and more elaborated information. This is why the city’s contemporary own publications –
mainly, Der Stadt Dantzig historische Beschreibung⁵ by Georg Reinhold Curicke – will also be taken into account and contrasted with the following travellers’ accounts.

Geopolitical Localization

The Citty of Dantzigk is in the Province of Pomerella, reckoned under the Crowne of Poland, reckoned also in Prussia. And according to the computation Formerly made between Amsterdam and London⁶, this place [Gdańsk] with suburbs may conteyn ¼ as many as London with suburbs, and ⅕ as many as Amsterdam: For in a healthy tyme, voide off any contagion or Noted sicknesse, there dye in London about 200 persons; att Amsterdam about 100; and here about 50: somwhatt More or lesse. Itt lyeth in the latitude of 54° 21´ North: very hard winters (although the colder and harder accompted the better wholesome) and very hot some part off the summer.⁷

This quote from Peter Mundy’s⁸ Travels begins with his description of Gdańsk. In spite of its brief character, it provides a variety of information, such as geographical and regional specifications, political affiliations, population statistics, mortality rates, location coordinates and information about the climate.

From this quote one can learn that the city of Gdańsk was located in the eastern part of the geographic region of Pomerania (Pol. Pomorze, Ger. Pommern) and belonged to the ethnographic region of Kashubia (Pol. Kaszuby, Ger. Die Kaschubei) and was also part of the historical region of

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⁵ Curicke, Der Stadt Dantzig.
⁶ See Mundy, The Travels, p. 67.
⁷ Mundy, The Travels, pp. 167–168; the title of this part (the thirty-fifth relation): ‘Dantzigk: its comparison with London’.
⁸ Peter Mundy (1600–1667) was an English merchant and traveller; he visited many European as well as Asian countries (India, China and Japan). In the years, 1639–1648 Mundy travelled to Denmark, Prussia and Russia and this trip and written relations are very important in this chapter. He stayed in Gdańsk for a longer period – namely from 1641 to 1648. Because of the Civil War in England, he left the city, Mundy, The Travels, p. 219: ‘Having spent almost 7 yeares tyme in this place and to and Fro, much of it much against my will, yet Neverthelesse with an ill will must I leave the place, by reason of the troubles in England which were not yet stilled. However, occasiones compelled Mee to leave those parts and retire home’. The descriptions of his travels were written mostly by a clerk, but with corrections by Mundy, while illustrations were made by Mundy himself. The information noted on Mundy comes from the Dictionary of National Biography, p. 303.
Royal Prussia (Pol. Prusy Królewskie, Ger. Königlich-Preußen). The comparison with London and Amsterdam – two of the largest contemporary European cities – not only testified to Mundy’s knowledge about the land areas of these three cities with their suburbs, but also ranked Gdańsk among European metropolises. Even if the number of inhabitants in Gdańsk in the mid-seventeenth century is frequently debated in historical publications, there is no consensus between historians concerning the size of Gdańsk’s population at that point in time. Jaroslav Miller in his demographical study estimated the population of Gdańsk in early modern times to be about 30,000 inhabitants in the years from 1500 to 1530 and about 40,000 (1550–1580), 50,000–52,400 (1600) and 67,600–70,000 (1650). Jerzy Stankiewicz indicated a lower population figure based on the mortality criterion (around 60,000 inhabitants for mid-seventeenth century) and on the housing criterion (around 40,000 inhabitants, after 1660). According to the last demographic index the population of Gdańsk at the end of the seventeenth century can be estimated to have been 55,000 inhabitants. However, one should highlight that these estimates use data only for the city itself, without its suburbs. In spite of the fact that the exact number of people living outside the city’s walls remains unknown, one can make the assumption that the total number of Greater Gdańsk inhabitants was around 70,000 on the eve of the Swedish Deluge. Finally, one may add that the city of Gdańsk consisted of the three main districts: the Main City (Pol. Główne Miasto, Ger. Rechtstadt), the Old City (Pol. Stare Miasto, Ger. Altstadt) and the Young City (Pol. Młode Miasto, Ger. Jungstadt), where the Main City remained the administrative and representative centre.

Nevertheless, one should bear in mind that the early modern city was not limited to the territory of the city itself, but that it also consisted of several suburbs. In early modern times, the tendency of expansion of rural and peri-urban areas can be observed. The acquisition of landed estates became a very popular form of investing money among merchants. In the seventeenth century, almost 50% of patricians serving in the City Council possessed land

9 The political status of the city will be discussed in the next part of this chapter – Politics.
10 See, for example, Mundy, The Travels, p. 167, (note 3); Bogucka, O mentalności, p. 213.
11 See Miller, Urban Societies, p. 26. Table 2.3 presents an estimated amount of the population in the cities within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.
12 Stankiewicz, Przemiany, pp. 32–33.
13 Stankiewicz, Przemiany, p. 33.
14 See Map 3 attached to the thesis.
estates, while in the fifteenth century it was only 8%.\textsuperscript{15} Interestingly, Francesco De Gratta followed this trend and besides his house in the city, he possessed a land estate in Stare Szkoty (Ger. Altschottland).\textsuperscript{16} This tendency can be connected not only with farming and cattle breeding, but also with building of merchants’ residences outside the city. Moreover, one may underline the social character of such suburbs and state that the suburban and rural areas around Gdańsk were mostly inhabited by Polish, Jewish, Scottish and Mennonites minorities. Next, one may recognise the areas of Stare Szkoty, Siedlce (Ger. Schidlitz), Orunia (Ger. Ohra) or Biskupia Górka (Ger. Bischofsberg) as the Church estates remaining in the possession of a number of religious orders such as the Carmelites, the Bridgettines or the Dominicans, which in turn remained under the sovereignty of the bishops of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Włocławek (Ger. Leslau).\textsuperscript{17} It should be highlighted that Oliwa (Ger. Oliva), the place where the Treaty of Oliwa, which ended the Deluge, had been signed, also remained part of the Polish Gdańsk metropolitan area.\textsuperscript{18} Thus, the suburbs played a residential function not only for Gdańsk merchants, but also for other minorities and remained to a great extent Church-owned lands.

Lastly, some words should be said about the climate and the topographical localization of the city because of their great impact on the development of trade, transportation and communication.

These parts [Prussia] in som perticulers may bee compared to some parts off India, although Farre distant and much differing in temperature off the aire, conditiones off the people, etts. For as there, if shippes take nott their opportunity to com away with the Monsoone are deteyned certayne monthes, Soe here likewise, if shippes get nott away in tyme are Frozen uppe until spring, in which interim No trading by Sea by reason off Ice, as att Suratt [city in Western India, Arabic Sea] [and] thereabouts in tyme off raynes, For stormes and currants. As there the Trees are greene all the

\textsuperscript{15} Gawlicki, Podmiejskie dwory, pp. 67–69.
\textsuperscript{16} ASL, AS, 123, p. 200: ‘Domek w Szotlancie [...] 2125 [probably fl]’.
\textsuperscript{17} Trzoska, Walka cechów, p. 35ff.; More information on the religious situation in Gdańsk and its suburbs in the sixth part of the present chapter.
\textsuperscript{18} About foundation of the Cistercians abbey in Oliwa and its role in the region and for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, see, for example, Cieślak, Biernat, \textit{History of Gdańsk}, p. 40, 157–158, 214–220.
Yeare [...] Cattle can hardly com by Fodder in the Fields by reason off heat and drought; Soe here, through cold weather.19

Mundy compared Royal Prussia with India and asserted that the harsh winters impeded trading in the Baltic just as the monsoons affected the Indian Ocean. In his writings, one may also find a similar fragment to the above one, this time about his return by the Vistula River from Warsaw to Gdańsk in mid-April: ‘They had som reason for their delay, viz., much wind, cold hard weather’20. Both of the cited fragments indicate the hard weather conditions and their influence on the trading possibilities on the one hand on the open sea and on the other, rafting goods by land and by river. In addition, one may recall that approximately one hundred years before Mundy’s descriptions, Olaus Magnus also depicted frozen southern and northern parts of the Baltic Sea on his Carta.21 This freezing indicates a cooler period, known as the Little Ice Age, was taking place throughout early modern times.22

Politics

As Mundy rightly noticed, the city of Gdańsk together with all of Royal Prussia was ruled by the Polish King in early modern times and remained an integrated part of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth’s period of the city began in 1454 and ended in 1793, when Gdańsk was incorporated into Prussia.23 The beginning of this period is usually considered to be the Incorporation Act of 6 March 1454, when Prussian lands were ceded to the Polish Crown.24 The treaty of the Second Peace of Toruń in 1466 established the differentiation of Royal Prussia, which became a part of the Polish Crown, from the eastern part of Prussian territories with Königsberg that remained under the control of the Teutonic Order.25 The year 1569 is a starting point for the Union of Lublin, when the real union between the Polish Crown and

19 Mundy, The Travels, p. 188.
20 Mundy, The Travels, p. 208.
22 About the Little Ice Age and its influences: Millar and Woolfenden, The role of climate, p. 1209.
23 Tighe, Gdansk, p. XV.
24 Friedrich, The Other, p. 22.
25 Friedrich, The Other, p. 23.
the Duchy of Lithuania was created (until this moment Poland-Lithuania was a personal union – from 1385). Then Royal Prussia with its biggest cities – Gdańsk, Elblag (Ger. Elbing) and Toruń came definitely under the administration and jurisdiction of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.26

Next, the extraordinary status of the city in the Commonwealth has to be highlighted. It is worth mentioning that Gdańsk preserved all of its earlier, medieval privileges, but also received several new ones in the early modern period. On the one hand, the city’s merchants often claimed their Prussian affiliation (the regional one), but on the other still indicated their Polish affiliation. Such interplay was mainly caused by the city’s economic interests as well as the City Council’s efforts to maintain its privileges. ‘We will not allow, in any case, the Prussian cities to be turned into Polish ones’27 – in such a way, Ignacy Bąkowski, the Pomeranian voivode (wojewoda pomorski) expressed his disapproval of the Polish nobles’ interference in Prussians cities’ affairs during the session of the Prussian Diet in 1652. The reasons for the intervention by the Polish nobles and even monarchs may be seen in the protests of Gdańsk’s ‘third estate’ (trzeci ordynek, Dritte Ordnung)28 and guilds concerning illegal odd-jobbers’ business (partacze).29 These conflicts arose systematically in the city and its suburbs and they can be seen as the result of interference from the three competing powers: the City Council, the King and the nobility.

During the sixteenth century, stable growth of the city and its suburbs took place. This situation in conjunction with the guild system and the City Council’s politics became one of the biggest issues in early modern Gdańsk. Once again, there was a visible tendency for the settlement of several minorities as Mennonites, Scottish immigrants and Polish Jews in the suburbs. The underlying reason for this process can be observed in the City Council’s politics, which forbade some minorities, especially Jews, from residing within the city’s walls. Craftsmen associated with the guilds were worried by the fact that illegal production and sale of goods at lower prices commonly occurred

26 Compare with Cieślak, Walka o reformy, pp. 147ff.; Friedrich, The Other, pp. 30–31.
27 Achremczyk, Rola Gdańska, p. 131: ‘nie pozwolimy żadną miarą obrócić miasta pruskie w miasta polskie’.
28 Gdańsk common folk chamber (according to Cieślak the commonality), see Cieślak and Biernat, History of Gdańsk, p. 139.
29 Cieślak and Biernat, History of Gdańsk, pp. 131ff; Trzoska, Walka cechów, pp. 35ff.; Cieślak, Udział Gdańska, pp. 206–208; About city’s status: Saarinen, Bürgerstadt, pp. 20–28; About the division of the Polish cities according to their function, scale and area: Wyrobisz, Small towns, pp. 153–163; Wyrobisz, The economic situation, pp. 41–58; Wyrobisz, Typy funkcjonalne, pp. 25–49.
around, and, sometimes even, within the city’s borders. One may highlight
the fact that craftsmen were represented in the City Council (‘third estate’),
but their participation was often limited by the rich merchants, who in turn
wished to purchase cheaper goods than those offered by the city’s official
guilds. This is why the craftsmen frequently asked the Polish Kings and
nobles to intervene in the City Council in order to defend their exclusive
rights to produce goods in the city. Nevertheless, such complaints often did
not lead to the expected reaction from the ‘third estate’, which can be
explained by the Kings’ dependence the City Council’s funds given for
military purposes. To put it another way, Polish monarchs profited from the
city and at the same time without great possibilities to influence the City
Council. Thus, one may state that the internal issues of the city’s development
were strongly connected with Gdańsk’s external politics and its relationship
to the rest of the Commonwealth.

‘Concordia res publicæ parvæ crescent – discordia magnæ concidunt’ ['In
harmony small republics grow – in discord great [ones] collapse'] – this
inscription was placed on the wall of the Gdańsk Golden Gate erected in
1612-1614 by Abraham van den Blocke. This statement included both the
quasi-independent city’s status as a small republic within the Common-
wealth, a great republic, as well as a warning prior to the conflicts and
disagreements that had a ruinous effect, and was similar to Venice’s foreign
policy in the fifteenth century. This proclamation can be easily related to the
wars between Poland-Lithuania, Sweden and Russia at the turn of the
sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Even if Gdańsk tried to remain neutral,
the city had to fulfil its duties towards the Crown. Therefore, the city was
obliged to financially support the military actions of the Commonwealth. The
city’s loans to the Crown caused by the Swedish-Polish war (1655–1660) can
be observed as just such an example of financial support. The city estimated
its own costs connected to the war to be over 5,000,000 florins. The loan was
never redeemed by the city despite the promises made by the Polish king,
John II Casimir Vasa. In fact, that such an agreement about the repayment of
the city’s expenses was created at all was probably due to the city’s
negotiations with the Swedish king, Charles X Gustav. Here, one might add

30 Compare with Trzoska, Walka cechów, pp. 35–49; Cieślak and Biernat, History of
Gdańsk, pp. 131–140.
31 Holsti, Major Texts, p. 19.
32 About Gdańsk’s participation in the conflicts and wars, see, for example, Cieślak and
that the City Council pursued its own politics and developed its own relationships with the Polish monarchs. Furthermore, the city of Gdańsk, as a Royal city, possessed special rights to influence the Commonwealth’s mainly economic politics owing to its representations on both a regional level – Royal Prussia’s Council – and on a general level – the Diet (Seym). On the one hand the city had its representatives and messengers at the royal court, firstly in Cracow and later in Warsaw, and on the other hand, Polish Kings nominated their representatives in the city. As one will see later, the Royal Burgrave (burgravia regis) was not the only King’s representative in the city; the royal secretaries and postmasters also somehow represented Polish monarchs on various occasions. Finally, one may notice that similarly to Gdańsk, the right to send representatives to the sessions of the Parliament was held only by the other Prussian cities (Elbląg and Toruń) as well as the capital cities: Cracow, Wilno (Lit. Vilnius) and Lwów.33

The political status of the city and its involvement in the political commitment of Royal Prussia and the Commonwealth highlights the important role the city played in regional development. The city’s political involvement correlated with military sea and coastal defences. For this reason, there was an expansion of the city’s fortifications and development of its infrastructure. Therefore, the bridging role of the city cannot only be observed through the prism of its neutrality but also in the care for the city’s businesses in times both peace and war.

**Trade and Shipping**

The Mayne trade or trafficke here is For graine, as wheat, barly, Rye (off the last Most), and divers other brought downe the River Wissell [Vistula] in great Flatt-bottomed lighters called Canes, off which sometimes 1500 or 2000 att once ly Neare the Citty and May have, one with the other, about 15 men each. By report above 160,000 tonnes off Corne is shipped From hence every Summer.34

The above quotation tells something about Peter Mundy’s knowledge of the city’s trade, and rafting of goods by the Vistula River. It includes a list of main commodities as well as a report on the amount of grain marketed by the city. Moreover, Mundy paid special attention here to the kind, size and number

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33 Szczuczko, Rola Gdańska, pp. 119–121.
34 Mundy, *The Travels*, p. 182.
of vessels used to transport the grain from the hinterland to the harbour. The specific tonnage of grain described here should be compared with other sources in order to obtain a more accurate picture of Gdańsk’s grain trade. According to the Sound’s declarations of the quantity of exported grain for the year 1649, more than 99,000 and 87,000 lasts (last, Pol. łażzt – a measurement of ship’s volume) had been declared as coming from Gdańsk. Consequently, one notices that these particular numbers are equal to the export of more than 200,000 tonnes of grain in each period.\(^{35}\) In early modern times, Gdańsk became the most important player in the grain market of Europe as well as in the Baltic Sea Region. To compare with other Baltic cities, for example Königsberg (Pol. Królewic, Rus. Kaliningrad) reached an export rate equal to 10% of Gdańsk’s total exports in the first part of the seventeenth century.\(^{36}\) It should be noted that the rafting of grain was usually possible twice a year, namely after the spring thaw in April/May and after harvesting of grain at the beginning of autumn. This is why the shipping of goods clearly depended on weather conditions, water level and the length of the summer period. On the threshold of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Gdańsk had become Europe’s main granary because of the bad weather conditions in other parts of Europe and Dutch entrepot trade.\(^{37}\)

The history of commerce in early modern times is inevitably linked to the Hanseatic League and at the same time with the Dutch dominance in trade and shipping. Gdańsk was the most important partner for Amsterdam merchants in the Baltic trade, which can be observed in the amount of freight contracts – 53.3% of the entire commerce. Riga had the second position with 20.5% and Königsberg was third with 5.4%.\(^{38}\)

Here is the staple [market] For Corne\(^{39}\), as Coninxberg [Königsberg] For wood-comodity, as wainescott, Clapboard, etts. Greatt store of other

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\(^{35}\) Compare with Cieślak and Biernat, *History of Gdańsk*, p. 110.


\(^{38}\) See Table 1, Maria Bogucka, Amsterdam and the Baltic in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century, in Maria Bogucka (ed.), *Baltic Commerce and Urban Society, 1500–1700, Gdansk/Danzig and Its Polish Context* (Aldershot, 2002), p. 434.

\(^{39}\) The grain market became the most important one for Gdańsk and grain was the most common raw commodity exported from its harbour, see for example: Urban, *Von Krakau*, p. 277.
commodities is allsoe brought downe From Poland, as potash, Flax, hempe, etts.\textsuperscript{40}

Here, Mundy pointed out that besides grain – potash, flax and hemp were the main export commodities of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The potash trade will be a subject of investigation in Chapter 7. However, what were the goods imported from other countries? The most requested commodities imported by Gdańsk were salt (mainly from France) and wine (France/Portugal). Moreover, other goods such as paper, textiles, glass and iron (mostly in bars) were imported to the city.\textsuperscript{41} Iron bars were the main product imported by Gdańsk from Stockholm, while grain and rye were commodities exported to Sweden. Furthermore, one may notice that Gdańsk remained one of the major partners of Stockholm in the Baltic area at that time and gave way only to the Dutch ports, Lübeck and Portugal regarding the import, and Dutch Ports and Lübeck regarding the export.\textsuperscript{42}

The North-European and Baltic commerce strongly indicates the bridging role of Gdańsk in trade and shipping in the entire region. Through its harbour, the city transferred the majority of raw commodities from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its southern neighbours such as Moldavia and Wallachia. Thanks to the city’s location on the southern Baltic coast, Gdańsk became a leader in Baltic trade, mainly with a goods exchange with Amsterdam, and at the same was a Polish window to the world. Dutch ships conducted 62\% of all Baltic goods transport in the first half of the seventeenth century, and 44\% in the second half.\textsuperscript{43} However, the continuous dominance of Dutch shipping during early modern times changed the economic situation in the region. The monopoly of the Netherlands in shipping and trade weakened the role of the Hanseatic League, conceived as an association of the cities situated around the Northern and Baltic Seas. The Dutch trade expansion, together with Swedish imperialistic politics, and the development of European agriculture and colonial plantations is often perceived as showing the decrease of Gdańsk’s role in the region’s commerce

\textsuperscript{40} Mundy, \textit{The Travels}, p. 183.
\textsuperscript{42} See Table B, Bogucka, Some Aspects, p. 111.
\textsuperscript{43} Cieślak and Biernat, \textit{History of Gdańsk}, p. 61.
and in other words, as indicating the end of its *Golden Age* in the historiography. Lastly, one may notice that Gdańsk participated in the Hansetag until the last one that took place in 1669. Taking this fact into consideration, the greatest period in Gdańsk development correlates with the city’s Hanseatic period.

To sum up, the role of Gdańsk in early modern times, it can be seen as a leader in the Baltic trade owing to the city’s monopoly on selling commodities (mainly grain) from the territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In other words, the bridging or intermediary role of the city is visible through the city’s economic contacts, trading strategies and relationships, both in the Baltic and North Sea trade. This character of the city is relevant to almost the entire period reviewed here. The changes in the market’s situation accompanied by the peripheralization of Baltic commerce in the eighteenth century influenced the city’s development negatively.

**Communication**

Apart from water transport by rivers and seas, mentioned in the previous section, road transport became more frequently used for the postal network between the main European urban centres in the Late Middle Ages. However, one might add that the cities themselves financed such communication networks over land. Gdańsk provided its own service of carriage and delivery of letters as well as even transport of goods by the postal service as early as the fourteenth/fifteenth century. This service was carried out by foot messengers, who often rode horses for faster delivery. Moreover, Lenartowicz sees the end of the fifteenth century as the moment of creation and systematizing of permanent postal communication between the Hanseatic cities. In such a way, the urban postal network was established and connected the main communication nodes of Amsterdam, Hamburg, Lübeck, Gdańsk and Riga with smaller cities such as Rostock, Stettin (Pol. Szczecin) or Königsberg. In using this postal system, Gdańsk developed links with its trade partners located in western and eastern parts of Europe. Approximately one hundred years later, the city became part of a similar network within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. As a result of the latter, Gdańsk established contacts with Toruń, Poznań and Breslau (Pol. Wrocław) and later with

45 Lenartowicz, *Historia*, p. 3; Compare with Maliszewski, Gdańsk jako ośrodek, p. 223.
Warsaw and Cracow. Through this system, Gdańsk gained regular access to the Southern part of Europe.

The year 1654 was a turning point in the city’s communication development. From that time, the Gdańsk postal office had been under the jurisdiction of the Polish monarchs. The City Council itself requested the King for help because of the conflict with Frederick William, Elector of Brandenburg and Duke of Prussia. The Electorate has sought to monopolise all of the postal routes in Royal Prussia and Pomerania. One may also add that this conflict almost led to war between the contending parties. However, the parties reached a solution whereby the Brandenburgian postal office was re-located outside of the city’s borders. The end of the conflict also resulted in the royal postmaster being granted sovereignty over the Gdańsk office. This particular conflict as well as the royal postmasters in Gdańsk will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. Thus, Gdańsk became the second royal postal office (besides Cracow) in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The establishment of both the Brandenburgian-Prussian and the Polish-Lithuanian postal systems symbolised the end of the self-governed postal service of Gdańsk and the rise of a new system whereby the Crowns ruled over the postal network in this part of Europe. Indeed, in the seventeenth century, the private (quite often merchant) communication network began to be replaced by the royal postal systems. However, just to clarify this point, the merchant Hanseatic postal network still existed at this time and various attempts to monopolise the post were unsuccessful. This process is very often linked to other matters connected to the dissemination of news and correspondence, such as the development of the press service, the emergence of the new publishing houses, together with an increase in the demand for news by the local societies. So, what did the information flow to/in Gdańsk look like at that time?

Kazimierz Maliszewski indicates that the role of Gdańsk in the information flow was, on the one hand to provide a city’s autonomous postal system, while on the other hand it was to be a postal node – the transfer place for news coming from the western to the eastern part of Europe and vice versa. The great importance of Gdańsk as part of the communication system in the region

46 Compare with Lenartowicz, Historia, p. 4.
47 About the reasons and the results of the postal conflict, see Lenartowicz, Historia, pp. 5–18.
48 For information about establishment of among others Brandenburgian, Scandinavian and Spanish national postal systems, see, for example, Zimowski, Geneza i rozwój, p. 44ff.
49 Maliszewski, Gdańsk jako ośrodek, p. 224.
was undoubtedly due to its trade, shipping, politics and religious situation – thousands of travellers, refugees, ecclesiastical authorities, residents and deputies of foreign Crowns visited and settled in the city.\footnote{50 Maliszewski, Gdańsk jako ośrodek, p. 224.} This in turn resulted in the increase in the demand for news. Maliszewski pays special attention to the different ways in which information was delivered. He distinguishes two ways of news transmission in the early modern cities – the internal way (private and official correspondence) and the external way (public press). It should be added that the first one was reserved for the City Council and city authorities, but the other had an open character and was directed at the merchant society.\footnote{51 Maliszewski, Gdańsk jako ośrodek, p. 225.}

In seventeenth century Gdańsk, there were two publishing houses in the city and one outside the city, in Oliwa, which printed mostly historical, law and religious books, but also newspapers and journals.\footnote{52 Compare with the eighteenth century’s situation, see Kotarski, Zaplecze instytucjonalne, p. 247ff.} Moreover, Gdańsk’s first periodical newspaper was ‘Wöchentliche Zeitung aus mancherlei Orter’ (1619–1642).\footnote{53 Maliszewski, Gdańsk jako ośrodek, p. 228.} In the next decades, few other newspapers containing news via postal communication were published in the city.\footnote{54 From news from Breslau, Stettin and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in general, see Maliszewski, Gdańsk jako ośrodek, p. 229.}

In order to fulfil the complexity of the information flow in Gdańsk, it is necessary to describe the meeting places where information exchanges took place. The majority of communication historians believe that the cafés and tea houses which emerged in Gdańsk around the year 1700 influenced news dissemination and also contributed to the appearance of public opinion. Nevertheless, the pubs were places where mostly men from different professions and social classes could gather together. Mundy depicted the Artus Court (Junkerhof) as just such a gathering place and described the character of this place as follows:

\begin{quote}
The Yuncker Hoffe […] serving For publicke use and meetings […] and For Feasting and Drinkinge as aforesaid openly don, there being benches round about, where sitt sundry companies of all degrees, which have drink […] Dantzker beer.\footnote{55 Mundy, The Travels, pp. 179–180.} Mundy also described this place as ‘[the] house of good Fellowshippes’.\footnote{56 Mundy, The Travels, p. 181.} Such a description of the role of the Artus Court can be treated as evidence that
\end{quote}
burghers, who met there, probably read newspapers and discussed them with each other with a pint of Gdańsk beer in hand. To conclude, Gdańsk was one of the main communication nodes in the Baltic Sea Region. Through the city, news from Russia and Poland-Lithuania passed to the western parts of Europe. The development of postal routes enabled the press service to exist and facilitated the progress of the publishing houses. In early modern Gdańsk, there were a number of meeting places of common usage (such as the Artus Court), where, it is believed, discussions on contemporary issues probably took place. Moreover, the city had gained access to both the Prussian and Polish communication systems in spite of the postal conflicts between Brandenburg-Prussia and Poland-Lithuania in the seventeenth century. Summarising, the bridging role of the city can be seen in its involvement in the European communication system. Owing to this, Gdańsk became a connecting point, not only for the Baltic Sea Region, but for the whole of Europe. Besides the residents and foreign agents, Gdańsk also became a major destination for religious immigrants.

Religion and Society

For their religion, here [in Gdańsk] are Lutherans, papists and Calvinists, the First being a Middle between the other 2, For with the one they deny Purgatory, prayers for the dead, Masse, etts., And with the other they hold Altars, ceremonies, Imagery and pictures in their Churches, etts. Confession (and absolution) in generall termes in private, as with us in publicke.57

Here, Mundy’s description has three main aspects – a list of the main religious groups in the city and references to their quantities and features. Mundy only gave estimated data and this is why the number of religious groups now needs to be specified in more detail. Jan Baszanowski estimated the quantity of Lutherans, Roman Catholics and Calvinists in Gdańsk to be respectively: 82.9%, 10.2% and 6.9% of the total city population for the time period 1651–1675 and respectively: 84.4%, 9.5% and 6.1% for the years 1676–1700.58 According to these numbers, Lutherans were the largest religious group in the city, but one may highlight that the population that settled in

57 Mundy, The Travels, p. 168.
58 Gieślak, Obraz społeczeństwa, p. 250 (tabell 30).
the suburbs were mostly Catholics and Mennonites. This in turn may significantly challenge earlier estimations of the percentage share of the municipal population according to its religious division. In Gdańsk and its peripheries were located several churches and chapels. The greatest one was the Lutheran parish church of St. Marry. Mundy compared this church to the St Paul’s cathedral in London:

The Pffarrekirck or parish churche, called St. Marries, is very large and richly sett Forth, the tower therof nott much inferior in bignesse to that off St. Paul in London.59

Besides the five Lutheran churches, there were four Catholic convents with their cloisters in the city and its suburbs: a Cistercian abbey (Oliwa), the Bridgettine church of St. Bridget (Siedlce), the Carmelite church of St. Joseph (Gdańsk) and the Dominican church of St. Nicolaus (Gdańsk), which became the De Gratta family’s final resting place.60 In addition, the Royal Chapel was built in the seventeenth century and became the main place for the Catholic celebrations in Gdańsk Main City. Calvinists were organised in one parish and possessed the church of Ss. Peter and Paul located in the suburbs.61 In addition to the Lutherans, Catholics and Calvinists, in Gdańsk there were other less numerous religious communities as Anglicans, Mennonites and Jews. About the Anglican community Mundy wrote as follows:

Many Married [English], living and abiding here, having a preacher, a Church or place to repaire unto to heare Gods word.62

This quotation indicates there was general religious freedom but also tangible municipal religious restrictions. It was one of the few places in contemporary Europe where Mennonites and Jews were tolerated. In spite of the fact that Jews had to settle in the suburbs and could not obtain citizenship, they could still enter the city and stay there for a short period of time as traders and factors of the Polish or Lithuanian nobility. Mennonites could live in the city, but without equal rights to the other Christian groups; however, even

59 Mundy, The Travels, p. 169.
60 See illustrations of churches and cloisters, Curicke, Der Stadt Dantzig, pp. 298, 310–311, 320–321.
62 Mundy, The Travels, p. 183.
Catholics and Calvinists were not allowed to sit on the City Council. Thus, the religious freedom in fact gave the Lutherans the upper hand and allowed them to control others.63

The complexity of the social issues and the quantity of the religious communities together with national minorities can give a more complete picture of cross-section Gdańsk society. As a Hanseatic city, Gdańsk was dominated by German as well as Dutch commerce in the medieval and early modern times. This in turn caused an increase in the number of German inhabitants in the city, which was especially visible in the post-Reformation period, when around 80% of the whole society became Lutheran. Besides the two largest groups that differed by language – Germans and Poles (including Jews) – English, Scottish, Dutch, Scandinavian and French minorities also lived in Gdańsk during its *Golden Age*.64 In addition, some tradesmen of Italian origin also stayed in the city as trade representatives acting in the name of the Italian states.

To sum up, the reasons for such great immigration can be seen in the commerce, communication, but also in the religious tolerance and openness of the society for foreigners.65 In spite of the fact that the coexistence of these religious and national communities was not always peaceful, Gdańsk and its suburbs remained open to newcomers in the long-term perspective.66 This is why one can even describe the city’s society as somehow *multi-ethnic* and the city’s character as bridging and quite open when it comes to religion. Therefore, the common name for Gdańsk’s inhabitants as Gdańskers

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63 Compare with Cieślak, Gdańsk, pp. 176–177.
64 Merchants and sailors from other countries such as England, Scotland, the Netherlands and France had their offices and meeting places in the city, for example Mundy described the English one. Mundy, *The Travels*, p. 183: ‘The English staple is allsoe here kept: a great company off Merchants, Factors, etts.; These minorities were organised in the forms of free brotherhoods or companies affiliated to the Artus Court, Mundy listed English and Scottish ones, Mundy, *The Travels*, p. 180: ‘(…) in the said house [the Artus Court] are certain o[r]ders having a Free Brotherhood or company, of the principall off the Citty, wherof some English and Scotts’; About other foreign groups in the city, see, for example: Urban, *Von Krakau*, p. 277.
65 About religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence, see, for example, Tighe, *Gdansk*, pp. 30–31.
66 The example of the odd-jobbers and illegal commodities produced by them led to riots on religious grounds (for instance the burning of suburban settlements in 1656 or the demolition of the Carmelite cloister in 1678), Cieślak, Walka o reform, pp. 170–175; Cieślak, Obraz społeczeństwa, pp. 252–253; Trzoska, Walka czechów, pp. 42–45.
(Danziger) in its *civic* sense – instead of the division of the society into religious and national groups – seems to be highly appropriate here.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, one should remember that such a community consisted only for Gdańsk residents who obtained citizenship.

**Culture**

The Artus Court was not the only place for meetings and discussions in Gdańsk. So, what were the other forms of entertainment in this early modern city and consequently, what can one learn about the local society from such entertainments? In brief, the theatre and a kind of open-air amphitheatre or sports arena were also placed there and can be seen as meeting places as well.

Gdańsk’s theatre was built between 1600 and 1612 and was a wooden construction approximately 10 meters high, located close to the School of Fencing and St. George Court. It was a kind of Elizabethan theatre built according to the English model. Because of its large size and the fact that the city itself had founded the theatre, Teresa Zarębska in her article pays special attention to the theatre’s public character and purpose. She also mentions English actors, who mostly played there⁶⁸. Mundy’s description confirms somehow her statement about the English plays being performed there. He described them as follows:

> Some Summers come here our English commediens [hic!] or players which representte [perform] in Netherlandische Dutche […] Among those actors was one here Nicknamed pickled herring.⁶⁹

Mundy asserted that not only theatrical characters, but also a clown amused the audience during interludes.⁷⁰ In the above quotation, Mundy also emphasised that Dutch was the language used in performances. The linguistic situation is worth lingering upon, but before doing so, other types of entertainment will be discussed.

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⁶⁷ Gdańsk as *patria* can be expressed by the citizenship of the city; Mundy, *The Travels*, p. 190: ‘(…) Burgers if they remove to another Country must loose and leave behind them the ⅓ th part off their estates to the Citties use’.

⁶⁸ Zarębska, Budowle, p. 367, (illustration 18).


⁷⁰ About ‘pickled herring’ (clown), see Mundy, *The Travels*, p. 182, (note 1).
Besides theatre and the Artus Court, other entertainments included sports and open-air activities. From Mundy’s description of the city one can learn about several forms of leisure activities such as ‘speedy sliding over the Ice and Snow’ in the winter time71 as well as walking in the city, horse riding and archery during the summer season.72 Due to Mundy’s detailed descriptions it is also known that animal fights were popular as well. He described them as follows:

Baiting and Fighting off beasts, as bull, beare and dogges enterchanged, sometimes horse and bear, wolffe and bull [...] although they observe not soe much law and orders in this sport as in England.73

This quotation ends with a comparison to the English rules, and by this, probably he was indicating his criticism of such violent activities.

Furthermore, the cultural life of Gdańskers can also be expressed by the city’s architecture and art as well as the educational system. The early modern city’s structure was formed gradually and continuously during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; therefore, Renaissance and Baroque architecture dominate in the city centre even today. In this period, most of the city’s public buildings were built or reconstructed, including the city hall, Artus Court, Göbel’s House, the English House, the Green Gate and the Golden Gate.74 The rebuilding of the Long Market was mainly connected with the construction of the royal residence and guild meeting places there. Besides the work on representational and public buildings, the enlargement of the fortifications and harbour took place around the city during this period of time. One should emphasise that foreign architects and artisans were recruited in order to plan and construct the new buildings as was common practice in contemporary Europe. Dutch art had a wide appeal among the Gdańskers, as is evidenced by the paintings by Izaak van den Blocke.75 In this period,

71 Mundy, The Travels, pp. 177–178: ‘In Winter […] speedy sliding over the Ice and Snow […]’.
72 I Mundy, The Travels, p. 178: ‘In summer [hic!] they ride a horseback or in coaches to the places aforesaid. Att Heilighbourne is a pretty pleasant walk beetweene the hills, woods and groves of trees […] They use allsoe shooting exercise with Crosbowes att a Fowleof wood sett uppe on a very high pole’.
73 Mundy, The Travels, p. 179.
75 The most famous of Blocke’s works are ceiling frescos; See the Allegory of Gdańsk, in Rudolf Braunburg and Michael Engler, Danzig, das Werder und die Kaschubische Schweiz (Hamburg, 1990), pp. 24–25.
Gdańsk’s Gymnasium, archive and library were also erected.\textsuperscript{76} The most common language taught at schools was German, but Latin and Polish were also part of the curriculum (mostly at the parish schools).\textsuperscript{77} It should be highlighted that in Gdańsk’s Lutheran churches, Latin hymnbooks were still in use, in spite of the lingual change of the church ceremonies due to the Reformation.\textsuperscript{78}

In addition, Gdańsk and Royal Prussia were a home region for such scholars as Nicolaus Copernicus, Johannes and Olaus Magnus\textsuperscript{79} and Johannes Hevelius in early modern times.\textsuperscript{80} Some of the aspects of culture and ideas presented above depict the city’s multicultural character, where artists, scholars and architects from different countries met and worked together. These examples show that not only the \textit{sacrum sphere}, expressed by religious tolerance, but also the \textit{profanum sphere}, by common leisure activities, linked all in the local society.

Concluding Remarks

The question about the uniqueness of the city arises in an analysis of the issues pertaining to Gdańsk. What were the unique features that distinguished Gdańsk from the other Hanseatic cities?

In order to answer this question, it is worth quoting Peter Mundy once again, who ended his relation about Gdańsk in the following manner.

\textit{This Citty [Danzig] exceeds (1) in traffick, (2) plenty, (3) voluptuousnesse, (4) pride), (5) arts. (1) For traffick: witnesse Near 200\textsuperscript{7} tonnes of Corne, besides other commodities brought yearly down out of Poland […] (2) For Plenty: see their Marketts how they abond with Flesh, Fish, Chace, Wildffoule, Fruits, herbes, rootes, etts., such store, such variety and Soe Cheape as it exceeds all other places that I have yet seen. (3) Their voluptousnesse: Manifested in their banketts, Meales, which not only abonds, butt allose in their long Sittings, especially att Weddings, which is commonly 5, 6 and 7 hours att a dinner, their drinkcing answearable by Men. This within the Citty […] (4) Their pride:}

\textsuperscript{77} About Polish language, see Nowak, \textit{Między barokiem}, pp. 284–289.
\textsuperscript{78} Cieślak, \textit{Życie religijne}, p. 320.
\textsuperscript{79} Olaus’s \textit{Carta Marina} was composed in Gdańsk and dedicated to this city.
\textsuperscript{80} About regional scholars, see Mundy, \textit{The Travels}, p. 216.
chiefly in their Apparell, not to bee paralleled, especially by the yonger Sort [...] (5) And lastly, For arts and Sciences.  

Here, Mundy summarised the unique features of the city and its inhabitants which he earlier analysed in his work. This fragment once again confirms that Gdańsk connected both the German and Polish culture and habits. Once again, Gdańsk remained the biggest city in this part of Europe and the busiest harbour in the Baltic Sea area. This shows that beside the strong economic development, the social and religious sphere distinguished Gdańsk from other European cities in the seventeenth century. Here, for example the Lutherans and Catholics could live together and practise their faiths. One should take this particular fact into consideration while analysing the De Gratta family’s status in the city. Even though their Catholic faith made careers in the city’s administration impossible, they were still able to gain citizenship of the city as well as purchase a house in the central part of the city. Altogether, the bridging role of the city can be described through its communication, trade, politics, religion, culture, art and the mentality of Gdańskers as well as the ethnical and cultural diversity of the Commonwealth.

Analysis of the main issues that the early modern city had to deal with requires a cross-disciplinary approach based on economic, political, religious and cultural perspectives. Therefore, this chapter has tried to illustrate some of the particular aspects of the city’s development by using such perspectives seen here as those complementing each other. In other words, it is impossible to create an image of the city without taking into consideration economic and political aspects. The case of the city of Gdańsk in the last part of its Golden Age showed that cities were precursors of civil societies and centres of cultural development. Indeed, cities offered the possibility to exchange views in their public places and other places such as pubs or inns. As this chapter has shown, Gdańsk’s Artus Court was such a meeting place, where public discussions took place.

The comparison of Gdańsk to a small republic within a bigger one that was analysed earlier in the text showed in what ways the city depended on the Commonwealth. In general, the city’s relationship with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was limited to the following communication channels: (1) via Royal Prussia’s Council, (2) via the representatives at the
Diet, and (3) via the representatives at the royal court. All of these levels show the influence of the city on the Commonwealth’s politics.

To sum up, the geographical location of Gdańsk on the south coast of the Baltic Sea played a significant role in the city’s development and influenced its multicultural character. By trade and shipping and land communication, the city was connected with Europe. This in turn resulted in the development of the press service, printing of books and cultural exchange. Through its religious tolerance and quasi-independent status in Poland-Lithuania, Gdańsk became a destination for both religious and political immigrants. These factors, in conjunction with the situation in contemporary Europe, allowed the city’s fast growth and transition from a medieval town to an early modern metropolitan area, and that made it possible for such migrants as Giovanni Antonio De Gratta and his family to establish themselves there. Finally, one may observe that Gdańsk development will also be considered in the final discussion of this thesis. At that point, the discussion will focus on the role of the city of Gdańsk in Francesco De Gratta’s career.
Diagram 2. The De Grattas’ family tree.
CHAPTER 3
Family

Madame Eufrosina, wife to [Bartolomeo Sardi] was born in Gdańsk to Sir Noble Francesco Gratta, the Postmaster General in Prussia of a noble family originating in the Duchy of Milan who obtained Polish Indygenat and Madame Agatha van [hic!] Classen, [originating in] a Dutch noble family.¹

With these words an anonymous chronicler of the Sardi family began his presentation of Eufrosina De Gratta, second daughter of Francesco De Gratta and Agatha van Classen, in his incomplete biography of 1730.² Even such a brief presentation included some intriguing facts related to Eufrosina’s parents and to the origin of the De Gratta family. First, the biographer noted that Francesco was the Postmaster General of Prussia, and came from a noble Milanese family. This description continues with facts that the family received the Polish Indygenat (naturalization into the Polish nobility) and lastly that Agatha van Classen (van Glassen, hic!) originated from a noble Dutch family. Even in this short description there are several questionable facts which contradict other sources about the De Gratta and van Classen families. Inspired by this description, I will challenge the presented information and widen my investigation to other members of Francesco De Gratta’s nuclear family through an exploration of the interfamilial bonds which in turn helped Francesco to root his family in Poland-Lithuania.

² There is no indication about the author of the Eufrosina’s biography, only the date of April 27, 1730 given as her date of death and at the same time the date of the document. See Nelli, Archivio Sardi, p. 571.
In this chapter, Francesco’s nuclear family is mapped and understood as his primary social network. Against the background of interfamilial connections, issues such as Gdańsk citizenship, education and marriage politics, together with the granting of the Polish Indygenat will be discussed.

The main questions here are:

1. What were Francesco De Gratta’s patrimonial strategies towards his children?
2. How did he root his family in Gdańsk and Poland-Lithuania environments?

For this purpose, Francesco’s plans for his children will be taken into particular consideration. Moreover, the family’s establishment in Gdańsk, which is seen as the ‘place’ factor in Francesco’s career, will also be evaluated. Therefore, before the analysis of Francesco’s life and aspirations for his children, the movement of his father Giovanni Antonio from Italy to Gdańsk needs to be presented. After that there will be an in-depth discussion concerning the marriages between Anna Maria and Jan Wawrzyniec; Eufrosina and Andrzej Ignacy Bair; Eufrosina and Bartolomeo Sardi. The marriages will be discussed parallel to Elisabetta’s future as a nun. Next, the education and professions of Francesco’s sons will be investigated. Moreover, the analysis of Francesco’s patrimonial strategies should be seen as a turning point in the investigation of his career and economic businesses. Prior to the presentation of Francesco’s family members, it is worth taking a closer look at the concept of familial social actions in the early modern period, with special focus on patrimonial strategies.

Familial Social Actions

Lindsay O’Neill, while describing the Earl of Egmont, John Perceval’s (1683–1748) epistolary network in the early modern British context, showed that his family members dominated among the recipients of his correspondence.3 According to O’Neill: ‘individuals automatically turned to family members for support and in doing so they reaffirmed ties and created geographically dispersed webs’4 and she also states that ‘leaning upon family connections

was a familiar social action. But how was the family as a social network understood in the early modern world? Did it consist of only its nuclear members or did it include others, beyond them?

O’Neill writes about the ‘ties of intimacy without ties of blood’ and about ‘friendly connections’ included in the ‘familial network’. Thus, the ties of intimacy were those on which familial social action relied and on which an individual’s family network was built. That meant the family network was not necessarily built up around all family members tied by blood, but rather around those who had a close relation to an individual. In such a way, friends and patrons, but also, business companions could be included in the familial network, as well as persons who were incorporated into the family by marriage or tutorship. What about the familial social action then?

The familial social action characterised by leaning upon family connections and turning to family members for support is thus a networking strategy based on permanent connections between relatives. In this light, one can perceive such bonds as providing not only inherited possibilities for an individual, but also as inter-family mutual dependences. The family connections that were built up on friendship relationships allowed a familial network to grow. In this way, the family ties could encompass new members, often along with the new members’ own networks.

Family networks were extremely important in the early modern world. The example given by O’Neill of the Perceval family’s web of contacts showed how family bonds were used to expand an individual’s network. There were several strategies to achieve familial inclusiveness. The main one which was commonly used at that time was undoubtedly the strategy of marriage. By his/her marriage or arranging child marriages, an individual could establish new networks or expand an existing one by inclusion of the other person’s contacts.

The De Gratta family was no exception. Francesco De Gratta and Agatha van Classen had six children whose futures were planned according to the category of familial social actions, which aimed to expand Francesco’s social network. The marriage of Francesco De Gratta’s oldest daughter Anna Maria to Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki was one such familial social action which, as discussed later, resulted, not only, in the merging of two families, but also (or mostly), in the cementing of the Francesco’s own businesses with Wodzicki’s. In this way, Jan Wawrzyniec was not only tied to Francesco by the intimacy

of their business relationship; he also became a member of the De Gratta family. One should see the marriage between Eufrosina, Francesco’s second daughter, with Andrzej Ignacy Bair and later with Bartolomeo Sardi in a similar way. Both Bair and Sardi were known to Francesco before they married his daughters.

Another strategic familial action was used with Francesco’s youngest daughter, Elisabetta, and his second son, Francesco Jr., who were chosen to become, respectively, a nun and a priest. Two other sons, Paolo and Alessandro, had to learn the merchant profession and become traders as well as inherit the father’s title and functions within the royal postal service. However, it should be kept in mind that it was Giovanni Antonio, Francesco’s father, who immigrated to Gdańsk in the first place and used his educational traineeship and merchants’ patronage to establish himself in the new situation. His activities may also be considered as familial social actions.

Gdańsk’s Merchant

Giovanni Antonio

There are few historical sources to be found describing the first years of Giovanni Antonio in Gdańsk. However, his application for Gdańsk citizenship could be seen as an aid to determining some basic facts about his early history in the city. Unfortunately, this document lacks both a date of confirmation and a date of arrival as noted in the Gdańsk City Council’s registry. Nonetheless, one might find some details about Pietro De Neri there, which consequently can shed more light on the time of creation of the document. De Neri, who came from Lucca, arrived in Gdańsk 1607 and died there in 1621. He was an agent of the Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo II, and was responsible for overseeing the grain trade between Poland-Lithuania and the Italian states. Concerning the application, it includes the statement that it was prepared after De Neri’s death, which is a strong indication of the early

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8 The application of Giovanni Antonio is held at the State Archive in Gdańsk: APG 300,60/99 No. 95.
9 In the State Archive in Gdańsk two sources that recorded Pietro De Neri’s death can be found. The first one is his last will, see APG 300, 43/35, pp. 133–134V.; and the second a note about the date of his death, his age and the Church that he was buried in (26 May 1621; Nero 49 years old, St. Nicholas) in the Church book of St. Mary’s Parish: APG 354/351, p. 180.
1620s as the approximate time of the document’s creation. As this document has also revealed, De Neri, was a tutor for Giovanni Antonio, who tutored him in the merchant profession.11

Consequently, it is very likely that Giovanni Antonio’s request had already been prepared in 1621. Furthermore, one finds another indication of time in the document – Giovanni Antonio had by this time resided in the city for 12 years, and had served as an assistant to De Neri for eight of these years.12 Despite the fact that Giovanni Antonio possessed the recommendation (‘Intercession’) signed by Prince Władysław (later Polish King Władysław IV) his request for Gdańsk citizenship had presumably been rejected. Such a conclusion can be drawn on the basis of the catalogue of the foreign merchants staying in Gdańsk without City Council permission, created about 30 years later, which still included the name of Giovanni Antonio.

The catalogue was generated in 1649/1650 and contains names of a number of merchants, together with a short description of their professions, often including extra information about their civil status and age. Next to Giovanni Antonio’s name (‘Antony Grato’, hic!) there is information about the length of stay (‘46 years’), his profession (‘Royal Postmaster and trader’) as well as the place of his residence (‘Laufenher Hoff’) together with some kind of registration fee that amounted to 500 fl.13 According to the estimated date of his request for Gdańsk citizenship, Giovanni Antonio had already moved to the city by 1609, which differs from the date included in the later catalogue of foreign merchants, which recorded his 46-year stay in the city. So, in the later source, Giovanni Antonio had already arrived in Gdańsk somewhere around 1604–1605, which was of course earlier than the previous known date. Such a difference could be a result of a mistake made by the City Council’s scribe, or of the wrong date being given by Giovanni Antonio himself. Despite this difference in time the above evidence suggests that it was in the first decade of the seventeenth century that he came to Gdańsk and that he stayed until the 1650s. He probably died in Gdańsk in the mid-1650s.15

11 APG 300,60/99 No. 95, frontal page.
12 APG 300,60/99 No. 95, frontal page.
13 According to Bogucka – ‘Dwór Kartuski’ (‘Kartuski Manor House’), see Bogucka, Obcy kupcy, p. 79.
14 APG 300, 10/27, p. 78. According to Bogucka, the fee of 500 fl was a rent, Bogucka, Obcy kupcy, p. 79.
15 Giovanni Antonio’s name is not included in the Church books of St. Mary’s Parish in Gdańsk, most likely due to the fact that he resided outside of the parish borders. His last letter to Somigliano is dated 29 January 1653 (The letter is written by Francesco).
Concerning Giovanni Antonio’s arrival in Gdańsk, it is highly likely that he was sent there by his parents to learn merchandising under the supervision of De Neri. As already noted, De Neri came to Gdańsk as a representative of the Duke of Tuscany to purchase grain and to export it to the Italian city states. Furthermore, such a business was most certainly a profitable one, which in turn made De Neri a prosperous and wealthy merchant, who had only daughters and no son. He obtained his citizenship in 1613. Perhaps it was due to this last fact that he desired citizenship for pragmatic reasons. He could see in De Neri a possibility to obtain the requested citizenship, especially as De Neri did not leave any male heirs who could pass down his functionary title. After Pietro’s death in 1621, Giovanni Antonio stepped into Pietro’s shoes and began engaging in his own trade; however, one should bear in mind that Giovanni Antonio did not marry one of De Neri’s daughters. It should be noted that the practice of sending sons abroad to a similar merchant’s group bonded to one’s own via family ties was often used in Europe’s early modern times.

In the previous research about the De Gratta family, one can encounter the incorrect information that Francesco migrated to Gdańsk after he received his postal function. Another issue is the information that his family came from Lucca or Genoa. According to my investigation, both these facts are false as Francesco very likely was born in Gdańsk, as the catalogue of foreign merchants includes the information that Giovanni Antonio continued his uninterrupted stay in the city from at least 1604/1605 until 1649/1650, and as the Indygenat confirms the family’s origin from

16 Tygielski, Włosi, p. 135.
17 He had four daughters: Angelica, Catharina, Aurelia and Barbara, APG 300, 43/35, p. 133.
18 See, for example, Noack, Christian Hoffmann, p. 76 (footnote 35).
19 Sources remain silent on whom Giovanni Antonio married; however, it is necessary to note that the oldest daughter to De Neri, Angelica was born in 1607 and married Mochinger in 1631, see Noack, Christian Hoffman, p. 76; Stekelenburg, Michael Albinus, p. 315. This is why it is impossible to claim that Giovanni Antonio married one of De Neri’s daughters, especially when one considers the fact that Francesco De Gratta was born in 1613.
20 See, for example, Lipska, Dekoracje, p. 98 (footnote 20); Jakubowski, Gratta Franciszek, p. 555. In some research, one may find information that it was Giovanni Antonio who first migrated to Gdańsk, but without any additional information on the reasons or date of his immigration, for example, Maliszewski, Gratta Franciszek, p. 106.
21 About Lucca See, for example, Pośpiech, W służbie, p. 162; about Genua, see Matthias, Darstellung des Postwesens, p. 119.
22 APG 300, 10/27, p. 78: ‘46 Jahr althier continue’.
Cannobio located in the Duchy of Milan. This information will be deliberated upon later in the text, in the subchapter which discusses the Polish Indygenat that Francesco’s sons obtained in 1676.

The lexicon of Lucca’s merchant families by Diario Giuseppe Vincenzo Baroni lists one Gratta family whose roots stretched back to the beginning of the fourteenth century. According to the lexicon, this particular Gratta family possessed a coat of arms depicting three pigs and one can conclude that the Lucchessian De Gratta family name line died out somewhere around 1650. Baroni mentions that Nicolao Gratta, who died ca 1650, was the last representative of this family. During my research, no possible links came up between Nicolao from Lucca on the one hand, and Giovanni Antonio or his descendants ‘from Gdańsk’ on the other. Moreover, the lexicon does not mention Giovanni Antonio at any time, even in the detailed family tree enclosed there. A possible explanation may be that he was one of many sons who had not been included in the family register because of the order of succession starting with the oldest son, or simply because this was another family with the same name. Lastly, it should be remembered that it was the application for the Polish Indygenat (which will be analysed in detail when presenting Francesco’s sons) that confirmed the fact of the De Grattas’ origin in the Duchy of Milan, which consequently denies their Lucca origin.

The Mollo family

On the basis of the correspondence in the Wodzicki archive and the records of St. Mary’s parish in Gdańsk, it might be assumed that Giovanni Antonio had at least two children. Besides Francesco, he had one daughter, Maria Luigia, who married a Milanese nobleman, Carlo Mollo. This relationship was revealed after Francesco’s death when Maria Luigia solicited for support

23 ASL, AS, 123, p. 124.
24 BSL, ms. 1114, No. 26: Diario Giuseppe Vincenzo Baroni, Notizie genealogiche delle bart. sec. XVIII. famiglie lucchesi.
26 It remains unclear if Giovanni Antonio had other son whose name was also Francesco. The only information about that is to be found in the Church books of St. Mary parish: APG 354/351, p. 67: ‘[16]74 16 Januar Francisco grato hf 49 J […] SN’; APG 354/352, p. 83: ‘[16]74 16 Januar Franciscus Grattonn h fr 49 J […] SN’.
27 ZNiO, Rkps. 11576, pp. 171–172. Letter by Luigia Molla De Gratta to Anna Maria Wodzicka (Gratta), Bellinzona 27 May 1677.
for her son Francesco Mollo from Francesco De Gratta’s daughter, Anna Maria. In her letter, Maria Luigia named Anna Maria, her niece and Francesco, her brother. 29 The fact that the family of Mollo resided in Bellinzona, a city in the Swiss Confederation close to the border with the Duchy of Milan, makes the hypothesis of the De Gratta family’s origin being in the northern parts of the Duchy of Milan even stronger. According to Kevin E. Kandt, Francesco Mollo was born in Bellinzona in 1648/1649 and became a Royal Secretary and even consul-general in Amsterdam. 30 Francesco De Gratta remained with Francesco Mollo in a business relationship in the 1670s. 31 Such an action of trading with family members abroad was an important element of his trade strategy, and it helped to establish a well-functioning network of contacts. Trade networks were often based on family ties to strengthen their confidentiality. Bearing in mind that Amsterdam was a major trading area in Francesco’s economic activities – he had already established contact persons there such as Girolamo Parensi or Andrea and Octavio Tencini 32 – the trade contacts made with and through his nephew might be seen not only as De Gratta’s familial action, but also as a well-planned business strategy, which undoubtedly intensified and secured the flow of his capital.

29 ZNiO, Rkps. 11576, p. 171: ‘nella morte di amico mio bene e fratello’.
30 Kandt, Sarmatia Artistica, p. 355.
31 In the State Archive in Lucca, there are preserved bills and extracts from economic transactions, see ASL, AS, 123, pp. 1–2, 8–9, 11–14. The issues connected with De Gratta’s trade businesses in Amsterdam were frequent topics in Mollo’s correspondence to Wodzicki after De Gratta’s death, see ZNiO, Rkps. 11573, pp. 297–338.
32 On 30 September 1674, Francesco Mollo married Anna Maria Ooms. As one can see from the engraving titled Allegorie op het huwelijk van Franciscus Mollo en Anna Maria Ooms by De Hooghe, their portrait was sponsored by Jeronimo Parensi and Nic[olao] Andrea Tensini, who in turn were Francesco De Gratta’s contact persons in Amsterdam. Romeyn De Hooghe, Allegorie op het huwelijk van Franciscus Mollo en Anna Maria Ooms [map], 1674. Accessed January 6, 2017. https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-P-1903-A-23614. The engraving is preserved in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, reference number: RP-P-1903-A-23614. In his book about Italians in Poland-Lithuania, Tygielski included some information about the relationship between Francesco De Gratta and Andrea and Octavio Tencini. Tygielski quoted there Giacomo Fantuzzi, an auditor to the Apostolic Nunciature in Poland-Lithuania, who resided at Tencini’s house on the recommendation of De Gratta during his stay in Amsterdam, see Tygielski, Włosi, p. 328. De Gratta also kept trade contacts with Girolamo Parensi, see Chapter 7.
Francesco

While taking into consideration the information about Francesco De Gratta’s death on July 16, 1676, at the age of 63 registered in the Church books of St. Mary parish in Gdańsk\(^3\), it becomes clear that Francesco was born in Gdańsk in 1613.\(^4\) According to the already mentioned catalogue of foreign merchants, Francesco had spent only five years outside his home city and that had to have happened before 1648.\(^5\) Furthermore, one should remember that no other merchant is listed there together with a son. That makes this particular note concerning Francesco’s five-year long interval very unusual. At the same time, it had to be of great importance for the City Council, who registered that information. As the catalogue also reveals, the interruption in his stay was caused by a ‘war’, unfortunately, without giving any other supplementary information about the time of the war or the parties engaged in the conflict.\(^6\) Nevertheless, it seems he left Gdańsk because of the Polish-Swedish war in 1626–1629, despite the fact that this war lasted only three years, not five as depicted in the catalogue. Then, Francesco was probably sent to his father’s homeland or to the Polish royal court. The later very close and friendly relationships between Francesco and the Polish royal couple can be seen as an argument for such an extended stay at the court. Both proposed alternatives seem to be plausible to the same extent. Little is known about Francesco’s education, but his stay outside of Gdańsk may cast some light on this particular aspect. The fact that he could communicate in at least four languages: Polish, German, Latin and Italian, taking the languages that he used in his correspondence into consideration, demonstrates his high educational level, which can be successively interpreted by his possible frequent visits to both Italy and Poland-Lithuania.

\(^4\) One may note that Giovanni Antonio probably had another son called Francesco. He died in 1674, at the age of 49. The only information about Francesco – probably the second son of Giovanni Antonio – had been included in the Church books of St. Mary parish: APG 354/351, p. 67: ‘1674, 16 January, Francisco Grato Gf 49Jahr SN’; APG 354/352, p. 83: ‘1674,16 January, Franciscus Gratonn hfr 49J SN’.
\(^5\) APG 300, 10/27, p. 78: ‘5 Jahr alhier in Kragen’.
\(^6\) APG 300, 10/27, p. 78.
According to Giovanni Antonio’s letter to his ‘patron’, Giovanni Andrea Giovanelli— an Italian trader in Vienna, Francesco married Agatha van Classen, a daughter of Paul Claessen (hic!) in October 1648. Paul van Classen was described in the letter as a ‘merchant and principal burgher [borgese, hic!] of Gdańsk’, who ‘was already dead’ at the time Giovanni Antonio sent his letter. These two major facts show that Paul left his legacy to his descendants. Of course this included leaving higher dowry for his daughter Agatha, as well as passing the merchant title to Paul’s heirs. Here, it should be mentioned that the van Classen’s family obtained its Gdańsk citizenship before the De Gratta’s family; Francesco received his citizenship in 1649. In addition, the van Classen family originated in the Netherlands, as the anonymous chronicler remarked in Eufrosina’s biography, of which a fragment was quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Furthermore, van Classens were Catholics. Besides the information that Paul van Classen was buried in the St. Nicholas Church in Gdańsk (in the very same Church as Francesco De Gratta and Caspar Richter), it can be found in a note in the Church books of the St. Brigitte Church in Gdańsk that Agatha van Classen had been baptized there on 11 March 1626. Moreover, in the very same

37 About Giovanni Andrea Giovanelli and the Giovanelli family, see, for example, Mazzei, Traffici, p. 70.
38 Not Agnes (Agnieszka) as for example K. Maliszewski wrote in his entry on Francesco De Gratta, see Maliszewski, Gratta Franciszek, p. 106.
39 The document is mentioned in Mazzei’s book: Mazzei, Traffici, p. 57. The document is preserved in the Venice archive: ASV, Archivo Giovanelli (AG), 4, pp. 52–53; There is no information about their marriage in the Church books of the St. Bridgette parish, this is why one can claim that their marriage took place at the Church of St. Nicholas in Gdańsk, the same Church, where Francesco De Gratta was buried.
40 ASV, AG, 4, p. 52: ‘mercante et principal Borgese di questa Citta’.
41 ASV, AG, 4, p. 52: ‘felice memoria’; His name can be found in the Church books of St. Mary parish in Gdańsk with a note that he was buried in the Church of St. Nicholas: APG 354/351, p. 185: ‘1645, 20 Martý, Paul Claussen 66 Jahr pöena 10 uhr., S. Nicolai’.
42 ASL, AL, 203, p. 825.
43 BZR, Regensburg Ostk/Rechenbücher, Danzig St. Brigitten, D46, No. 15: ‘Anno 1626, 11 Marty, P. Johan, Infans: Agatha, Parentes: Paul Classen, Cornelo v. Sursten, Partini: Franciscus Brocso, Elisabet Wusekler, Margetha von Sursten’. In 2002, the original church books from what is nowadays the western part of Poland that were kept by the Regensburg Catholic Diocese’s archive were given to the Polish Catholic Church archives. The Church books from Gdańsk’s parishes are located in the Pelplin Catholic Diocese’s archive, Poland. See APG, Parafialne księgi metrykalne przechowywane w Archiwum Diecezjalnym w Pelplinie (PN, 2002). In this research the microfilms from Regensburg were used.
books, one may find that both Francesco De Gratta and Agatha van Classen were godparents to a number of children of Gdańsk Catholic merchants.\textsuperscript{44}

Thus, Agatha’s Dutch roots and Catholic faith, together with the high status of her family in the local Gdańsk society, must undoubtedly be seen as strategic elements in Giovanni Antonio’s patrimonial ambitions towards his son. By Francesco’s marriage to Agatha, the De Gratta family became permanently linked to the city, which eventually helped Francesco to obtain city citizenship. The register of the ‘third estate’ tells that Francesco received his citizenship on 11 May 1649.\textsuperscript{45} This was approximately at the same time as the list of foreign merchants was created and only a few months after his marriage to Agatha. One could ask if Francesco had been listed in Gdańsk’s multitude register even if it is clear that the De Gratta family was prosperous at that time and Francesco married to Agatha van Classen. The reason why his name was registered there seems to lie in the Italian origin of Francesco’s father as well as the pro-royal character of the ‘third estate’, which throughout the following centuries was often in opposition to the City Council.\textsuperscript{46}

Nonetheless, what did it mean for Francesco to be citizen of Gdańsk? And why could Giovanni Antonio not obtain his citizenship earlier?

The answer to the first question lies in the right of only Gdańsk citizens to take part in the legal grain trading within Poland-Lithuania and transporting goods through Gdańsk’s harbour to the western part of Europe. Grain trading by non-Gdańsk merchants was strictly prohibited and regulated by the Gdańsk City Council, which had the sole right to allow a merchant to trade with Polish nobles. The Polish trade was extremely important for the development of Gdańsk as a harbour city, where the commodities from the Polish territories (hinterland) were sent to be sold. This is the reason why the City Council started to limit the possibility for foreign traders to obtain city citizenship. As a result, it was more difficult to receive a city citizenship in the seventeenth century than in the previous one.\textsuperscript{47} According to Bogucka, in the first half of the seventeenth century, the Gdańsk City Council wanted to introduce changes to their citizenship policy, restricting it only to those

\textsuperscript{44} BZR, Regensburg Ostk/ Rechenbücher, Danzig St. Brigitten, D46, No. 19–23. NB! No other personal links were discovered to the people from the Church books during the analysis of Francesco De Gratta’s activities.

\textsuperscript{45} APG 300, 60/4, p. 119: ‘11. May (21) Franz Gratt (Kratt) [hic!] v. Danzig [hic!]’.


\textsuperscript{47} Bogucka, Obcy kupcy, p. 61ff.
foreign traders who stayed full-time in the city. Consequently, these merchants simply could not stay in other cities for a long time and after their return apply for Gdańsk citizenship.\footnote{Bogucka, Obcy kupcy, p. 63.} This fact might explain why Francesco’s five years away from the city were registered by the City Council. As already observed, the rules became more stringent in the seventeenth century, and because of that Giovanni Antonio De Gratta did not obtain his citizenship, even when he was recommended by Prince Władysław.\footnote{APG 300,60/99, No. 95.} However, he could continue his stay in the city on special conditions, restricted by the City Council. In addition, according to these conditions, one could receive the citizenship only if born to a trader who continued to reside in the city. In such a way, Giovanni Antonio’s life in the city made it possible for Francesco to become a Gdańsk citizen.

Returning to the information that Francesco spent five years outside Gdańsk, this fact strengthens the idea of the time requirement and the very tedious registration in this matter demanded by the Gdańsk City Council. Moreover, it should be said that citizenship allowed Francesco to legally trade with the Polish hinterlands as well as to purchase an apartment in the city. His marriage to a noble local merchant’s daughter, who possessed Gdańsk citizenship, can be seen as an additional factor which accelerated the whole process. Finally, it should be highlighted that Francesco became a citizen of Gdańsk as an Italian nobleman. Francesco did not get his Polish Indygenat during his lifetime, and therefore, it is most likely that he lived as a merchant until his last days.\footnote{See the copy of a letter by primate of Poland-Lithuania (Andrzej Olszowski) to Francesco De Gratta written in Warsaw dated 22 June 1675, BUW, GR, 70 Pisma z czasu panowania Michała króla i Jana Sobieskiego, k. 7. In this letter Olszowski wrote to De Gratta about the planned reprisals of the Polish nobility that had to follow towards Gdańskers after the death of a servant to the Bishop of Smoleńsk. Olszowski did not take the Polish nobility’s side and highlighted that Gdańskers were innocent and this is why he asked De Gratta for help.} The Indygenat was eventually received by his sons in the autumn of 1676 after their father’s death, which in fact allowed them to gain full noble rights, like the rest of the Polish-Lithuanian noblemen. The Polish Indygenat will be discussed more profoundly in the subchapter about Francesco’s sons. Now, the focus will be moved to Francesco’s and Agatha’s daughters, and their marriages as networking strategies.
‘I Love My Children More Than All Other Fortunes’\textsuperscript{51}

These are the words which Francesco wrote to Jan Wawrzyniec about his children while discussing the marriage of Jan Wawrzyniec to his daughter, Anna Maria. Although the form ‘children’, used in the letter, only referred to his daughters, Francesco treated his daughters equally regarding the disposition of his testament. Each one of his daughters received the same sum amounting to 20,000 Polish zł as their dowry.\textsuperscript{52} This rule was also applied to Anna Maria, the oldest of his three daughters, who became Jan Wawrzyniec’s wife in the autumn of 1669. The marriage took place after a long run of negotiations between her future husband and her father. The correspondence of Francesco with Jan Wawrzyniec encloses their negotiations, and from that source one can learn how the negotiations were pursued as well as get to know more details about Francesco’s and Jan Wawrzyniec’s intentions and ambitions. Moreover, the correspondence does not reveal any epistolary contacts of Anna Maria with Jan Wawrzyniec before their marriage. While the marriage of Francesco’s oldest daughter to his close business companion seen in its economic context will be the subject of Chapter 7, the marriage negotiations considering the patrimonial strategies and admission of Jan Wawrzyniec to Francesco’s nuclear family seem to represent a very relevant topic to investigate in the present chapter. In connection to this, one may observe that the marriage negotiations are broadly described in his correspondence and include a number of important details. Keeping this in mind and the fact that it was the first marriage arranged by Francesco, it seems to be crucial to present these negotiations more thoroughly on the pages that are to follow. Special attention will be paid here to the creation of the marriage contract and the preceding procedures.

\textsuperscript{51} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 240: ‘mię mile są Dzieci nad wsitkie inne fortuný’.

\textsuperscript{52} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 240: ‘Ja z Curkamý ruwno postampicz sobie mislę ý krziwdeý, zadneý nie czinię’. The amount of 20,000 Polish zł, see the marriage contract ZNiO, Rkps. 11577/III, pp. 1–4.
Anna Maria

If Sir [Wodzicki] had any remarks concerning everything [concerning the marriage] Sir had the possibility to ask while Sir had stayed in Gdańsk, thence we had had opportunity to disclose of our plans.53

In a letter dated 24 July 1669, Francesco highlighted the fact that Jan Wawrzyniec did not say anything about his remarks when he met him personally in Gdańsk. Consequently, the letter might be considered as Francesco’s answer to Jan Wawrzyniec, who tried to assuage his doubts and fears concerning the amount of Anna Maria’s dowry. Francesco argued there that it was he who started the conversation on this topic, while they conferred face to face in Gdańsk. Thus, it can be said that Jan Wawrzyniec by that time was not as well-prepared for the negotiations as he should have been in Francesco’s eyes. One can observe Jan Wawrzyniec’s remarks as a result of the advice given by his friend Friedrich Ledel54, who became his representative in his matrimonial negotiations with De Gratta. ‘To disclose of our plans’ – in these words Francesco reminded Jan Wawrzyniec about their ‘open’ negotiations which took place in Gdańsk. At the same time, Francesco seemed to be quite surprised by Jan Wawrzyniec’s doubts concerning his offer. Nevertheless, as the letter informed, Jan Wawrzyniec was obliged to reveal his plans and to disclose his strategy of negotiations if he wanted to marry Francesco’s daughter. Next, Francesco continued his argumentation in the following way:

Deign to Sir [Wodzicki] […] to clarify your position and declare your opinion, to not remain in an unclear situation, if Sir would feel secure that Sir Ledel from your side will represent you in the negotiations, I am contented.55

One should highlight that Francesco asked Jan Wawrzyniec to declare his opinion and clarify his further plans directly before the statement about the mediation of Ledel.

53 ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 240: ‘kiedyś WMMP. miał iaki respekt wczimkolwiek wolno belo WMMP. odziwacz się albowiem natom ia porusił WMMP. tu w Gdansku bendanc azebýsmý sobie obupolne zamisły otwierały wczas’.
54 Friedrich Ledel, a Gdańsk merchant, was a brother-in-law of Johann Friedrich Becker, see Gryphius, Vermischte Gedichte, p. 208.
Who was Ledel and what kind of relationship bound him to Jan Wawrzyniec? The first thing which comes to mind is that Ledel was a person who perhaps knew both of them, especially, if we consider that Francesco agreed quickly to the proposal of his mediation. Ledel was probably one of a few persons whom Jan Wawrzyniec knew in the city, especially, if we bear in mind that the Wodzicki family originated in Little Poland. In addition, one may consider the fact that Ledel was brother-in-law to Becker, with whom De Gratta and Wodzicki traded potash. However, it should be remembered that Jan Wawrzyniec as a young merchant, without a Polish noble title, made high profits by selling potash and rose quickly in the administrative hierarchy of Poland-Lithuania. Presumably, he got to know Ledel by way of his trade contacts. Moreover, Ledel can be observed here as his primary contact in Gdańsk and as the only seller of his goods to the western part of Europe, until he made his business acquaintance with Francesco in the late 1660s. In addition, their meeting could possibly have been being arranged by Ledel. The fact that Francesco married off his youngest daughter to Jan Wawrzyniec, even though he was not a nobleman, shows that Francesco wished to find a reliable merchant with whom he could conduct his trade within the Polish territories. In such a way, Francesco saw in Jan Wawrzyniec, on the one hand, someone who was still not well-established in commerce and in need of his connections while, on the other, he perceived a possibility to infiltrate Polish trade via his future son-in-law.

I remind that Sir declared [your offer of marriage] to me from the very beginning, however because of our Gdańsk problem-free habit, that is commonly practiced in such circumstances, I had directly agreed upon your request, but as I have said, I prefer that these issues [about the marriage] will be discussed only among us and that I leave to your good will.56

After his additional confirmation of Jan Wawrzyniec’s proposal for the admission of Ledel as a mediator to their negotiations, Francesco used the phrase about the intimacy of their transaction, which demanded their mutual trust. This phrase can be interpreted in terms of Jan Wawrzyniec’s distrust of Francesco, who considered his future father-in-law’s offer with suspicion. Moreover, Francesco expressed his will for direct contact with Wodzicki

without any other mediating person in a longer-term perspective. Nonetheless, the request for mediation as such shows that the contacts between Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec were not strong enough in 1669 to leave the negotiations unmediated. The above quote also reveals another interesting fact: that Francesco by his statement of the ‘Gdańsk problem-free habit’ of negotiation, perceived himself to be a Gdańsk merchant. Moreover, this statement should be seen as nothing more than an attempt to convince Jan Wawrzyniec to trust Francesco.

‘I prefer that these issues [about the marriage] will be discussed only among us’ – this last statement strengthens the principal message in the analysed letter, by which Francesco tried to persuade Jan Wawrzyniec of his good intentions and trustworthy offer. De Gratta ended his letter with a sentence that he and with his wife would stay in touch with Wodzicki when it came to his ‘love affairs’. This particular statement means that both Francesco and his wife, Agatha, accepted Jan Wawrzyniec as their future son-in-law. Here, Agatha is mentioned for the first time in Francesco’s correspondence. This fact suggests the patriarchal patrimonial politics of Francesco, when it came to marrying off his daughters. Finally, he referred himself using the forms: ‘I’ or ‘we’ throughout the letter. One may note that this ‘we’ form did not refer to his wife but to him and Jan Wawrzyniec. This once again indicates his major influence on their daughter’s future. However, it seems that Agatha also had her own contacts with her future son-in-law already in 1668, which can be confirmed even by her letter to him dated 6 April 1668. Her contacts allow us to maintain that Agatha agreed to the marriage of her oldest daughter, but she still remained without any direct involvement concerning the final financial arrangement negotiated between Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec.

The Marriage Contract

Sir’s offer still remains actual [to me], Sir, you asked me to create points to our contract [...] however, because of the fact that I am not familiar with neither style nor patterns of such scripts, I would prefer that you, Sir,

would forward your difficulties to the contract, by your great friend Sir Ledel.\textsuperscript{59}

In his letter to Wodzicki dated 27 April 1668, Francesco, while mentioning the marriage contract (Lat. script), admitted that he had no knowledge about how to create such documents. A question about the genuineness of his words may arise here: did he really lack such knowledge? Here, the aspect of trust and intimacy between these two men is in focus. On the one hand, Wodzicki wished to create his marriage contract himself to be legally protected, and on the other hand, demanded the stipulations be signed by Francesco to assure himself that Francesco would not change his mind. Later on, Francesco mentioned Ledel’s mediation and the ‘great friendship’ between Jan Wawrzyniec and Ledel, which together with the potential ‘difficulties’ that might have arisen during their negotiations, showed his eventual approval of Jan Wawrzyniec’s request, but only if his request was supported by a ‘friendship’ argument. In the same letter, Francesco used the statement that ‘he loved his children more than all fortunes’ and assured Jan Wawrzyniec of his further assistance even after the marriage.\textsuperscript{60} After that, he used the phrase: ‘Przyjacielowy confido’ which means ‘friendly trust’ towards Jan Wawrzyniec. It should be emphasised that Francesco named Jan Wawrzyniec as his friend for the first time, although indirectly, by use of an adjective form while expressing trust. The reason for the indirect approach applied by Francesco in his letter might be seen in his later argument, which confirmed his promises and the ‘trustworthiness’ of his offer. Furthermore, he noted that especially his daughter, Anna Maria, among other people residing in his house (‘domowi’) sent her greetings to Jan Wawrzyniec in the postscript of his letter, which in turn can be seen as evidence for their communication only via Francesco.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{59} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, pp. 239–240: ‘Jako daley procedere wzawzieteý Intentiey y ode mnie puncta zondasz do formowania Contractu [...] nie wiedzanc, Manierę ani metodum takowich Scriptow, rozumialbim zebisz WMMM P. przez Jmci P Ledla iako przyiaciela wielkiego iezelý iakie difficultates widziecz racisz do resolutieý onich zaziey wiedziecz y wyrozumiecz naszego WMMMP’.

\textsuperscript{60} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 240: ‘Ze mię mile są Dzieci nad wszystkie inne fortuný ý kiedý z przeizenia Boskiego ie Przyiacielowy Confido przesto non intendo abý oddalone beý od affectu ý lask moich ojcowskich’.

\textsuperscript{61} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 241: ‘Domowy Moý zwłaszcza moia Anna klaniaiú się WMMP’.
In his next letter, dated 4 May 1668, Francesco wrote about the marriage contract again. This time, he insisted on his free choice – without being obliged by any contracts, to declare a specific amount of money compounding Anna Maria’s dowry.\textsuperscript{62} Moreover, he said it was dangerous to discuss their contract in the epistolary correspondence at all. This is why he became astonished by Jan Warzyniec’s lack of confidentiality, about which they had talked earlier, presumably at the time while Jan Wawrzyniec was staying in Gdańsk.\textsuperscript{63} Francesco also declared that he intended to keep his promises as he stated again that ‘he loved his children more than any other ‘substance’, but that he did not want to be absorbed by their negotiations, and wanted thus to stick to his already expressed opinion.\textsuperscript{64} In addition, the letter includes information that Agatha had contacted Jan Wawrzyniec on her own. Francesco explained that his wife had a very temperamental nature and made her decisions rapidly.\textsuperscript{65} Unfortunately, Agatha’s letter has not been preserved in the Wodzicki’s family archive. However, one can still assume that it could include issues around the marriage contract and the ongoing negotiations. Francesco also noted that his wife and daughters had joined ‘St. Dominic Markt where all of his [Francesco’s] women spent their time’.\textsuperscript{66} Despite the fact that he considered deliberating about the marriage issues via correspondence highly inappropriate in one of his earlier letters, one can read in the same source that his wife had sent her promises to Jan Wawrzyniec in her last message to him.\textsuperscript{67} Thus, even though her letters have not been preserved today, it is clear that Agatha also actively engaged in the negotiations.

Lastly, it is worth noticing here that Francesco did not return to the issues concerning the negotiations any more after his letters dated 27 April and 4 May 1668. Nonetheless, Francesco did not hesitate to inform Jan Wawrzyniec

\textsuperscript{62} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 243: ‘Jasię tak Declaruię ze quad promisi promisi, alnsuper quid post fata mea dzaci się ma, Chce oby to na moią zostawalo dobrowolną dispositią’.

\textsuperscript{63} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 243: ‘Co się ticze Scriptu naszego ktorim Serio iako widzę się starasz, nie wiedział bim co WMM Panu napisacz, albowiem takie controversie niediaj się tractari bezczenie listownie dziwuę się zes WMMMP. o tim nullan fenisty mentionem kiedismy ustnie mogłý discutere hanc materiam, wszakesý Creuiter zsoą ex meo motu jednak, około tego się zgodzieł lubo nie dostatecznie’.

\textsuperscript{64} ZNiO, Rkps.11572/II, pp. 243–244: ‘milszemi są dziateczki moie anizełý Zadna insza Substantia Jednak, nie damsię daleý oblegarî od nich leno co usque dokandt Zdanie moie mię czongnie bez ustirku Oicowskiego affektu, [...] rzetelnieý moią intentią wirouziums wiencý nonConsdo piones’.

\textsuperscript{65} ZNiO, Rkps.11572/II, p. 244: ‘przebaz WMMP tardantiam habic’.

\textsuperscript{66} ZNiO, Rkps.11572/II, p. 244: ‘Maįą moie Białegłowy wten tidzien Jarmark’.

\textsuperscript{67} ZNiO, Rkps.11572/II, p. 253: ‘Przeszłą Pocztą poslaem WMMMP obietnicę Moiei Malzonkiyt ktura się kłania WMMP. cum reliquis naleznach as hoc affitum’.

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about Anna Maria. In the last letter before his daughter’s marriage dated 8 June 1668, Francesco noted that his daughter had been getting ill; however, she has been feeling better at the time he sent his letter.68 Furthermore, no evidence is to be found in Francesco’s correspondence which could confirm that Anna Maria and Jan Wawrzyniec had contact with each other before their marriage.

These negotiations had shown how De Gratta tried to present himself towards Wodzicki as his business partner, especially if one considers the fact that their trade agreement was formulated around the time as the marriage negotiations took place. Due to the fact that he was not familiar with the creation of marriage contracts, Francesco trusted Ledel. Moreover, his patrimonial politics did not eliminate Agatha’s own contacts with her future son-in-law. Altogether the negotiations shows that both sides were suspicious regarding financial affairs (mostly visible in Wodzicki’s reactions) and trust (De Gratta’s).

The Marriage

As a result of the marriage negotiations, the contract which regulated Anna Maria’s dowry, was signed by Francesco De Gratta and his wife Agatha van Classen (Grata, hic!) on 15 November 1668.69 In signing the contract, both parties obliged themselves to pay 20,000 zł (probably Polish zł) for Anna Maria’s sake in order to protect her economic situation, especially, in the case of Jan Wawrzyniec’s death. The document also revealed that their marriage took place at the Catholic Church (presumably St. Nicholas Church) in Gdańsk, on 26 November 1668.70 Moreover, the contract divulged that Anna Maria was the oldest daughter of Francesco and Agatha. Surprisingly, it did not include any information about witnesses that were present or external credentials at the time of its signing. This is why it is fair to state that Ledel was only engaged in leading the negotiations around the formulation of the stipulations, which were later used for the final contract, but was not a witness during Jan Wawrzyniec’s marriage.

The fact that this legal document was copied from the original version of the document by Franciszek Tychowski into the register of the city of Warsaw

(Acta Castrensis Capitensis Varsaviensis) after the Epiphany (6 January) of 1679, reveals that the contract was not registered in any of the Crown’s official registers before. Thus, it remained in the form of the mutual agreement between Jan Wawrzyniec and Anna Maria’s parents. It is highly likely that the official registration of the marriage contract happened because of the conflict between Francesco’s children, which arose around his legacy in the late 1670s. As regards the conflict, it was settled eventually by litigation at the Gdańsk City Council in 1680–1681. When it comes to the contents of the contract, it included all of the earlier created stipulations (Lat. puncta). Moreover, in contrast to the marriage contract, which was created by Jan Wawrzyniec, these stipulations were made by Francesco. The stipulations were prepared on 23 September 1668, i.e. three weeks before the day of signing of the marriage contract. As was said before, there is no remark that in turn could confirm Ledel’s mediation in either of the documents. Taking this into consideration, it is fair to assume that Francesco’s strategy to leave the negotiations private resulted in Ledel not being among the document’s signatories.

By his marriage to Anna Maria, Jan Wawrzyniec – Francesco’s business partner became a member of his familial network. One may observe that after the marriage, Jan Wawrzyniec’s relationship with his father-in-law became one in which they were almost equals. Moreover, as one shall see later (Chapter 7), they developed more direct and trustful language in their communication. Finally, the marriage contract also reveals the subordination of daughters towards parents. This is particularly valid for her father, who negotiated with his future son-in-law concerning Anna Maria’s marriage settlement and belongings. One can say that such negotiations, as observed here, exemplify a patriarchal decision-making process included in early modern patrimonial practices; however they also reveal that Agatha was also involved in them. Nevertheless, it would be an exaggeration to maintain that they both pursued their negotiations to the same extent. The future of Francesco’s daughter was the main subject of his negotiations on the marriage contract with Jan Wawrzyniec. As a consequence, by strict regulations he wanted to secure Anna Maria’s dowry in the case of a divorce or her husband’s death, at the same time as he wished to develop their particular business interests.

71 ZNiO, Rkps. 11577/III, p. 4.
72 For the process files, see ASL, AS, 114.
73 ZNiO, Rkps. 11577/III, pp. 5–6.
Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki

Jan Wawrzyniec originated from a Cracowian merchant family. He became a Royal Secretary not later than in 1661. Together with Johann Friedrich Becker, he led a trade company, which specialised in the export of salt, grain, potash and weed-ash which originated from Wallachia and Moldova, and were exported to the western part of Europe. According to Maleczyńska, Johann Friedrich Becker received a special privilege to export saltpetre in 1665 which in turn allowed the company to increase its production of potash in Wallachia. Jan Wawrzyniec’s first contact with Francesco De Gratta can probably be dated to the late 1660s. As Francesco’s correspondence with Jan Wawrzyniec reveals, they did not know each other well before 1668. In Francesco’s early letters to Jan Wawrzyniec from 1668, it can be observed that he was insecure, especially when he referred personally to his business companion. He often apologized for his language mistakes; however only until Jan Wawrzyniec’s marriage to Anna Maria.

Returning to Jan Wawrzyniec’s career in the Polish governmental structures, he, together with another business partner, Adam Kotowski, collected royal tolls in the Polish Crown and Ruthenia (clo koronne i ruskie), and also administered the Crown land of Sambor (ekonomia samborska) together with the Crown land of Żywiec (ekonomia żywiecka). In addition, they managed the Cracowian salt mines (żupy solne) in Wieliczka and Bochnia from the late 1670s onwards, until the mid-1690s. In addition, Wodzicki was also involved with several smaller land estates, which he purchased in the last years of his life. He died in 1696. Altogether, one might stress that the career of Jan Wawrzyniec in the governmental structures of Poland-Lithuania is often depicted as a surprising and unique example of a merchant career in Polish noble society.

Eufrosina

Eufrosina, second daughter of Francesco, was a courtesan to the Polish Queen Marie Casimire d’Arquien, the wife of King John III Sobieski. She even accompanied the Queen during her trip to Rome in 1702, on which

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74 Wodzicki’s biographical note was created on the basis of the article by Maleczyńska, see Maleczyńska, Awans społeczny, pp. 67–73.
75 Maleczyńska, Awans społeczny, p. 68.
76 Maleczyńska, Awans społeczny, pp. 68–69.
77 Maleczyńska, Awans społeczny, pp. 69–73.
78 Maleczyńska, Awans społeczny, p. 73.
occasion she also visited Lucca, the place of origin of her second husband.\footnote{Antonelli, Una Sardi Polacca, pp. 97–156.} She was married twice. Eufrosina died in 1719 in Gdańsk.\footnote{Antonelli, Una Sardi Polacca, p. 101.} By that time she was the last of Francesco’s children who resided in the \textit{Gratta House} (\textit{Kamienica}) located in the heart of Gdańsk.\footnote{More about the Gratta House, see Chapter 8.} Eufrosina’s first marriage with Andrzej Ignacy Bair took place in September 1673. Her second marriage, to Bartolomeo Sardi, was concluded around three years later. Therefore, her first marriage can be considered as fully arranged by her father while the second one was concluded after his death. Consequently, a closer scrutiny of her first marriage will be undertaken here.


‘Here, yours only the gratefulness Grattowna [Miss Gratta], beautiful Eufrozyna [hic!] Now becomes yours […] my dear Bair!’\footnote{\textit{Wenus Polska}, pp. 192–193: ‘Twa oto jedyna Najwdzięczniejszaja Grattowna, piękna Eufrozyna, Juž ci celem zostaje […] Kochany mój Bairze!’} – in this way the contemporary poet Jan Gawiński presented the marriage between Eufrosina and Andrzej Bair. Gawiński was present in person at their wedding and recited a poem especially created for this occasion. The poem, written in a very flowery style, is a good example of the contemporary occasional literature. It includes several references to mythological characters which symbolise and praise the married couple.

The presentation of bride and groom was included in the poem. While Andrzej Ignacy was presented as a well-educated and reliable person who had travelled extensively in his youth and had held high governmental positions, Eufrosina was depicted more by referring to her personal features. She was shown as the embodiment of the goddess Venus who ‘was not [known] from
fortunes but from beautiful appearance, great habits, high intelligence. There are also descriptions of the family of Gratta and Eufrosina’s parents.

‘Happy parents who today gave away their daughter in marriage’ – this conclusion reveals the patrimonial politics of Francesco and Agatha towards marrying off their second daughter. Gawiński wrote about the family of Gratta and its reputation as follows:

[Eufrosina originates] in the House of Francesco De Gratta, in the excellent House of virtues, great achievements, if this was unknown to someone until today, it should be [known] here and beyond, or in the whole Crown, wherever his [the House of De Gratta’s] fame was not recognised [yet].

Here, the word ‘House’ (‘dom’) was used to depict Eufrosina’s origin. The concept of the ‘House’ was broadly used in Europe’s early modern period. It signified the nuclear family living together with relatives, family friends – often tied by kinship as well as professional connections – and the household’s servants. As one can read from the above quotation, the House of De Gratta was praised by the poem’s author as a ‘House of virtues and great achievements’. He was undoubtedly referring to Francesco’s personal career and his efforts devoted towards the organisation of the postal service in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In other words, the House of De Gratta was solely identified with Francesco. Not only did Gawiński pay tribute to the excellence of the De Gratta family in Gdańsk, he also proclaimed the De Gratta House’s greatness in in the kingdom (‘in the whole Crown’).

‘Wenus Polska’, as the poem of Gawiński was entitled, was published in September 1673 in Gdańsk, directly after its recital at the wedding. This fact can be ascribed to both Bair and at the same time, to Francesco who were interested in spreading the poem among contemporaries in order to praise the House of Gratta and to promote themselves. For Francesco it was undoubtedly a perfect moment to show his engagement in matters of the Crown, as well as to praise his ‘great achievements’ in the organisation of the postal system in Royal Prussia. Remarkably, the poem does not make any

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84 *Wenus Polska*, p. 185: ‘Nie że z fortun wysokich, lecz pięknej urody, Obyczajów wspaniałych, dowcipu bystrości’.
85 *Wenus Polska*, p. 197: ‘Szczęśliwi rodzice, Coście dziś swą córeczkę […] w świętą ligę małżeństwa wydali’.
86 *Wenus Polska*, pp. 184–185: ‘Domu Gratta Franciszka, w znamienite domu Cnoty, wielkie postępkı, jeśliż tajne komu, Mogą być tu i dalej, lub w całej Koronie, Gdzieby sława o jego nie brzmiała przestronnie’. 
reference to the Italian origin of the family. That could also strengthen the earlier message of the ‘great achievements’ for Poland-Lithuania, indicating only the local (Gdańsk) and the Polish contexts, which simultaneously eliminated Francesco’s wide activities and contacts abroad. Even the title of the poem, ‘Wenus Polska’, highlighted the Polish identity of Eufrosina. Consequently, the entire poem can be understood as a plea, created by Francesco, to be perceived as a Polish patriot.

Before the text of the particular poem, Gawiński’s work was provided with three citations. One proclaimed: ‘Marriage is not only for us but for the prosperity and contract with the Republic’\textsuperscript{87}. The sentence by Jakob Cats (Cutzius), Dutch poet\textsuperscript{88} indicates the understanding of marriage as a political contract which influenced the Republic’s prosperity. The other two quotes, one by Aristoteles that the public interest lies in a large amount of marriages\textsuperscript{89} and the other one by Horacio that the marriage should be indissoluble until death\textsuperscript{90}, also point to the institutional understanding of marriage; however, in its civic sense. Surprisingly, there is no reference to the Bible or the tradition of the Catholic Church, which both the families De Gratta and Bair belonged to. A question arises concerning the content of the poem: did Francesco add these quotes to the printed edition of the poem? Even if there are no indications to claim that, one may assume that his patrimonial politics towards his children, especially his daughters, needed a form of legitimation and he also wished to prove their loyalty to the Commonwealth. Through the lens of such legitimation of the marriage as a public right and responsibility towards the Crown, the patriarchal system appears not only as bonded to the Christian values and tradition, but also to the Crown and its prosperity. Finally, one may conclude that Francesco confirmed his strategy of strengthening his ties within the governmental spheres of the Polish Crown by his choice of recently ennobled Andrzej Ignacy as the husband of Eufrosina. Moreover, De Gratta undoubtedly tried to be accepted as a Polish nobleman and this is why such a poem can certainly be seen as part of his strategy to gain the Polish Indygenat.

\textsuperscript{87} \textit{Wenus Polska}, p. 178: ‘Matrimonium non nobis solum, sed agnatis se posteritati sed republicae contrahendum est’.
\textsuperscript{88} See Chemperek, \textit{Poezja}, p. 61.
\textsuperscript{89} \textit{Wenus Polska}, p. 178: ‘Reipublicae qiuppe interest, ut coniugia sint frequentia, sine qu i bus illa nec stare quidem potest, multo minus vigere’.
\textsuperscript{90} \textit{Wenus Polska}, p. 178: ‘Felices ter et amplias, Quos irrupta. tenet copula; nec maiis Divulsa querimoniiis Suprema citius solvit amor die’.
Andrzej Ignacy Bair

According to Gawiński, Andrzej Ignacy travelled around Europe in his youth, knew many languages, and gained a high position in the Crown’s Treasury due to the trust of Jan Andrzej Morsztyn who was a Grand Treasurer of the Polish Crown at this time.\textsuperscript{91} He received his noble title not earlier than in January 1673. Hence, it happened only half a year before he married Eufrosina. In the noble declaration one can read that Andrzej Bair received his title as a reward for his engagement in military service for the Crown, as well as his administrative work as the Royal Secretary and as a Higher Notary of the Crown’s Treasury.\textsuperscript{92} Here, it is reasonable to consider Francesco’s motives. He wanted somebody of noble Polish origin as a husband for his daughter, and at the same time, he wanted to strengthen his own position in Poland-Lithuania through the marriage. Taking this into consideration, maintaining family bonds with Bair, who remained in a patron-client relationship with Jan Andrzej Morsztyn who was responsible for the Crown’s economy and collected fees from the postal service, seemed to be a well-planned patrimonial strategy. Thereby, Francesco undoubtedly gained more convenient access to Morsztyn than he had had before. In addition, bearing in mind that Francesco’s youngest daughter, Elisabetta was already destined to become a nun, the marriage of Eufrosina had to reap political benefits for Francesco. Considering that Bair was already established as a civil servant of the court and had married once\textsuperscript{93}, he might be seen in contrast to Jan Wawrzyniec as a more influential person in Francesco’s eyes. Nonetheless, the similarity between both marriages: this of Bair-Eurosina and that of Wodzicki-Anna Maria, could be seen in the provenance of Francesco’s sons-in-law. Both of them fulfilled important functions in the governmental structures of Poland-Lithuania at the time of their marriages with Francesco’s daughters. Moreover, both came from merchant families rather than aristocratic ones. Lastly, it is worth emphasising that Andrzej Ignacy Bair gained nobility status in 1673 and Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki gained his in 1676, at the same session of the Diet when the sons of Francesco De Gratta obtained their Indygenat.

\textsuperscript{91} Wenus Polska, pp. 188–189.
\textsuperscript{92} VL, vol. 5, p. 76.
\textsuperscript{93} Bair was first married to Cecylia (Anna Cecycilia) Ginther on 24 October 1666 and had one daughter with her– Cecylia Łucya who was born on 23 December 1667. Furthermore, he also had a son with Eufrosina De Gratta, Jan Franciszek, who was born on 4 December 1674, see Dodatek, p. 39.
Bartolomeo Sardi

Bartolomeo Sardi viewed his marriage with Eufrosina, the widow of Andrzej Ignacy Bair as a possibility to improve his economic situation. On 3 June 1676, he informed his father, Lorenzo (1609–1677) who resided in Lucca, about Francesco’s children in these words: ‘three sons and three daughters, of these one married, one is widow and the third is young’. One could say that Bartolomeo’s letter points to the marital status of Francesco’s daughters as his main interest. Even though Francesco was not dead then, Bartolomeo, while discussing with his father the issues concerning negotiations with him, was aware that Francesco’s days were numbered. This is why he became interested in marrying Eufrosina, whose inheritance, as he reported to Lorenzo 18 October 1675, was estimated to be around 10,000 thaler. However, he did not trust this number because of her unresolved situation regulating the legacy of her late husband, Andrzej Ignacy Bair. Nevertheless, he married Eufrosina on 26 November 1676 in Warsaw.

To sum up, Bartolomeo’s eventual marriage to Eufrosina after Francesco De Gratta’s death meant that her dowry became substantially higher than it was before De Gratta’s death and included both her inheritances from her first husband and father. This very interesting fact reveals also that he preferred to wait until the situation concerning her previous marriage had been resolved before his eventual marriage to her. The documents preserved at the Lucca Archive indicate that Bartolomeo was known to Francesco as early as 1669 when he made a business trip to Gdańsk on behalf of his father, Lorenzo, which in turn shows the possible impact of Francesco even on the marriage of Bartolomeo. Furthermore, on 26 March 1673 Bartolomeo became the Postmaster General of Poland-Lithuania after Angelo Maria Bandinelli, who

94 About the dates of his life, see the family of Sardi’s genealogical tree: Nelli, Archivio, p. 173.
96 About the dates of his life, see the family of Sardi’s genealogical tree: Nelli, Archivio, p. 173.
98 Antonelli, Una Sardi Polacca, p. 109.
99 Antonelli, Una Sardi Polacca, p. 110: ‘della quale ne tocca una porzione al figlio picciolo, che c’e et alla madre, all’inconto tocca la meta delle facolta del marito, le quali non si sa, per l’appunto, quante siano. In conclusione vi sariano piu imbrogli (credo) che denari’.
100 Nelli, Archivio, p. 162.
101 ASL, AS, 111, pp. 1050–1151.
resigned from this function. In the 1680s, Bartolomeo rented the Mint of Bydgoszcz (Ger. Bromberg), Royal Prussia. This particular fact will be the subject of a broader investigation undertaken in Chapter 6. After Paolo De Gratta’s death, Bartolomeo’s and Eufrosina’s son, Lorenzo, became the Postmaster General of Royal Prussia, Courland, Semigallia and Livonia.

Elisabetta

Elisabetta, Francesco’s youngest daughter, became a nun. She joined the Convent of the Order of Canons Regular of Prémontré (the Norbertines) in Żukowo (Ger. Zuckau) on 15 August 1678 and took her vows (professa) on 20 August 1679. Elisabetta was consecrated by a bishop of Włocławek Piotr Paweł Mięszkowski. Elisabetta De Gratta (Elżbieta, hic!) died on 30 October 1706 and according to her biographical note that is included in the list of nuns from this convent, Elisabetta was recognized as a saint after her death.

Elisabetta was accepted into the Convent not earlier than in 1678, around two years after her father’s death. Francesco’s will expressing his wish that his youngest daughter join the convent appeared in his testament dated 19 March 1676. He bequeathed a payment of 60,000 fl to the Covent. The amount was equal to the two other shares inherited by Anna Maria and Eufrosina. According to this source, Francesco had already expressed a wish to donate money to the Convent in 1676; therefore, one may conclude that he definitely decided about Elisabetta’s future before his death. His last will was eventually fulfilled in August 1679, when Elisabetta took her vows. It is highly likely that during these celebrations the whole family gathered in the monastery.

It was common practice for one daughter in a family to become a nun, and the De Gratta family was no exception in this respect. The Norbertines’s Convent located in Żukowo, 18 km West of Gdańsk, was one of the main Catholic female convents in Royal Prussia and was subordinated to the

103 GSTAPK I Ha. Rep. 2057, Letter of Laurens Sardi Dantzic le premier De Guin 1712: ‘de la disposition qua fait le Roy De Pologne mon Maitre De la charge De feu Mr Gratta mon Oncle en ma faueur’. In such words Lorenzo Sardi informed Frederick I of Prussia about his office as the General Postmaster of Royal Prussia, Courland, Semigallia and Livonia at the beginning of June 1712.
104 The document includes the dates of her admission to the convent and vows: Monasterium, p. 352.
105 ASL, AS, 114, pp. 67V.–70.
bishop of Włocławek.\textsuperscript{107} Even though there is still no clear evidence to explain why Elisabetta joined this particular convent, the reason for such a decision may well have been motivated by the knowledge that another merchant daughter was to be accepted at the same time and to the same nunnery.

In the list of the convent’s prioresses, there is some information about the admission to the monastery of ‘virgines Gedanenses, nempe Elisabettaam De Grata et Philipiam a Schmieden\textsuperscript{108} by prioress Catharina Kostczanka (1671–1689). Theresa Philippina Schmieden was a daughter to Johann Ernest Schmieden who served as the proconsul and Royal Burgrave of Gdańsk.\textsuperscript{109} The noteworthy fact is that in both cases there is an indication of the functions of their fathers.\textsuperscript{110} Along with the earlier note informing about only their admission to the convent under the leadership of Kostczanka, the information about their father’s professions implies the high social status of the recently ordained blessed nuns. This fact also links Francesco (post mortem) with Johann Schmieden, who also served as a Polish royal official in Gdańsk.

Lastly, Philippina’s biographical account, in contrast to Elisabetta’s, states that she had to learn Polish before she entered the nunnery, which suggests that Elisabetta spoke Polish. Another confirmation of her language skills was a letter written to her brother Paolo in correct Polish.\textsuperscript{111} Thus, Elisabetta’s language proficiency shows that Francesco paid much attention to the education of his children, including enhancing his daughters’ knowledge of Polish. This will become clearer when analysing his sons’ education. Finally, the fact that Elisabetta was using the Polish language, while writing to Paolo, and not German or Dutch, both commonly used in Gdańsk, indicates that Polish was the favoured language of the family.

\textsuperscript{107} Marek Derwich, Prämonstratenserorden im mittelalterlichen Polen. Seine Rolle in Kirche und Gesellschaft, in Irene Crusius and Helmut Flachenecker (eds), \textit{Studien zum Prämonstratenserorden} (Göttingen, 2003), pp. 343–346.

\textsuperscript{108} Monasterium, p. 347.

\textsuperscript{109} Monasterium, pp. 359–361.

\textsuperscript{110} Francesco De Gratta’s function was presented in the following way; Monasterium, p. 352: ‘Francisci de Gratta, generalis postae magistri et sacrae regiae maiestatis secretarii’.

\textsuperscript{111} ASL, AS, 123, pp. 605–610.
The Polish Indygenat

The Polish Indygenat, or in other words naturalization into the Polish-Lithuanian noble estate, was a common practice of recognition of the foreign nobility status in the Poland-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In 1676 at a session of the Diet, the successors (sons) of Francesco De Gratta also received such an Indygenat. In the text of the Indygenat it is noted that Paolo, Francesco Jr. and Alessandro were accepted into the noble strata and accepted to the ‘Indigenarum’ owing to their father’s achievements and service for the Diet, Polish Kings and the whole Rzeczpospolita (Commonwealth). There is also information that they were accepted into the Great Duchy of Lithuania as their noble province. To clarify, the contemporary Poland-Lithuania consisted of five provinces (according to the parliamentary division into provincial assemblies – sejmiki generalne): Lesser Poland, Greater Poland, Masovia, Royal Prussia and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (which Francesco’s sons received as their noble province). Francesco’s sons were instructed to devote their lives to the service for the Rzeczpospolita as their father did.

The collection of the documents on the Gratta family’s noble status at the Lucca City Archives also contains two other documents besides the above mentioned Indygenat. The first one, classified before the Indygenat, is a letter signed by the Polish Crown notary giving information about De Gratta’s Italian noble title confirmed by the Milan’s notary and dated 4 November 1676 which was sent to Paolo De Gratta at the beginning of 1677. The second document is a genealogic note concerning the Lithuanian roots of the Czartoryski family. This in turn suggests the Prince Michał Jerzy Czartoryski (1621–1692) conferred upon Francesco De Gratta’s sons his noble status. Thus, the whole

113 ASL, AS, 123, p. 129.
114 Augustyniak, History of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, p. 110.
117 The note about the Czartoryski’s family (‘Ex: Historia Lituana’): ASL, AS, 123, pp. 131.
collection of nobility documents reveals the process by which Francesco’s sons received their Indygenat after their father’s death. Returning to the particular document of the Indygenat, it states clearly that Francesco’s sons received the privilege because of their father’s service. When it comes to the confirmation of the Gratta family’s noble Italian title, issued by the Milan City Council, it was probably requested by Paolo after his father’s death, which shows Paolo’s leading position as the oldest among his siblings.

In summary, it can be concluded that the Polish Indygenat was presumably Francesco’s idea for his sons. Francesco, who had obtained Gdańsk merchant citizenship in 1649 and who already had Italian noble status, had not considered it necessary to request naturalization to the Polish gentry for himself. However, the fee for the Indygenat, which was 8.117 (probably Polish zł) per person, was added to Francesco’s list of debts and estates, and named there as ‘nobilitatia’, in August 1676.\(^\text{118}\) The fact that the fee is not recorded in the respective son’s account strengthens the hypothesis of Francesco’s patrimonial strategy also in these matters. Finally, it should be added that, especially in the second half of the seventeenth century, an increasing number of foreigners obtained Polish noble status. In that sense the sons of Francesco were not unique. However, while tracing the ways of ennoblement of other Italian actors, the fact that Francesco De Gratta’s sons were nominated because of their father’s service was a rather less conventional practice.\(^\text{119}\)

Paolo Antonio

The oldest son of Francesco, Paolo Antonio, often used his Polish noble rights, as we will see in this part of the chapter. In his correspondence to Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki, Caspar Richter pointed out the improper behaviour by Paolo towards other nobles, his frequent stays at the royal court, as well as numerous loans from several persons that he had to repay.\(^\text{120}\) Caspar Richter, who was a Gdańsk merchant, did not approve of Paolo’s ‘new’ behaviour, and from his letters one can say that he was concerned about Paolo’s future.

\(^\text{119}\) See the list of ennoblement of Italians from the reigns of Sigismund I to John III Sobieski, Tygielski, Włosi, pp. 384–388.
\(^\text{120}\) About Paolo’s loans see for example Jan Wawrzyniec’s memorandum: ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 153.
The marriage of Paolo to Agnieszka Kłodnicka, the daughter of Aleksander Kłodnicki, Bracław’s (Ukr. Bratslav) District Master of the Pantry (podstoli bracławski), which took place on 2 April 1677, was unsuccessful. Richter frequently mentioned to Wodzicki Paolo’s concerns about his marriage. Because his wife refused to move to Gdańsk, Paolo decided to remain at the royal court. On 16 July 1677 Richter wrote that the Royal Chancellor Lubomirski, who had proposed that Paolo marry Agnieszka, had now advised that Paolo should remain in Gdańsk. At the same time, Richter mentioned that Mr Zabrzeski had sent certain information that Agnieszka remained in Lublin or Kazimierz (Kazimierz Dolny) and did not plan to go to Gdańsk. This means that Richter treated Paolo’s marriage negatively. Later, in the same letter, he even wished to have the King’s and other magnates’ support to influence Paolo not to leave the city. Even Agnieszka’s father stressed that she should join Paolo, but she did not change her mind on this point. That is why during his stay in Gdańsk in late November 1677, Mr Klodnicki (Chomicki, hic!) expressed his wish that Paolo and Agnieszka should divorce because his daughter was ‘disappointed’ with her husband. The divorce became a reality not earlier than in February 1679 when Richter informed Wodzicki that Paolo was ‘freed’ from his wife and had to pay her 15,500 zł (currentis moneta). Three months later, on 7 April 1679 Richter reported that Paolo’s new ‘situation’ as follows:

Sir Paolo is totally freed from Madame Kłodnicka, and he [Paolo] considers to marry [again] in Gdańsk, the truth is that the dowry might be high but the only thing is that she [Ms Schmid] is non-Catholic and he [Paolo] wished to consult with his Majesty the King; in Poland he will never find such fortune, but the religion is different, it will be a pity to miss such an occasion.

121 See Elektorów poczet, p. 150.
122 ASL, AS, 124, p. 78.
123 ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 42.
124 ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 46.
125 ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 54: ‘P. Chomicki, był też y ieszcze weGdansku, y ten zyczy sobie rozwodu, bo widzi ze Corka iego zwiedziona [...] obiedwie strony tego pragną [rozwodu]’.
127 ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 183: ‘Pan Paweł iuz cale uwolniony od Paniey Kłodnickiey, zamysla znowu we Gdansku się zenic prawda ze possag może bydz dobry tylko ze nonCatholic a, miał tez y do Kmci MMPana pisac sam wtye materiey Consulendo, y prosic
As Richter said in one of his next letters, dated 26 May 1679, the possible marriage of Paolo to Ms Schmid (Panna Szmidowna) had not been approved by her father. However, according to Richter such a marriage was seen as a very promising scenario:

If there were not be an issue of different faith this offer would be very good for him [Paolo] because there are few ladies with such a huge dowry and he could recover the costs which Mrs Kłodnicka ran up.\textsuperscript{128}

To sum up, Paolo’s marriage to Agnieszka Kłodnicka and his attempt to marry Ms Schmid ended in failure. Paolo’s testament dated 22 March 1712 did not mention any descendants or a wife. This is why his function as the Royal Postmaster for Royal Prussia was inherited by his nephew, Lorenzo Sardi. Furthermore, Lorenzo was the only one who inherited Paolo’s estates. Lastly, Francesco De Gratta knew both the Lubomirscy and Kłodniccy families because of his financial and trade activity (loan to Helena Lubomirská, wife to Aleksander Michał Lubomirski, who was involved in the arrangement of Paolo’s marriage and trade connections with Aleksander Kłodnicki)\textsuperscript{129}; therefore, even Paolo’s marriage may be considered in terms of Francesco’s interference.

To Live as a Merchant

The discussion around Paolo’s education and estates brings up some additional facts around Francesco’s use of his children in his strategies. Richter informed Wodzicki on 20 November 1677 about Paolo’s interest in acquiring his own estates. The Vice-Chancellor of the Crown (\textit{podkanclerzy koronny}) suggested the land estate of Sulgostowie in Masovia to Paolo; however Richter, as his guardian, decided to abandon this idea because of Paolo’s instability and recklessness.\textsuperscript{130} It is clear that the decision made by Richter influenced Paolo’s education and trade activity.
future life. It is worth keeping in mind that the administration of Francesco’s legacy was left to Richter. While informing Wodzicki about the proposal of the Vice-Chancellor, Richter stated the following:

[Paolo] does not want to live in Gdańsk either, and says that he has nothing to do there, he prefers to stay at the royal court and I [Richter] do not know why he wants to stay there [and] what he will gain from this.131

The opinion of Richter that Paolo was wasting his time at the royal court and had nothing to gain there referred to the function of the Royal Postmaster in Royal Prussia which had already been passed down to him after his father’s death. When it comes to the idea of possessing a land estate, which in turn could also be seen as his efforts to live as a nobleman, Paolo realised this in February 1678, when he bought a village from the bishop of Łuck (Ukr. Lutsk).132 Richter did not inform the recipient which village Paolo had leased from the Bishop, but it is very likely that it was the estate Kokoszki (Ger. Kokoschken) located on the suburbs of Gdańsk, which was later registered in his name.133 According to Paolo’s last will he possessed not only the estate Kokoszki, but also several others, such as: Bissewo, Bastenhagen, Koppensin, Ellernitz and Nynkowo.134

In his correspondence to Wodzicki, Richter also provided some facts about Paolo’s education. On 8 April 1678 Richter wrote that Paolo preferred to live in the countryside and to run his estate, and at the same time that he did not want to be enslaved as his father was. A life outside, but still, near the city was seen by him as providing a form of liberation from his duties.135

Sir Paolo sold maraes and foals and will sustain from it [postal service?], because all lusts and desires from the royal court abominated him, he had lost interest in the perks of noble status, and wants to be a merchant and

131 ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 54: ‘We Gdansku tez mieszkac niechce, zdajac ze niema co czynic, wiece woli przy Dworze Krola Imsci zostawac y czego się doslugiwał, zgoła niewiem co u niego będzę napotym’.
134 Spelling of the names of estates as they are in the source’s text, AS, ASL, vol. 122, p. 264.
applies to the trade, he started to go frequently to the stock exchange, to converse with Dutch, English and other traders, to learn about bookkeeping and bills and wants to live a sparing city life, the only thing he fears after he was freed from Mrs Kłodnicka that a court lady might be offered to him.\textsuperscript{136}

The above quotation not only gives information about Paolo’s personal change, but also idealizes the ‘merchant’ way of life, seeing it as better than the ‘courtly’ one. Richter undoubtedly considered the merchant life as the ideal one and so he wanted Paolo to follow his instructions to become a merchant. As the quotation reveals, Paolo eventually followed Richter’s advice and began his education as a trader by making regular visits to the stock exchange, having conversations with other merchants and foreign traders, as well as learning about accounting and bookkeeping.

One could learn from Chapter 2 that the private merchant estates outside the city became more popular in seventeenth century Gdańsk. That is why Richter did not argue in the same tone as he did in the case of the Masovian estate when Paolo rented the Kokoszki estates. The quotation ends with Paolo’s concerns about his potential next marriage. He wished to escape from the suggestions to marry some Polish nobleman’s daughter. He did not want to be dependent on the royal court any longer. To clarify this, Paolo stayed at the royal court for a number of years and then decided to become a merchant.

It should be said that despite his numerous complaints about the negative side effects on his businesses of his father’s service to the Polish Crown, Paolo finally chose a very similar career to his father’s. He resigned from the courtly life to enjoy the benefits of the merchant life. But still, in contrast to Paolo, his father pursued his businesses only as a Gdańsk merchant. Besides Francesco’s permanent service for the King and the Crown, he acted without being naturalized to the Polish gentry. Moreover, one may emphasise the fact that he stayed in Gdańsk for almost his entire life and obtained local citizenship, which shows his strong trade affiliation to Gdańsk. He even took care to confirm Gdańsk citizenship for his children as included in the probate

\textsuperscript{136} ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, pp. 158–159:’a P. Paweł zas poprzedawszy Klacze y zrebce będzie się ztego sustentował, bo iuz wszystkie desideria y fochy dworskie onemu obrzydły, niechce wiedzieć więcej de Indigenatu ale Kupcem bydz affectue i do Handlow się applicue iako też zaczął pilno przed giełde chodzie z Hollendrami, Anglikami y innemi Kupcami Conuersowac, Buchalterey y rachunkow się uczy, y po mieysku skromnie zyc będzie, tylko się obawia zeponieważ się zwolnił od P. Kłodnickiey aby mu iakiey Damy ode dworu niepresentowano’. 
Paolo, unlike his father, received an official noble office of Chamberlain (podkomorzy), the Master of the Horse of Livonia (koniuszy inflandzki) in 1699, but also possessed the title of Royal Secretary. Consequently, the noble offices made him de facto a member of the local Prussian nobility. In addition, like his father, he also possessed estates outside the city, which shows not only his family’s financial status, but also social one. As stated in Chapter 2, in the early modern period, there was a tendency for merchants to purchase estates, and their lifestyle became similar to the noble one in this respect. Nevertheless, even though he received a noble title and possessed estates, Paolo also eventually decided to stay in the city and to realise his royal functions there. Therefore, one can state that as a Gdańsk merchant, but also as a Royal Postmaster, Paolo’s career was very similar to his father’s.

Francesco Jr.

The second son of Francesco, who was listed in the Indygenat, was Francesco Jr. (The form Francesco Jr. will be used here to avoid misunderstanding and confusion regarding his father’s name). Francesco Jr. was expected to become a priest and to obtain a high post in the structures of the Catholic diocese in Milan. He arrived in Milan in 1677, where he was supposed to receive a good ‘Canony’ (the title of canon, Lat. canonicus) through the intercession of the Prince Bonomoci. It is highly likely that Francesco Jr.’s future had been planned in advance by his father, yet there is no clear evidence to show Francesco’s relationship with this prince.

While reporting about Francesco Jr.’s move to Milan, Richter declared to Wodzicki that it was better for him to move to Italy. However, he was still concerned about the fact that he was spending time with the ‘Compania Polska’ (most probably a group of young Polish nobles who went to Italy to study). Similarily, in Paolo’s case, Richter highlighted his perception of the

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139 Urzędnicy Inflanccy, p. 127. In addition, the authors of this volume gave the date of death of Paolo De Gratta: 18 April 1712.
negative influence of being a Polish noble, this time calling them the ‘Compania Polska’ – a name that has a strong national connotation. Nevertheless, this time he did not use a direct reference to the Indygenat. Francesco Jr. refused to the post of a priest only one month after his arrival in Milan. Next, Richter informed Wodzicki that Francesco Jr. had chosen to stay in Milan for a longer time instead of moving to Paris, where he had earlier got into trouble with his ‘Polish companions’.

Moreover, according to Richter’s anonymous informant from Italy, Francesco Jr. was viewed as an eccentric and mischievous person at his new residence. In a letter dated 11 February 1678, we read that Francesco Jr., who during his stay in France was a ‘rascal’, changed his behaviour for the better in Italy, but was still abusing alcohol.

On 7 April 1679 Richter mentioned that Francesco Jr. was ‘learning well in Parma and was getting better in everything’. This message reveals the important fact that Francesco Jr. had moved to Parma from Milan and was continuing his education there, probably, at the University of Parma. Furthermore, Richter’s correspondence reveals that Francesco Jr. remained under Francesco Mollo’s control. Francesco Mollo often appears to have acted as a guardian or an adviser to his cousin. Such a relationship is confirmed by Richter’s letter dated 10 March 1679, in which Wodzicki was informed that Mollo contacted Richter in regard to Francesco Jr.’s part of the legacy and instructed him: ‘do not transfer it [his inheritance] to anyone other’. Undoubtedly, Francesco Jr. knew that the partition of legacy after his father was in the hands of Richter and Wodzicki and, despite this fact, he preferred to contact them through Mollo.

In short, Richter’s correspondence gives a negative picture of Francesco Jr. as one who would not study, especially, during his first time in Italy. Moreover, Richter highlighted that it was him who made a big issue of the...
partition of his father legacy. Francesco Jr. remained critical of the rules applied by Richter when it came to the administration of his father’s estates. That might be seen as an explanation of why he had closer contacts with Francesco Mollo than he did with Caspar Richter. Furthermore, Francesco Jr. did not become a priest, but continued his studies in Parma instead (not in Milan as his guardians wished). Eventually, he became a Royal Secretary in Poland-Lithuania and, later, an officer in the royal army. He was killed in the battle on the Peloponnese in 1691.148

Immortalis Memoriae Frater Vester

‘Victoriosissiomo serenissimae Reipublicae Venetea Leoni’149. With these words Paolo and Alessandro described their brother, after his death on the battlefield in the Levant, in an occasional poem printed in Gdańsk. In the text, Paolo and Alessandro expressed their sorrow about the loss of their brother and, simultaneously, praised their brother’s bravery and honour in order to make ‘his memory immortal’. One can say that Francesco Jr.’s name ‘Venetian Lion’ indicated his military affiliation. It is clear from the text that he participated in the Morean War – a part of the Great Turkish War, which eventually ended in 1699 and was led by the Venetian Republic on the Ottoman territories of Southern Greece.151 The poem’s authors inform the reader that Francesco Jr. was a military officer for a long time before he died. According to the authors he took a part in the battle of Vienna 1683, the greatest military victory of King John III Sobieski. This fact could also be proven by Francesco Jr.’s sketches made during this battle and presenting its decisive moments. These sketches were finished and printed later by Romney De Hooghe in Amsterdam. It is worth mentioning here that De Hooghe had earlier worked on behalf of Francesco Jr.’s father and had also created the images representing the Polish victory in the battle of Khotyn 1673. This fact shows not only that the De Gratta family was interested in the Polish military successes, but also, the family was concerned about the development of their potash trade from the war-torn regions.152 Moreover, one may maintain that even at this time De Grattas wanted to be considered as a Polish patriots.

148 Treiderowa, Gratta Franciszek, pp. 555–556.
149 BJ, 14288 III, (title page).
150 BJ, 14288 III, p. 1 (according to the original numeration).
151 About the Venetian rule over the Morean (Peloponnesian) Peninsula and the Frist Morean War (1684–1699), see, for example, Zarinebaf, On the Edge of Empires, pp. 423–436.
152 About the sketches by Francesco Jr. together with other battle sketches sponsored by his father Francesco, see Treiderowa, Tematyka polska, pp. 5–47.
Finally, the text of the poem often refers to the ancient Greece and the Peloponnesian wars as well as to Greek mythology. The work was published in Latin, not in Polish, as happened in the case of the poem ‘Wenus Polska’, which had been created to acclaim Eufrosina’s first marriage. Consequently, the poem’s aim was to spread the memory of the heroic attitude of Francesco Jr. not only locally, but throughout Europe. What is especially important here is that the poem includes information about Paolo and Alessandro themselves. One can read there not only about Paolo’s functions as a Master of the Horse of Livonia and the Postmaster for Royal Prussia and Alessandro as the ‘Equitis Poloni’ (cavalier), but also, for example about the De Gratta family’s coat of arms. The coat of arms depicts a lion standing on his hind legs (‘a lion rampant’) and holding a ring in his front legs. Undoubtedly, the coat of arms was used here to symbolise Francesco Jr.’s bravery and heroism. As one may recall from the beginning of this chapter the coat of arms of a Lucchesian family of De Gratta depicting three pigs differs greatly from the coat of arms presented above. This fact once again denies the Lucchesian origin of Giovanni Antonio De Gratta who migrated to Gdańsk. In addition, one may note that there is unfortunately no description of the coat of arms included in the Italian letter confirming De Grattas’ nobility, which in turn could officially verify what their coat of arms looked like. Lastly, one may note that Francesco Jr. earned his agnomen ‘Venetian Lion’ from his participation in the Venetian Republic’s army. By his military activity, it can be judged that Francesco Jr. had never moved back to Gdańsk after his Italian studies, but on the contrary, he continued his life in Italy.

Alessandro

The correspondence of Caspar Richter with Jan Wawrzyniec contains a few facts about Alessandro’s life, although fewer compared to facts about his two

153 BJ, 14288 III, title page.
154 BJ, 14288 III, p. 2 (note on the margin): ‘Stemma Domus: Leo erectus, pedibus globuseu sphaeram sustinens’. Such a description differs from the coat of arms ordered by Anna Maria Wodzicka, which was to be sent to her and her brother (presumably Paolo) to Gdańsk, see ZNiO, 11575/II, pp. 299–302. This coat of arms also presented a lion standing on his hind legs, but this time the lion had a sheaf in his frontal legs (Illustration 2 attached to this thesis). It remains unclear when and why the De Grattas’ coat of arms changed into the form of lion with a sheaf instead of a ring. Nonetheless, the close contact between De Gratta and the King John II Casimir Vasa (from this King, De Gratta received his postal office and factoratus) and the fact that John II Casimir Vasa possessed a coat of arms that depicted the Vasa sheaf may indicate such a connection to this particular King. About De Grattas’ coat of arms, see Żychliński, Złota, p. 226 (note 1).
other brothers. First of all, we can learn about Alessandro’s education from there. Francesco’s youngest son had been studying at the *Seminario Brunopolitano*, a Philosophical College in Bydgoszcz (Ger. Bromberg) in 1678.\(^{155}\) Later on, according to Francesco Mollo’s suggestion, Alessandro acquired some language education in Leuven.\(^{156}\) However, Alessandro’s studies in the Spanish Netherlands should be seen as a brief visit, which interrupted his ‘proper’ education that he was undertaking in Royal Prussia. He stayed in Leuven from February 1677 (if the time of Mollo’s invitation is counted as the start date) until September 1678, when Caspar Richter informed Jan Wawrzyniec that Alessandro had returned to Bydgoszcz.\(^{157}\)

After his studies abroad, Alessandro continued his education at the Collegium in Braniewo (Ger. Braunsberg) located in the Diocese of Warmia (Ger. Ermland). The Braniewo Collegium was an educational institution, where the Catholic local nobles’ sons received their education. That is why even the choice of colleges in Bydgoszcz and Braniewo might be seen as Francesco’s decision following the local ‘Polish Prussia’ practice concerning Alessandro’s education. Furthermore, sending Francesco Jr. to the Spanish Netherlands also seems to have been arranged by his father, especially if one considers that Francesco Mollo, who invited Alessandro, was a nephew to Francesco, and that they had an ongoing business relationship. The last information about Alessandro, given by Richter in his letters to Jan Wawrzyniec, notifies that Alessandro wished to become a priest and to obtain the title of Canon of Warmia’s diocese.\(^{158}\) Warmia’s diocese was a bishop’s dominion and served directly under Rome, so was not part of the Polish-Lithuanian Church structure with the archbishop in Gniezno (Ger. Gnesen).\(^{159}\) This fact once again demonstrates that the De Gratta family had strong connections with Italy. Finally, in contrast to his two other brothers:

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\(^{158}\) ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 249: ‘gwoli czemu wziòł P. Alezandra z sobą, na oddanie do Antwerpiey aby się tam uczył y cwiczył w Językach, stamtąd za lat trzy chce go do Kupiectwa gdzie applicowac, lecz iakom wyrozumiał, ze P. Alessandro ma ochotę ad Spirituaelem Statum, y chce bydzy Kannonikiem Warminskiem’.

Paolo and Francesco Jr., Alessandro was always presented as a calm and prudent person in Richter’s correspondence. There is no evidence to show whether he became a priest or not. Nevertheless, his further function as a postal officer ‘subdelegatus’ at the Gdańsk postal office, ordained by the King August II, in 1698, rather excludes such a possibility. It remains unknown when Alessandro died, but considering that Paolo is known to have died in 1712 and taking into account that Paolo was the last living son of Francesco then it is logical to assume that Alessandro died between 1698 and 1712.

Caspar Richter (1641–1694)

‘My Kasper’ – in this way Francesco referred to his companion and assistant at the Gdańsk postal office, Caspar Richter, in his letter to Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki dated 6 March 1671. Richter was not a member of Francesco’s nuclear family in terms of ties by blood, nor was he married to one of his daughters. Still, he remained in a very close relationship with his superior. The sources are lean concerning their mutual friendship or relationship. One knows that the friendship was initiated before Francesco’s death and Richter took care of Francesco’s children and, partially, of his businesses, too. He was responsible for the regulation of all debts and credits left by De Gratta. This is why Caspar Richter should be seen as a very close companion to Francesco, who entrusted him with the future of his family and businesses. In this way, Richter became responsible for the continuation of his principal’s professional sphere (the postal office) along with the private one by taking care of the education of his children and the maintenance of his house, and dealing with his creditors.

161 GStAPK I Ha. Rep. 2057, Royal privilegium for Alessandro De Gratta by August II (1698).
162 The date of birth, see Kandt, Sarmatia Artistica, p. 356.
Caspar Richter was probably born in Gdańsk in 1641.\(^{165}\) Highly likely, his father, Caspar (-1660)\(^{166}\) was a trader from Lauenburg, who was registered in Gdańsk Main City’s record book on 16 November 1656.\(^{167}\) Such a registration could mean that he moved to Gdańsk Main City then; however, other archival sources suggest that he resided in the city at least from the 1640s.\(^{168}\) Furthermore, it remains unclear whether some other members of his family or others of the same surname lived at the same time in Gdańsk.\(^{169}\) Considering the date of birth of Caspar, one may argue that De Gratta most likely offered some tutorship to him. Consequently, even though the archival sources remain silent on this point, he presumably became Francesco’s personal assistant when he was around 20 years old. In addition, Richter was a Catholic, as he was buried in the Church of St. Nicholas in Gdańsk. He died in 1694 at the age of 53.\(^{170}\)

In his article about the art trade in King John III Sobieski’s Poland, Kandt includes a fragment of Stephen Grau’s chronicle, which gave a biographical note on Caspar Richter along with a short description of his funeral, as follows:

A man who corresponded with the kings and princes and Great Lords in Europe/: he could 8 language well:\ he was well-known in the Holy Roman Empire, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, England and France.\(^{171}\)

It is evident from this chronicle fragment that Richter was undoubtedly an important person in Gdańsk society and played a significant role within the

\(^{165}\) According to the information included in the Richter’s family tree, see Dorothea Weichbrodt, *Patrizier, Bürger, Einwohner der Freien und Hansestadt Danzig in Stamm- und Namentafeln vom 14.-18. Jahrhundert*, vol. 4 (Klausdorf/Schwentine, 1992), p. 56.

\(^{166}\) Weichbrodt, *Patrizier*, p. 56.

\(^{167}\) This information was included in one of Gdańsk Old Town’s record books of the Main City, see APG, BA, p. 191.

\(^{168}\) See the documents by King Władysław IV that include the name of Gaspar Richter who was equitum magistri in Gdańsk, APG 300, 52/583, pp. 5–15.

\(^{169}\) In the PSB, one may find Wilhelm Richter (ca 1600–1667), a sculptor from Bielefeld, who moved to Gdańsk in 1615/1616 or 1624, see Janusz Pułubicki, *Richter Wilhelm*, *PSB*, vol. 31, pp. 284–285.

\(^{170}\) Richter was buried in the Church of St. Nicholas, see Kandt, *Sarmatia Artistica*, p. 356. His name can be also found in the Church books of St. Mary’s parish in Gdańsk, APG 354/352, p. 33: ‘1694, 6 September Caspar Richter – 53 Jr, Schwarz Münch’: APG 354/352, p. 33.

\(^{171}\) The quotation from Kandt, *Sarmatia Artistica*, p. 371: ‘ein Mann nicht allein mit Königen und Fürsten und den Grossen Herren in Europa correspondirte, sondern auch:\ Aldie weilen er 8 Sprachen gutt kündig war:\ im Reich, Italien, Holland, Hispanien, Engelland und Frankreich, zur gnüge Berühtet und Bekannt war’.
royal postal service. He could communicate in a number of European languages and was intimate with several authorities. Finally, one might consider that even though Richter was not a family member as such, he remained the closest partner of De Gratta and became the administrator of his legacy. On the face of it, these facts seem to be contradictory to the strategies that Francesco used concerning the marriage choices for his daughters and the planning of his sons’ education. However, while one considers the fact that Francesco De Gratta was in a need of a trustworthy person, who/whose family was already established in the local environment, the choice of Richter is not surprising. Through such a choice, De Gratta obviously gained a close partner who was not only fluent in German, but also familiar with the local merchant families.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter examined Francesco’s nuclear family as part of his social network. It began with the immigration of his father, Giovanni Antonio, to Gdańsk and ended with a presentation of one of his closest companions, Caspar Richter. Most of the attention in the chapter was devoted to Francesco’s children and to his plans for their future as part of his social, political and economic strategies. The way in which Francesco De Gratta established the status of his family and how he socially advanced in both a Gdańsk and Polish-Lithuanian context was presented in Francesco’s patrimonial strategies. His patrimonial strategies were understood as familial social actions expressed in the choice of his children’s education, marriages and professions, which in turn elevated the family’s social status. The main findings of the present chapter might be categorized into the three groups, depending on the mode/type of social interaction:

1. The place of interaction (Gdańsk, Poland-Lithuania, Italy).
Paolo stayed in Gdańsk almost all of his life, excluding his short-term stay at the royal court after Francesco’s death. Besides him, Alessandro lived also there; after his studies in Royal Prussia and the Spanish Netherlands he came back to Gdańsk. Thus, two of Francesco’s children continued to live there. Anna Maria and Eufrosina moved to the Crown of Poland, respectively Cracow and Warsaw, after their marriages. In the case of Francesco Jr., we learned that he studied, first in France (Paris) and secondly in Italy (Milan, Parma), and also that he, eventually, joined the Venetian army. Elisabetta
became a nun at a local monastery, located outside Gdańsk – so, not in the city, but still in Royal Prussia. Thus, one can say that Francesco’s children interacted in different places: Gdańsk, Prussia, Poland-Lithuania, the Spanish Netherlands and Northern Italy. Remarkably all the places listed above were associated with Francesco’s own web of interactions and activities. He lived in Gdańsk and obtained his office as a Head Postmaster of Gdańsk postal service and later that of Royal Prussia, Courland, Semigallia and Livonia as well as pursuing his trade around Europe.

2. The spheres of interaction (merchant, religious, military, economic, political).

As shown in the chapter, Francesco’s functions in the postal service passed down to Paolo and Alessandro, who continued to stay in Gdańsk. Both of them pursued the education they required in the merchant sphere. Paolo learned a trade profession while Alessandro in addition to his standard education that he finished in Royal Prussia, took additional language courses in the Spanish Netherlands. Elisabetta followed a spiritual profession and devoted her life to serving in the religious sphere. Francesco Jr., who gave up the title of Canon in Milan, became a soldier (the military sphere). By marrying off his daughters, Anna Maria with Jan Wawrzyniec and Eufrosina with Andrzej Bair, Francesco expanded his own web of possibilities and gained easier access to, respectively, the Polish trade (the economic sphere) and the Crown’s Treasury (the political sphere), where his good contacts undoubtedly stimulated the course of his activities.

3. The interaction between social strata (merchants, nobles).

The socially upward mobility of the De Gratta family in Poland-Lithuania started with Giovanni Antonio and his application for Gdańsk citizenship that was eventually received by Francesco in 1649. Consecutively, 27 years later, Francesco’s sons received their Polish Indygenat. The Indygenat, on the one hand, confirmed their Italian noble title and, on the other, it made their rights equal to those of the rest of the Polish gentry. Moreover, their social advancement could also be seen in the marriages of Francesco’s daughters. While Anna Maria married a merchant, Eufrosina married a recently ennobled court officer. However, both cases showed that the husbands of Francesco’s daughters had not originated from the upper gentry or aristocratic families. This in turn, may indicate that the De Gratta family’s social position was limited by the status boundaries deeply rooted in the
Polish-Lithuanian noble society, which consequently made the movement between different social strata rather insurmountable.

To summarise, one of the more significant findings to emerge from this part of the thesis is that the De Gratta family moved upward socially by receiving Gdańsk citizenship, and, eventually, by obtaining the Polish Indygenat. Such an upward mobility became possible though Francesco’s familial social actions and his involvement in the Polish-Lithuanian postal service. His familial social actions allowed him to include new and notable persons as members of his network. The second major finding is that the familial connections were of great importance, both for gaining new protectors as well as to affirm already established business contacts, not only for him, but also for his descendants. Moreover, the chapter has gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of the early modern family as a platform for social interactions. Here, especially De Gratta’s arrangement of the marriage of Anna Maria with Jan Wawrzyniec as well as his marriage negotiations with Wodzicki should be mentioned. It was the first marriage arranged by De Gratta. It has been possible to follow the course of his marriage negotiations, which gave a clear picture of the mutual trust that was built between trade companions. Furthermore, besides securing of Anna Maria’s financial status, Francesco was aware of the importance of endogamous rules, which in turn were used to strengthen and legitimize his business actions. Moreover, the present chapter also demonstrated that Francesco entrusted Caspar Richter with almost everything. Although Richter was not a part of De Gratta’s family, he became, de facto, a member of Francesco’s greater family. That in turn supported the idea that the tutorship can be investigated as a familial social action. Returning to the De Gratta family’s upward social mobility, it should be borne in mind that it was not only seen in a positive way. Thanks to Caspar Richter’s correspondence with Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki, it could be learned that the De Gratta family had been losing its ‘merchant character’ because of its Polish noble title. Thence, the upward social mobility of the De Gratta family has to be seen as being limited to the hierarchical society of Poland-Lithuania, rather than as a social movement within Gdańsk’s internal community. Finally, the current findings add substantially to the investigation of Francesco De Gratta’s businesses and his function in the postal service as well as the legacy left by him to his descendants. This chapter followed Francesco De Gratta’s family network. In the next chapters, other networks that made his official career in the royal services and trade development possible will be investigated.
Francesco De Gratta was often presented as Royal Secretary on different occasions. The title of Royal Secretary – even if its actual meaning is hard to determine – opened doors for a number of foreign merchants and nobles, helping them establish their careers in the Polish-Lithuanian governmental structures.¹ This is why before proceeding with the further analysis of De Gratta’s career and networks, the royal secretary’s title and function that was a part of his career is worth taking a closer look at.

Mr Pinocci, one of the royal secretaries, who is serving in order to receive the Indygenat and who wished himself this office [presumably the Royal Notary] before the Queen did reserve it [the office] to Sir [I. Boulliau]. I forward the letter by him [Pinocci] written to me that you, Sir, can read using your decrypting code […] he [Pinocci] serves at the office of the Royal Notary; he is an ‘virtuoso literato’ and came from Lucca.²

These were the words of Pierre Des Noyers³, the Royal Secretary of Queen Marie Louise, in his letter to Ismaël Boulliau dated 18 May 1656. Des Noyers described here how Girolamo Pinocci⁴, the Royal Secretary of John II Casimir Vasa strove to receive the Polish Indygenat. One may observe here that the title of the Royal Secretary was granted only at the beginning of Pinocci’s career and was a door to his later occupational progress. Furthermore,

¹ Compare with Pośpiech, W służbie, p. 160.
² Portfolio, pp. 6–7: ‘P. Pinoci, jednego z sekretarzy królewskich, który się wysługuje w celu otrzymania indygenatu i który życzył sobie tego urzędu wprzód nim go królowa dla WPana przeznaczyła. Posyłam list jego do mnie pisany […] sprawuje urząd rejenta kancelaryi; jest to ‘un virtuoso literato’ i pochodzi z Luki’.
³ Targosz, Uczony dwór, p. 28.
⁴ About Girolamo Pinocci, see Targosz, Hieronim Pinocci.
Boulliau was also a Royal Secretary himself and contacted De Gratta concerning the proceedings of Poland-Lithuania. According to Des Noyers, Pinocci strove to receive the Polish Indygenat (he eventually received it in 1662) as well as to obtain new functions at the Queen’s court. Taking into consideration the fact that Des Noyers presented Pinocci to Boulliau in his letter, Pinocci had to go to Poland-Lithuania from Lucca quite recently. Moreover, Des Noyers noted that Pinocci wished to receive an office that was already designated to Boulliau. Consequently, one may conclude that even though Pinocci was a newcomer, he was familiar with the political system in the Commonwealth and was aware of his career possibilities.

Royal Office

In her biography on Girolamo Pinocci, Targosz defines the function of the royal secretary as a royal office that was directly subordinated to the King. Moreover, she claims that the royal secretaries were not only appointed by the King, but also obtained a kind of salary from him and were responsible for a range of different tasks concerning the work of the royal court. One may note that the Polish Kings employed many secretaries, for example the number of secretaries employed by Władysław IV amounted to 227 persons. However it should be kept in mind that this title was given to both those who de facto worked at the royal court place and those who worked only on special tasks. Generally, the most important task of the second group of legates was to represent the monarch in various ways, such as on diplomatic missions, fiscal matters or even in the King’s private affairs. This is why the fact that Francesco De Gratta possessed the title of Royal Secretary does not necessarily mean that he worked at the royal court, but rather that he was recognised as one of the King’s representatives, who stayed in Gdańsk and represented the monarch in the city and perceived actively royal affairs there.

5 BnF, 13035–13036. The correspondence from the years 1660–1669 includes mostly information about the political development of the Commonwealth and not details about De Gratta’s postal career. Therefore, these letters will be not the subject of a broader analysis in this dissertation.
6 Targosz, Hieronim Pinocci, p. 16.
7 According to Targosz, Pinocci migrated permanently to Poland in 1640, see Targosz, Hieronim Pinocci, p. 9.
8 Targosz, Hieronim Pinocci, p. 12.
Thus, one may conclude that De Gratta belonged to the second group of secretaries, who acted occasionally. As a consequence, his title of secretary cannot be seen to indicate his occupation, and in its turn cannot be seen as something that granted his postal function. Nevertheless, one may argue that thanks to the King’s decision, De Gratta received his secretary function that made him even more prosperous. One may claim that De Gratta obtained some kind of financial allowance for his work from the Polish monarchs, but in an indirect way – the postal privilege instead of money. In such a light, a royal privilege (przywilej królewski) appears to be a document of great value. Similarly, to his postal function, Francesco’s Royal Secretary’s function may be perceived here as his chance to improve both his social status and economic situation and consequently was a step towards the Polish Indygenat. Even though it is hard to determine which of these two functions – postmaster and Royal Secretary – Francesco received first. One may conclude, through considering the courses of the careers of other actors of Italian origin in Poland-Lithuania, that the royal secretary’s title was a significant aspect of the development of someone’s later career. According to Pośpiech, such a title defined professional (occupational) status in a certain sense and implied the attainability and subordination to the King. In such a light, through his secretary function, Francesco undoubtedly became one of the King’s trusted men, which undoubtedly resulted in the Polish Indygenat being received by Francesco’s sons. Altogether, one may presume that he already possessed the Royal Secretary’s title when he received his factoratus and Royal Postmaster’s title in 1649, a few years prior to when his official postal activity began as the Head Postmaster of the Gdańsk post office.

In addition, it is not likely that De Gratta received any kind of financial allowance for his function – it was rather the opposite – Francesco paid the royal couple (presumably both the King and the Queen) in order to receive his position of Royal Secretary and postmaster. Moreover, he frequently supported them financially and it is highly likely that he even had to pay a monthly salary to the King for his right to the mail service in Gdańsk.

11 For example the career of Angelo Maria Bandinelli who remained a Royal Secretary to the King John II Casimir Vasa before his appointment as the Royal Postmaster of the Polish Crown in 1662, Tygielski, Włosi, p. 184.
12 Pośpiech, W służbie, p. 164.
13 About buying of the royal offices under reigns of John II Casimir and Marie Louise Gonzaga, see Brzozowski, Podstawy, pp. 352–353.
14 Compare with Chapter 5.
It is remarkable to note that all of the mint masters, as will be seen later, held the title of Royal Secretary. This in turn means that no one without this title was allowed to hire a mint in Poland-Lithuania, nor to serve in the royal monetary system. Therefore, this title was in fact a kind of official permission issued by the King that allowed those foreign actors who were not noble or had not received the Polish Indygenat at the time they applied for their offices, to pursue their careers. One can observe that such dependence was not only limited to the receiver and the domestic society but also appeared between the receiver and the royal couple. In such a constellation, the King or the Queen played a role as providers to their secretaries. The royal couple was perceived by the nobility as protectors and patrons for foreign merchants who helped them to establish and develop their activities in the Commonwealth. Therefore, the interference between the Kings and royal secretaries should be taken into account when analysing the individual activities and career strategies of such secretaries. Both sides in this scenario were dependent on one another. For these Kings, to possess foreign secretaries offered an opportunity to escape from the influences of the Polish and Lithuanian noble families, which strove to weaken the rights of kingship and royal control. It is worth mentioning here that the nobility elected the monarchs and had control of the Crown finances. In this perspective, prosperous foreign actors were undoubtedly seen by Kings as their allegiants, who could not only obtain eventual financial support but also create a group consisting of trustworthy officers who were not dependent on the domestic nobility. In turn, for the foreign secretaries, the patronage of the Kings opened up career possibilities and also granted protection and security.

Concerning whether or not the royal secretaries were paid a salary, as indicated in Targosz research, it seems to be true only for the very limited group consisting of the very closest personal allegiants that worked directly at the royal court. For example, the list of expenses of the royal court of John II Casimir Vasa created for the year 1651 names only three secretaries who received a salary. Thus, the salary was paid only to those who were responsible for actual work of the royal court at place and were responsible for the preparation of the King’s speeches and letters as well as the organising of state ceremonies. All other secretaries acted within a privilege title system and

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15 Pośpiech, W służbie, p. 164.
16 Compare with Mączak, The structure, p. 110.
acted only on specific occasions, for example, on diplomatic missions to
other monarchs.

Francesco De Gratta as a Royal Secretary

The Royal Secretary’s title for Francesco De Gratta entailed not only his
entrance to the royal institutions, but also a number of duties. De Gratta aside
from representing the King in the city, was obliged to monitor and run royal
correspondence and transportation of royal goods as well as to inform other
royal secretaries about the proceedings of the royal court. Therefore, his
postal office, as well as his function as one of the commissionaires appointed
to resolve the postal conflict in 1661, should be seen as functions integrated
with his Royal Secretary’s function, and not just as titles. Both his postal and
commissioner functions will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.
For now, the use of the title by several monarchs when referring to De Gratta,
together with his contacts with other royal secretaries are worth taking a
closer look at.

There are no preserved documents by De Gratta where he mentioned his
secretary function. Even his potash trade contract made by himself included
only his postal function (‘Prussian Postmaster’). This contrasts with the fact
that Becker is presented as a Royal Secretary there. However, in the marriage
document created by Wodzicki in 1668, De Gratta was presented first as a
Secretary and later as the administrator of the Gdańsk Mail, which can be
seen as the way as De Gratta presented himself. Moreover, his Royal Sec-
retary function was also noted in the document dated 20 August 1676 created
by his heirs concerning his property after his death. Although, these were
documents created by Francesco’s family members, they show that his two
titles were used in the official contexts simultaneously. Besides the fact that
there are only a few examples of archival sources that evidence the use of the
Royal Secretary’s title by De Gratta himself, there are some letters written by
Polish Kings: John II Casimir Vasa, Michael I and John III Sobieski and
directed to the Gdańsk City Council, which include De Gratta’s title of
Secretary. Similarly to the previous sources created by De Gratta’s family

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18 ZNiO, Rkps. 11579/III, p. 393.
19 ZNiO, Rkps. 11579/III, p. 393.
21 ASL, AS, 123, p. 109. This document is discussed more in Chapter 8.
members, Francesco was not only presented as a Royal Secretary in these letters, but also with his other functions. For example, in one of John II Casimir Vasa’s letters, dated 29 April 1669, the title of De Gratta was as follows: ‘Secretary and Commissioner’\(^{22}\). All of the official functions of De Gratta were given only once in one letter by Michael I dated 9 August 1669, in the following way: ‘Postmaster, Secretary and Commissioner’\(^{23}\). The majority of other royal letters that included De Gratta just gave his secretary function.\(^{24}\) This fact can be explained by the character of such correspondence. It often includes instructions to the Gdańsk City Council on how the money for various purposes should be transferred to them. Here, De Gratta frequently appeared as the person via whom the money should be sent to the royal court. In fact, he was a broker between the City Council and the Kings. For this reason, it is believed that the Polish Kings mentioned De Gratta’s secretary function in their letters. From this perspective, the royal secretary’s function appeared as a guarantee of the safe transfer of the money. Moreover, in this context, De Gratta’s maintaining of contacts with Benjamin Krause (Beniamin Kraüse, hic!), who remained a representative of the Gdańsk City Council at the royal court, at least in the years 1659–1663\(^{25}\), was also a part of his Royal Secretary’s function. The records of the Kamlaria (Kämmerei), the city authority managing the city’s finances\(^{26}\), which are held in the State Archive in Gdańsk, include De Gratta’s money transfers.\(^{27}\) Therefore, taking into consideration all of the above pieces of information, one might claim that De Gratta’s role as a Royal Secretary in the city was mainly connected with his financial agent activity.

Francesco De Gratta remained in touch with several other royal secretaries, too. His correspondence with Boulliau is an example of such contacts.\(^{28}\) Once again, these letters include mostly the political and war news from Poland-Lithuania, but they some are of a scientific nature. Boulliau was a scientist and astronomer and therefore De Gratta sometimes enclosed in his

\(^{22}\) APG 300, 53/95, 9, p. 83: ‘Secretarÿs et Commissarys N[ost]ris’.
\(^{25}\) The records from this particular period of time include information about De Gratta.
\(^{26}\) Compare with Biernat, Archiwum, pp. 243–244.
\(^{27}\) APG 300, 12/96, p. 130; APG 300, 12/97, p. 141; APG 300, 12/98, p. 138; APG 300, 12/99, p. 140.
\(^{28}\) BnF, 13035–13036.
letters some news about Johannes Hevelius, a Gdańsk scientist. Most likely, De Gratta was obliged by the royal court to inform Boulliau about the situation in Poland-Lithuania. Moreover, the list of credits and debts of Francesco De Gratta from 1676, which will be analysed in detail in the last empirical chapter, included the information that both Boulliau and Des Noyers were in debt to De Gratta. This fact in turn may be evidence for a claim that they were also dependent on De Gratta’s financial activity. Boulliau who resided in Paris, was undoubtedly a most important link between the Polish and French royal courts. As will be shown in the next chapter, the royal couple was especially interested in a regular flow of correspondence from/to France because of Marie Louise’s origin and her network there. From this perspective, De Gratta’s informatory service appears to have been as a connector between the Queen and her secretary in Paris. In addition, it is worth mentioning here that De Gratta had also stayed in touch with Claudia Felicia Des Essarts, who also remained one of Marie Louise’s contact persons in Paris. To sum up, as the example of the French network shows, De Gratta remained in contact with other royal secretaries (cluster), which was undoubtedly one of his duties as a Royal Secretary.

Royal Factor

One may highlight that the official position of royal factor that will be investigated more in Chapter 7, was given to Francesco by King John II Casimir Vasa and was a part of De Gratta’s secretary function as well. By this, he became a royal (King’s) factor, who took responsibility for the safe transportation of royal goods. The royal couple kept regular contact via correspondence with the French royal court, including by the mutual exchange of goods. At the same time as having duties to the king, title offactoratusallowed for the intermediation in Polish trade. In this way, the royal factor not only controlled the king’s trade along with shipping of his goods but also received recognition in his place of residence. In addition, it should be kept in mind that Francesco obtained his Gdańsk citizenship and

29 See, for example, BnF, 13035, 6, the letter from Francesco De Gratta to Ismaël Boulliau dated 18 January 1662.
30 ASL, AS, 123, p. 199, 201.
31 See, for example, FZATTR, Postakten 1239, the letter from Francesco De Gratta dated 6 November 1666.
32 About Des Essarts, see Fabiani, Warszawski dwór, p. 31, 58–59.
33 ASL, AS, 121, p. 707.
his ‘factoratus’ almost at the same time. These two things made him a merchant with a full Gdańsk citizen status as early as in 1649.

In connection to the previous part of this chapter, Francesco De Gratta often appeared as a contact person in the correspondence of several Polish Kings with the Gdańsk City Council. Their correspondence included issues around shipping of the royal goods. For example, Queen Marie Louise Gonzaga, the wife first of Władysław IV and later of John II Casimir, used Francesco as her assistant when it came to the inspection of her packages in Gdańsk’s harbour. She claimed that packages which had arrived for her were destroyed in Gdańsk during such checking and therefore, in her letter dated 15 August 1661, the Queen informed the Gdańsk City Council that her packages could not be subject to any verification.\(^{34}\) In addition, she communicated that she would pay no customs duties to the city. This letter showed that she could not find her way around Gdańsk customs and was obliged to go through the checking. This is why in one of her next letters dated 19 May 1662, she requested that Francesco be present in person at the place where her goods would be inspected.\(^{35}\) This fact confirms not only that Francesco remained one of the most important representatives of the royal court in Gdańsk, but also remained the royal couple’s close contact person in the city.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter was intended to present briefly the royal secretary’s title and function, its meaning to newcomers as well as the benefits and duties connected to it. As Pinoci’s example showed, becoming the royal secretary was the first step in a person’s career, and the title was also a substitution for the Polish Indygenat or the act of ennoblement. Moreover, this text revealed that De Gratta played several functions at the same time, such as postmaster, secretary, commissioner and factor. All of these functions were interconnected with each other and in addition, they were sometimes interchangeably used by the Polish Kings in their correspondence with the Gdańsk City Council. Altogether, the royal secretary’s title \textit{de facto} was needed by actors of foreign origin to pursue their careers as royal officials in Poland-Lithuania; however there were certain duties connected to this function as well. The example of De Gratta showed that in parallel to his postal affairs, he was

\(^{34}\) APG 300, 53/81, 11a, p. 73.
\(^{35}\) APG 300, 53/81, 13, p. 89.
obliged to perform other tasks for the Polish Kings, which undoubtedly were also a part of his Royal Secretary’s function.
CHAPTER 5
Postmaster

This chapter investigates the career of Francesco De Gratta in the royal postal service of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The focus lies on the time period starting in the late 1640s and ending in the mid-1670s with an emphasis on the years 1649–1654 and 1660–1661. The text is divided into three parts according to the subsequent steps in Francesco’s career. Francesco became a Gdańsk Postmaster in 1654. However, he was appointed to his first postal office as the Royal Postmaster in 1649, and this is why the first part of the present chapter (‘Royal Postmaster in Gdańsk’) investigates the time until 1654. This part also examines the postal activity of Francesco’s father, Giovanni Antonio. The time period between 1654 and 1661 is examined in the second part of this text (‘The Head Postmaster in Gdańsk’). Then, Francesco became the Head Postmaster of the Gdańsk postal service and pursued his postal negotiations in the light of the Oliva treaty’s provisions. The Oliva treaty was signed eventually on 3 May 1660 and ended the Polish-Swedish war (1655–1660); however, it did not end the postal conflict. Accordingly, the events of 1660–1661 will also be discussed here. At this time, Francesco received his title of the Postmaster General of Royal Prussia, Courland, Semigallia and Livonia. The third part of the present chapter (‘The Postmaster General of Royal Prussia, Courland, Semigallia and Livonia’) includes the time following 1661 until Francesco’s death in 1676. A short description of later activities of the De Gratta family in the royal postal service in the city will also be given here. Furthermore, the hypothesis that Francesco received, in the mid-1670s, the function of the Postmaster General Poland-Lithuania will also be verified in this part of the text. The chapter ends with a short summary and discussion of the private/state interests of the De Gratta family regarding its function in the postal system.
The present chapter will take into consideration the following research questions:

1. How was Francesco De Gratta able to obtain his postal function?
2. How was he able to pursue his postal career?
3. How did he use his position in the postal service for his own or the Crown’s interests?

Little is known about Giovanni Antonio’s postal activity and Francesco’s first years as a Royal Postmaster, and it remains uncertain how Francesco’s career began. Therefore, analysis of the correspondence between Giovanni Antonio and Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, the Habsburgian Postmaster in Hamburg is important for shedding new light on this. Previous research has focused on Francesco’s later activity, and this is why the earlier period will be analysed more extensively here. For the most part, the archival sources on the postal development are quite extensive in spite of the fact, as mentioned in Chapter 1, that the entire postal collection that remained in the Gdańsk Archive was destroyed during World War II. Here, the sources will include, among others, official letters issued by the Polish Kings, as well as the Gdańsk City Council’s records. The appointment of a new postmaster required the creation of a range of specific privileges. This is why the appointment of Francesco De Gratta left much evidence, and – as will be seen later on – his nomination remained controversial.

European Context

The investigation of Francesco De Gratta’s postal career should be preceded by a brief overview of the European situation, especially concerning the postal service and news dissemination, in the period of time that precedes the time when he obtained his office as the Head of the Gdańsk postal service in 1654. This time should be seen as a crucial one and as connected to the provisions of the Westphalian treaty (1648), which guaranteed sovereign territories control over their borders as well the right to their own postal services.

Here, the relationship between Poland-Lithuania and Brandenburg-Prussia appears to be the most significant point of discussion. The struggle over the Gdańsk Mail almost led to a military conflict. According to the Arkiv i Postväsendet, a nineteenth century journal on postal history edited by Carl
Johan Hellberg in Hamburg, there were three postal campaigns in Gdańsk’s postal history. The first one included the events from the years 1646–1661, the second 1670–1715 and the last one 1772–1793. Even if the contents of the articles included in this journal are hardly verifiable (without footnotes or references), the division of the postal conflicts into three periods seems to cover the main postal issues in the city. Although the author(s) of the articles presents De Gratta and the Polish side negatively, the articles still focus on the most significant moments in the development of the Gdańsk Mail together with its transformation into a royal postal office. This is why this division seems to be useful even for my investigation. It can help with understanding the overall tendencies in the development of the Gdańsk postal service in the early modern period.

The conflict over the postal service through Gdańsk became one of the major issues in the bilateral relationships between Poland-Lithuania and Brandenburg-Prussia in the second half of the seventeenth century. All in all, the plan considering the creation of a new postal route by the Habsburgian Mail showed that this postal service was of great importance and not only at the local scale, but on the larger European one. This service linked all of the post-Hanseatic cities located in the eastern and northern parts of Europe with their partner cities located in the western part of the continent. Furthermore, the engagement of the Habsburgian interests here should be seen as a broader geopolitical development, where a number of state powers became interested in the monopolisation of postal services. Here, the Habsburg Empire also appears to have been part of the postal conflict between Brandenburg-Prussia, Poland-Lithuania and the Swedish Empire to some extent.

The second half of the seventeenth century is frequently considered by historians as a crucial period for the development of postal services in Europe. At that point, state-controlled postal services appeared and grew in almost all countries of Europe. Thus, Gdańsk which had regulated its own communication thus far, was gradually transformed into being a local agency of a larger Polish-Lithuanian postal structure. From the case of Gdańsk, it

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1 Arkiv i Postväsendet.
3 In the Arkiv i Postväsendet, the subjective opinions of the author(s) were presented without any in-depth analysis of the archival sources. For example one can read there that Francesco De Gratta was impudent and sly, see Arkiv i Postväsendet, p. 42.
becomes evident that even in a decentralized country like Poland-Lithuania, an attempt was made to transform the communication system. Thence, the royal prerogative granted by the Westphalian treaty, signified in its essence control over the territory and borders of the country. Also, it was used for the collection of incomes in the form of postal fees and charges (including postal fees). Keeping in mind that the postal services only developed into Crown-controlled organisations in the 1650s, Francesco’s office became even more substantial and strategic for the Commonwealth as it originated from the end of 1640s when his father Giovanni Antonio organised the Royal Mail in Gdańsk, however he had no rights to the city’s postal system. This situation changed in the year 1661 with the end of the Polish-Swedish war, which eventually heralded the transformation of the Gdańsk postal service into the royal system. Altogether, until the mid-1650s there were three postal services operating in the city: the Gdańsk Mail, the Brandenburgian Mail, and the Polish Royal Mail. The Royal Mail remained the only postal service in the city and simultaneously administered the city Mail from the mid-1650s up to the year 1698, when August II combined the Polish Royal Mail with the Brandenburgian Mail.5

The Polish Monarchs

Bearing in mind the fact that Francesco’s career as postmaster lasted for almost 30 years, it seems to be obligatory to also introduce his family’s relationships with the subsequent Polish Queens and Kings. Polish monarchs appear here simultaneously as Francesco De Gratta’s principals and dependants. It is important to remember that Polish Kings had the sole right to nominate royal postmasters, as the postal service was part of royal prerogative. This is why a large section will be devoted towards the relationships between postmasters and their superiors in the following text. Undoubtedly, Francesco and later his son Paolo, would have full access to all the correspondence going through Gdańsk. Here, one may remark that having access did not necessarily mean that they actually opened and read all of the correspondence. However, this privilege kept them well-informed as royal agents who were allowed to control the information flow. Thus, they, together with their superiors, had the monopoly on legally monitoring the contents of correspondence. Consequently, the study tries to demonstrate the role that Francesco and his successors played in the process of establishing/

5 Lenartowicz, Historia, p. 32.
supporting the contemporary power realm of the Commonwealth. In other words, the De Grattas’ activity as Gdańsk postmasters and their strong cooperation with the royal court has to be seen not only as providing possibilities for the development of their postal careers and improvement of their social status, but also from the perspective of their active participation in the establishment and continuation of the reign of subsequent Polish monarchs.

The Royal Postmaster in Gdańsk

Giovanni Antonio De Gratta

Francesco De Gratta became the first Postmaster General of the Polish Royal Mail office in Gdańsk, established in 1654. However, his father, Giovanni Antonio, was the first member of the family to receive the title of Royal Postmaster in the city.

As Chapter 3 revealed, Giovanni Antonio was primarily engaged in the grain trade; however, his activities were not limited only to trade. The list of foreign merchants residing in Gdańsk that was created in 1649–1650 by the Gdańsk City Council includes a note about his occupation as follows: ‘Royal Postmaster […] trader’. One may highlight that the list certainly states that Giovanni Antonio was the Royal Postmaster, not the city’s one. It remains unclear when exactly Giovanni Antonio received his postal office; however it could be presumed that it happened somewhere around the mid-1640s. The fact that the Polish King Władysław IV Vasa reorganised the entire postal system in the Commonwealth in 1647 suggests that Giovanni Antonio’s office was also part of this development at that time. From this point in time, the postal service had to be financed from taxes (‘quadrupla’). Despite the fact that the King’s postal reform did not include Gdańsk, it seems likely that even this royal city was somehow influenced by the reorganisation. The city’s post office was only transformed into a royal one in 1654. Until this time, it is believed that only a royal agent residing in the city was taking care of the Gdańsk – Warsaw postal route. Indeed, the events of 1654 brought changes that formally transformed the Gdańsk postal service into a state-controlled one. Nevertheless, the first attempts to monopolise the Gdańsk Mail could already be seen in Giovanni Antonio’s actions.

7 About the postal organisation of 1647, see VL, vol. 4, p. 55.
8 VL, vol. 4, p. 55.
Previous research does not offer an in-depth description of Giovanni Antonio’s function as a postmaster. Furthermore, most of the literature does not mention him at all and claims that it was Francesco who became the first Royal Postmaster in Gdańsk. Even most of historical sources on the postal history are silent when it comes to Giovanni Antonio. Nevertheless, a collection of Giovanni Antonio’s letters to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, the Habsburgian Postmaster in Hamburg, is held at the Thurn and Taxis archive in Regensburg which includes several documents concerning the De Grattas’ (and especially Giovanni Antonio’s) postal activity.\textsuperscript{9}

The First Contact

The copy of a letter sent by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, dated 4 October 1647, seems to be their very first epistolary contact.\textsuperscript{10} In this letter, Giovanni Antonio introduced his son in the following manner: ‘my son Francesco turned 30, speaks and negotiates fluently in different languages’\textsuperscript{11}. In his later letters he called his son just ‘my son’ (‘mio figlio’), without giving his first name. This information suggests that they had started their relationship no earlier than 1647. Moreover, it is worth emphasising that this particular letter gives the age of Francesco but it is different to the age in other collected sources. According to the information included in the letter, Francesco was born in 1617; however, according to the date of his death registered in the Church books of St Mary’s parish, he was born in 1613. So, Francesco was born just a few years after Giovanni Antonio’s arrival to Gdańsk. This in turn resolves doubts around Francesco’s birth place and confirms his Gdańsk origin. Moreover, this letter’s introductory character as well as its date may suggest that Giovanni Antonio was appointed to his office as a consequence of Władysław IV Vasa’s postal reform. Nonetheless, Giovanni Abondio Somigliano had already received his office as the Habsburgian Postmaster in Hamburg in 1640.\textsuperscript{12} Thus,

\textsuperscript{9} No wider research has been found to have analysed this correspondence concerning De Gratta’s role in the Polish-Lithuanian royal postal service. The reference to this correspondence together with its brief analysis of the origin of the Polish newspaper (‘Die Polnischen Novellen’) in Gdańsk as well as the contacts between De Grattas and Somigliano and Vrints was made by Kranhold in his book on the history of Gdańsk’s press; See Kranhold, \textit{Frühgeschichte}, p. 95ff.
\textsuperscript{10} FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The copy of the letter from Giovanni Antonio Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 4 October 1647.
\textsuperscript{11} FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The copy of the letter from Giovanni Antonio Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 4 October 1647: ‘mio figliolo Francesco mieta di 30 Anni giorene prattaro et negocŷ et de diversi linguagi’.
\textsuperscript{12} Compare with Arblaster, \textit{From Ghent to Aix}, p. 203.
Somigliano had already been established in the postal services for a long time before De Gratta started his postal activity. Finally, no evidence has been found to indicate that an office of the royal postmasters existed in the city before Giovanni Antonio’s service. This confirms the hypothesis that Giovanni Antonio received his office of the first royal postmaster in Gdańsk, which was created not earlier than in 1647.

Francesco De Gratta – the Royal Postmaster

In 1649, Francesco received a royal privilege signed by the King John II Casimir Vasa that made him the Royal Postmaster (tabellarius) in Gdańsk.\(^ {13} \) This together with three other things that also took place in 1649: (i) receiving of a factoratus title that made him a royal factor, (ii) obtaining of Gdańsk citizenship that was needed in order to pursue his trade activities legally, and lastly (iii) marriage to a daughter to the local Gdańsk citizen, have to be considered as demonstrating his establishment in the city. As the royal privilege said, Francesco was especially responsible for the well-functioning postal connection between France and Poland. The royal couple, especially the Queen, were interested in receiving news, packages and letters from France. This particular interest in France, besides the royal correspondence going there, might be explained by the Queen having come from Paris (she was probably born in Nevers, but grew up in Paris)\(^ {14} \) as well as by the fact that she had contacts there such as Boulliau and Des Essarts. Returning to the postal privileges that made Francesco the Royal Postmaster in Gdańsk, these privileges concerned only the managerial level of the postal service between Gdańsk and Warsaw-Cracow together with control over the transfer of royal correspondence to and from France, as well as other countries located in the western part of Europe. Thus, similarly to his father, Francesco did not become the Gdańsk postmaster as such, but the royal postmaster in the city. He eventually became the Gdańsk Head Postmaster in 1654 thanks to the number of negotiations that he pursued on behalf of his father as the royal postmaster. The creation of a new postal route to Amsterdam was one of the ideas that were negotiated in their correspondence.

\(^ {13} \) FZATTR, Postakten 1239, A copy of the document by John II Casimir Vasa from 1649.
\(^ {14} \) See, for example, Stone, The Polish-Lithuanian, p. 155.
A New Postal Route

As one can learn from Giovanni Antonio’s letters, both he and his son, Francesco, had pursued their attempts to establish a new postal route from Amsterdam to Gdańsk via Hamburg.\textsuperscript{15} Even if those plans remained unsuccessful, the circumstances around them give a new perspective on the postal development in this part of Europe. Consequently, this development showed that Thurn and Taxis planned to create a postal route from Hamburg to Gdańsk at the same time as Sweden, Denmark, Brandenburg and Mecklenburg that also possessed postal services in the territories of Pomerania.\textsuperscript{16} This is why one may observe frequent reports by Giovanni Antonio to Somigliano about the progression of the Brandenburgian Mail to monopolise the entire Pomeranian postal system. Even if they possessed privileges (there will be more about them later) required to create such a postal route on his behalf, their ideas still remained at the planning stage, not even close to becoming real. Thus, one may describe these attempts as unrealistic and illusory, especially when taking into consideration the later developments in the region.

The Postal Partner

Francesco undertook the postal negotiations in person in Warsaw and in Cracow. Nevertheless, Giovanni Antonio’s correspondence offers insights that Francesco already used existing contacts and networks established by his father. In one of his letters, dated 15 November 1647, Giovanni Antonio called King Władysław IV Vasa ‘his patron’\textsuperscript{17}. As one can also learn from this

\textsuperscript{15} For example, FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 14 January 1650.

\textsuperscript{16} Droste, The Terms, p. 131.

\textsuperscript{17} FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The copy of The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 15 November 1647: ‘la m:ta di Polonia mio S:re et Pro’ne Clem:mo, é curiosissima di haverele Gazette di Branabdia e altreparti e quanto di novitá va succedendo; e pero’ mene fafare dal S:re montelupi suo m:tro di Posta Generale grand ‘instantia; Siche quando VS. mi potesse acompiacere senza suo incommodo di mandar mi ogni settimana per il mio danaro, mi sarebbe di favoure particolare per dar gusta a’Padroni, mi potradunque accennare in riposta di questa quanto potrebbe importare l’anno ad haverele ogni settimana, La propositione fatta di mettere una Posta traqua e costa che caminasse piu presto della ordinaria, non e dispiaciuta aldetto S:re montelupi m:ro di Posta Generale di S. m:ta s:ona di Polonia Il cui consenso e favore intal impresa non sarebbe difficile adotttenerlo; Peró VS. potrá dispiegare bene i suoi pensieri, e che vie e mezzi piu opportuni sara necessario ad abrazzare per arrivare al vero disegno n’ro, per potere alla Corte fare trattare il piu occorrerà; di novitá di queste parti nonho per hora
letter, Giovanni Antonio asked if Somigliano could in turn send the newspapers from the Duchy of Brabant (nowadays Belgium) to the Polish King. He also informed Somigliano that he should send them directly to Gdańsk at Giovanni Antonio’s expense. Moreover, he stated that Carlo Montelupi, the Royal Postmaster for the Polish Crown in Cracow, had already been informed about that and accepted the weekly subscription of the Brabantian newspapers. This letter also included a closing passage in which Francesco sent his greetings to Somigliano. It is very likely that Giovanni Antonio wanted to highlight his close contacts with the King as well as Carlo Montelupi, who was the Postmaster General of Poland-Lithuania at that time. Presumably, he even answered for Somigliano’s doubts concerning the payment for newspapers. Thus, it is very likely that before Giovanni Antonio started his service for the royal court, Somigliano used to contact the Polish postmaster in Cracow regarding any matters that concerned the postal service. Thus, Giovanni Antonio became Somigliano’s ‘Polish partner’ concerning the delivery of the royal correspondence and the subscription to newspapers for the royal court. This said, it seems to be important to notice that Giovanni Antonio also briefed Somigliano on the development of the military situation in Poland-Lithuania. This fact also suggests that he offered his information service as a news agent to Somigliano, who in turn offered his to the Habsburg Empire. Finally, a general remark concerning the information about Giovanni Antonio’s occupation as a postmaster in Gdańsk, which was included in this particular letter should be made. Taking into account that Giovanni Antonio never gave his profession when signing his letters, it can be claimed that that Giovanni Antonio’s relationship with Somigliano was at an embryonic stage. Moreover, concerning the postal connection between Poland-Lithuania and the western part of Europe, the fact that the Gdańsk Mail was used instead of that in Cracow is evidence that confirms the claim that it was quicker to get information via the northern postal route.

cheparticiparle, solo che la m:ta Ser:ma di Polonia ha s’pesa lasua partenza Littoania sino alla prossima Primavera, volendo aspettare a Warsovia Il Grand’ Ambasciatore di francia chesi aspetta, e nonpiu a Vilna, Concio bacciandole con mio figliuolo affetuosamente’.

18 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The copy of the letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 15 November 1647: ‘Mro’ di posta in Danzica’.
News About the Royal Couple

In his next letter, dated 7 February 1648, Giovanni Antonio wrote that Francesco would remain in Italy until the next spring. After that, he planned to return to Poland-Lithuania in order to negotiate his postal position. Unfortunately, by that point in time Giovanni Antonio had not yet revealed what Francesco was doing in Italy during his stay. Moreover, he enclosed a short description about the Queen’s correspondence to Paris. The letters (mandates) sent by the Queen were written in French and addressed to various Parisian merchants and gentlemen. These letters were hidden among other regular correspondence. Giovanni Antonio highlighted that he received this specific information regarding the contents of the Queen’s letters from Carlo Montelupi. This in turn suggests that their cooperation was vital in order to keep the Queen’s contact with Paris both uninterrupted and secretive. Here, undoubtedly, a sound postal connection with a trustworthy news agent was of great importance for the Queen, especially when one considers political concerns, for example, the sending of mandates and privileges to her respective followers in France. In just such a way, these intermediary persons who were engaged in the postal service were updated about the contents of the Queen’s correspondence. One week later, Giovanni Antonio included in his next letter, the name of one of his informers – Boccaro, probably Manoel Boccaro Frances (Jacob Rosales), Spain’s Jewish agent in Hamburg. Francesco still remained in Italy where he met with Giovanni Antonio’s patrons in trade and postal matters. Unfortunately, the letter does not reveal the names of persons whom Francesco met there.

19 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 7 February 1648: ‘qual si voglia altro servizio per, se apriranno lipiegi comeminaciano, pender il ricorso alla Corte di Polonia e sara provisto ad questo inconveniente, se bene mi dispiace che S.m. Ser:ma con tutta la Corte parta ad io stante da varsovia per Littuania che nonsi potra trattare cos’alcuna punto de negocis ad lei con sapeuole pero alritorno de mio figliolo d’Italia ad poss:ma primavera alqul tpó tornera ancora […] non dubito ci applichera megli l’animo, Detto s: montelupi ha questo serupolo, che le ire’ della Ser:ma Regina sotto Coperta dell suo fattorerqua, sottoquale u gano mandate gran quantita de ire’, tanto per Mercanties per Gentilomini della Corte de Parisgh che e il principal quadagno venendo ancora franchi lingua, pur ancora ad questo conue betrovane remedio’.

20 Probably Manoel Boccaro Frances (Jacob Rosales), a Spain’s Jewish agent in Hamburg, see Israel, Empires, p. 348.

In his next letter, Giovanni Antonio mentioned Roncalli (Domenico), a Canon of Warmia’s diocese and an agent (‘resident’) of the Polish King in France and later in Rome\(^2\), who could help Giovanni Antonio and Somigliano to pursue further plans to establish a new postal route. Roncalli, who was involved in arranging Marie Louise’s journey from France to Poland-Lithuania, was undoubtedly seen as a person who could recommend the De Grattas to the Queen.\(^2\) Furthermore, his next letter included information that Daniel Della Vaire\(^2\) (Della Faille?), a factor to the Queen, while visiting Gdańsk came to De Gratta’s house and read letters.\(^2\) This fact shows how close the De Gratta family remained to the royal court. This was one of many incidents when the people connected to the Polish monarchs or the Polish monarchs themselves were able to access correspondence with the help of the De Grattas. There will be more examples evidencing such activity later in the text. But even at this stage, it is obvious that the De Grattas were in close contact with both the Queen and the King, who remained in turn their patrons, and because of this they passed on regular news about the royal couple.

Patron and Benefactor

As an example of the above, a letter dated 29 May 1648 can be given. It includes information about King Władysław IV Vasa’s death on 20 May 1648. Here, Giovanni Antonio considered the King his ‘patron and benefactor’.\(^2\)

\(^2\) See Tygielski, Włosi, p. 71, 75.
\(^2\) Tygielski, Włosi, p. 71.
\(^2\) FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 29 May 1648: ‘della inaspettata morte della M. Ser:ma de Polonia et Suecia mio Clementiss:mo Pro’ne et benefattore, seguita ad giornipatti ad mericz in Littoania N.S. habbial’anima in gloria, econ soli la povera ser:ma Regina, laquelle ancoralei si trova nel medesimoluoco indisposta di febre calda, piaccia ad Dio restituirle quanto P:ma intiera prsitina sanista, verame (…) la Corona hefatta granperdita Dio in spiri liss:ni ad unione et corcondanza in elegierne un altro, chesistima sara il Principe Casimiro, ó il Principe Carlo, ouero il Duca de’ Neuborgo’.
added that the Queen, due to her illness, still remained in Merecz, Lithuania, (Lt. Merkine), where the King had passed away. It is important to note that this letter was later forwarded by Somigliano to Count Lamoral of Thurn and Taxis, the General Habsburgian Postmaster in Brussels.27

The Postal Situation

Returning to Giovanni Antonio’s postal plans, one can read in one of his earlier letters that he wished to continue his negotiations. Giovanni Antonio noted there that he did not expect any problems from Montelupi and said that an issue might arise when it came to the Swedish side.28 In his eyes, Sweden would not tolerate the passage of foreign postal services in the Swedish territories, here Swedish Pomerania. This information disclosed Somigliano and De Gratta’s plans, which envisaged the creation of an alternative postal route stretching from Gdańsk to Hamburg and including the Hanseatic cities located on the Baltic coast.

In the following months, the correspondence of Giovanni Antonio mostly included Polish news and some information about Francesco, as well as the postal situation in the city. For instance, he reported about how the convocation of a successor after King Władysław IV Vasa was being prepared, and also presented the development of the war situation in the Ukrainian lands of Poland-Lithuania together with some information concerning the military conflict between the Turks and Tatars.

Nevertheless, in a letter sent 5 March 1649, one can read that Francesco was on his way to Cracow from Warsaw in order to negotiate the postal affairs, which mainly concerned obtaining the next royal privilege.29 Undoubtedly, Francesco also negotiated his postal privilege, which made him the Royal Postmaster in Gdańsk. Later, Giovanni Antonio in his letter to Somigliano left a report concerning the postal situation in Gdańsk, writing that: ‘this [Gdańsk’s] magistrate changed the day of departure of the mail

27 See addressee on the cover of the particular letter, FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 29 May 1648.
28 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 14 February 1648.
29 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The copy of the letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 5 March 1649: ‘le diró essere ritornato quarto giorni sonomio figliolo da Cracovia, gdi lo dato con bona salute, qualmiriferisce, havere’ spontato il negotio della posta ad segnio che se la uoermo S. M. Ser:ma ci concedera e fara grazia dal Privilegio, esperó conuera ad esso miofigliolo torni ad Pasqua pross:ma ad Varsov:a ad stabilire il tutto’.
service. Thus, such information was important to both of them and could possibly be seen as a negative development. De Gratta’s and Somigliano’s planned postal route was intended to be even faster than the existing one. This is why every improvement in the city’s postal organisation was undoubtedly perceived by them as a contrary action. Next, he reported that two other postal systems were active in the region – the Swedish one with postmasters in Stettin and Riga, as well as the Brandenburgian one with a postmaster in Königsberg. It seems that Somigliano and De Gratta wanted to exclude first both Swedish and electoral postal services from the Gdańsk Mail, then to take over the postal route to Hamburg using the Habsburgian privilege stating that only they held the rights to the postal service going through the territories of Royal Prussia.

Francesco in Cracow

In the following weeks, Giovanni Antonio continued to send his reports about the development of their postal affairs. For example, in his letter dated 12 March 1649, he wrote that Francesco was to receive his postal privilege after his return to Warsaw. This information suggests that Francesco still remained in Cracow at this particular point in time. One week later, he reported to Somigliano that the Queen was ‘satisfied and positive when it comes to their postal negotiations’. Again, it seems that this information was sent by Francesco who visited Cracow at that time and met with the royal couple there. Moreover, he said that Gdańsk postmasters had once again compiled a new schedule for the arrival of mail service. On 26 March 1649,

30 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The copy of the letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 5 March 1649: ‘Questo magistrato, ha fatto mutare il giorno della partenza della Posta’.
31 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The copy of the letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 5 March 1649: ‘In oltra mipare che ei sevole la corispondaesa dell mastro di posta de Suedesi ad stettino, ede’ Riga che dequella Dell Elettottore de Brandenburgo ad Regimonte, spersene possiamo peromerttere, se vora corispondere alle sue promesse, basta cheio non tardaro ad perocurarne il Privilegio’.
32 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 12 March 1649: ‘Dovendo per lavarne il Privilegio ritornare mio figliolo […] ad Varsovia’.
33 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 19 March 1649: ‘Regina si compacia et agradasca il negocio’.
Giovanni Antonio reported that Francesco was still in Cracow as he was spending the Easter holidays at the royal court.\textsuperscript{34}

One can observe that Giovanni Antonio’s reports about his son’s proceedings in Cracow always included some fresh news about Poland-Lithuania. This fact may suggest he wanted to appear as a more reliable person in Somigliano’s eyes. Such first-hand news was much more valuable than that retrieved from other sources such as newspapers. Thus, the personal network was still very important for both Giovanni Antonio and Somigliano and remained one of the main channels of information flow between the Habsburg authorities and the Polish royal couple.

Furthermore, in his letter dated 2 April 1649, Giovanni Antonio gave assurances that Francesco would arrive in Warsaw as soon as possible (‘subito subito’).\textsuperscript{35} Here, there is a question concerning the reason why Giovanni Abondio Somigliano was apparently concerned about Francesco’s prolonged stay in Cracow. Presumably, he wanted Francesco to continue his postal negotiations with the Polish nobility, as well as De Gratta’s principals in Warsaw. It can be presumed that the postmasters in the Commonwealth were placed under the jurisdiction of the General Treasurer, Jan Andrzej Morsztyn, who – once again – ran the Crown’s finances. Indeed, Somigliano was interested in dealing quickly with their postal affairs which perhaps needed to be approved by the Diet. Thus, Francesco’s extended stay in Cracow can be treated as additional evidence for a very good relationship between him and the Queen. As one may recall, Giovanni Antonio frequently had news about the Queen (more than about the King), which he forwarded in his letters to Somigliano. It was no earlier than 19 April 1649 when Francesco departed from Cracow to make the journey back to Warsaw.\textsuperscript{36} Nevertheless, even this time he did not arrive there. As one can read in Giovanni Antonio’s correspondence, Francesco was sent by his father to

\textsuperscript{34} FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 26 March 1649: ‘mio figliolo forsi ancora avanti le ss:te feste di Pasqua andera ad Varsovia ad terminare il tutto’.

\textsuperscript{35} FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 2 April 1649: ‘miofiglio subito subito fatte le feste di Pasqua si tranferirà ad Varsovia’.

\textsuperscript{36} FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 19 April 1649: ‘mio figliolo partira per Varsovia ad suo […] operato’.
Königsberg in order to pursue his affairs. He did not mention what kind of affairs the visit was about, nor whom he visited there.

Francesco in Warsaw

In his next letter, dated 7 May 1649, Giovanni Antonio informed Somigliano that the Queen was ill. It appears from Giovanni Antonio’s correspondence that she was often ill; however, this time his letters are silent about what ailed her. He continued about Francesco, in his letter dated 14 May 1649, and wrote that he was on his way to Warsaw. Giovanni Antonio also included that Francesco was shipping out his goods at that very time (‘spedicione desuoi affairi’). Probably, this information was connected to Francesco’s arrival in Königsberg and related to his trade affairs. Unfortunately, this time he did not give any additional information about the kind of goods that he traded or the persons that Francesco visited both in Königsberg and in Warsaw after his arrival there. The letter dated 21 May 1649 did not yield any further details, besides information about the length of time that Francesco was planning to stay in Warsaw. Francesco was to return to Gdańsk in 14 days. In his letter dated 28 May 1649, Giovanni Antonio mentioned that the local postmasters in Gdańsk had increased their postal fees. Later, he added that the Gdańsk merchants were disappointed because of this rise in prices. The time of delivery of letters, presumably from Hamburg, was extended to seven days. This postal route was planned to run twice a week now and the

37 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 30 April 1649: ‘mio figliolo per miei affaireri parti per Regimonte dadove lunedi [...] e subito partira per Varsovia’.
38 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 7 May 1649: ‘Regina gdio lodato andava megliorando della suagrave indisposicione’.
39 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 14 May 1649: ‘Dimani parte mio figliolo per varsovia che N.S. l’accompagni ad saluamento e’li presti gracia di bona e’desiderata spedicione de suoi affari’.
40 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 21 May 1649: ‘mio figliolo per Varsovia da dove spero che fra 14 giorni saradi retorno’.
41 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 28 May 1649: ‘questi maestri di posta fanno pagare $5 per ogni minima lr’a de mezzo foglio [...] io pagato deli doi piegi gl. 85 di questa moneta, questi mercanti la sentano male […] Il loro pensiero e’ di Continuare ad spedire 2 volte la sett:na lor posta in 7 giorni, si che giudico ancora io che ad noi causera maggior diffulta per la nr’a impreza’.
postal fees were to increase. Moreover, he also said that this situation would cause major difficulties for both himself and Somigliano.

How could the changes in the city’s postal service influence Somigliano and Giovanni Antonio’s plans to establish a postal route? On the one side, Somigliano and De Gratta were able to count on the full support of the royal couple, but on the other, they had to consider other postal services present in the region. This made plans for a Habsburgian postal route via Pomerania less likely to be realised. Furthermore, in the next letter, dated 31 May 1649, Giovanni Antonio noted that Francesco remained in Warsaw and said that he had not received any further information about the development of their postal negotiations. In the letter dated June 1649 (no day-date) Giovanni Antonio reported that Francesco had still not arrived from Warsaw to Gdańsk; however the word ‘not’ (‘non’) was added afterwards in the original letter. That in turn can be seen as evidence for his planned return before the postal day. Moreover, he wrote that the ceremonies organised due to the celebration of the military victory of the Commonwealth were much reduced because of the Queen’s illness, as for example there was no ballet planned for that day. Furthermore, he noted that he possessed the royal mandate for Giacomo (Jacob, hic!) Gelentino who resided in Strasburg (Lat. Argentoratum, Argentina) and which was probably issued by the Polish King, and sent it to Somigliano. Unfortunately, there is no information about why De Gratta forwarded this mandate to Somigliano; however, it obviously shows that they both belonged to a kind of official informatory network.

His next letter, dated 4 June 1649 stated that Francesco was finally on his way from Warsaw. He said that the local postmaster in Gdańsk had increased

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42 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 31 May 1649: ‘Damio figliolo da Varsovia non ho ancora aviso alcuno di quello vapossando spero sentire qual Cosa con laposta de dimani e’ con la pross:ma posta ne daro aviso ad VS. Ieri saranno se quite lefonzioni deller nostre Regie ad Varsovia’.

43 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, June 1649: ‘mio figliolo ancora non e ritornato da Varsovia’ l’attendo però di momento; ieri otto furono celebrate le nostre Regie, ma conpo che cerimonie per la indisposicione della Ser:ma Regina, non siando stato al fanchetto ad taula che S.M.la Ser:ma Regina mons: Nuncio Apostolico, Principe Carlo e’ l’Arci vescono, e’altro che un balletto nonsie fatto’.

44 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, June 1649: ‘ha mandato perme per Argentina al S: Jacob Gelentino dalprincipio fino e quest’ hora per potermi imborsare dell porto da costa e’franco forte’.

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the cost of sending a letter to 10 gr. (groszy).\textsuperscript{45} Even if Giovanni Antonio received a special reduced price for mailing of his correspondence, he did not fail to notice that ‘they [Gdańsk’s postmasters] had recently become very arrogant’.\textsuperscript{46} The next letter, dated 10 June 1649 included information that Francesco had achieved in Warsaw ‘as much as he could ask’ and that he would ‘serve with a newspaper’.\textsuperscript{47} It is highly likely Francesco was obliged to create a newspaper. Presumably, it was a hand-written newspaper that was to be produced in Gdańsk, and gathering both local and foreign news from the western part of Europe for the needs of the royal court.

Furthermore, one may note that Giovanni Antonio described the grain prices in Gdańsk for the first time in his correspondence. That in turn may suggest that he continued with his grain trade in parallel to his function as the royal postmaster.\textsuperscript{48} He noted that the price of grain in Gdańsk had risen and stated that the prices would be even higher if the war in Poland continued. Then again, he informed Somigliano about Francesco who ‘was acting in order to receive his postal privilege’ in his letter dated 2 July 1649. He also mentioned that Francesco was acting in the service of the Queen by sending her reports, presumably to France.\textsuperscript{49} Taking into consideration the fact that the south-eastern parts of the Commonwealth remained at war, these reports had to include the political situation in the Commonwealth together with military development in the region. In one of his next letters dated 6 August 1649 – the letter was written by Francesco – one can learn that Francesco eventually received his privilege that allowed him to send the

\textsuperscript{45} FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 4 June 1649: ‘Ale 3 mandatemi hodato fidi recapito ma non mivoglianopagare che gl 6 per lettera et ad questi maestro di posta miconviene pagare gl 10 in somma’.

\textsuperscript{46} FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 4 June 1649: ‘vedo sono diventati molto aroganti dapocho in qua’.

\textsuperscript{47} FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 10 June 1649: ‘mi figliolo havere ottenuto ad Varsovia quell tanto ha potuto domandare’, che li serva l’aviso, per suo governo, e’aspettando mio figliolo di momento della poss:ma, li doro quello piu occurrera’.

\textsuperscript{48} FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 10 June 1649: ‘Grani qua vanno alzando di prezzo, comprandosi da magazzeni li formenti ad fl 200 sino in 320. 330 et le segale fl 175 ad 195 in aparenza d’alzare d’avanto: se la guerra in Polonia andera avanti’.

\textsuperscript{49} FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 2 July 1649: ‘ritorno de mio figliolo da Varsov:a e’quanto ha operato per il privilegio della posta, al che per ora mi raporto […] speranza di potermi mandare ognisett:na li raporti in lingua francesa due volte in Cambio delli in lengua Latina per servicio della Regina’.
royal correspondence where he ‘deemed it to be necessary’\(^{50}\). Thus, he gained a form of royal monopoly and was also given a free hand by the royal couple to organise the postal system.

Francesco in Gdańsk

The difficulties that arose concerning the city Mail were also a subject of a discussion in the letter from 6 August 1649. The Gdańsk City Council was against the idea of the use of the city’s couriers by De Gratta and proposed he use the royal ones instead. As a result of this, one can find information in one of Giovanni Antonio’s next letters that confirmed that De Gratta used his own couriers to distribute royal letters.\(^{51}\) According to the list of belongings of Francesco created after his death in 1676, he possessed a stable for several horses that he undoubtedly used in his postal service.\(^{52}\)

One may also note that the letters sent by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano were written by Francesco after his arrival from Warsaw. The style of these letters differs greatly from those written by his father. More importantly, these letters often included information that may confirm that Francesco wrote his letters by himself, without his father’s participation. Nevertheless, Giovanni Antonio still signed the letters, but, in some cases it is uncertain who actually signed them, because of the different style of handwriting or setting of the signature. For example one may find the signature not directly after the contents of the letter but in the corner of the page. Furthermore, it is important to note that although the correspondence between Giovanni Antonio and Abondio was sent on a regular basis, it did not mention anything about Francesco’s marriage, which took place in October 1649. Generally, the letters did not include the De Gratta family’s private situation in Gdańsk, nor their Italian roots, or references to other family members or estates at all. The lack of this type of information that

\(^{50}\) FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 6 August 1649: ‘Nel Privileggio che hadato á mio figliolo, cosa loceotenente del General delle Poste inq:ta Citta conlemed:me autorita che ha nel Regnio di Genal delle Poste, eonfacolta dipotere Instituire expedire le Poste Regie per dove stim:to necessario [bold text by MS] per servictio della M. Ser:ma Et anio q:ti Danzicani nonpossimoi Imput:re q:ta Innovatione ad mio fogliolo, ha:atto Cauare Il mandare Reggio di dovere sped:re li pieschi Reggi conpropý Corrieri e non conquelli della Citta’.

\(^{51}\) FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 1 October 1649: ‘altrimente spedischi li miei Regý, Corrieri quando mi piacerá tanto pui qndo lo faró con mand: Reggio, che giatengo al ord:ne per partielo ved:re quando Voranno’.

\(^{52}\) ASL, AS, 123, p. 145; About the register and the Kamienica, see forthcoming article by Salamonik, Salamonik, *In Memoriam*. 

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could in turn shed some light on the private activity of the De Grattas can be seen as evidence that the relationship between Giovanni Antonio and Somigliano remained only on a professional level. Consequently, the network that appears from Giovanni Antonio’s letters around the postal and political issues included there, may be characterised as an occupational one that associated the news agents and information experts, though without any familial or friendship bonds. Essentially, this network (cluster) consisted only of postmasters and their superiors as well as the other actors involved in their postal negotiations.

Once again, Montelupi was the Postmaster General of Poland-Lithuania and this is why he was considered as a highly influential person in the De Grattas’ network. This is the reason why Giovanni Antonio and Giovanni Abondio Somigliano often discussed him in their correspondence and contacted him regarding their questions and issues around the postal development in the Commonwealth. Even if the superior right to nominate royal postmasters belonged to the King, the Postmaster General played a significant role throughout the entire process. He could recommend someone that belonged to his network to obtain a state postal position as had happened in Francesco’s case. A similar situation to this from 1649 appeared again in 1654, when Francesco De Gratta was nominated as the Head Postmaster in Gdańsk. While Montelupi was involved in the postal negotiations and the issuing of the postal privilege for Francesco in 1649, in 1654 he officially recommended Francesco for his office, which was even noted in the text of the privilege. One may recall that Francesco was the Royal Postmaster in Gdańsk only until the year 1654. This is why the time between 1649 and 1654 should be seen here as a process during which Francesco received full access to the Gdańsk Mail. Consequently, these particular events may be considered as subsequent movements in his postal career. Moreover, while in the year 1649 Francesco remained still an assistant to Giovanni Antonio, the situation had changed totally in 1654. Then he became an independent postal agent. Giovanni Antonio probably died somewhere around 1654 leaving his office to his son.

In fact, Francesco’s writing of his father’s letters can be seen as the preparatory phase in his career. Not only did he learn to write official letters in Italian or German, he was also able to maintain bonds with the Habsburgian Postmasters and to become familiar with several influential individuals. Moreover, the De Gratta family’s relationship with Somigliano and later with Johann Baptista Vrints, was established by Giovanni Antonio and later was just inherited by Francesco. Through Somigliano, De Grattas
had access to the Count of Thurn and Taxis, Lamoral, the Postmaster General of the Holy Empire who resided in Brussels. Thus, one can consider the Italian postal network that appeared in the central part of Europe at that time as an attempt to create a hereditary system in order to monopolise the postal services by families of Italian origin. In such a way, the postal dynasties grew up in this part of Europe and gathered a great part of the European postal services in their hands.

Francesco Again in Warsaw

In a letter dated 10 December 1649, Giovanni Antonio wrote that Francesco was on his way to Warsaw to be there during the Diet. One may recognise here that the style of handwriting was Giovanni Antonio’s again. One week later, he said that Francesco would stay in Warsaw as long as would be necessary. Once again, Giovanni Antonio returned to the idea of the establishment of their postal route to Amsterdam. He remarked that the Brandenburgian Mail needed nine days to get from Amsterdam to Königsberg. Nevertheless, Giovanni Antonio noted that the local merchants remained very dissatisfied with the city’s postal service. Giovanni Antonio had observed the irritation of the Gdańskers and saw this as an opportunity on the one hand to make this particular postal route faster, and on the other hand to eliminate the Brandenburgian Mail. Basically, it can be presumed that Francesco probably tried to convince Polish nobles and the Polish King

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53 For example, the activity of the family Montelupi is analysed in terms of monopoly, see Zgorzelski, Z badań, p. 152.
54 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 10 December 1649: ‘mio figliolo sabatopattó parti per varsovia, che Dio l’ accompagni ad saluamento e’ dovendomi raguagliare de quanto alla giornata andera passando in quella Dieta’.
55 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 17 December 1649: ‘ieri intesi che dopoi leposs:me sante feste della nativita de N.S. uno de’ questi nri’ della posta verra costa e’ da Amsterdam medemam:te uno per trattare estabilire novo ordine di metter qua da Amsterdam le lr’e in 9 giorni, e di qua din altanto tpo’, come fa ancora la posta del Ser:mo Elettore de Brandenburgo, che’ le’ mette in 9. Giorni da Amsterdam ad Regimonte, non compoco danno epreudico di questa posta, che causa una confusione’ che li Corrieri da Regimonte non osseruano pui il p:mo ordine de arivare in 2 giorni, ma vengano quando lipare e’ piace, peril che questi Mercanti restano molto malcontenti, però quando l’ Ill:mo S: Conte de Taxis risolusse di dare li ordini occorrenti perla nostra Posta haressimo tanto maggior comodita et occasione divenire ad nri’ disegni, na intalcaso pare ad me faccia debisognio Che d: Ill:mo S. Conte si agiusticon Il Ser:mo Elettore altrimente te’mo che lecoe non passeranno tropobene, vado raguagliando mio figliolo che hora si trova ad Varsovia de quanto occorre ad finche’ cerchi de’ aviare ad ogni ostacoli’.
to open a new postal route during his stay in Warsaw. Here, Francesco’s proceedings may be considered as similar actions to those by his father, who prior to making the postal service faster tried to influence the Count of Thurn and Taxis via Somigliano. Apparently, both the Polish and Habsburg sides were obliged to comply with the arrangements that they once agreed with Brandenburg-Prussia and the Swedish Empire. Furthermore, Giovanni Antonio described the Commonwealth as a ‘state in ruins’56, certainly with regard to the Ukrainian conflict.

In his next letter, dated 24 December 1649, Giovanni Antonio returned again to his plans to create a postal route from Amsterdam via Hamburg to Gdańsk. He also mentioned that his son would soon arrive in Warsaw and would give a report about the Diet development.57 Here, one can see the link between the parliamentary decisions and the postal negotiations. Presumably, their postal plan had been discussed at this particular Parliamentary session or required some support from the Polish officials present in Warsaw. One week later, he wrote about the new decision that was made by the local Gdańsk postmasters. This new decision regulated the flow of the correspondence arriving from Amsterdam (to Gdańsk), which now was scheduled to arrive in Gdańsk from Amsterdam in nine days and from Hamburg (‘costa’58) in seven days.59 This meant that the days of the outgoing mail service had also been changed and together with the earlier changes introduced by Gdańsk postmasters, this had a positive impact on the correspondence flow. According to Giovanni Antonio, these changes had been

56 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter iovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 17 December 1649: ‘della total Ruina de tutto il Regnio’.
57 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 24 December 1649: ‘da costa per Amsterdam’, ‘mio figliolo arrivo ad varsovia […] e con la poss:ma posta mi dovera avisare quello napassando in quella Dieta per darme parte’.
58 According to the lexicon by Johann Christoph Nehring, ‘Acosti’ or ‘Costy’ means the place to which one is writing, see Johann Christoph Nehring, D. Johann Christoph Nehrings Hochfürstl. Sächsischen Hof-Advocatens zum Friedenstein, Historisch- Politisch- und Juristisches Wörter-Buch oder Lexicon: in welchem nebst der Erklärung der Juristischen und bey der Kaufmannsschaft gebräuchlichen, auch andere in den Zeitungen, Schriften, und überhaupt im gemeinen Leben vorkommende Redens-Arten, ingleichen verschiedene […] (Gotha, 1757), p. 9.
59 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 31 December 1649: ‘nri’ mastri di posta hano fatto altra resolucione di farvenire le lre’ una sol volta la settimana, cice’ il lunedi capitera qua la posta e il venerdi sispedira di qua come P.ma pero mettermanno qua le lre’ de Amsterdam in 9 giorni, e’ da costa in 7 giorni’.
accepted by local merchants and seen as ‘more comfortable’ ones. At the same time, he said that he hoped that Francesco would manage to conclude their postal affairs without any further difficulties and that the Count of Thurn and Taxis would also accomplish his task. Presumably, the Count of Thurn and Taxis was asked to issue special privileges that were required to establish their postal service. In addition, Giovanni Antonio certainly said that Francesco would stay in Warsaw in order to negotiate about their office. One may highlight that Giovanni Antonio frequently used the form our concerning the new postal route and his cooperation with Somigliano. Thus, the planned postal route that was to emerge, was a joint venture of De Gratta and Somigliano and was considered in terms of their business and consequently not the Crown’s.

One week later, Giovanni Antonio said that the Count of Thurn and Taxis hoped that the new postal route would be finally established. This information revealed that Giovanni Antonio had continuously stayed in touch with Count Lamoral personally. Moreover, he added that they (De Gratta and Somigliano) should negotiate with a local postmaster of Stettin concerning the postal service through this city. The planned time of their postal route was similar to the Brandenburgian Mail. It would take nine days in total and start in Gdańsk on Fridays and arrive on the Monday of the following week at its final destination. They were therefore able to offer a

60 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 31 December 1649: ‘questo modo sistima torni piu comodo ad mercanti’.
61 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 31 December 1649: ‘Circa ala nra’ messa staro ad sentire quello piu operera mio figliolo ad varsovia, sperando non uisara altra dificulta et impedimento, purche non manchi dalla parte dell Ill:mo Sre Conte’ de’ Tassis, che sta assai ad pendere’ forma resolucione, stimo per non essere ancora lapace nel Imperio del tutto sicura’.
62 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 7 January 1650: ‘Da mio figliolo non ho ancora aviso alcuno quello vada operando intorno alla nra’ posta, non dubito peró che non manchera de humana possibil diligenza peruenire ad nri’ bramati disegni subito ne habbia qual che relazione ne havera VS. parte’.
63 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 14 January 1650: ‘Il S. Conte de Taxis serve’ e’da speranza di benpresto principiare la posta da costa ad qua; le confermo la partenza per stettino e’ ad cotesta volta de’ uno de questi mastri di Posta di questa Citá per trattare con cotesto maestro della Posta e’ un altro hadavenire da Amsterdam costi, di mettere’ novo ordine cioe’di rimetterla nel primo termine’ de’ una volta la sett:na solo, e’questo di mettere le lre’ traqua e’costa in 7 giorni, e’ in 9 giorni tra quae’ Amsterdam, cosi arrivarebe qua la posta il lunedi e’ tornarebbe ad partire il venerdi’.
similar and more secure service to that of the Brandenburgian Mail, which arrived at Gdańsk on the same days, however without passing through all of the coastal cities. Giovanni Antonio also mentioned that his son was planning to come back to Gdańsk. At this stage, they had received a special privilege and were only in need of a special resolution that was to be issued by the Count of Thurn and Taxis.

The Difficulties

In letter dated 21 January 1650, Giovanni Antonio wrote that their planned postal route had encountered some major difficulties. He said that these difficulties were due to the possession of Pomerania, partly by the Swedish Empire and partly by Brandenburg-Prussia. In addition, Giovanni Antonio stated that the Elector ‘still had not taken over this part of the region [Middle Pomerania]’. Thus, one could reason that the issue around the possession of Middle Pomerania (Ger. Hinterpommern) did not allow De Gratta and Somigliano to establish their postal route. In the next letter, dated 28 January 1650, Giovanni Antonio reported that Francesco had not yet returned from Warsaw, where he was still negotiating about their postal service. In his next letter, he added that Francesco had left Warsaw and had travelled to Cracow ‘on urgent business’. Two weeks later, he wrote that Francesco was again in

64 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 14 January 1650: ‘al ritorno de mio figliolo da varsovia dovero sentire quello di piu havera operato circa ala nra’ posta con darne parte ad VS. persuo governo, basta che il Privilegio nro’ e’ Ampliss:me e’solosi sta spettando la resolucione del S: Conte de Tassis’.
67 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 28 January 1650: ‘mio figliolo non era ancora ritornato ad varsovia, si che’ nonto quello havera trattato oltra circa alla Posta Regia, non havendomene fino ad hora acennato cos’ alcuna’.
68 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 4 February 1650: ‘Mio figliolo non c’ancora ritornato, siandosi da varsovia per urgenti affair tra’ sferito fino ad Cracovia’.
Warsaw and was continuing his negotiations on the postal matters.69 This time, he used the form *my* negotiations instead of the form *ours* which he had often used previously in the context of his bilateral affairs with Somigliano. One may consider that this was the result of the partition of the responsibility by them. Obviously, the De Grattas were responsible for the negotiations with the King and the Polish Parliament, while Somigliano was responsible for those with the Count of Thurn and Taxis. Next, on 25 February 1650, Giovanni Antonio reported that his son had met the Postmaster in Warsaw.70 He did not mention whether it was the Postmaster General or not; however, it is very likely that Francesco had met Montelupi, otherwise, he would have used another title such the ‘Postmaster of this city’ (‘postmaster di questa Citta’) as he used to say in his letters. Later, on 4 March 1650, Giovanni Antonio reported that Francesco had still not arrived back from Warsaw and wrote about his doubts concerning the establishment of their postal route.71 In the next letter, he gave a detailed description of the postal services that were going through the city, and also stressed that the postal service to/from Warsaw remained in his hands, as follows: ‘my mail service to Warsaw’ (‘mia posta per varsovia’).72 Consequently, this shows that Giovanni Antonio possessed control only over the Gdańsk – Warsaw postal route. Other parts of

69 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 18 February 1650: ‘Mio figliolo non e’ancora ritornato di Polonia siando arrivato da Varsovia fino ad Cracovia per miei negocÿ, l’attendo però giornalmente, subitosara quinto restara VS. raguagliata de quanto havera operato in materia del al Posta Regia’.
70 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 25 February 1650: ‘mio figliolo non e’ancora ritornato di Polonia, attendandolo però di momento e’portando qualche novità non nan chero darne parte ad VS. stabene non havesse dato audieznzae’ ore’cchie al discorto e’richieste de’questo mastro di Posta ma chiarito lobene’.
71 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 4 March 1650: ‘mio figliolo ancora non si lassavedere, che meresto mezzo conturbato per non ricevere con questa oltima posta sue Ire’.
72 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 4 March 1650: ‘per la loro Posta, havendo comesoneto concluso et stabilito, che la loro posta vada e’vanga due volte la sett:na dovendo capitare qua l’una il venerdì, e’ partine il sabato giorno sequente, e l’ altra arrivare il martedì qua e’partire il mercordì sequente’ l’ ultima ad mesara di grand’ in comodo, per che capitato il martedì nel qual giorno ad un horado poi pranso spedisco la mia posta per varsovia, e’capitando quella de costa tarde’ con lelre’ di francia mi convera aspettare’ 2 in 3 hore d’avanti si come a seq:to im patto’ però ad questo trovaro rimedio per che faro venire un mandato Regio che subito arrivata laposta mi diano fuora il mio piego primadi registrare lelre’ e’darefuora le altre ad mercanti; mi aportera ancora impedimento che non porto recapitare cosi presto lelre’ che VS mimanda permerecanti nell miopiego, la quale soglio mandare subito con il
the route going in both western and southern directions remained the responsibility of others. His next letter, dated 11 March 1650, affirmed that Francesco had met with Montelupi, the Postmaster General in Warsaw, adding that Montelupi negotiated the De Grattas’ postal affairs with the Polish King. This last information confirms not only that Montelupi was engaged in the De Grattas’ postal negotiations, but also argues for the claim that De Grattas needed his support in order to discuss their issues with the Polish monarch.

**The Royal Privilege**

Around two weeks later, Giovanni Antonio revealed that Francesco’s mission had been crowned with success. This letter was written in Francesco’s hand. This letter encloses information that Francesco had eventually gained ‘their’ (most likely Giovanni Antonio’s and Somigliano’s) postal privilege, which was confirmed by a copy of privilege attached to it. Taking into consideration the time between the last letter written by Francesco before his journey to Warsaw and the present letter, Francesco stayed in Warsaw and Cracow for more than three months. One may consider such a long stay as not only for a single meeting with the Postmaster General and the King, but perhaps also as a business-related trip, especially when one takes into account De Gratta’s trade activity and broad contacts with Polish noblemen.

Francesco was successful in organising the signed charter from the Polish King; nonetheless, as will be seen, it was still not enough. Giovanni Antonio encountered additional issues that were connected with the development of the Gdańsk Mail. As one can see from Giovanni Antonio’s next letter, dated 1 April 1650, the city’s postmasters together with the City Council operated the postal system.
service twice per week, which was sanctioned by the city’s merchants. Undoubtedly, Giovanni Antonio had considered this change to be just one more issue which promised to dash their plans. A well-functioning city postal service did not allow for the establishment of a new postal route. Only disappointment among merchants, faster shipping times, lower charges as well as support from the City Council could make their ideas realistic. It seems that the only option that remained to them was to monopolise the already existing postal route, which Francesco De Gratta eventually did in 1661 – however – the first attempt had been made by him in 1654. In view of this, Francesco’s postal monopoly that he ultimately received appears to have been a result of the long-term strivings of the De Gratta family, and in particular a realisation of his father’s plans and efforts. Consequently, Francesco’s control over the Gdańsk’s postal office emerges here as being dependant on cooperation with the Habsburgian Postmaster in Hamburg.

Surprisingly, Giovanni Antonio’s letter dated 5 April 1650 included his desire to continue his and Somigliano’s project and also emphasised that Gdańsk’s merchants were now positively oriented towards their ideas. De Gratta did not list the names or even groups of merchants that were interested in using such a postal route. Nonetheless, Gdańskers as well as the foreign merchants and traders who resided in the city presumably wanted several postal services that could offer both lower prices and faster transport. Such a conclusion can be drawn if one considers that his letter was later forwarded to the Count of Thurn and Taxis with an additional note by Giovanni Abondio Somigliano. The letter divulged that Giovanni Antonio wished to continue his and Somigliano’s plans, but was doubtful about the way in which their negotiations had been undertaken.

78 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano (includes an extra letter by Giovanni Abondio Somigliano to the Prince Thrun and Taxis), 5 April 1650: ‘la continua bona speranza datoli qie alcun ancono intorno al saputo negocio di Posta, quanto hora s:ne mostri deliente a ansioso’.
Postal Tariff

Giovanni Antoni’s next letter, dated 6 April 1650, included further information about the changes to the Gdańsk – Hamburg postal route, which had caused some confusion in the Netherlands.79 One may note here that this information was sent by one of Giovanni Antonio’s friends (‘amicis’) in the Netherlands who accused him of not paying the necessary fee (probably postage) for his letters. This issue appeared frequently in the future and was connected to the possession of the Mail by a number of different actors who each controlled a particular part of the postal routes and charged their own fees for use of their services. By that, it was no longer clear who should pay additional postage, especially at the time when the correspondence was taken over by another postal service that was often in conflict with the other one, as happened for example during the Polish-Brandenburgian postal conflict. In a letter dated 15 April 1650, Giovanni Antonio informed Somigliano about the difficulties involved in obtaining a new charter.80 Unfortunately, De Gratta did not mention what privilege they wished to receive this time. Nevertheless, it is highly likely that he was concerned about the Habsburgian privilege. In the later part of this letter, Giovanni Antonio noted that the city of Gdańsk wanted to reach an agreement with Frederick William, the ruler of Brandenburg-Prussia on their common couriers.81 Such an agreement was signed in June 1654 and as a result the Gdańsk postal service became subordinated to that of Brandenburg.82 This happened only a few months before the establishment of the royal postal service in the city. In addition, he also mentioned the royal prerogative (‘Regal Regius’), which in turn can be linked to the Westphalian treaty which made it possible for subsequent European monarchies to organise and control their own postal services, and must have become a subject of discussion among the

79 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 6 April 1650: ‘Il venire spesso (come hora avade) Il Coriero da setiri senza Ire’ nedi Hamborgo ned holanda per consequenza, qui come vedo sono In Confusione conq:ti mercanti Epiu d’uno pero de miei amici mi umprovera di farmale á non mett:re una posta Reggia’.
80 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 15 April 1650: ‘Le difficolta che ogni volta li scopriva In procurare Il privilegio’.
82 Lenartowicz, Historia, p. 11.
postmasters. One may observe that a note by Somigliano to the Count of Thurn and Taxis was attached to De Gratta’s letter, in which Somigliano commented on the practices of Gdańsk’s postal couriers who used the Habsburgian postal routes to send their correspondence to Amsterdam, and described it as an ‘ongoing activity’ for several years. This information can be seen as an attempt to influence the Count of Thurn and Taxis to pay more attention towards the establishment of the Habsburgian postal route to Gdańsk. In a letter dated 12 May 1650, Giovanni Antonio described their plans as ‘being always difficult’ and noted that this time he was waiting for a resolution that should be made by the Habsburgian authorities. Such a resolution could in its turn openly announce that the new postal route was set up and was seen as the most powerful document. However, such a resolution was presumably never issued.

The Letter of Count Lamoral

In the Regensburg collection of postal documents, there is a draft of a letter created by the Count of Thurn and Taxis Lamoral that was addressed to Antonio Giovanni De Gratta dated 6 June 1650 and sent from Brussels. One can recognise this letter as a possible reply on the letter sent earlier by De Gratta to Somigliano and forwarded to the Count containing the issues around the establishment of their postal route. In this instance De Gratta did not correspond directly with Count Lamoral, but his letter was forwarded by Somigliano with his additional note, as had happened quite frequently on earlier occasions. This letter included Count Lamoral’s assurance concerning the repayment of the cost of creating the new postal route for De Gratta. This letter in turn helps to support the claim that Count Lamoral also believed in the creation of a new postal line and consequently entrusted this task to Somigliano, who then involved De Gratta in his affairs. Nevertheless, Count Lamoral emphasised the need for cooperation with the Polish King and believed in the King’s ability to exclude Brandenburg-Prussia from the Gdańsk – Amsterdam postal route.

Thus, the preparations to open a new postal route required financial resources and a number of negotiations that lasted for a long period of time.

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83 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The draft of the letter by Count Lamoral to Giovanni Antonio De Gratta, 6 June 1650.
85 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The draft of the letter by Prince Lamoral Thurn and Taxis to Giovanni Antonio De Gratta Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 6 June 1650: ‘L’errettione delle Poste’ and later in the same draft: ‘et á sal fine mandare costi espressam:te Unapersona’.
(from the late 1640s to the early 1650s or even longer). Indeed, these prepara-
tions were pursued in the wake of the Westphalian treaty. Consequently, the
total idea might seem on the one hand as unrealistic, as it contradicted the
agreements of the Westphalian treaty, and on the other hand as the result of
bilateral reluctance to find a compromise. In other words, none of the actors
who were engaged in the conflict respected the principle of territorial
sovereignty. The Brandenburgian Mail used the royal Polish postal routes in
Royal Prussia at the same time as the Polish Royal Mail planned to enter
Brandenburgian and Swedish Pomeranian territories.

Francesco’s Role in the Postal Negotiations

Taking into account the way in which the negotiations were conducted, one
wonders about the particular role that Francesco played in these negotiations
as well as his abilities in that regard. Firstly, one may conclude that Giovanni
Antonio together with Giovanni Abondio Somigliano are seen here as the
initiators of all the negotiations that resulted in Francesco obtaining his postal
appointment. In addition, on the basis of Giovanni Antonio’s correspondence,
one may argue that the Count of Thurn and Taxis was also such an initiator.
As regards their activity, Giovanni Abondio Somigliano remained an agent of
the Count Lamoral and Giovanni Antonio De Gratta, who with the help of his
son, Francesco negotiated with the Polish King and the Polish court, remained
an agent of the Polish monarchs. Thence, both sides were engaged in the
creation of the special privileges that would allow a new postal route to be
established. Furthermore, both Somigliano and De Gratta needed support
from their principals and could not decide about the next steps on their own.
Returning to Francesco’s role in the negotiations, one may also ask why
Francesco instead of Giovanni Antonio led the postal negotiations.

Of course, as Giovanni Antonio’s firstborn son, Francesco was supposed
to take over the postal business and this is why he was sent to Warsaw and
Cracow; however, the answer here seems to lie in Francesco’s linguistic
abilities. In his first letter to Somigliano, Giovanni Antonio emphasised that
Francesco was able to converse and negotiate in several languages.
Undoubtedly, Francesco wrote, read and spoke acceptable Polish, while his
father did not. This is why he was sent to Poland to negotiate with the Polish
authorities. Indeed, it was on behalf of Giovanni Antonio that Francesco
pursued his negotiations. Moreover, Giovanni Antonio’s letters written in
German included several grammatical mistakes. This fact once again
strengthens the hypothesis that Giovanni Antonio was born and grew up in
Italy, and came to Gdańsk only in his youth, and therefore he was not able to fully master the German language. Conversely, Francesco, who was born in Gdańsk and educated in Gdańsk, had learned German. In addition, he also spoke and wrote in Polish at the communicative level, although his letters contained several mistakes that he was aware of, and often apologized for in his correspondence with Wodzicki. Nevertheless, the fact that he had mastered at least four languages: Italian, Latin, German and Polish, indicates the high level of his education as well as his father’s concerns and plans for the future of his son. Undoubtedly, Giovanni Antonio had prepared Francesco to become a trader who could communicate with Polish noblemen as well as local merchants in their native languages.

Returning to the postal negotiations, one can conclude that Giovanni Antonio and Francesco’s efforts to create a new postal route met with several difficulties that rendered the entire plan impossible. With time, Giovanni Antonio became more and more sceptical, and even considered abandoning the plan to open a new postal route. As one may note, Francesco started his own negotiations after Giovanni Antonio’s death, but now with Johann Baptista Vrints, the successor and son-in-law of Somigliano, who remained the Habsburgian Postmaster in Hamburg until 1675. It is important to note here that at the time when Giovanni Antonio and Abondio needed to obtain a royal charter, Francesco was sent to Warsaw and Cracow. He acted as their agent, who was obliged to pursue their negotiations with the King and the Postmaster General. In addition, Francesco needed to be accepted by Somigliano, as he formally acted on his behalf, and later on Count Lamoral’s. Presumably, Somigliano had already agreed to Francesco’s mediation in 1647, when Giovanni Antonio introduced his firstborn son to him. Concerning the negotiations, it is highly likely that Francesco even had to win the approval of other authorities besides the Polish monarchs, who governed the postal service. Once again, it is possible that he even met with Jan Andrzej Morsztyn, as well as other representatives of the Polish nobility during sessions of the Diet in order to gain their approval. Finally, one may argue that his knowledge of Polish was a key factor that not only allowed him to proceed with the postal negotiations, but also facilitated the establishment of trade contacts which he later used in his own personal business and postal career.

86 See, for example, ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 234.
Francesco’s Abilities

As regards the results of the Vrints – De Gratta negotiations, even this time their plans failed. For example, as one can learn from Francesco’s letter dated 6 March 1655, Vrints questioned the fact that De Gratta was in possession of royal charts which were needed to establish the new postal route. This shows that the negotiations, which lasted for several years, in 1655 had not yet reached a reasonable solution. In the same letter, Francesco said that the Polish King did not wish to provoke a military conflict with Brandenburg-Prussia because of the postal issues. One should remember that this letter was sent just after the start of the Polish-Swedish war and can be seen as an indication that Francesco had given up on the plans.

In the late 1640s, Francesco remained in Italy and during this time he had contact with Giovanni Antonio’s partners. According to Giovanni Antonio’s letters the subject of these talks was the development of the postal services. Presumably, Francesco had contact with the Habsburgian postmasters who resided in Italy (most likely Venice). However, the postal negotiations seem not to have been the only reason for his departure to Italy. Like his father, Francesco pursued his own trade activities, which included trade with several Italian city states. Undoubtedly, Francesco used his time in Italy to procure his own business partners, whom he contacted for instance several years later in order to organise the trade route for his goods from Wallachia to the Netherlands by the Mediterranean Sea (more about that in Chapter 7). After his stay in Italy, Francesco travelled directly to Poland-Lithuania, where he remained for a long period of time. There, he learned about the Diet’s proceedings and received his privilege to monitor the royal correspondence to/from France. Giovanni Antonio in his correspondence with Somigliano noted that Francesco ‘was going to serve with a newspaper’. Most likely, Francesco had obtained a privilege for printing a newspaper, not for selling other newspapers coming to Gdańsk. This is, however, hard to prove. Even though the postmasters were broadly engaged in newspaper publishing, there is no suggestion in the case of Francesco that he actually used this privilege (at least in the 1650s); however one may observe that he was in possession of specific privileges needed for his printing activity and owned a press machine at home (according to the probate inventory from 1676).

88 FZATTR, Postakten 1239, The letter by Francesco De Gratta to Baptista Vrints, 6 March 1655.
89 ASL, AS, 123, p. 141: ‘einer Presse’.
The conflict in the Ukrainian lands of Poland-Lithuania with Cossacks and Turks was escalating during the time when Francesco was at the royal court. Weekly news about the war developments was included in Giovanni Antonio’s correspondence. However, one of the most interesting facts that appeared in this correspondence is the close relationship of Giovanni Antonio and Francesco to the royal couple, and especially the Queen. It is not an exaggeration to state that the news about the queen’s health dominated the correspondence and the war was only mentioned in passing. Taking into consideration the informative service that Francesco pursued in addition to his postal negotiations, one can deduce that he was a representative or an agent acting not only on behalf of his father, but also Somigliano and in turn the Habsburg Empire. Such a hypothesis becomes even more likely if one takes into account the fact that Francesco asked Count Lamoral for advice about how he should pursue his negotiations with the Polish authorities. Furthermore, the fact that Giovanni Antonio reported Francesco’s actions to Somigliano and in turn to Count Lamoral on a weekly basis, shows how meticulously these negotiations were prepared and demonstrates that both parties were engaged in them actively. Nonetheless, Francesco did not only make journeys to Warsaw and Cracow in order to pursue the postal affairs. He also conducted his trading businesses there, including establishing and developing his trade network in Poland-Lithuania. Consequently, the frequent journeys and meetings with several actors that Francesco undertook in his youth, both in Italy and Poland-Lithuania, allowed him to use those contacts later to manage his businesses ‘from the city’ without contacting his partners in person. To put it another way, he already possessed contacts around Europe before he eventually settled down in Gdańsk permanently. It is remarkable that for most of his remaining life, Francesco stayed in this city, without making any journeys abroad (only within Poland-Lithuania). In the same context, one should consider his quite regular attendance at the sessions of the Diet. He used the Diet as a platform to meet with a range of members of the Polish nobility as well as court authorities who often remained in debt to him. In this way, he continued to meet his debtors in person, and such meetings were undoubtedly perceived by him as necessary and important priorities in order to continue his financial activities. Similarly, Francesco met with the Postmaster General of Poland-Lithuania on a frequent basis during his journeys to Warsaw and Cracow. All in all, one can claim that

90 More about that will be in Chapter 6.
building a network in Poland-Lithuania required physical proximity – face to face contacts.

Giovanni Antonio and His Contacts with the Polish Queen

As one can learn from his letters, Giovanni Antonio was responsible for delivering the royal couple’s correspondence and remained an agent in the Queen’s service. One may ask here: how did his service to the Queen begin? Giovanni Antonio started his relationship with Giovanni Abondio Somigliano in 1647, only one year after Marie Louise was crowned Queen of Poland-Lithuania. Presumably, Giovanni Antonio and Francesco met her during her stay in Gdańsk in the winter of 1646 for the first time. Marie Louise was then on her way from France to Poland-Lithuania to marry the Polish King, Władysław IV Vasa. Therefore, one may exclude the possibility that Giovanni Antonio was the Royal Postmaster in the service of Władysław IV Vasa before the year 1647. Furthermore, the hypothesis that Giovanni Antonio remained in the Queen’s service (not the King’s) seems to be confirmed by the privilege that Francesco received in 1649. This privilege claims that the main purpose of De Gratta’s postal service was the management of the royal correspondence going to/from France. Similarly, one can see the list of the privileges that Paolo and Alessandro received from Caspar Richter in 1693 as another source that seems to deny that Giovanni Antonio worked in the royal postal service before the late 1640s. Here again, the privilege, which was created in 1649, was listed as the first among other postal documents. Even if the list only consisted of the privileges that once belonged to Francesco, these documents proved Francesco’s sons’ rights to run the postal service in Gdańsk. This is why one should look upon the eventual documents received by their grandfather as being equally important for Francesco’s successors in order to claim their right to the postal services. However, both the list, as well as other sources presented in this chapter, remain silent on this matter. Furthermore, one may recall that Władysław IV Vasa had created the office of the Postmaster General of the Commonwealth and had appointed Carlo Montelupi to this position in 1647. The creation of this office is often seen by scholars as a reform of the royal postal service in the entire country.91 It is highly likely that the reform also affected Gdańsk. Gdańsk, as the one of the most significant royal cities, was undoubtedly recognised by the Polish King as one of the main information centres in the Commonwealth. Therefore, one may presume that the office of the Royal

91 See, for example, the unpublished dissertation by Zgorzelski, Organizacja, p. 37.
Postmaster in the city was also created as part of the postal reform. Consequently, this development probably explains why Giovanni Antonio’s title of Royal Postmaster was included at the list created by the Gdańsk City Council in 1649/1650.

Finally, why did De Gratta want to establish a new postal route even though he faced several practical difficulties? Firstly, the control over the postal route between Hamburg and Gdańsk was undoubtedly seen as financially very promising. This postal route linked the major trade cities located on the South Baltic coast that were of course highly dependent on a well-functioning postal system. Secondly, the wish of the De Gratta family to control the postal system can be connected with political issues as well as the state-making processes that were developing at that time. As one can see, Giovanni Antonio and Francesco De Gratta made an attempt to exclude the Brandenburgian Mail, not only from the Polish territories, but also from Pomerania entirely, under the pretext of the management of the royal correspondence. Francesco continued with these plans after his father’s death. Nevertheless, even if the Polish King did not want to escalate the postal conflict at the beginning of the 1650s, he supported Francesco De Gratta and eventually excluded the Brandenburgian Mail from Gdańsk after the end of the Polish-Swedish war.

The Head Postmaster in Gdańsk

In 1654, Francesco received two privileges that made him the Head Postmaster in Gdańsk. These privileges in fact transformed the Gdańsk Mail into the second royal postal office of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Nonetheless, one may ask why two privileges had been created. The answer seems to be rather simple; De Gratta did not become recognised as the Gdańsk Head Postmaster by the city of Gdańsk and Brandenburg, and therefore, the second privilege was issued.

The Gdańsk Head Postmaster

On the 12 February 1655, the King of Poland, John II Casimir Vasa, appointed Francesco De Gratta to the position of the Gdańsk Head Postmaster.92 It was his second privilege in this matter. The very same day, John

92 The second document of John II Casimir Vasa is about Francesco De Gratta’s appointment as the Head Postmaster in Gdańsk in 1655 (the earlier similar document was created in 1654): BG PAN, Ms. 719:29, p. 588R.
II Casimir Vasa created a mandate to Johann Saltzsieder, who was one the Gdańsk city postmaster at this time. While the copies of the second privilege and the mandate to Saltzsieder are preserved at the Gdańsk Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the first privilege is missing. However, one can find a transcription of this particular document in Lenartowicz’s book on Gdańsk postal history. Unfortunately, the author does not give any information about the document’s location or the date of its creation. However, the contents of the document quoted by Lenartowicz does not differ much from the second privilege preserved at the Gdańsk Library. This said, it seems relevant to analyse the contents of the second privilege before taking Lenartowicz’s findings into account.

When it comes to the date of the creation of the first privilege, it can be discerned that it was issued during the autumn of 1654. This is confirmable due to the analysis of Francesco De Gratta’s letters to Frederick William, the ruler of Brandenburg-Prussia and to Michael Mathias, the Head Postmaster of the Brandenburgian Mail in Berlin, both sent on 4 December 1654. Both sources are preserved at the Secret State Archives of the Prussian Cultural Heritage in Berlin and include the information that Francesco was already the Head Postmaster in Gdańsk. These letters were Francesco’s answer to the Elector and his postmaster because his privilege remained unaccepted by them.

According to Lenartowicz, Johann Saltzsieder, the Gdańsk city postmaster, had once been arrested by Brandenburg-Prussia, and was against the idea of establishment of the Brandeburgian postal office in Gdańsk, and this is why he started to negotiate with the Polish King prior to the establishment of the Royal Mail instead in the city. In light of this, Saltzsieder’s journey to Warsaw in September 1654 appears to have directly influenced the eventual creation of the royal postal service in Gdańsk that happened some months later. Here, one may consider the hypothesis that Giovanni Antonio and Francesco cooperated with Saltzsieder in this matter. Undoubtedly, among the most significant results of Saltzsieder’s mission was the appointment of

93 The copy of mandatum by John II Casimir to Saltzsieder 12 February 1655, BG PAN, Ms. 719:29, p. 588R.
De Gratta as the Head Postmaster in Gdańsk as well as the attempt to transform the entire office into the royal postal structure. Saltzsieder’s mission also showed that the city of Gdańsk eventually remained loyal towards the Commonwealth and did not accept the rule of Brandenburg-Prussia in postal matters. The Brandenburgian side remained against the De Grattas (Francesco and later Paolo) and stated that they had bought their offices from Polish monarchs. Moreover, the Brandenburgian officials often claimed that Francesco De Gratta obtained his office through the patronage of the Polish Queen, Marie Louise Gonzaga.

Saltzsieder’s Mandate

The royal mandate for Johann Saltzsieder dated 12 February 1655 was presumably addressed to the Gdańsk City Council in order for him to be accepted as the royal postmaster in the city. The document not merely expresses the King’s gratitude to Saltzsieder for his involvement in postal matters, but also mentions the need for cooperation between the city and Francesco De Gratta in order to administer the city’s mail service. This means De Gratta had not been recognised as the superior of the Gdańsk Mail by the City Council. Furthermore, the Gdańsk City Council refused to cooperate with De Gratta at the very beginning and therefore, one may observe that the politics of the City Council were similar to the

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97 The information that the De Grattas (here Paolo De Gratta) were paying a fee to the Polish King for their postal privilege can be found in one of the letters preserved at the Secret State Archives Prussian Cultural Heritage in Berlin; GStAPK I. HA Rep. 103, 2056/1 Anlegung einer Fahrpost zwischen Danzig und Königsberg, The letter by Heuskus an Stille dated 6 May 1695.

98 GStAPK I. HA Rep. 103, 2055/0 Verhandlungen mit Polen über Postrechte in Danzig. Transit der brandenburgischen Post durch Polen und Verbot des Durchgangs für die Danzig-Stettiner Boten durch Pommern, Bd. 3, The anonymous, undated document to Scultetus (proabably created in the late 1690s).

Brandenburgian ones. However, Francesco De Gratta continued his postal activity in the city and the Gdańsk City Council eventually accepted the changes. In the Secret State Archives of the Prussian Cultural Heritage in Berlin, there is a letter signed by the City Council and dated 24 January 1661 that certainly stated that the city agreed upon the reorganisation of the city’s postal service and accepted De Gratta as the city’s commissioner concerning postal negotiations. This meant also that Gdańsk eventually approved De Gratta as the city’s Head Postmaster.

The privilege created for Francesco De Gratta on 12 February 1655, called here the ‘second privilege’, reveals some information surrounding the circumstances in which Francesco received his office. First of all, the document focuses on the regulation of the situation that appeared in Gdańsk in 1654, it likewise states that De Gratta became the Head Postmaster in Gdańsk. In addition, the new postal resolution subordinated the city’s

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100 See, The copy of the letter by the Gdańsk City Council to the Elector of Brandenburg dated 24 January 1661, GStAPK, I. HA Rep. 6 Preussische Landtage und polnische Reichtsage, preussische Lehnsachen und Gesandtschaften nach Polen, Nr. 50, Fasc. 2. The fifth annex to the letter by Hoverbeck dated 24 February 1661: ‘Nos quidem confisi illis articulāris, de quibus inter Sac R M V et Electorales Commissaries in pago Preusichmarck super negocio Postae con venerate, salcum conductum nostrum ad requisitionem nobilis Francisci de Gratta dederamus sed minister Electoralis, qui his diebus hac transit, a deputatis nostris compellatus, postquam ipsi singulatotius negocy nomenta.’


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postmaster (Johann Saltzsieder) to De Gratta. Lenartowicz argues on the basis of the first privilege that Johann Stöckel, the Brandenburgian Postmaster in Gdańsk should be treated equally to the other city’s postmasters and this is how he also became subordinated to De Gratta. In addition, one may note that all of the Gdańsk postmasters were excluded from the Gdańsk City Council jurisdiction, and from this moment they were solely under the royal jurisdiction. Therefore, this particular change on the one hand concerned the subordination of the entire Gdańsk Mail to the Royal Mail, while on the other hand it concerned the exclusion of the electoral Mail from the territories of Royal Prussia including Gdańsk. Furthermore, this document mentions the fact that Carlo Montelupi developed the Royal Mail as well as it encloses a remark on Władysław IV Vasa’s postal reform. Władysław IV Vasa’s reform was presented here as a development of the royal postal system in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that changed it into a Crown-controlled institution. Finally, this privilege shows the hierarchy of the Gdańsk authorities who had influence on the postal service in the city.

The privilege was addressed to the royal representative in Gdańsk. However, besides the Royal Burgrave, the document was also addressed to the proconsuls and consuls together with other members of Gdańsk City Council. This fact shows not only the hierarchical system among Gdańsk authorities, but also reveals the relationship between Gdańsk and the Commonwealth. By the way the Polish King addressed his privilege, first and foremost his representatives and later the city’s authorities, one can learn about the King’s attempts to control the city’s postal developments. Indeed, the Polish King has seen the postal service as one of the royal prerogative. The King appeared here as the authority, who constituted and guaranteed the rights of the royal cities. Nevertheless, one may argue that the King needed some kind of support to enforce his decision about the changes in the Gdańsk postal system. Thus, he made his delegate responsible for persuading the Gdańsk authorities to accept De Gratta as the Head Postmaster of the city’s mail service.

Furthermore, the privilege also includes the information that Johann Saltzsieder was obliged to continue his work as a postmaster in the city, but from now on as the Royal Postmaster (not the city postmaster any longer). His special responsibility was to monitor the flow of correspondence to France, Germany and other ‘overseas countries’. This information indicates

that De Gratta officially became the superior of the Gdańsk Mail; however, Saltzsieder was the one who was responsible for postal matters in practice. In other words, the Polish King used the already established Gdańsk postal structures, with Saltzsieder as the qualified postmaster who knew the organisation of the city’s mail service well. Saltzsieder was only supplied by (he did not replace) Francesco De Gratta, to whom the control, incomes and management of the entire mail service in the city now belonged. This, de facto, linked Francesco De Gratta’s (and earlier Giovanni Antonio’s) function as the Royal Postmaster with the existing city’s mail service organisation (in the long run without the electoral postmaster) creating a single postal structure in the city.

The document quoted by Lenartowicz, which is recognised here as the first privilege that Francesco received in autumn of 1654, was addressed – unlike the ‘second privilege’ – only to Francesco De Gratta. It includes similar content to the ‘second privilege’ that was discussed above. It also indicates the reform of the postal service in the Commonwealth that lay at the heart of the appointment of De Gratta to his role. In his privilege, John II Casimir Vasa mentioned the fact that Carlo Montelupi had effectively diversified and restructured the Royal Mail and now suggested that there was a possibility to make the same changes in Gdańsk. He underlined that the Gdańsk Mail dealt with ongoing issues related to the sending of correspondence.

Moreover, the King mentioned that the candidature of De Gratta was supported by somebody’s recommendation; however, the privilege does not give any information as to the identity of the person in question. Even though the document remains silent on the matter, it is almost certain that Carlo Montelupi recommended Francesco to his position. Taking into consideration Giovanni Antonio’s correspondence, both Giovanni Antonio and Francesco had stayed in close contact with Montelupi for several years and had entrusted to him their postal negotiations. Consequently, Montelupi helped Francesco to obtain his postal privilege once that was required to establish the new postal route between Gdańsk and Hamburg. Taking these facts into consideration, Montelupi appears here as one of the main actors that belonged to the De Grattas’ professional network. Montelupi’s recommendation once again confirmed, not only the earlier mentioned hypothesis that most of the European mail services remained in the hands of the well-linked Italian families who passed down their postal functions, but also

103 BG PAN, Ms 719:29, p. 588R.
showed the practise of mutual help between families of Italian origin to keep and maintain their functions. However, it remains unknown how Montelupi was rewarded or paid for his involvement in De Gratta’s advancement.

Returning to the privilege, it also mentions the specific responsibilities of Saltzsieder, who was obliged to control delivery of the royal correspondence going to and coming from France. Consequently, one can conclude that he was given the task that once belonged to De Gratta. The document also states that Saltzsieder obtained his function as Francesco’s associate, and together with his principal and their couriers had to operate solely under the royal jurisdiction.

Thus, the main differences between these two privileges are to be found in the addressee of the documents as well as their dispositions. While the first privilege was not directed to the Gdańsk authorities, the second privilege listed them all. This is why the first document can be recognised here as the personal privilege that appointed De Gratta to his function and perhaps for this reason was not accepted by the Gdańsk authorities. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that the Polish King could just ignore the Gdańsk City Council, without giving any reasons for his decision that strongly interfered with the city’s internal policy. Therefore, the second privilege included such an explanation. Furthermore, in contrast to the first privilege, the second document contained information about King Władysław IV Vasa and his reform of the postal system in Poland-Lithuania. This in turn may be seen as an attempt made by John II Casimir Vasa to constitute his decision as a form of continuation of his brother’s postal reform. Here a question arises as to why King Władysław IV Vasa did not include Gdańsk and Royal Prussia in his postal reform under the same conditions that he applied to the territories of Poland-Lithuania.

Undoubtedly, Władysław IV Vasa was mostly interested into the centralization of the postal system in the Commonwealth and in linking the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to the Crown of Poland, and for this particular purpose he created the office of the Postmaster General. The Postmaster General had power over the other royal postmasters, including the one in Gdańsk. Moreover, he gained the right to decide about postal fees. Consequently, the Gdańsk city’s mail service remained independent of the royal authority up to the 1640s. Presumably, because of the events of the mid-1650s, King John II Casimir decided to change his predecessor’s postal policy and tried to exclude the electoral postal service from Royal Prussia. He wanted the postal service to and from Gdańsk to remain directly under the jurisdiction of the Polish monarchs. This can be seen as a reason why the
postal service of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth expanded to Royal Prussia, as well as why the Gdańsk city postal office became the second postal office in the entire country.\textsuperscript{104}

The Oliva Treaty and Postal Issues

The Polish-Swedish War, a part of the Second Northern War, lasted from 1655 to 1660 and is broadly seen by historians as a crucial time in Polish history. It ended with the treaty of Oliva signed on 3 May 1660 which brought changes in the geopolitics of the region. Even though the analysis of the Deluge lies beyond the scope of this chapter, one may observe that postal issues were also present during the military developments and the negotiations that led to the Oliva treaty. Besides Poland-Lithuania and Sweden, Brandenburg-Prussia also took part in this conflict. At the beginning of the conflict, Brandenburgian side supported the Polish side and eventually opted against the Commonwealth.\textsuperscript{105} Brandenburg-Prussia notoriously complained about the Royal Postmasters and the Polish side did not remain peaceable and also attacked the officers of the Brandenburgian Mail. At the heart of this conflict were issues connected to the borders and territories that the postal routes of the involved countries crossed. More precisely, the core of this conflict referred to the year 1654; however, it is rather obvious that the conflict was firmly established already in the late 1640s, when Giovanni Antonio and Giovanni Abondio Somigliano made their first attempt to establish a new postal route via Brandenburgian and Prussian territories. This is why the engagement by Frederick William in the Polish-Swedish war can be also seen as a result of the border protection issues as well as the status of the Gdańsk Mail. In addition, one may argue that the Elector desired to control the postal route (together with its incomes) passing through Royal Prussia, especially when taking into account his plans to monopolise the postal route between Berlin and Königsberg via Gdańsk.

Moreover, Francesco De Gratta had also been active in this postal conflict and he eventually contributed to the exclusion of the Brandenburgian Mail from Gdańsk.\textsuperscript{106} As one may recall, Frederick William possessed the right to have his postal representative in the Gdańsk city’s mail service, who in turn worked at the same place as the Gdańsk postmaster. So far, the electoral postmaster in Gdańsk remained under the authority of De Gratta. This

\textsuperscript{104} Lenartowicz, Historia, p. 14n.
\textsuperscript{105} See, for example, Frost, After the Deluge, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{106} See, for example, Jakubowski, Gratta Franciszek, p. 555.
situation did not meet with the approval of Brandenburg-Prussia and was an additional issue in the relationships with Poland-Lithuania. Furthermore, at the same time, one more conflict developed. This time it was connected to the administration of the city of Elbląg and the delta of the Vistula River. This territory was quickly captured by the Swedish army at the beginning of the Deluge and remained Swedish until the end of the Polish-Swedish war. According to the Oliva treaty, Brandenburg-Prussia would take over Elbląg together with its surrounding territories. This met with huge opposition from the Polish side, and the King refused to agree upon this settlement. He saw a great danger that could result in obstacles to trade, which was pursued mostly via the Vistula River. This, if the Elector could overtake Elbląg then he could control the entire transport of Polish goods to the Baltic Sea. This is why even after the Oliva treaty, Elbląg still remained under the control of the Commonwealth in practice. In addition, this conflict was often presented in the historiography, next to the irregular delivery of the mail service, as the main problem in bilateral relationships between Poland-Lithuania and Brandenburg-Prussia.

The Stipulations of the Postal Negotiations

In the Hamburg City Archive, there is a letter by Hoverbeck, the Electorate agent in Gdańsk, dated 14 July 1660 in which he reported to his principal, Frederick William, about the developments concerning the postal affairs in Gdańsk. He enclosed a list containing the stipulations (Lat. puncta) that were to be discussed with regard to the postal agreement that was negotiated after the Oliva treaty. These stipulations were signed by Francesco De Gratta. It was Francesco who pursued the postal negotiations with Brandenburg-Prussia and the Swedish Empire on behalf of the Polish King. The contents of these stipulations will be compared later with the main issues around the Royal Mail that were published in the ‘Merkuriusz Polski’, the first Polish newspaper, in 1661.

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107 About the conflict over Elbląg, see, for example, Włodarski, Polityka, pp. 149ff.
108 Lankau, Prasa, p. 136.
109 StAHH, 111–1, 745 Danziger, Stettiner und pommersches Botenwesen (1625–81), A copy of Puncta Circa Negotium Postae by Gratta 14 July 1660, pp. 16–16R.;
110 StAHH, 111–1, 745, p. 16: ‘Puncta Circa Negotiúm Postae’.

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The stipulations contained the following four settlements: (i) recalling of the electoral postmaster from Gdańsk\(^\text{111}\), (ii) regulation of the couriers’ work\(^\text{112}\), (iii) the right to distribute and collect letters without prejudice to either party to the conflict\(^\text{113}\) and (iv) the exchange of the post on the borders\(^\text{114}\). These stipulations aimed to guarantee a regular postal connection between Gdańsk and other cities and undoubtedly, they referred to the defeat of the Brandenburgian Mail. This is why such settlements and consequently – the negotiations that Francesco had pursued – may be partially seen here as his successes. Even if the postal conflict did not end with those stipulations, they were considered in the final agreement. De Gratta played a significant role in the negotiations about the Gdańsk Mail. He was the King’s representative at this time and possessed the right to shape conditions that regulated the mail service in the northern part of the Commonwealth. Moreover, these negotiations, together with the conditions included in the points were also convenient for Francesco’s own interests, as he had wished for a long time to exclude the Brandenburgian Mail from Royal Prussia. Lastly, the conflict between Poland-Lithuania and Brandenburg-Prussia continued and even escalated in the following months before the eventual compromise was settled in September 1661.

### Wutzkau and Narmel

Returning to the agreement around delivering the mail service that was included in the Oliva treaty, it was limited only to points 1 and 4 from Francesco’s list\(^\text{115}\). The postal issues were not solved by the Oliva treaty and the list was extended later by additional points that regulated the couriers’ activity. As a result of the Oliva treaty and the postal negotiations, Brandenburg-Prussia had eventually moved his postal office outside Gdańsk and located it in Wutzkau (on the route to Berlin) and Narmel (on the route

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\(^{111}\) StAHH, 111–1, 745, p. 16: ‘1. Serenissimús Elector Brandenbúrgicús Magistrúm Súúm Postarúm ex Civitate Gedanensi in ditiones sús ex núnc transfere’.

\(^{112}\) StAHH, 111–1, 745, p. 16: ‘2. Cúrsoribús ex veredarÿs, tam cúrrú quáam Eqúís útriúsqüam partis, tam Regís Poloniae per ditiones Electorales, quáam Electoris Brandenbúrgici per ditiones Regías Liber et non praeprditús concedatúr transitús, sinc tamne permútatione Eqúorúm aút veredariorúm’.

\(^{113}\) StAHH, 111–1, 745, p. 16: ‘3. Ita tamen út cursors, veredarýsqüam Regyí, in ditionibús Regýs Literás úllas distribúant et colligant in præjudícium alterútriús partís’.

\(^{114}\) StAHH, 111–1, 745, p. 16: ‘4. Inter Gedanúm Elbingam, Regiomontúm itemquam Pomeraniae orientalis Civitases fiat permútatio Postae in confinýs’.

\(^{115}\) Lenartowicz, *Historia*, p. 18.
to Königsberg). This in turn can be seen as the main success of Francesco De Gratta’s postal negotiations. Nevertheless, this change did not totally solve the conflict, since it continued.

The Extraordinary Issue of the Merkuriusz Polski

The eighth extraordinary issue of the ‘Merkuriusz Polski’, dated 25 January 1661, was solely devoted to the postal conflict between Poland-Lithuania and Brandenburg-Prussia, including the situation in Elbląg and the Brandenburgian claims to this city. One may see this issue as an attempt on the one hand to inform the noble society about the conflict, and on the other, to spread the Polish version of the reasons for the postal conflict both at home and abroad. Taking into consideration the hypothesis that Francesco De Gratta was active in the preparation of the newspaper, such an extraordinary issue of the Merkuriusz can be seen as his great opportunity to clarify the circumstances around the delays in the delivery of correspondence to the Polish nobility and merchants. Moreover, this was also as a possibility to paint the electoral side in a bad light and to present Brandenburg as being responsible for the negative development of bilateral relationships. Nevertheless, Giovanni Antonio and Francesco while developing their plans to establish a new postal route, which was planned to go through the territories that belonged to Brandenburg-Prussia, also acted in a similar way as the Brandenburgian Mail. They usurped the right to the dissemination of correspondence, even after the signing of the Westphalian treaty. Concerning Elbląg, according to the treaty of Bydgoszcz, which was ratified on 6 November 1657, Poland-Lithuania had lost this city together with the Lauenburg and Bütow Lands (Pol. ziemia bytowsko-leborska). Nevertheless, the Commonwealth refused to return Elbląg. The city was annexed by Brandenburg-Prussia as a result of the first partition of Poland-Lithuania in 1772.

118 About spreading of the news about Poland in Wien, see the particular letter by Łukasz Opaliński to Wespazjan Lanckoroński dated 25 January 1661 included in Lankau, Prasa, p. 111.
119 See forthcoming article by Salamonik, Salamonik, New Times.
120 As a result of the First Partition of Poland, Elbing together with Ermland and Royal Prussia became in 1772 territories of the Kingdom of Prussia, see, for example, Walaszek, Migracje Europejczyków, p. 80.
Indeed, these two issues: the postal conflict and the conflict about Elbląg were connected with each other. The conflict about Elbląg was a hindrance to a solution concerning the postal service. According to an anonymous letter that was sent to Jan Opaliński, the Voivode of Poznań, which in turn had been enclosed together with one of Hoverbeck’s reports dated 28 March 1661, the return of Elbląg would put an end to the postal conflict. The document reveals that the postal agreement included the exchange of correspondence on the route between Gdańsk and Elbląg, and the fact that the city remained in the hands of the Polish King made such an exchange impossible. De Gratta was mentioned twice in this text. Firstly, the text says that he had acted in accordance with the agreements with the Grand Treasurer of the Crown and the anonymous author of the letter (presumably somebody else from the Polish court). The second time, De Gratta confirmed that the correspondence arrived in Wutzkau, the exchange postal place on the route to Berlin. These two pieces of information show, on the one hand, that De Gratta wished to return Elbląg to Brandenburg, and on the other hand, that the exchange of correspondence with the Brandenburgian Mail on the western border functioned well. The document also includes information about the reasons for the current postal conflict as follows: the couriers of De Gratta lacked special passports and this is why they had been arrested. In accordance with the bilateral agreement, these passports should be issued by the Polish authorities and not, as in this particular case, by the Gdańsk City.
The letter also encloses information that the King of Poland John II Casimir expressly tried to exacerbate the situation. At that time, the postal commission was created and consisted of representatives of Brandenburg and Poland-Lithuania. Here, it became visible that De Gratta was actively engaged not only in the postal conflict, but also in the negotiations about Elbląg, which in turn is evidence for De Gratta’s function as a member of the postal commission.

The Commission

The postal commission was created at the beginning of 1661 after the drawn-out conflict between Poland-Lithuania and Brandenburg-Prussia had periodically impaired the postal service. A document dated 16 March 1661, which was sent from Gdańsk, presumably by Hoverbeck to Frederick William, includes some information about the establishment of the Polish committee. The document mentions that Adrian von den Linde, the Royal Burgrave and De Gratta were nominees as royal commissioners to pursue the postal negotiations with the Brandenburgian side on behalf of the Polish King. However, a few months earlier a similar rescript by the Polish King had been formulated and sent to the Gdańsk City Council. It was dated 11 November 1660 and focused on the role of Francesco in the postal organisation in Gdańsk which strengthened his position in regard to the local authorities. One may recall that this document was composed some months later after the creation of the stipulations by Francesco that were discussed earlier in the text. This again may be seen as an attempt made by the King to force the Gdańsk City Council to accept De Gratta as the Head Postmaster in the city. This happened a few months before De Gratta was officially nominated as one of the major commissioners to the postal negotiations. Considering the fact that De Gratta was the King’s protégé, it is highly likely that such decision met with broad disapproval among Gdańsk’s citizens, which, once again, remained sceptical about any influence from Poland-Lithuania. However, as one may recall, the choice of De Gratta was finally accepted by the City Council’s letter to Frederick William dated 24

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124 BG PAN, Ms. 719:29, p. 579.
January 1661. In this letter, Gdańsk officials included the information that they agreed that De Gratta should be the city’s official representative. The commission was eventually expanded to include Nicolaus von Bodeck, the city’s mayor, and Fredericus Ehler, a proconsul of the Gdańsk magistrate, besides von den Linde and De Gratta.

The major conflict between Poland-Lithuania and Brandenburg ended in September 1661, although the tensions continued in the following decades until 1698, when the Brandenburgian postal service could once again open its office in Gdańsk.

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The Postmaster General of Royal Prussia, Courland, Semigallia and Livonia

At the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Gdańsk, one can find a copy of the privilege issued to Francesco De Gratta dated 6 September 1661, which appointed him to his position as the Postmaster General of Royal Prussia, Courland, Semigallia and Livonia. The document confirms that De Gratta had been nominated as the Postmaster General due to his virtues, efficiency and the diligence with which he had served the Commonwealth for several years. This also confirms the involvement of De Gratta in the postal development and with the negotiations connected to the Oliva treaty, as well as his arbitration in the proceedings after signing of the treaty.

De Gratta does not appear often after the year of 1661 in the postal documents collected in various European archives. Even his well-preserved correspondence to Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki from the years 1667–1674 does not include any information about the Gdańsk Mail or the issues between Brandenburg-Prussia and Poland-Lithuania. De Gratta remained only the administrator of the mail service as well as its financial benefactor, while the

125 See, GStAPK, I. HA Rep. 6 Preussische Landtage und polnische Reichsage, preussische Lehnssachen und Gesandtschaften nach Polen, Nr. 50, Fasc. 2. The fifth annex to the letter by Hoverbeck dated 24 February 1661 (The copy of the letter by the Gdańsk City Council to the Elector of Brandenburg dated 24 January 1661).
126 See the Recesses of 1661, BG PAN, Ms. 719:29, pp. 517–532.
127 Lenartowicz, Historia, pp. 30ff.
Gdańsk postmasters (Saltzsieder and later Richter) continued to manage the flow of correspondence.

The Hereditary Function

Previous research argues that Francesco De Gratta left Gdańsk once he had received his function in 1661 due to complaints from the electoral side. However, he not only stayed in the city and conducted his business affairs from there, but remained in control of the flow of correspondence. By doing so, he continued to enjoy the King’s protection and patronage. The hypothesis that Francesco had been replaced by his son, Paolo in the early 1660s seems to be unconfirmed and even runs contrary to the archival sources. Unfortunately, the original documents about Paolo’s appointment are missing. However, the copies of Paolo’s postal privileges are preserved and located at the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Gdańsk and at the Czartoryski Library in Cracow. According to these copies Francesco De Gratta remained both the Head Postmaster in Gdańsk (followed by Caspar Richter) and the Postmaster General of Royal Prussia, Courland, Semigallia and Livonia until his death in 1676 (succeeded by his son Paolo).

Even though the document prepared after Francesco’s death, 20 August 1676, states that the postal privilege included all of Francesco’s children, the right to the title as well as the half of the postal provision was granted to Paolo, which in turn showed the inheritance of Francesco’s function by Paolo. However, one may note that Paolo was a minor at the time Francesco died and therefore, Richter in fact functioned as the administrator of the Gdańsk postal service until Paolo reached the required age of 25 defined by the Crown

129 Assuming that Paolo replaced his father already in 1661 as Jakubowski claims; See Jakubowski, Gratta Paweł, p. 556.
130 BG PAN, Ms. 719, p. 598–600.
133 The privilege of Augustus II from 1701, in which he confirmed the earlier privilege of John III Sobieski for Paolo De Gratta from 1676, BG PAN, Ms. 719:29, p. 598.
134 ASL, AS, 123, p. 111: ‘Poczty, ktora według Przywileiu wszystkim zarowno nalezy [...] Alubo [...] tén Urząd cum titulo Samemu tylko Jemci Panu Pawłowi słuzyc ma tak y dochodow onemu Samemu nalezec bédzie.’
as it’s older restriction for officials. Richter was an assistant to De Gratta and it is no exaggeration to maintain here that Francesco treated him as one of his closest partners, almost as a member of his family, especially if one considers that Richter was designated as the executor of Francesco’s last will by Francesco himself.

Returning to the hereditary system that is visible in the De Gratta family, it followed the common pattern present in contemporary Europe. Both Francesco and Paolo included information about the inheritance of the postal office in their last wills. Obviously, they wanted to secure the postal rights for their heirs. As Paolo’s case showed, it was possible to choose the person to whom the office would be given next even if Paolo left any children. Paolo inherited his postal function in a similar way to Francesco. However, the situation differed from the late 1640s, at the time when Francesco was appointed to his position as the Royal Postmaster. Francesco negotiated his position partly by himself. In the mid-1670s, Francesco passed down to Paolo a well-functioning postal office with much broader competences and influences than at the time when he took over after Giovanni Antonio’s death. Nonetheless, as Richter informed Wodzicki in his letter dated 27 August 1677, one year after Francesco De Gratta’s death, Jan Franciszek Bieliński, a Sword-bearer of the Polish Crown (miecznik wielki koronny) was also interested in taking over the Gdańsk Mail, but his attempt had been unsuccessful. Richter also wrote that he ‘had strengthened the post’ – he most likely put some financial resources into it and in this way became its creditor, to avoid the possibility that the postal service could be taken over by someone else. Even if the postal function was hereditary, it had competition, and in order to continue the management of the mail service, one – in


137 For Francesco’s last will see, ASL, AS, 114, pp. 67V.–70; For Paolo’s last will, see, AS, ASL, vol. 122, pp. 263–266.


139 About Jan Franciszek Bieliński, see, for example, Niesiecki, Herbarz, vol. 2, p. 145.


this case Richter – was forced to invest private resources. Francesco left his web of contacts to his heirs. This web included far more influential actors than that of Giovanni Antonio. His network included mostly several Polish-Lithuanian authorities, nobleman, clergyman, but consisted also of Italian and German merchants. This fact suggests that Francesco had rooted his family mostly in the Polish-Lithuanian noble society and wanted his sons to follow his line.

Lastly, some words need to be devoted to Francesco’s sons’ education. As discussed in Chapter 3, both Paolo and Alessandro were in various ways prepared to take over Francesco’s functions, at least for some time following their father’s death. It is highly likely that Francesco decided about his son’s future and left some decisions to Richter. This is why one may see Richter’s complaints about Francesco’s sons to Wodzicki as a result of the possible realisation of Francesco’s decisions. Most probably, Francesco aspired for the Indygent for his sons, which they eventually received in 1676. Furthermore, Francesco’s sons received a good education in languages. Taking into the account Paolo’s correspondence in various languages, he mastered French, Polish, German, Latin and most likely even Italian. One may add that these languages were in use in the daily trade and official correspondence that was passing through Gdańsk. Finally, Paolo and Alessandro’s education did not differ from their father’s; therefore, such training might be seen as a part of a standard postmaster’s education.

Financial Dependence

There was a connection between the Polish system and the Habsburgian Mail but not as part of the Thurn and Taxis postal infrastructure. In fact the Polish postmasters had to pay a special fee to the Thurn and Taxis’s postmasters who resided in Venice. One can learn about this practice from Caspar Richter’s letter to Wodzicki dated 27 August 1677, which discussed Bartolomeo Sardi, the Postmaster General for the Commonwealth in the 1670s, who paid a fee to the Habsburgian Postmaster in order to receive his office.142 One may argue that there is no evidence that shows the dependence between the De Grattas and Thurn and Taxis. Nevertheless, it can be presumed that the De Gratta family had also been financially dependent on the Habsburgian postal service, as in Sardi’s case. Although the hypothesis is that Francesco probably bought his office from the royal couple and in addition,

it is believed that he paid some monthly rent to them, it is highly likely that Giovanni Antonio had also been financially linked with Thurn and Taxis. Such a hypothesis appears especially likely to be true if taking into account Giovanni Antonio’s activity in the late 1640s, when he, together with Somigliano, planned to establish a concurrent postal route to the Brandenburgian Mail and received some financial resources from Count Lamoral to cover the costs related to the realisation of their plans. Nevertheless, it was obvious that the further incomes that the new postal route would provide had been divided between De Gratta and Somigliano. Once again, the sources are silent when it comes to the eventual bills, salaries or other forms of financial allowances. Finally, it still remains unclear whether Giovanni Antonio was, besides his royal office, also a Habsburgian Postmaster or not. However, when it comes to Francesco De Gratta, it is certain that he only served as the Polish Royal Postmaster.

The Open Letter

The opening, checking and even requisition of letters seems to have been a standard procedure of the postmasters during early modern times. The possibility to control the correspondence gave an additional link between the Polish monarchs and De Gratta. This is why access to the letters is also worth taking a closer look at in this chapter. This particular chapter mentioned the visit of one of the queen’s factors who came to the De Grattas’ residence and read letters. This type of practice was also quite common in later decades, for example during the stay of Queen Marie Casimire d’Arquien and King John III Sobieski in Gdańsk in 1677 and the queen’s visit to Gdańsk after the death of her husband in 1697.143 Moreover, the Gdańsk postal office even disclosed that Jan Andrzej Morsztyn collaborated with France in order to rig a new election in Poland-Lithuania against Sobieski.144 These examples indicate the ongoing and continuous right to opening and reading letters, which was actually used by postmasters for political reasons. One may argue that such a practice allowed the De Grattas and the Polish monarchs – their principals – to monitor and influence the political development in the Commonwealth to some extent. The family of De Gratta remained loyal to the subsequent Polish

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143 About the royal visit in 1677, see, Chapter 8. About the royal visit in 1697: See, Komaszyński, Piękna, p. 252.
144 The treason of Jan Andrzej Morsztyn was the subject of several books, see, for example, Sokołowska, Jan Andrzej Morsztyn, p. 168ff.; Kluczycki, Wyprawa, p. 14ff.; Deiches, Koniec, p. 65ff.
monarchs at different time periods, regardless of who was actually sitting on the throne.

Francesco’s correspondence reveals that he also used his position for his own personal interests. As one may read in Francesco’s letter to Wodzicki dated 6 March 1671, neither he nor Caspar Richter read a particular letter addressed to Mr Ledel. This fact shows that De Gratta had the possibility to open the correspondence and use it for his own business reasons. Moreover, he even shared information from letters with Wodzicki. Indeed, his position as the Head Postmaster in Gdańsk made it possible for him to open the correspondence of others. In such a way, he was aware of prices as well as the business of other merchants. Taking this into consideration, it is not surprising that Francesco never mentioned the names of his business partners (correspondents) from the Netherlands or England in his correspondence with Wodzicki. Further discussion on this will be provided in the chapter on Francesco’s business activities (Chapter 7). Lastly, one may emphasise that Francesco complained about the mail service and assumed that other persons were reading his letters, and this probably explains why he did not mention the names of his companions, as he argued: ‘Who knows what is happening with my letter […] the people’s curiosity is enormous’.

The Postmaster General of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

What is not yet clear is whether Francesco De Gratta did or did not become the Postmaster General of Poland-Lithuania.

In the Pinocci Family Archive held at the Cracow State Archive, one can find a name book left by Girolamo Pinocci, the editor of the ‘Merkurijusz Polski’ that includes the titles and places of residence of several authorities. The majority of the persons listed there can be recognised as Polish magnates; however, the book also includes some foreign authorities as well. This source may be seen as a book detailing the contact persons engaged in business or political affairs with Pinocci. Among several names, one can find

146 ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 249: ‘Co wiedziecz co Zmoim listem […] Curiositas ludzka wielka’.
147 For more about his editorship of the first Polish printed newspaper as well as his relationship with De Gratta, see forthcoming article by Salamonik, Salamonik, New Times.
the name of Francesco De Gratta (here: ‘Al Grata di Danzica’)\(^{149}\) as well as his title of Postmaster General of Poland-Lithuania (‘All. M:to Ill:re Sig:re mio Sig:re et Pr’ne Cess:mo Il Sig:re Francesco Gratta Amministrat:re delle Regie Poste di Polonia’)\(^{150}\). Although there is no date given in the document, it may be concluded that the book was created at some time between 1660 and 1676. In addition, it is also noticeable that the book was written with different inks and it consists of two separate parts. This fact, together with some deletions of names, and supplementary notes concerning one person’s new title, point to the fact that this source was created over a long period of time and was frequently updated with new names or professions. Here, the most important aspect is that this source contained the information that De Gratta was the Postmaster General of Poland-Lithuania. The other archival sources are silent on his eventual advancement, and this is why it may be presumed that Pinocci, while adding De Gratta to his notebook, noted that De Gratta belonged to the royal postal service. Moreover, he included Francesco’s place of residence and consequently this may also be treated as evidence that Francesco stayed in Gdańsk, and thus one can reject the possibility that he did not move to Warsaw or Cracow, the cities where the Postmaster General used to reside. Finally, one may also take into account that Bartolomeo Sardi, who married Eufrosina De Gratta (after Francesco’s death in 1676) was appointed to the function of the Postmaster General in 1673 after the resignation of Angelo Maria Bandinelli, who in turn became a Postmaster General of Poland-Lithuania after the death of Carlo Montelupi in 1662.\(^{151}\) Bandinelli eventually migrated to the Duchy of Tuscany in 1673.\(^{152}\) According to the findings of Mazzei, Bandinelli stayed in Florence several times during his office in Poland-Lithuania, and one of these stays lasted from July 1671 to September 1672.\(^{153}\) Even if it remains uncertain who the Postmaster General in practice was during Bandinelli’s stays abroad, it is unlikely that De Gratta took over this position. This is why Pinocci’s note should be not overestimated, at least until one finds new sources that confirm this eventual progress in Francesco’s career.

\(^{149}\) ANK, AP, 29/650/25, No. 336, Gratta (no date given, probably the mid-1670s), p. 419.
\(^{150}\) ANK, AP, 29/650/25, No. 336.
\(^{151}\) About Bandinelli’s postal activity, see Mazzei, _La trama_, p. 187.
\(^{152}\) The royal postal privilege for Bartolomeo Sardi (the General Postmaster of Poland-Lithuania) dated 26 May 1673, see ASL, AS, 121, pp. 161–164.
\(^{153}\) Mazzei, _La trama_, p. 186.
Concluding Remarks

This chapter set out to determine the course of Francesco De Gratta’s postal career and focused on the question of how he obtained and used his postal functions. This chapter’s main aim was to analyse the process by which De Gratta obtained the postal function, his career promotions, private interests and his Crown interests. This investigation has found that generally his career was a result of his networking efforts. At first, Francesco employed his father’s network to forward his own career. One can reason that his contacts with Carlo Montelupi, Giovanni Abondio Somigliano and in turn with the Count Lamoral of Thurn and Taxis allowed him to start his own postal activities. Francesco De Gratta received his first position in 1649. This can be considered as the continuation of his father’s work. Francesco did not have gain full influence over the Gdańsk postal service until 1661; therefore the events from 1654 should be treated only as his first attempt to take over the postal service in the city.

Taking these facts into consideration, it becomes clear that Giovanni Antonio was already established as the Royal Postmaster in the city when Francesco began his career. Therefore, his father’s connections might be considered here as Francesco’s advantages that allowed for his own social advancement. The good relationship with the subsequent Polish monarchs was part of Giovanni Antonio’s legacy. The broad contacts with the Polish authorities, including a range of Polish noblemen, were conversely Francesco’s achievement. He knew the Polish language and the habits of the Polish aristocracy as a result of, for example, his frequent visits to Warsaw and Cracow, together with his presence at the places where sessions of the Diet took place. In such a way, his postal functions linked with his other function as the Royal Secretary and indeed with his trade and financial businesses. The De Grattas paid the royal couple in order to receive their positions. The elimination of the Brandenburgian Mail from Gdańsk was one of the most important of Francesco’s successes. This in turn represented – to some extent – the realisation of his father’s idea about the creation of a new postal route to Amsterdam. The empirical findings in this chapter showed that the answers to the first two research questions from the introduction are similar to each other.

Francesco’s and Giovanni Antonio’s letters gave an insight into the postal organisation of Poland-Lithuania as well as the decision-making processes in the postal matters. For example, one can learn where Francesco stayed during these years and whom he contacted. Moreover, from these letters, one can
trace an Italian network, which consisted of postmasters of Italian origin in contemporary Europe. While Francesco’s actions were treated in the chapter as the main subject, the Italian network of postmasters appeared rather as one of the main outcomes of the present text. The Italian network was investigated by analysis of Giovanni Antonio’s contacts with Abodnio Somigliano as well as Francesco’s relationship with Montelupi; both were initiated by Giovanni Antonio. Finally, Giovanni Antonio was only the Royal Postmaster in Gdańsk, without any kind of influence over the Gdańsk Mail. That also suggests his close relationship with Montelupi, who obviously was his principal as well as his protector. In addition, the chapter has shown that the actual system of financing of the mail service remained in the hands of the postal families, and that the office of the royal postmaster was hereditary; however, it was not devoid of competition as was the case after Francesco De Gratta’s death. Even if the mail service was based on the succession and private funding, it became a royal system throughout the entire Commonwealth, with a hierarchical administration system.

Besides the investigation of Francesco’s postal career, the present chapter also proposed some explanation of how the De Grattas used their function in the royal postal service to pursue their own and Crown interests. However, one may ask here how they linked their personal interests with the court’s concerns.

First of all, it can be assumed that being the Royal Postmaster and later, the Head Postmaster in such a large city as Gdańsk was a highly profitable and prestigious profession for Francesco. All letters addressed from Poland to the western part of Europe had to cross the city. That was undoubtedly an excellent opportunity for De Gratta to gain contacts among the Polish elite and to develop his own business relationships. One may emphasise that the contemporary postmasters generally mixed their professional and business functions. Francesco De Gratta was no exception.

That said, his involvement with the Crown’s interests will be briefly reconsidered. One may conclude that Francesco De Gratta served the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth well, particularly by taking over the Gdańsk city postal service and by removing the Brandenburgian Mail from the city in 1660–1661, which, as a consequence, almost led to the outbreak of war. His achievements led to his promotion to the Postmaster General of Royal Prussia, Courland, Semigallia and Livonia in 1661. In this way, the postal service throughout the entire territory of the Commonwealth was divided into two parts – namely Royal Prussia and the Polish north-east’s provinces on the one hand, and the Polish Crown together with the Duchy of Lithuania

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on the other, with respectively – Gdańsk and Cracow as the main postal centres. At this time, the Gdańsk Mail came under the control of the Polish Kings and consequently, they could monitor the entire postal traffic crossing this city. However, it is crucial to add here that loyal and trustworthy postmasters were necessary for such cooperation. Through several carefully thought out actions – partially by loans, the storage of valuable items, and finally by hosting several kings in his house during royal visits in Gdańsk (more about that in the proceeding chapters) – the De Gratta family gained the King’s patronage. Thence, the De Grattas’ establishment in the city and their heading of the postal service there could be described as nothing short of a process of monopolisation of the information flow in the city and taking over the incomes that the mail service generated.

154 Merkuriusz, p. 100.
155 Lipska, Dekoracje, p. 99.
CHAPTER 6

Creditor

This chapter follows Francesco De Gratta’s activities in the fields of the monetary system and credit, and in what ways these engagements were mutually invigorating. First of all, the present text intends to explain De Gratta’s involvement within the monetary system of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In order to illuminate this, a number of actors – who were mostly Italian – will be examined according to their involvement in the system of leasing of the mints of the Crown of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Here, most attention will be given to Tito Livio Burattini who remained one of the most influential actors in the financial system after the Deluge. However, before the investigation of De Gratta and Burattini’s actions, the chapter will describe the mint and monetary services. Next, the import of silver to Poland-Lithuania by De Gratta in a company with Angelo Maria Bandinelli will be analysed as well as his financial support to the royal couples, the Parliament and Polish nobles. The financial system of the Commonwealth will be presented with focus on the mint system as well as the banking activities of a range of Italian merchants. This chapter concludes with a discussion of Francesco De Gratta’s involvement in the mint system of Poland-Lithuania as well as his creditor actions in terms of career strategies, possibilities for social advancement and economic development.

Thus, the major research questions in this chapter are:

1. What was the involvement of De Gratta in the monetary system of Poland-Lithuania?
2. How did De Gratta utilize his function as the Royal Secretary for his financial activity?
As previously mentioned in Chapter 4, the Royal Secretary’s function did not only refer to De Gratta’s administrative career, but also allowed for development of his economic and financial activities. As the goal of the previous chapter was to analyse De Gratta’s career in the postal system, this chapter is designed to discover what actually did happen when Francesco had established himself as the postmaster in Gdańsk (1654 – the Head Postmaster in Gdańsk, 1661 – the Postmaster General of Royal Prussia, Courland, Semigallia and Livonia), and to research how he used his Royal Secretary’s function in his financial activities. The time investigated here starts around the year 1661 and ends in the mid-1670s. The same will be done in the following chapter, when Francesco’s trade activities concerning the potash trade from Wallachia to the western part of Europe during this period are studied. Not surprisingly, archival materials that offer information about Francesco’s trade and financial activities from the time period of the 1660s to the mid-1670s are held in various archives of Europe. Most of them are to be found in the State Archive in Lucca.

According to these sources, the greatest level of financial activity of Francesco De Gratta is recorded from the 1660s. This in turn can be easily related to political developments in the Commonwealth. After the Deluge, which eventually ended in 1660, together with the signing of the agreement between Poland-Lithuania and Brandenburg-Prussia that temporarily stopped the postal conflict (1661), the possibilities to develop trade and banking activities increased again. Furthermore, Francesco gained access to the incomes from the postal service during this period, which also gave him the opportunity to invest these particular financial sources into his other activities, such as credit or support/patronage.¹ His involvement in credit/loan activities – both on official and private levels – is shown as a result of the benefits generated from his postal function. Lastly, one may add that the poor economic situation and political instability in the early 1660s Commonwealth are worth looking at. The Crown had become more dependent on investors of foreign origin who were seen as those who could quickly repair the Crown’s finances as well as establish and build up an infrastructure. The majority of these investors were foreign merchants/nobles, mostly Italians, who were noted throughout this time by the Polish nobility as a hostile element aiming to pump the Crown’s money into their own pockets. Such a

¹ About De Gratta’s access to the income that the mail service generated, see Lenartowicz, Historia, p. 16.
view crystalized in the mid-1660s, around the time of the financial scandal that had erupted from Tito Livio Burattini’s activities in the mint system.

The Mint System

Similarly to the postal system, even the mint system in Poland-Lithuania remained within the royal prerogative in early modern times. A significant part of the income that the mints generated was entrusted to the Polish Kings. This is why only the King’s most trusted men could lease or reopen the mints in the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, one may observe that the incomes from the mints also belonged to the mint masters, the persons who did in fact administer all monetary work. This should be kept in mind while analysing the interests of merchants of Italian origin who had emigrated to Poland-Lithuania and were in possession of the required capital. For instance, Tito Livio Burattini enjoyed some 40% of the total income from the mints in the 1660s.

Most of the royal mints that existed in the mid-seventeenth century were established a long time before the seventeenth century and were mostly limited to the Polish Crown. In the 1660s, Burattini had managed to reopen mints in Brześć Litewski (Bel. Brest-Litovsk), Bydgoszcz and Kowno (Lit. Kaunas), but also hired other mints in Poland and Lithuania. The following analysis will focus mostly on the development of the Lithuanian mint system, with Wilno’s mint at its centre. Francesco De Gratta’s monetary activities were mostly connected with this particular facility. The Wilno mint had been established under the reigns of Casimir IV Jagiellon (the King of Poland, 1447–1492) and remained, except for a few periods, the central mint of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania throughout the early modern period.

The Monetary System

All of the financial interactions studied here took place between a limited number of actors. The royal (King) and parliamentary (Diet) powers had a huge impact on the financial development of the Commonwealth. However, in Poland-Lithuania, which is frequently recognised as an aristocratic republic, the Diet played an enormous role when it came to the regulations of not

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2 About the Royal Treasury (skarb nadworny), see Jezierski and Leszczyńska, Historia gospodarcza, p. 60.
3 Konopczyński, Tytus Liwiusz Boratyni, p. 134.
4 It should be emphasised that only the royal mints are researched in the chapter, so those that belonged to the cities are excluded.
5 Kraszewski, Wilno, p. 196.
only the political sphere but also social and economic ones. The monetary system of Poland-Lithuania belonged to the Parliament represented by the Grand Treasurer of the Crown (podkarbi wielki koronny) and the Grand Treasurer of the Duchy of Lithuania (podkarbi wielki litewski). To them belonged the administration of the Commonwealth’s monetary system, but excluding among others opening and maintaining of the mints that, as noted above, which remained the royal prerogative. In the mid-seventeenth century, the poor economic situation of the royal and Commonwealth treasuries forced the financial authorities to outsource the mints on a larger scale than had hitherto happened. Consequently, almost every mint was governed by foreign entrepreneurs. In such a way, the entire mint system came under their control. They remained the monarch’s protégés and received their titles of royal secretaries. One of the most famous mint masters (the administrators of the mints) in Polish history was Tito Livio Burattini who enjoyed the protection of Queen Marie Louise Gonzaga. The protection of the Queen and of King John II Casimir Vasa allowed him to control almost the entire mint system of Poland-Lithuania in the 1660s. To clarify this, even though the monetary system officially belonged to the parliament and the mint system to the King, the mints remained, as will be seen later, in private hands and became hereditary. It is therefore hard to differentiate between what actually belonged to the royal or to the noble jurisdiction when it comes to the monetary system. This complexity will be now presented by the example of Burattini as well as other mint masters who cooperated with him.

Tito Livio Burattini

Burattini’s career in the monetary system of Poland-Lithuania started in the late 1650s, at a time when the Crown’s finances were in dire straits, devastated by wars and the bad state of Polish silver mines. Therefore, the initiative to sponsor and administer the Crown’s mints undertaken by Burattini, met with the approval of the Polish King, John II Casimir Vasa. However, as early as in the late 1640s, Tito Livio Burattini was engaged in minting affairs and contacted Giovanni Antonio De Gratta in order to import copper. Tito Livio, along with another trader of Italian origin, Paolo Del Buono, hired the Royal

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6 About the complexity of the royal and Diet’s financial systems and the function of General Treasurers, see Filipczak-Kocur, Skarbowość, p. 334.
7 Tygielski, Włosi, p. 278.
9 Mazzei, Traffici, p. 70.
Crown Mint of Cracow from 23 March 1658.\(^\text{10}\) In his biography of Burattini, Hniłko mentions that Burattini also received the title of the Royal Secretary at some time around this date.\(^\text{11}\) Consequently, these facts confirm the correlation between obtaining the title of the Royal Secretary by him and his further activities in the structures of the royal monetary system. The same year (August of 1658), Tito Livio Burattini and his brother Filippo received their Polish Indygenat. This once again affirmed the sequence of subsequent steps required to obtain of the Indygenat. Nonetheless, one may observe that this entire process was quite rapid in Burattini’s case.

According to a letter by Des Noyers to Boulliau (both were secretaries to the Polish Queen Marie Louise) dated 11 June 1659, Tito Livio Burattini together with Paolo Del Buono took over the administration of the Mint of Warsaw.\(^\text{12}\) In the same letter, Des Noyers mentioned that the brother of Paolo, Buono, administered the mint of the Duchy of Florence and highlighted that he was considered very proficient in his activity.\(^\text{13}\) In addition, Des Noyers mentioned that the brothers of Del Buono together with another man from Sicily (no name given in the letter), wished to create a military school on an island located by the Vistula River. Although their plan was not realised, it showed that there were a great number of Italians who wished to invest their economic capital in Poland-Lithuania. In the case of this Sicilian man, his entire capital was to be invested.\(^\text{14}\) Nonetheless, the Diet refused to accept such plans as the opening of a military school by foreigners and thus perceived the plans as dangerous ones.\(^\text{15}\) Furthermore, Des Noyers’s letter included the information that Del Buono was a mint specialist in Florence. In this way, Burattini was also recognised as a mint specialist. His multiple education and experience as a scientist were undoubtedly seen as attractive qualifications.\(^\text{16}\) As mentioned above, his monetary career began just after the time he had received his Polish Indygenat. Taking this particular information into account, one may suggest that the Italians had not only the money required for the production of the

\(^{10}\) Tancon, *Lo scienziato*, p. 156.


\(^{13}\) *Portfolio*, p. 217: ‘Brat tamtego trzyma mennicę w. księcia we Florencji i uchodzi za bieglego w tej sztuce’.

\(^{14}\) *Portfolio*, p. 217.

\(^{15}\) Des Noyers wrote that the Polish nobility stopped their plans; however, it was probably the Diet, who eventually dismissed such plans, see *Portfolio*, pp. 217–218.

\(^{16}\) About Burattini and his scientific activity, see, for example, Tancon, *Lo scienziato*, pp. 70ff.
coins, but also the knowledge, experience and merits that were demanded from newcomers in the Polish-Lithuanian court.

Burattini reopened mints in: Ujazdów (16 November 1659)\textsuperscript{17}, Wilno (23 February 1663)\textsuperscript{18} and Brześć Litewski\textsuperscript{19}. However, the reestablishment of the mints on the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Wilno and Brześć Litewski) met with several problems. The military situation in Lithuania as well as the geopolitical localization of Wilno negatively influenced the development of the mint in this city. Another issue was the irregular import of the metal ore needed for the mint’s ongoing production. The materials were imported from different parts of Europe and had to pass through Gdańsk. As discussed in Chapter 5, the postal conflict still influenced the information and commodities flow in the 1660s. Because of this, the transport of metals was often stopped by Brandenburg-Prussia and as a consequence, the monetary production became inefficient there.\textsuperscript{20}

According to Hniłko, Burattini nominated Ciro Bandinelli as the administrator (superintendent) of both the Lithuanian mints.\textsuperscript{21} Nevertheless, the mid-1660s saw a crisis in Burattini’s monetary activity. The mint of Ujazdów was closed in 1665. The same happened to the mint of Brześć Litewski, where production was stopped in 1666.\textsuperscript{22} One may remember that the mints that Burattini reopened in the early 1660s were only designed to quickly recover the Crown’s finances after the Swedish Deluge (the indebtedment due to lending money for military purposes) and to produce a new kind of shilling (szeląg) that had not been recognised in other European countries. These new coins were called \textit{boratynki} from the name of Burattini, and contained a smaller amount of ore metal than proper shillings. In this way, the currency was weakened, which led to protests, and eventually Burattini was charged with fraud and embezzlement by the Diet.\textsuperscript{23} Simultaneously, the King was accused of being partly responsible of the deterioration of the currency through his contact with Burattini and another

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17} Hniłko, \textit{Włosi w Polsce – Tytus Liwiusz Boratyni}, pp. 31–32.
\item \textsuperscript{18} The author just mentions the Lithuanian mint, but it is highly likely that it was the Mint of Wilno; Hniłko, \textit{Włosi w Polsce – Tytus Liwiusz Boratyni}, p. 51.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Probably the same year as this in Wilno, Hniłko, \textit{Włosi w Polsce – Tytus Liwiusz Boratyni}, p. 53.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Hniłko, \textit{Włosi w Polsce – Tytus Liwiusz Boratyni}, p. 55.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Hniłko, \textit{Włosi w Polsce – Tytus Liwiusz Boratyni}, p. 53.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Hniłko, \textit{Włosi w Polsce – Tytus Liwiusz Boratyni}, p. 54.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Compare with Tygielski, \textit{Italians}, p. 245.
\end{itemize}
mint master Andreas Timpe (Andrzej Tymf). As a result of such deterioration, financial transactions included a statement as to whether they were conducted in ‘good money’ (moneta bona) or ‘current money’ (moneta currens). Even though Burattini reopened his silver and gold mints in Cracow and Bydgoszcz in the following years, the economic crisis and financial scandal around Burattini led to his mints eventually being closed in 1668. Burattini resigned from his monetary activity until the mid-1670s when he reopened a number of his old mints. An example of his later activity was the mint of Bydgoszcz that was passed down later to Bartolomeo Sardi, the husband of Euphrosina De Gratta, who remained the Postmaster General of Poland-Lithuania at this time.

Altogether, Burattini remains a controversial figure in Polish history. His actions are seen by economic historians more as consequences of a long-term process, an effect of the monetary crisis which began under the reign of Sigismund III. Hence, the monetary activity, especially in the 1660s, was associated with huge risks. One could lose one’s reputation as happened in Burattini’s case. Keeping this in mind, the process of entering the monetary system by De Gratta will now be investigated.

Francesco De Gratta and the Mints

The role of Francesco De Gratta in the mint system of Poland-Lithuania has never been a topic of any research. Furthermore, little is known about his engagement in the Crown’s financial system in general. Previous research has only mentioned that he imported silver in company with Angelo Maria Bandinelli from America via Cádiz to Gdańsk and later distributed it to Poland-Lithuania. This is why the present part of the analysis aims to shed some light on De Gratta’s involvement in the mint system of the Commonwealth, as well as to link his import of silver with his own financial activities. Moreover, De Gratta never took over the administration of any mint by himself, but he lent his resources to the mint masters for such a purpose.

24 Tygielski, Włosi, p. 284.
26 Hniłko, Włosi w Polsce – Tytus Liwiusz Boratyni, p. 55.
28 See, for example, Mazzei, La trama, p. 190.
In her book on the Italian merchants in the sixteenth/seventeenth century Europe, Mazzei mentions that Francesco De Gratta, along with Angelo Maria Bandinelli, created a merchant company (‘societa di negozzi mercantili’) in 1666 that operated in Cádiz.\(^{29}\) Moreover, Mazzei highlights that the brothers to Angelo Maria: Bartolomeo and Fulgenzo, who were permanently based in Cádiz, were responsible for the import of silver from the New World to Europe.\(^{30}\) Mazzei also assumes that Angelo Maria Bandinelli had already transferred his economic capital from Poland-Lithuania to other parts of Europe by 1664.\(^{31}\) Here one can observe a parallel with his resignation from his office of Postmaster General of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that eventually happened in 1673.\(^{32}\) Moreover, the research by Michel Morineau that was quoted by Mazzei in her analysis reveals that the import of American silver to Europe increased rapidly at this point in time.\(^{33}\) This fact also strengthens the hypothesis of increasing interest in and demand for American silver in the Commonwealth. As one may recall from the previous chapter, Angelo Maria Bandinelli migrated to Florence after his resignation from his postal function. It could be argued that it was not only the import of American silver that linked him with De Gratta, but also his postal activity. It is highly likely that they started to cooperate once Bandinelli became the Postmaster General of Poland-Lithuania in 1662\(^{34}\), following the death of Carlo Montelupi. In such a way, the link between the monetary system and the postal one came to light. As a rule, the cooperation between actors of Italian origin developed once they had achieved their official functions in the Crown’s or the royal administration. These duties remained somehow hereditary and were regulated by cronyism and patronage during the period that is to be analysed here.

A letter written by Bartolomeo Bandinelli and preserved in the Archive of the Museum Plantin-Moretus in Antwerp verifies the facts and hypothesis offered by Mazzei concerning the company between Bandinelli and De Gratta.\(^{35}\) This letter, dated 26 May 1667, was sent from Cádiz to Henri François Schilders, a Dutch trader and chaplain in Antwerp, and included information concerning the common business of De Gratta and Angelo

\(^{29}\) Mazzei, *La trama*, p. 190.
\(^{30}\) Mazzei, *La trama*, p. 190.
\(^{31}\) Mazzei, *La trama*, p. 190.
\(^{32}\) Mazzei, *La trama*, p. 190.
\(^{33}\) Mazzei, *La trama*, p. 190.
\(^{34}\) Tygielski, *Włosi*, p. 184.
\(^{35}\) MPM, AFs, 6, No. 15.
Maria Bandinelli on the one side and Bartolomeo and Fulgenzo Bandinelli on the other. This letter demonstrates that their company was still functioning in the mid-1660s, a time which saw the end of Burattini’s greatest activity in the mint system within the Commonwealth. Francesco De Gratta’s engagement in the mint system began some time before he became involved, with Bandinelli, in the import of silver, as depicted in the letter. The first document that includes the information about Francesco De Gratta’s loans to finance Burattini’s mint activities was written in 1664.

In the list of debts and credits created by Caspar Richter after Francesco’s death in 1676, one finds information that Francesco De Gratta’s capital that he had earned in cooperation with Bandinelli’s family still remained in Spain (probably Cádiz) at the time of Francesco’s death. In addition, one also notices that the name of Angelo Maria Bandinelli appears twice in this source: regarding his mint account and his private payment account. There is no additional information about the time when the loans were taken. However, if one considers the credits connected to the mint’s costs that were listed directly above the capital which remained in Spain, it becomes clear that this fund was related to the import of silver which was later used in monetary production. One may also add that Angelo Maria Bandinelli who appeared twice in this archival source, was involved in both the import of silver on the one hand, and as will be seen later, the administration of the mints on the other. Lorenzo Bandinelli, who resided in Florence and was a cousin to Angelo Maria, was also named in the list. Hence, Francesco could have his own contacts with several members of the Bandinelli family without abandoning the administration of the entire silver import activity to Angelo Maria. Therefore, the list of debts and credits shows that the repercussions of the activities of the company of De Gratta – Bandinelli continued at least until the mid-1670s, otherwise Francesco would possibly have withdrawn his resources that he kept in Spain before his death.

De Gratta and Burattini

The earliest document that contains information about De Gratta’s mint activity is preserved at the State Archive in Lucca. This is a contract created

36 MPM, AfS, 6, No. 15.
37 ASL, AS, 123, p. 199: ‘Capital w Hispaniey u Bandinellow […] 5798,28 [probably fl]’.
38 ASL, AS, 123, p. 199: ‘Angelo M:a Bandinellego ut Supra […] 14983,8 [probably fl]; Angelo M:a Bandinellego Conto Corr:ro […] 7326,20 [probably fl]’.
by Tito Livio Burattini in Warsaw dated 22 August 1664.\(^\text{39}\) It says that Francesco De Gratta was prepared to take over the administration of the royal mints and was obliged to repay Burattini’s debts in the case of Burattini’s death.\(^\text{40}\) According to this very document, De Gratta appeared as the manager of Burattini’s legacy, and this is why he can be seen as one of Burattini’s closest business companions. Burattini was described in the letter as the administrator of the mints both in Poland and Lithuania. This archival source also reveals that De Gratta paid the money needed for the development of these mints. Thus, Francesco De Gratta financially replaced Burattini for the first time and this in turn may be treated as evidence for the poor financial condition of Burattini’s mints, and also shows De Gratta’s strategy to enter the monetary system without taking responsibility himself. In addition, Francesco De Gratta received the right to dispose of Burattini’s estates in Poland and in Italy.

One may argue that this archival source shows that De Gratta was wealthy enough in the mid-1660s to provide credit to Burattini and in turn the monetary system of Poland-Lithuania. This coincided with the solution of the main postal conflict of 1660–1661. It is highly likely that De Gratta increased his income from the mail service then. This would explain how he could allocate his resources to the mint system. Burattini died in 1681, five years after Francesco’s death. Therefore, the existing agreement was not used by De Gratta himself to repay Burattini’s debts. However, the statement says that De Gratta lent money to finance Burattini’s mint activity, and therefore, this document was later used by Francesco’s successors to claim their rights to the repayment of the loan some years after Francesco’s death.

Burattini also appears among the debtors in the list created by Richter after Francesco’s death, having a considerable debt to Francesco.\(^\text{41}\) Moreover, Bartolomeo Sardi took over the administration of the mint of Bydgoszcz after

\(^{39}\) ASL, AS, 121, p. 5.
\(^{40}\) ASL, AS, 121, p. 5: ‘poca importanza atterenti til piú a queste Zecche del Regno, e del Gran Ducato di Lithuania da me benute in Awenda e Servitio delle qualii sudetto sig. Gratta conviene stare al dissotto di somme di darano molto riguardende; e iche essendo noi mortali bisogna pensare per servitio dell’alino ancora alla sicuella sua in Caso, che Dio Benedetto mi volerre chiamane a se, prima di haver pagato tutto quello li dcno, e che li potteni andar hovendo da qui Avanti […] che in Caso di mio morte, sudetto sig. Gratta si poui pagare di tutto quello li poteni eccer debitore, tanto sopra li mei beni mobili e stabili, presenti é futuri, qui nel Regno, et anco in Italia, anzi che lo constituisco uno delli Tutori che boneveranno mareggiare le mie facoltá’.

\(^{41}\) Around ¼ of the price of the Kamienica, see ASL, AS, 123, p. 199: ‘Tito Livio Boratini Conto Coro. […] 11163,16,9 [probably fl]’.
Burattini’s death as a kind of repayment of Burattini’s debts to De Gratta that were included in the list. The agreement was confirmed by a Crown official, Gadomski which in turn can be seen as a form of insurance that guaranteed the rights of De Gratta’s successors. Francesco De Gratta was also named in the contract as the Royal Postmaster and Burattini as the Royal Secretary. The second source that is related to this development is the list of stipulations dated 1 June 1665. The list includes the terms and conditions that were probably connected to the above mentioned contract. The document was also created by Burattini and determines the role of De Gratta as creditor. Moreover, it also includes the information that Francesco was absent at the time of signing and was represented by Pestalozzi, a merchant from Lucca residing in Warsaw at this time.

The Contract

The next document that discloses information about De Gratta’s mint activity is an agreement between him on the one side and Tito Livio Burattini, Giacinto Bianchi, Giovanni Cinacchi, Angelo Maria Bandinelli and Enrico Mones on the other. This contract was also created in Warsaw on the very
same day as the list of stipulations presented earlier in the text. This document states clearly that Francesco De Gratta was the creditor of the mint of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It is important to mention here that this archival source was signed not only by Burattini, as happened with the previous documents, but also by: Giacinto Bianchi who remained a Senior Notary of the Royal Treasury, Giovanni Cinacchi, a trader in Cracow and Warsaw, Angelo Maria Bandinelli, the Postmaster General of Poland-Lithuania and Enrico Mones, a Wilno mayor.

As presented below in Diagram 3, Burattini and De Gratta (marked white on the diagram) were the pivotal actors in this agreement – Burattini as the one who governed the mint system in Poland-Lithuania and De Gratta as the person who financed the reopening of the mint. Moreover, De Gratta lent money to all of the mint masters; however, he did it on behalf of Burattini. According to the archival sources, Cinacchi, Bianchi, Bandinelli and Mones (marked grey on the diagram) were obliged to repay their loans to De Gratta individually and, as will be seen later, they contacted him one by one, but they did not negotiate about taking credit with him. Lastly, one may add that Burattini, who did not have the required money for the production, employed other actors to run his business to cover not only the costs, but also the risks of such action. In such a way, the mint masters remained in De Gratta’s debt, while De Gratta remained dependent on them to enter the mint system.


47 Hyacinto (Jacek) Bianchi (Bianki) who received his Indygenat in 1662, see Biblioteka Ordynacji, p. 32.
48 Giovanni (Jan) Cinacchi (Cynaki), the brother to Bartholomeo Cinacchi, see Cynarski, Grygiel, ”La società luccese del seicento”, p. 330.
49 Enrico (Henryk) Mones, a Calvinist, a member of the City Council, one of the chief burgomasters, see Ragauskas, Vilniaus, p. 288; Frick, The Councillor, p. 50 (footnote 13).
Diagram 3. The relationship between the mint masters and creditor Francesco De Gratta.

All of these individuals appear frequently in the previous research as linked with each other and are presented in a number of socio-economic constellations. Mones and Pestalozzi (who remained De Gratta’s plenipotentiaries according to the list of stipulations from 1665) were engaged in trade with Bartolomeo Sardi. Similarly, a merchant company had been established by Bartolomeo Cinacchi, Giovanni Baptista Pestalozzi and Enrico Mones in 1659. Thus, it is possible to claim that all of the above-listed actors had known each other for a long time before they signed the agreement with De Gratta. This is why their cooperation when it comes to the maintenance of the mints of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania should be seen rather as a continuation of their ongoing businesses than as an extraordinary collaboration.

Later, in the very same volume, one may find a contract dated 20 January 1666 that tells about the repayment of the loans to De Gratta by Burattini. Moreover, a number of similar documents dated 10 November 1670 by: Bartolomeo Cinacchi a vogt (wójt) of Wilno, Giacinto Bianchi, Giovanni Cinacchi and Tito Livio Burattini can be found there as well. The next

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50 Mazzei, *La trama*, p. 20.
51 Mazzei, *La società*, p. 80.
52 ASL, AS, 121, p. 19.
53 ASL, AS, 121, p. 27, 39.
54 Bartholomeo (Bartłomiej) Cinacchi (Cynaki), see, for example, Ragauskas, *Vilniaus*, p. 452.
55 ASL, AS, 121, p. 31, 43.
56 ASL, AS, 121, p. 35.
57 ASL, AS, 121, p. 47.
document is an undated bill that again contains the above-listed names; however, it includes the information that it was the mint of Wilno that was maintained by the loans from De Gratta.\textsuperscript{58} The last document concerning the mint of Wilno included in this particular volume is the bill (also undated) about the rescheduling of these loans. The contract includes the time period of 1670–1672 that allows us to ascertain that the document itself was created before 1671. This source says that Burattini, Bandinelli and Cinacchi’s brothers were obliged to repay their debts in two tranches, the first by the 3 July 1671 and the second in 1672 (unspecified date). This is the latest document which gives evidence of De Gratta’s monetary activity. In general, this bill refers to the agreement of 1664–1665 and the repayment notes of 1670. The above agreements indicate that the loans that the mint masters took out were not repaid in time. Tito Livio Burattini is not named in this archival source, which can mean that he repaid his debt.

In addition, these bills include the names of the creditors in their Polish form for the first time.\textsuperscript{59} According to the handwriting, it was De Gratta who created these particular bills. Such information may also cast some light on Francesco De Gratta’s linguistic abilities as well as his identity, especially while taking into consideration the fact that other contracts signed by Burattini were written in Italian. Lastly, it is important to stress the fact that the list of debts and credits of 1676 also contains the figures of the unpaid loans taken out by the mint masters. One can also find issues connected to the repayment of these loans in Richter’s correspondence to Wodzicki as well as in the records of Gdańsk City Court (\textit{ława miejska}) that are to be discussed on the following pages.


\textsuperscript{59} ASL, AS, 121, p. 51: ‘Ich Msci Panowie Interessanci Minnic Litewskiey’ Pan Burattini, A. M. Bandinelli, Bianchi, Jan Ciniaiki, Bartlomiey Cinaki […] Zgodnie stala z Ich Wsciami 10 November 1670 a Warszawie y obliguja sie splacic to jest 3 July 1671 […] zostawili, ktory dotad nie […] Bianki, A. M. Bandinelli, J. Cinaki, B. Cinacchi; Anno 1672 Bianki, A. M. Bandinelli, J. Cinaki, B. Cinaki; Contrapemitur Rffectu Imci Pana Biankiego 1670 19 Noember przez Pana Laugingera; 1671 9 July przez tegoż […] 1672 17 September przez P. Laugingera’.
The Repayment Issues

In the letter dated 9 January 1678, Richter reported to Wodzicki about the situation around the repayment of the loans as well as the situation concerning the monetary system in Poland-Lithuania. He stated there that he was in possession of the bond of King John II Casimir Vasa of 100,000 fl (most likely, it is the same bond that also covered the cost of tapestries, which will be analysed in Chapter 8). Richter also mentioned that besides this bond, he kept several pledges of the former Polish King that were of a great value and noted that ‘if they will be sold, the problem will be gone’. Later, he mentioned that Mrs Burattini had promised to transfer 11,000 fl and wrote about Mr Bandinelli having to repurchase the silver that he kept for him. It is highly likely that all of the above mentioned actors connected to the monetary and trade activities had belongings held by De Gratta as security for loans.

In his letter, Richter also wrote about the intercession of the Vice-Chancellor of the Crown (podkanclerz koronny) to the Gdańsk City Council. The Vice-Chancellor appears here as the intercessor, and it can be stated that Mr Burattini, Bandinelli and Cinacchi asked for his help to delay the eventual repayment. The Vice-Chancellor turned to the Gdańsk magistrate due to his function of serving in the Commonwealth. Presumably, he did not want to discuss this either with Richter or Wodzicki any longer (it might be presumed that he did it earlier) and had seen the Gdańsk City Council as a powerful institution that could influence Francesco’s successors. One may recall that Richter remained the Royal Postmaster in Gdańsk at this time and this is why he still had to abide by the City Council’s decisions. Obviously, even if he remained officially under the jurisdiction of the King, he still wished to continue having an amicable relationship with the members of the City Council.

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60 ZNiO, 11574/II, p. 67: Cośię tycze z PP. Mincerzami łacona jest sprawa pierwsza mamy obligatią Krola JMS P. Jana Kazimierza 100/m fl […] potym rozne fanty które takwiele wyniosą, gdyśie poprzedzadzą y niebędzie szkody, Pani Buratinia obiecała przysłąc 11/m fl. y swą skrzynię ze srebrem eliberowac Pan Bandinelli miał takze na S. Jan wykupic, zazywszy Intercessiey Imm Pana Podkanclerza Koronnego do magistratu Gdanskiego aby nam persladował zebsymin nie naglili z Executią. Dzisia dostałem list od Pana Bartłomieja Ciniakiego, który mi piszeze z Immacia Panem Podskarbim WXL zawarł Contract o Minnicę Kowienską imieniem Pana Buratiniego, ytak obaczmy co ci ludzie czynic będą’.

61 It seems that it was the same obligation that also included information about the Potop tapestries kept by De Gratta that is to be discussed in Chapter 8.

62 ZNiO, 11574/II, p. 67: ’potym rozne fanty które takwiele wyniosą, gdyśie poprzedzadzą y niebędzie szkody’.
In 1678, Jan Małachowski replaced Jan Wielopolski as the Vice-Chancellor of the Crown. It might be added that Wielopolski, unlike Małachowski, is not included in the list of debtors and creditors of 1676. This fact rather excludes the hypothesis that the Vice-Chancellor was in De Gratta’s debt and because of that contacted the Gdańsk City Council. Returning to the letter by Richter, one also reads there that he received a letter from Bartolomeo Cinacchi, which informed him about the contract between Cinacchi and the Great Treasurer of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (podskarbi wielki litewski) on the establishment of the mint of Kowno on behalf of Tito Livio Burattini. Richter eventually concluded this part of his letter about the mints by expressing his doubt in the following manner, ‘and so we will see what these people will do.’

Despite the Vice-Chancellor of Crown’s actions, these issues were eventually brought before the Gdańsk City Court (ława miejska). The protocols of this Court, held in the State Archive in Gdańsk, include three documents concerning the repayment of debts incurred by the mint masters. These documents were created on 20 October 1677; however, they were not registered in the Court’s books until 3 March 1678. These agreements are related to repayments by Angelo Maria Bandinelli, Tito Livio Burattini and Giovanni Cinacchi.

Thus, the documents quoted above, together with Richter’s correspondence to Wodzicki, not only show that Burattini had obligations to De Gratta while still having influence in the monetary system of Poland-Lithuania in the late 1670s. As Richter mentioned in his letter, Bartolomeo Cinacchi was granted his privilege to hire the new mint in Lithuania thanks to Burattini, who most likely recommended Cinacchi to the Grand Treasurer. Indeed, both men had already cooperated in the late 1660s when they administered the mint of Wilno and borrowed money together with Bandinelli and Bianchi from De Gratta. These activities reveal that the actors of Italian origin remained active even after the huge financial scandals that had erupted in the 1660s connected with Burattini’s monetary frauds, and consequently, they did not lose their power and influence in the political structures of Poland-

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63 AS, ASL, 123, p. 199.
64 See, for example, Matwijowski, Sejm, p. 108.
65 ZNiO, 11574/II, p. 67: ‘ytak obaczmy co ci ludzie czynic będą’.
66 APG 300,43/79, pp. 160V.-162.
67 APG 300,43/79, pp. 160V.-161.
68 APG 300,43/79, pp. 161–161V.
69 APG 300,43/79, pp. 161V.-162.
Moreover, the Polish Kings still supported them and allowed them to create a kind of a monopoly in the administration of the monetary sector, even if the nobility was against such actions.

Sardi and the Mint of Bydgoszcz

In his letter dated 14 October 1678, Richter again informed Wodzicki about the ongoing issues connected with the mints. Richter had sent a letter to Sardi in which he asked him to confer with the mint masters and instructed him to enquire with them about their further plans. Next, he noted that the mint masters wished to hire a mint during the coming spring (1679) and repay their debts from the income that this new mint would generate. In addition, he remarked that this was still uncertain information and he continued his report with a note about Bandinelli who had asked him not to sell his silver, giving the explanation that it was Montelupi’s property. Thence, this letter reveals that the debtors of Francesco De Gratta wished to lease a mint in order to produce money for the repayment of their debts. This information highlights that the royal monetary system still remained in the hands of actors of foreign origin in the late 1670s and reveals that the mint masters could decide when and where to reopen a mint. Moreover, obtaining the required royal privileges was not a great challenge for the mint masters who guaranteed a steady income to the King.

In Wodzicki’s note to one of Richter’s next letters dated 16 December 1678, one finds additional information about the mint of Kowno. Wodzicki wrote in his note that Burattini (so, not Cinacchi) was to reopen the Lithuanian mint. Burattini cooperated with other actors of Italian origin in order to finance his mint activity and he used his companions’ names to cover his businesses. In the letter dated 26 May 1679 Richter informed Wodzicki that the mint masters planned to start another mint in the spring of 1679 (not the Kowno mint). He stated there that if such a mint were to be used, then

70 See, for example, Tancon, *Lo scienziato*, p. 160ff.
71 ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 126: ‘Do tegosz Imsci P. Sardego pisalem aby zmincarzami chciał serio agere y wyowiedzialśś ultimariam declarationem co myślą czynić, oni proponunt nawiosną minnicę otworzyc, yznieszą płacic debitasua, Leczto ieszcze niepewna, Pan Bandinelli wielce prosi aby Sreber tychnie przedawac Ponnewaz nalezą do PP. Montelupim a nie iemu, o czym szerzey futura Posta’.
the debt of the mint masters could be repaid ‘according to the contract that [the mint masters] created with the now deceased [Francesco De Gratta]’. Later, he added that Burattini had received his privilege to hire a mint of Bydgoszcz; nevertheless, he noted that the ‘promissory note (wexel) was expensive and that is why it would be difficult to [re]open [this mint]’. Furthermore, Richter mentioned that silver was expensive at the time, and expressed his opinion that Burattini skimped on silver.

This letter reveals that the mint of Bydgoszcz was intended to generate money for the repayment of the debts of the mint masters. This fact can be seen as a reason why Bartolomeo Sardi passed down the administration of this particular mint according to the document created on 30 December 1680. This document was signed by Jan Andrzejs Morsztyn, the Great Treasurer of the Crown, and regulated Burattini’s responsibilities towards the heirs of De Gratta. The document also includes a reference to the Diet of 1678 saying that Burattini was acquitted from charges brought in 1666 and would receive a silver mint with all of the profits that the mint generated. Consequently, the contract states that Sardi was the only administrator of this mint, and was nominated by Burattini himself. This text was created in order to instruct the mint masters who probably refused to acknowledge Sardi as the governor of the mint of Bydgoszcz, and at the same time to follow the

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decisions of the Grand Treasurer. Furthermore, it is highly likely that the tactic used by Burattini to place Sardi as his successor was connected to Burattini’s loans by De Gratta. Therefore, the mint was officially handed over to Sardi as the repayment of the debts. Thus, Burattini did not administer this particular mint any longer, but Sardi still paid some part of his profits to Mrs Burattini after Tito Livio’s death. Here, one may ask why Sardi, the husband to Francesco’s daughter, took over the governance of the mint of Bydgoszcz. Did the sons of Francesco possess legal rights to it as well?

It is highly likely that Sardi, who remained one of the closest business companions to Francesco, was partially involved in Francesco’s mint activity as early as the mid-1660s. This is why he could be seen by De Gratta as a competent person who knew how to operate the mint system. Moreover, Sardi became the Postmaster General of Poland-Lithuania in 1673, presumably, thanks to the recommendations by both De Gratta and Bandinelli. Remarkably, the same persons were engaged in the monetary and the postal systems of Poland-Lithuania and undoubtedly, they supported each other’s businesses. In addition, in Burattini’s eyes the mint of Bydgoszcz was an unprofitable business, and because of that he resigned from this particular mint and returned it to Sardi. Finally, even if it is hard to believe that such an activity was not a profitable one, one should bear in mind that the mint masters had great difficulty repaying their debts to De Gratta.

To conclude this part, Sardi’s contract reveals the issues that appeared concerning the reopening of the mint of Bydgoszcz. Moreover, this contract together with the other archival sources that have been analysed hitherto demonstrate that the mint masters moved from the Crown of Poland to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Royal Prussia in the 1660s and 1670s. This of course may also be connected to the sociopolitical situation of these regions where the influences of the noble families were not as strong as those of the Crown. The process was characterised by the gradual replacement of Burattini by Francesco De Gratta through Francesco’s financial actions. In other words, Francesco did not reveal his involvement in the mint system and did not lease a mint himself and because of that, could avoid the risk of losing his reputation, as it had happened in Burattini’s case.

77 See the document by Sardi covering the time period from 1 December 1680 to 1 March 1682, ASL, AS, 121, p. 67.
78 In his letter dated 3 November 1679, Richter informed Wodzicki that the Mint masters had not repaid their loans and noted that their debts were the greatest among all those outstanding; ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 231: ‘Minniczni […] nieoddają, gdzie naywiększa częśc Substantiey tkwi’.
Financing Social Status

Several sources that inform about Francesco De Gratta’s credit activities contain the information that Francesco De Gratta loaned his money for various purposes and to various persons of different occupations and origin. These loans were connected to the loans to the mint masters in their monetary activity. The debts chalked up by them were not repaid in time and a similar situation appeared in relation to these other creditors. To make it clear, only the debts of a number of individuals will be analysed here, while the tapestries, the residential house in Gdańsk and the Italian legacies of Giovanni Antonio will be discussed in the last empirical chapter. In the register of the creditors created after Francesco De Gratta’s death, there are a large number of actors. Francesco was probably aware of the difficulties that could appear with the repayments of loans or the selling of his estates. Thence, his financial activity should be seen as an ongoing process as well as a way of expanding his social network and improving his social status.

Royal Prussia

In the State Archive in Toruń one finds archival sources that are connected to the finances of the Commonwealth and which include information about Francesco De Gratta. Particular attention will be given to two of these documents.

The first one is a contract dated July 1659 and created by Jakub Oktawian Konopacki, the Treasurer of Royal Prussia.79 The document mentions the citizens of Puck, which was one of the Prussian cities, and the payment of the excise ‘for the needs of the Commonwealth and the Prussian province’.80 This source includes information that De Gratta had already paid 1,000 Polish zł for this purpose.81 Taking into account that the entire agreement amounted to 3,000 Polish zł, one can argue that De Gratta presumably paid this amount

80 APTor, ASczan 21, p. 65.
81 APTor, ASczan 21, p. 65.
of money in advance and wished to receive his money back. In the list of the debts and credits created in 1676, although this particular amount was not recorded, one finds the debts of such cities as Gdańsk and Elbląg. This suggests that De Gratta also financially supported Prussian cities in their different needs as can be observed by the example of Puck.

The second document presented here is the excerpt from the registry created at the session of the Prussian Diet (sejmik pruski) on 1 September 1661 in Malbork. The document included the information that the Treasurer of Royal Prussia paid De Gratta the expenses determined in 1660 on behalf of the King. Later, the document listed particular amounts of money, but without any detailed information about the kind of expenses. Nonetheless, besides the Prussian Treasury, the cities of Toruń and Gdańsk also were included and obliged to repay their expenses to De Gratta. Principally, this document consists of two aspects that describe his role. Firstly, De Gratta supported the expenses of the Prussian Diet and its obligations towards the Crown. Secondly, he was a representative of the King at the local parliament in Malbork, and was also acting as the King’s plenipotentiary and creditor. Similarly, the previous archival source also informs about the Prussian cities. As both documents were created somewhere around 1660, one can conclude that Francesco De Gratta wished to establish himself in the local Prussian environment in order to cultivate his connections with the Prussian cities. Undoubtedly, through his loans, he was seen as a helpful actor that could provide finance for the Prussian cities, but could also be a link between them and the King. Remembering the fact that De Gratta then became the Head Postmaster for the Royal Mail in the city, his financing actions towards the Prussian cities can be understood as widening his status and influence in the region. To put it another way, these two sources can be seen as part of a network-building strategy on the local Gdańsk and Prussian level that was based on financial dependence.

82 ASL, AS, 123, p. 201.
83 APTor, ASczan 441, pp. 49–52: ‘Regestr Rachunkow Skarbowych Na Seymiku, dnia 1 September 1661, Malbork’; An extract of this excerpt can be also found in the State Archive in Lucca, ASL, AS, 121, pp. 1–4.
84 APTor, ASczan 441, pp. 54–57: ‘Rachunek Podatkow [...] in Anno 1660 uchwalonych’; p. 57: ‘Expensa Im P. Gracie na Króla JM, Skarb wyliczył [...] Temusz IM PP. Torunczanie [...] 11000, Item [...] 11014,,14,,15 […] Temusz Jm PP. Gdanszczanie – 32000’.
The Royal Family

According to the document that was analysed above, Francesco remained a representative of the King in Royal Prussia. The function of postmaster together with the function as a member of the postal commission created in 1661 had already characterised Francesco De Gratta’s status as the King’s official representative in the city. Moreover, all of the Kings that Francesco De Gratta served as Royal Secretary are included in the list of debts and credits created in 1676. This list includes: John II Casimir (debt), Michael I (loan) and John III Sobieski (debt).\(^85\) It can thus be suggested that Francesco had acted in a similar way towards these Polish Kings as he did towards the Prussian cities. Keeping this in mind, on the one hand the Polish monarchs became the ‘patrons and benefactors’\(^86\) of De Gratta, but on the other hand De Gratta regulated their finances.

One may find an example of Francesco’s financial strategy in the letters from King John III Sobieski to his wife, Marie Casimire d’Arquien. In his letter to Marie Casimire dated 30 May 1668, Sobieski (then a hetman – commander of the Polish army, \textit{hetman wielki koronny}; Sobieski was crowned as Polish King in 1676) discussed among other things their financial situation.\(^87\) During the absence of Sobieski, Marie Casimire who lived in their residence in Żółkiew\(^88\), wanted her husband to organise economic resources to meet her expenses, and so he informed her about persons that he talked to concerning their financial matters.

He explained to her that the promissory note (\textit{wexel}) was expensive and named Messrs Formonts who actually ran a banking service in Gdańsk as ‘great impostors and extortionists’.\(^89\) He said that Mr Referendarz (probably \textit{referendarz wielki koronny}) had informed him that in Lübeck the loan rate was only three per 100 (probably Polish zł); however, he did not note which rates Messrs Formonts used.\(^90\) In addition, Sobieski noted that Mr Chełmski (probably Marcyjan Ścibór Chełmski, Steward of Sandomierz – \textit{podstoli

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\(^{85}\) ASL, AS, 123, p. 198, 200–201.
\(^{86}\) A statement used by Giovanni Antonio about the King Władysław IV Vasa; FZATTR, Postakten 1239, A letter by Giovanni Antonio De Gratta to Giovanni Abondio Somigliano, 29 May 1648.
\(^{88}\) See \textit{Biblioteka Ordynacji}, p. 181.
\(^{89}\) \textit{Biblioteka Ordynacji}, p. 182; About the Formont family and their banking activity, see, for example, Staszewski, \textit{W zasięgu}, p. 90.
\(^{90}\) \textit{Biblioteka Ordynacji}, p. 182.
sandomierski, who was one of a commanders of the Polish army)\textsuperscript{91} even earned some money when he conducted such transactions.\textsuperscript{92} After that he admitted that he had no knowledge or experience of how to deal with such transactions and said that even during their stay abroad, their inspector managed their finances.\textsuperscript{93} This is why he entrusted his financial transactions to De Gratta and Burattini, who in his eyes ‘will do [the entire transactions] nicely’.\textsuperscript{94} Such information about De Gratta and Burattini also appears in one of Sobieski’s earlier letters to Marie Casimire dated 6 May 1668.\textsuperscript{95} Sobieski noticed that Mr Burattini borrowed the money from De Gratta.\textsuperscript{96} Essentially, these letters indicate the ongoing financial help by De Gratta. Once again, Sobieski was not a king at this time, but De Gratta must have seen in Sobieski an important actor who could strengthen his position as a creditor in Gdańsk. Indeed, Sobieski criticized Messrs Formonts and sought out both De Gratta and Burattini, by whom he probably got in touch with De Gratta, an alternative creditor, who could loan money or conduct financial transactions both in the country as well as aboard. In addition, one might observe that Sobieski turned to De Gratta and Burattini when he had financial problems. This is evidence that he did not hesitate to contact Burattini even though he had been accused of embezzlement.

**Nobility**

While reading the list of debts and credits from 1676, presented in a more detail in Chapter 8, one will find several names of the top noble families as well as the churchmen. An intriguing picture of networking appears when one tries to search for the functions of the named persons in the list and seeks to reconstruct the existing ties between these persons and De Gratta. For instance, in the State Archive in Toruń, one may find a document by Jerzy Karol Konopacki, a Prussian noble who borrowed 2,000 Polish zł in \textit{moneta bona} from De Gratta for his wedding on 28 September 1671, and promised to repay his debts after the wedding.\textsuperscript{97} Konopacki was the son of Jakub Oktawian and Sophia Heidenstein.\textsuperscript{98} One also finds that Elizabeth

\textsuperscript{91} Pietrzak, \textit{Z dziejów}, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{92} Biblioteka Ordynacji, p. 182.
\textsuperscript{93} Biblioteka Ordynacji, p. 182.
\textsuperscript{94} Biblioteka Ordynacji, p. 182.
\textsuperscript{95} Biblioteka Ordynacji, p. 177.
\textsuperscript{96} Biblioteka Ordynacji, p. 177.
\textsuperscript{97} APTor, ASczan 17, p. 3; Nowosad, \textit{Konopaccy}, p. 196.
\textsuperscript{98} Nowosad, \textit{Konopaccy}, p. 192.
Heidenstein’s (a sister to Sophia) debt had been also included in the list of 1676. In addition, Elizabeth Heidenstein was an abbess at the Żukowo convent, the very one where the daughter of Francesco De Gratta, Elisabetta took her vows. Furthermore, the father of Jerzy Karol, Jakub Oktawian was the same person who created the document about the citizens of Puck discussed some pages ago. Thus, one may conclude that De Gratta was familiar with the entire family of Konopaccy and served as a creditor to a number of members of this particular family. Moreover, the fact that the same amount of money that Jerzy Jakub borrowed from De Gratta for his wedding was noted in the list from 1676 suggests that De Gratta treated this loan as a social networking action rather than as a source of potential financial profit, especially when one takes into consideration the way in which the contract was formulated.

Even though Konopacki obliged himself to repay his debt as soon as possible – ‘immediately after the wedding or even sooner’ – as he had acknowledged in the contract, he did not keep his promise. One may note that this contract does not include any information concerning the consequences if he did not repay his loan on time. Nevertheless, Francesco De Gratta did not use this strategy in all of his businesses and sometimes required a form of pledge if the debt was not repaid.

Therefore, the contract with Adam Szymoszek Lytinski dated 10 July 1670 included just such a pledge. One may read there that De Gratta paid 3,000 Polish zł of the debt of Lytinski to Messrs Formonts. Lytinski promised to repay this amount of money to De Gratta by the 1 January 1671 – if not, he undertook to give De Gratta his estates of Leśna and Lendów. The fact that the villages of Leśna and Lendów were located in Kashubia strengthens the hypothesis that Francesco De Gratta was also interested in local estates. The list of 1676 does not contain any information about these estates or Lytinski. This fact confirms that Lytinski repaid his debt to De Gratta on time. Therefore, this transaction can be observed as a profitable action. As one may note from the Sobieski example, the promissory note was a kind of toll that was commonly used in the banking system of that time. The second contract should be considered in the same manner as the first, which included a note about a pledge. By such a procedure, one might observe that De Gratta,

101 APT, ASzN, 17, p. 3: ‘zaraz poWeselu albopredze’. 
102 ASL, AS, 123, p. 3.
103 ASL, AS, 123, p. 3.
similarly to Sobieski’s case, was seen as an alternative financing channel to Messrs Formonts.

To sum up, these two examples, the loan by Konopacki and this by Lytinski, show different loan strategies. While the first contract indicates a close relationship between the creditor and the debtor, expressed in the mutual trust (no information about the pledge in the document), the second example demonstrates a certain level of suspicion by De Gratta who chose to include a pledge in the contract. Altogether, the second strategy appears to have been more successful when it comes to economic profit. It most likely resulted in the repayment of the debt on time. The second strategy emerged as a social action and served to build up a social network with the family of Konopaccy, with whom De Gratta had once conducted his other representative activity.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter aimed to show the role of Francesco De Gratta in the monetary system of Poland-Lithuania as well as to discuss Francesco De Gratta’s activity as a creditor who loaned his money to a number of actors that were in turn responsible for the Crown’s financial and political development. One could also observe here how the financial system functioned as well as how strong the Italian influence was in the establishing and development of new mints in the Commonwealth. However, how is it possible to explain the link between the function of the Royal Secretary/representative and financial activities by the example of Francesco De Gratta’s actions?

One may find the same persons that De Gratta lent money to in other situations where he represented the King or the Rzeczpospolita. Taking into consideration the opinion of Caspar Richter which will be discussed in the last empirical chapter of this thesis, Francesco De Gratta was a servant to Poland-Lithuania. As presented in the chapter, he lent money to kings, nobles as well as to actors of foreign origin (mostly Italians). In such a way, Francesco built his career and social status not only in Gdańsk and Royal Prussia, but also in Poland-Lithuania. This can especially be seen when one combines his financial activities with his other occupations as the postmaster or trader. Furthermore, the list of creditors and debtors of 1676, together with other sources researched in this chapter confirm that Francesco entrenched his position in these environments partially by his creditor actions. Such actions were nothing more than ways to form interdependence links that
obliged both parties to cooperate. To put it another way, Francesco undoubtedly gained acceptance from the city’s officials by his investments in the city’s finances and his involvement in Gdańsk’s financial duties towards the King. This clearly illustrates the link between his function as the Royal Secretary that represented the Polish monarch in Gdańsk and his credit activities. Considering De Gratta’s social status, his creditor actions can be seen as tactics directed towards his social advancement as well as the establishment of a business network – consisting mainly of Polish nobles and monarchs – and, in addition, they finally confirm his effort to root his family in the Polish-Lithuanian milieu. In other words, he only financed influential persons, who undoubtedly became part of his and his children’s network of contacts.

Finally, the example of funding the mints by De Gratta disclosed the mechanism of the function of the mint system in Poland-Lithuania. Once again, the network of actors of Italian origin appear here as crucial for the understanding of how the monetary system functioned in the Commonwealth. The actors of Italian origin had control over the monetary system, including its administration, maintenance as well as subsidies. They also widened their interests to include the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the late seventeenth century. Therefore, De Gratta’s actions that were concentrated on the financing of the mint system in the Commonwealth should be considered elaborate steps in his career, but rather in terms of social and political development. Considering economic profits, they were rather auspicious. What is especially worth noticing here is that he did not strive to take over a mint himself. His function was solely to lend money for mint activities, which were undertaken by others. By acting in this way, he did not take the risk of losing his good name. As one can also observe, Francesco’s financial tactic resulted in the passing of rights to some of Burattini’s mints as recompense for debts taken over by Burattini. This strategy also showed that De Gratta was only a ‘node’ in his network, giving the ‘star’ role to Burattini. Broadly speaking, a large number of foreign and Polish-Lithuanian nobles/merchants as well as the Polish monarchs and the Prussian cities became dependent on De Gratta’s funds to the same extent as De Gratta was dependent on the official privileges that he received from the Kings, the trader transactions that he developed with a range of nobles and merchants, and the special dispensations he required from Gdańsk City Council in order to establish and develop his trade in the city.
The present chapter examines Francesco De Gratta’s business contacts with Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki, with a special emphasis on their potash trade between 1668 and 1674. Here, the time span depends on the number of letters and contracts that are preserved at Wodzicki’s archive in the Ossolineum Library in Wrocław. The quantity of sources increases for the years 1669–1671, which was the time when Francesco became involved in Jan Wawrzyniec’s potash trade. Nevertheless, there will be more than only letters of Francesco De Gratta that will be examined in this chapter. The correspondence of Johann Friedrich Becker, Jan Kosiński, Adam Kotowski and Stanisław Kienierski to Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki will also be included, because they add specific facts about De Gratta’s and Wodzicki’s trade. While Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec are central actors (‘stars’) in the network that resulted from their potash trade, Becker, Kosiński, Kotowski and Kienierski among others are perceived as contact persons (‘nodes’) used by De Gratta and Wodzicki to achieve a variety of purposes.

This investigation of De Gratta and Wodzicki’s potash trade will focus on the search for the personal actions and networking strategies of Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec as well as other persons (their assistants or protectors) who were engaged in their businesses. Thus, the present chapter will examine the ways in which Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec interacted with one another as well as how they decided in which direction to move when developing their trade. This is why, not surprisingly, the major objective of this study is to examine respectively Francesco’s and Jan Wawrzyniec’s roles in their networking. Therefore, this study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What function did Francesco serve in the potash trade?
2. How did he interact with his business companion (-s)?
3. How did he use his other royal functions to develop his potash trade?

The list of Francesco’s credits and debts that Caspar Richter created in 1676 will also be analysed here in addition to Francesco’s correspondence. It will be used especially with reference to the outcomes of De Gratta and Wodzicki’s potash business. The letters between De Gratta and Wodzicki reveal the fact that Jan Wawrzyniec was Francesco’s major trade partner at least from the mid-1660s until the mid-1670s. This is why Francesco’s correspondence can help us to follow his businesses with Jan Wawrzyniec, whereas the list of his debts and credits can be used to discover the social structures of De Gratta’s financial transactions.

Keeping in mind how important legal restrictions were observed by Gdańsk City Council, it seems to be relevant to begin this chapter with an examination of Francesco’s rights to pursue his trade with Jan Wawrzyniec and royal court. Francesco received his Gdańsk citizenship in 1649. In the same year, he obtained also his factoratus title in order to sell royal goods. This is why the conceptual terms as factor and Polish trade as well as the description of the main goods that Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec exported will be presented first. Secondly, the subsequent steps of the development of The De Gratta-Wodzicki business will be analysed. This part will be divided chronologically into three sections focusing on: Francesco’s function as a factor to Jan Wawrzyniec, their common businesses, and the development of their company including the establishment of the new transportation routes. At the end of this chapter, there will be a discussion of Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec’s involvement in their potash company.

Factor

Factoratus from the King [John II Casimir Vasa] de anno 1649.¹

A royal privilege that provided Francesco De Gratta with a title of factor was recorded in a list of privileges that set out his rights to the Gdańsk postal service.² The list entitled (in short) ‘The Privileges of Francesco De Gratta and

¹ ASL, AS, 121, p. 707: ‘Factoratus od tegosz Krola Imci de anno 1649’.
² ASL, AS, 121, p. 707.
His Successors, who inherited the mail service\(^3\) was prepared at the special request of Francesco’s sons, Paolo and Alessandro in order to retrieve the original documents that determined their rights to the postal service. These documents, which once belonged to their father, remained in the possession of Caspar Richter after Francesco’s death. The list was prepared in 1693, just one year before Caspar Richter’s death. Richter obviously kept his position as Gdańsk Postmaster and of course, he had in his possession Francesco’s documents up until his death in 1694, when, Richter’s postal function passed down to Paolo and Alessandro. This succession seems even more probable when we consider the fact that Alessandro had already been appointed to his post as Gdańsk Postmaster in 1693. It was Richter who created the list of debts and credits after Francesco’s death in 1676. He also possessed official documents that regulated Francesco’s office, which shows that Richter could actually control Francesco’s sons’ future. To conclude, royal privileges, including the *factoratus*, were significant for Paolo and Alessandro as they confirmed their rights to the Polish royal trade as well as to the Gdańsk postal service. Moreover, one can see that Francesco’s *factoratus* was strongly connected to his postal function. Lastly, the fact that he possessed the royal factor’s title made De Gratta a more trustfull trade agent in Wodzicki’s eyes.

What did it actually mean for Francesco De Gratta to operate as a factor?

Tielhof in her work on the Amsterdam grain trade, employed Bogucka’s definition of *factors*, which was ‘agents carrying out orders for a number of merchants and partnerships at the same time’\(^4\). Moreover, according to her, they ‘had to follow the orders of their principals in buying and selling and received a salary, which was often a percentage of the turnover, for their pains’\(^5\). She continued her definition by describing the importance of familial social actions, as follows: ‘kinship and family ties between factors and principals were ubiquitous […] it was a traditional way to create trust between the partners’\(^6\). Such a definition has two major aspects that regulated factors in their profession. The first aspect considered multiple activities of a factor who was obliged to buy and sell goods on behalf of his principal, whereas the second aspect was connected to the trust between factor and

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\(^4\) Tielhof, *The ’Mother of all Trades’*, p. 168.

\(^5\) Tielhof, *The ’Mother of all Trades’*, p. 168.

\(^6\) Tielhof, *The ’Mother of all Trades’*, p. 167.
principal, which was often formally cemented through familial bonds. Bearing this description of the principal-factor relationship in mind, the fact that Francesco married off his oldest daughter Anna Maria to Jan Wawrzyniec was undoubtedly, a part of his business strategy. As will be seen later, this marriage even changed their factor-principal relationship by including Francesco in Jan Wawrzyniec’s potash trade company as its co-owner. Therefore, this particular event will be treated as a decisive moment that confirmed their economic affairs. Furthermore, Francesco played a similar factor/creditor role in the trade of other merchants located all over Europe as he did towards the Polish monarchs. To give just one example, he sent grain to Italy, which was described in his correspondence to Jan Wawrzyniec.7 Pietro De Neri and presumably his father, Giovanni Antonio were also involved in such activity, and it is fair to assume that Francesco continued occasionally providing the Italian states (here presumably the Duchy of Tuscany) with grain. One may remember that this route was long and required many resources and therefore, such activity should not be overestimated here.8 However, his trade activities with the Netherlands obviously not only made him a factor for Wodzicki but also allowed him to penetrate the Dutch grain markets. Moreover, De Gratta’s economic relationship with Wodzicki was not a linear and constant action. De Gratta’s role in their relationship changed over time due to several factors. For example, such a change can be observed following the marriage of Anna Maria to Jan Wawrzyniec.

Francesco did not operate as a factor to several other merchants at the same time as he pursued his businesses contacts with Wodzicki. Even if his involvement in intermediation in several trades around Europe can be easily detected, his role was not necessarily to become a factor but a creditor, as the previous chapter showed. Thus, the title of factoratus should be considered as providing special permission that enabled him to pursue his own long-term trading activities in Europe, rather than ‘just’ having a representative function of the King/other merchants in the city. In this context, Francesco’s role did not limit him to being only Jan Wawrzyniec’s trade agent, but revealed his own trade activity. Here, the questions about their roles and responsibilities in their business relationships become clearer. Who played the active or passive roles in their business relationship? Who of the two men took the highest risk if their trade was unsuccessful?

8 Tygielski, Włosi, p. 135, 308.
The answers to these questions will be discussed in detail and in context through the use of Francesco’s correspondence later, but even now, keeping in mind the analysis of their negotiations concerning the marriage of Anna Maria from Chapter 3, it can be stated that their attitudes were variable and changed under the force of external influences. Both De Gratta and Wodzicki seemed to modify their approach to pursue their common business for various reasons, for example, depending on where they lived or the persons they knew and consulted in regard to emerging issues.

Polish Trade and Potash

Gdańsk remained the main harbour of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and controlled all of the trade that reached the delta of the Vistula River. Because of this, it was of the greatest importance to have a contact person there, especially for someone who pursued Baltic trade. This is why Francesco’s factor function as well as rooting his postal activities in Gdańsk allowed him to develop his Polish trade. Moreover, he had a well-established web of contacts in the western part of Europe at his disposal. This fact can be certainly considered as a potential advantage, which helped him improve his position in these milieus as well as being encouraging for Wodzicki. Moreover, one may conclude that on the one hand Polish nobles were totally dependent on their trade agents that were often assembled in trade companies, and on the other hand, new Gdańsk merchants such as Francesco, were principally interested in entering into Polish trade.

In fact, Polish trade is generally understood in this chapter to mean the export of goods produced in the greater territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which in turn can be described as a hinterland for the busy harbour of Gdańsk. Polish trade depended mostly on the export and sale of grain, which remained the most demanded Polish commodity in Europe throughout early modern times. However, besides grain – as presented in Chapter 2 – forest products: potash (Pol. Potasz, Ger. Potasche) and weed-ash (Pol. Szmelcuga) that were produced in the eastern part of Europe, also had a special place in European trade. Because of the fact that the forest areas in Poland-Lithuania had been extirpated in the seventeenth century,

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9 One of these contacts was his nephew, Francesco Mollo, along with Voet in Amsterdam.
10 According to Philipp Andreas Nemnich’s dictionary, the Polish word ‘Potasz’ means potash and ‘Szmelcuga’ means weed-ash. Nemnich, An Universal European, (Polish – P – potasz, S – szmelcuga) [NB! no page numbers].
Wallachia and Moldova became the main new places where potash was produced.\(^{11}\)

In the second half of the seventeenth century, both Wallachia and Moldova remained semi-independent tribute autonomies under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire. These territories quickly became the leading ones in potash production in Europe due to the establishment of the new trade routes that linked the territories with the rest of the continent. As will be seen later, several trade companies established their factories there somewhere around 1660, which was only a few years before Jan Wawrzyniec started his company with Francesco. Because of the high number of potash trade companies, there was huge competition when it came to potash production. Moreover, the fact that the great majority of the companies transported or sold their goods at the same place – in the harbour of Gdańsk – made the situation even more demanding. Thus, a reliable contact person that possessed a large network of contacts in the western part of Europe was especially needed if one wished to make one’s potash trade profitable abroad.

Potash

Today, potash (potassium chloride) is used as mineral fertilizer to enrich the soil for faster growth of plants, and is ‘mined from the earth’.\(^{12}\) According to a nineteenth century work on agricultural chemistry, potash was produced by burning trees and as its name indicates, ashes were mixed and later heated in iron pots with water.\(^{13}\) The production of weed-ash differed from the making of potash since weeds were used instead of wood.\(^{14}\) However as Francesco informed Jan Wawrzyniec in one of his letters, potash was used in soap-making\(^{15}\) and weed-ash as Cernovodeanu informs ‘in bleaching linen and as raw material in glass-making’.\(^{16}\) This made the weed-ash definitely

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\(^{11}\) According to J. Köstner who claimed the extirpation of forests in Poland-Lithuania was one of the biggest issues besides war in the Ukrainian lands of Poland-Lithuania and the development of competing markets in Moscow and Riga that influenced the decrease of the potash trade in Gdańsk, see Bogucka, *Handel*, p. 41 (note 61).

\(^{12}\) *The Fertilizer Encyclopaedia*, p. 518.

\(^{13}\) Johnston, *Lectures*, p. 274.

\(^{14}\) *The dictionary of merchandise*, p. 365.


\(^{16}\) Cernovodeanu, *England’s trade*, p. 74.
cheaper. In the book on England’s trade policy in the Levant by Cernovodeanu\textsuperscript{17} one can read that Wallachian and Moldavian forests were especially rich in high-quality trees.\textsuperscript{18} This is the reason why these regions became central to the European potash trade. The political situation in this part of Europe was unstable. The invasions of the Turks and Tatars who continuously threatened the Commonwealth’s Ukrainian territories led eventually to war between Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire. This conflict ended with the victory of Sobieski in the battle at Khotyn in 1673, but it did not bring stability (an actual state of war remained until 1699).\textsuperscript{19} Besides the Wallachian and Moldavian territories, the Ukrainian lands of Poland-Lithuania became crucial to the potash trade, because this was the first leg of the transportation route for the goods. However, it seems that the risk of this perilous trade had been taken into account by the potash trade companies in their own transportation strategies. As will be seen later, this risky trade even included the establishment of new passage routes.

**Wodzicki’s Factor**

In the list of debts and credits created after Francesco’s death, one can find that Francesco left a high debt because of his potash trade. The amounts of 107,428 (probably fl) and 5,499 (probably fl) that are listed there and ascribed to, respectively: potash in the company with Sir Wodzicki (‘Potasch in Compania z Im Panem Wodzickim’) and Francesco’s own potash account (‘Popielny rachunek własny’), represent one third of all of his debts.\textsuperscript{20} This company (‘Compania’) was established by Francesco De Gratta and Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki in the late 1660s. The above numbers indicate that the potash trade was not profitable. However, if one considers that the biggest trade vessels that were entering Gdańsk harbour at this time were of 150 lasts\textsuperscript{21} and that one last of potash cost according to Francesco De Gratta, 400–500 Polish zł in 1670\textsuperscript{22}, the entire debt registered above corresponds to less than two vessels of 150 lasts. Consequently, one may speculate that such a debt could have been caused by a loss of a vessel or unprofitable transactions. Therefore, even if this business did not give Francesco a profit at the end, it

\textsuperscript{17} Cernovodeanu, *England’s trade*, p. 74.  
\textsuperscript{18} Cernovodeanu, *England’s trade*, p. 70.  
\textsuperscript{19} See, for example, Frost, *After the Deluge*, p. 13.  
\textsuperscript{20} ASL, AS, 123, p. 198.  
\textsuperscript{21} Bogucka, *Handel*, p. 32.  
\textsuperscript{22} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 276.
is still highly likely that this trade was seen as a profitable one when he established his company with Jan Wawrzyniec. Furthermore, the fact that there were many merchants who pursued such trade suggests that a potash company was a lucrative enterprise in those days. Lastly, Francesco’s engagement in the potash trade should be clarified. He first only worked on behalf of Jan Wawrzyniec as his factor and he became involved with his potash company no earlier than in 1668. The following part of the chapter will examine the period of time when Francesco was Jan Wawrzyniec’s factor, with a special focus on the situation of the potash market in the Netherlands, and Becker’s debts.

Wodzicki’s Business

In a letter dated 24 February 1668, Francesco wrote about his doubts concerning Wodzicki’s friend Becker, in the following manner:

When it comes to Sir’s businesses with the known friend it would be better for Sir’s security as well as his [Becker’s] credit, that those goods that he wants [to be] secured [by the] amount of money known for [us], [he] will send to Gdańsk in Sir’s name.23

Undoubtedly, Francesco considered Jan Wawrzyniec’s contact in Wallachia, Johann Friedrich Becker, as an unreliable person. This is why he proposed to Wodzicki that he should sign his commodities with his initials – not his friend’s (Becker’s) – prior to their transportation to Gdańsk. Such advice shows that Francesco did not hesitate to instruct Wodzicki about how he should run his affairs even if he remained only a factor to him. Consequently, the fact that Francesco suggested that Wodzicki sign the goods with his name demonstrates that Becker had huge debts already in 1668 and the goods produced by him could be taken over by his creditors. As already mentioned, Francesco was only a trade agent to Wodzicki, who sold his goods to the western part of Europe at this time. The phrase that Francesco included in his letter: ‘Sir’s businesses’ confirms such a relationship. Thus, Francesco was only a person who administered Wodzicki’s affairs; however, he still instructed him about how he should manage the transport of his goods.

23 ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 232: ‘Così ciecì Interessow WMMMP. z przyjacielem wiadomim zdalobim się tak pro maiory Securitate WMMM Pana Jako ÿ ad Saluandum Creditu iego, nie belo by lepi azebý Portionem tich towarich Chce assecurare Summę wiadomą, na Imien WMMMP. splawicz do Gdanska kazał’.
Francesco wrote his letter to Jan Wawrzyniec while in Warsaw and addressed it to Gdańsk. This indicates that Wodzicki asked Francesco for advice during his stay in this city. In this context, the information given by Francesco that Jan Wawrzyniec should discuss the issues around his potash trade with Mr Döring, probably a Gdańsk merchant, can be understood to represent the sharing of his own contacts during his absence from the city.\textsuperscript{24}

In his next letter, dated 2 March 1668, Francesco said that if he had known that Wodzicki would be staying for such long time in Gdańsk than he would have changed his plans and met him there.\textsuperscript{25} This fact reveals that Wodzicki did not inform Francesco about the length of his stay in Gdańsk. This in turn shows that Wodzicki’s visit was expected, but still considered in Francesco’s eyes as a short, occasional one. As mentioned before, Francesco stayed in Warsaw at that time, where the sessions of the Diet took place. Here again, one can consider the information about the instability of the Diet that Francesco mentioned in his next letter to Wodzicki as showing his ongoing interest in the parliamentary proceedings.\textsuperscript{26} Next, around two months later, Francesco informed Wodzicki about the bad weather conditions that had caused problems for the shipping of his potash through the waterways. Later, he noted that goods Becker had sent to him had arrived in Gdańsk and simultaneously admitted that he had not yet met with Becker’s servant, or with Friedrich Ledel concerning Wodzicki’s matters.\textsuperscript{27} One may recall from Chapter 3 that besides De Gratta, Ledel – a brother-in-law to Becker – was also Wodzicki’s contact person in Gdańsk who pursued the potash trade for him.

In his correspondence, apart from trade issues, Francesco included some information about the current political situation in Europe. The correspondence mostly consists of war news which in turn can be perceived as threats that could have a negative influence on Jan Wawrzyniec’s potash trade. Similar concerns were included in Francesco’s letters about Wodzicki’s grain trade. In his letter dated 4 May 1668, Francesco wrote about Spain, which had signed a peace treaty with France, which influenced the grain prices and caused them to fall them from 80 to 70 (probably fl) per last.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{24} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 232: ‘zostaie negotium, traktowalibim okolo tego z P. Döringem’.
\textsuperscript{25} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 235.
\textsuperscript{26} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 233: ‘Seim się nam bardzo Chwieie’.
\textsuperscript{27} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 239: ‘Tu Sluga P. Bekiera ieszcze się nie widzial zemną ani JM P. Ledel’.
shows that Francesco informed Wodzicki about news that could affect his businesses abroad. One can see this as evidence of Francesco’s informatory assignment that was undoubtedly included in the factor’s duties. In his next letter, dated 11 May 1668, Francesco communicated that ‘the heavens have blessed the shipping of goods (‘Navigatia’) of both Wodzicki and Becker’. So, once again he highlighted that he was not a part of Wodzicki’s business, but only his factor.

Messrs Bassaunts

The truth is that nowadays forest goods have no protection. This was experienced by Messrs Bassaunts who sold with a great loss their consignment of potash in the Netherlands [and] by that they did not repay their credits, but rather they needed to accumulate them.

The above quotation informs about the prices of the forest commodities and the trade deal made by Messrs Bassaunts in the Netherlands. One can conclude from this particular fragment, that Messrs Bassaunts had also pursued the potash trade similarly to Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec, choosing the Dutch market as the main focus of their trade. It is significant that Francesco not only informed his principal about the market situation, but also concluded that ‘forest goods had no protection nowadays’. Such a statement might mean that the trade in forest goods was not a profitable business at this particular moment, but it can also be understood to mean it was so in the past. Later, Francesco stated that he would pay Becker the money needed for potash production on the request of Jan Wawrzyniec’s brother, Maciej. Thus, here one can learn that Francesco kept the profits of Jan Wawrzyniec’s potash business and also fulfilled the orders of Maciej Wodzicki. This in turn shows that Francesco administered the potash trade, including its profits, but also remained dependent on his superiors’ orders. Moreover, the brother of Jan Wawrzyniec appears here for the first time. This may suggest that Jan
Wawrzyniec cooperated with his brother Maciej regarding his trade, especially its financial side. When it comes to the transfer of money to Becker, Francesco added that he had to find a solution to obtain the money first. This in turn shows that Jan Wawrzyniec’s financial condition was not satisfactory and he did not possess any savings that might be disposed of freely by Francesco.

Furthermore, Francesco stated: ‘Sir [Wodzicki] ordered [me] to take the goods from Mr Becker, which are far away from the coast and [Wodzicki] did not give me any reassurances that he [Becker] would take the risks [of transportation]’. In fact, the risks here refer not only to the goods transported from the delta of the Vistula River to Gdańsk harbour, but also to Becker’s creditors. It is highly likely that Jan Wawrzyniec would have preferred not to transport directly to Gdańsk because of other creditors of Becker who could take over these goods as repayment for Becker’s debts. These two somehow contradictory accounts show that both Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec were aware of Becker’s debts and tried to avoid getting into trouble with Becker’s creditors.

**Kiekiebusz**

In Francesco’s next letter, one can read that ‘the goods sent from Mr Becker had arrived at the indicated place’ thanks to Becker’s assistant and Jan Wodzicki’s emblem. So, Wodzicki had followed the advice of De Gratta and marked his goods with his sign. De Gratta’s correspondence later reveals that Kiekiebusz was Becker’s assistant, and was responsible for the transportation of his goods to Gdańsk. His name appears twice in Francesco’s letter. The first time when he reported that Becker via Kiekiebusz ‘refused to repay [them] his debts amounting at 40,000 [probably fl]’ and secondly when Francesco informed Jan Wawrzyniec that ‘Kiekiebusz did not fulfil his commitments in refusing to deliver either the goods or the money’.

This is why Francesco instructed Jan Wawrzyniec that he should meet Becker personally to discuss his debts during his business trip to Sambor\textsuperscript{38}. Sambor, a city located in the Ruthenian Palatinate of Poland-Lithuania, remained one of the main trade centres in this region. Moreover, the potash produced in Wallachia was checked there. While the potash trade route will be discussed in more detail later, Becker’s credits are worth taking a look at now.

Becker’s Debts

In the next part of his letter, Francesco reported that Messrs Bassaunts, together with other creditors wished to assume control over the commodities that were produced by Becker as repayment of his debts\textsuperscript{39}.

\begin{quote}
[Kiekiebusz] should give [the goods] and in this way he could repay [Becker’s] loans [that Wodzicki’s granted to him] as well as rescue his superior’s reputation, I could add later such a repayment to your account; you, Sir, may inform Mr Becker about that […] in the next week, […] he [Becker] should do that being secured by Sir’s [authority]. Kiekiebusz […] avoids meeting with me but I will go to him and meet him at his apartment.\textsuperscript{40}
\end{quote}

According to Francesco, the only solution to recover Becker’s debts was to force him to relinquish the goods instead of the money. Moreover, such goods could not be marked with Becker’s emblem any longer. In this way, they could be treated as Jan Wawrzyniec’s commodities and consequently could easily be sold. It is worth noticing that such a strategy aimed to omit Becker’s other creditors, even if they had used such practices. Nonetheless, this fact shows that Francesco, not Jan Wawrzyniec, somehow had become

\textsuperscript{38} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 259: ‘Jednak Ze mię list WMMMP poczesił de 23 maia pisani z ktürego wirozumiałm szczesliwy prziażd onego do Sambora, Day Boze Dalszego Szczesliwiego progressu samislam WMMMP. ý zebyšz do całego ukontentowania, interesse swoie tak z JM P. Bekierem iako Z innemi complanare mogł’.

\textsuperscript{39} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, pp. 259–260: ‘towarow […] kture przinalezzą JMsP Bekierze znacz isz PP. Bassaneantowie ý Inni Creditorowie przodkuią […] atowarÿ ad Equi-

familiar with the solutions used by Becker’s other creditors. In addition, as the quotation illustrates, Kiekiebusz avoided meeting with Francesco and this is why Francesco decided to visit him personally at his home. This information suggests that Kiekiebusz resided in Gdańsk, but also proves that Becker was insolvent. Nonetheless, it is important here to note that Becker was treated as the only person who conducted the potash trade for Jan Wawrzyniec in Wallachia. Moreover, this quote includes information that Kiekiebusz should, according to Francesco, not only repay Becker’s debts, but also try to recover his principal’s reputation. This in turn indicates that one’s reputation was as valuable as one’s debts.41

Francesco was obliged to follow the requests of Jan Wawrzyniec and Maciej Wodzicki. However, he felt himself free to instruct Jan Wawrzyniec about how he should run his trade. This shows that Francesco’s role as a factor, was not limited only to the administration of Jan Wawrzyniec’s trade. He also offered solutions to sometimes very complicated situations as in the case with Becker’s creditors. Despite the fact that Francesco could not decide by himself which direction Wodzicki’s potash trade would develop, he still could provide counselling that certainly influenced Jan Wawrzyniec’s later decisions. Francesco also served as an informant, bringing the news on the current political and economic situation in Europe to the attention of Wodzicki. However, Francesco’s function changed competely in 1669 when he joined the potash business with Jan Wawrzyniec and invested his financial resources in that.

The De Gratta-Wodzicki Company

In a letter dated 18 March 1670, so somewhere around nine months after his last letter, Francesco wrote:

With regards to our businesses with Mr Becker who on me has created bills amounting to as much as 16000 zł that I accepted and paid [...] I am much afraid that old wounds hurt and he wants to heal them by our poverty [...] It will be a sensation if we get [our money] from him without whipping.42

41 About the reputation and honour, see, for example, Campbell, Monarchy, p. 66.
42 ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 265: ‘in materia naszych interesow z P. Bekierem ktury namie takwiele iako na 16/m złotich widawszy wexlow, ktorem acceptowal y zapłacił [...]
This was the first letter by Francesco to Jan Wawrzyniec after his marriage to Anna Maria. The length of time between this letter and the previous one can be explained by Jan Wawrzyniec’s prolonged stay in Gdańsk. During this time, Francesco became a business partner to Jan Wawrzyniec and joined his company which produced and exported potash. In the above quotation, one can see that Francesco referred to their potash trade as ‘our business’ and said that he had prepaid costs connected with their trade to Becker. Moreover, he complained that he would probably never see the money again. A question arises from Francesco statement: Why did Francesco become a co-owner of Wodzicki’s potash company if he was aware of Becker’s debts?

Undoubtedly, Francesco had seen this particular trade as a promising business and aspired to get into Polish trade. One should remember that he already had experience and knowledge through his dealings with Jan Wawrzyniec’s potash trade. This is why, despite his complaints about Becker, he wished to be part of this business. The exact time De Gratta became involved in Wodzicki’s Wallachian trade is crucial for our understanding of the development of their potash business. Who took the responsibility for respectively: production/ transport/ export and the contacts with the various authorities that their trade required?

The development of Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec’s company was a complex process demanding a well-established network of actors responsible for different steps of potash production and transportation. Moreover, the contacts with the Wallachian Hospodar, Antonie din Popești, or Polish Kings were extremely important for meeting the special requirements of their free trade. Next, the contacts with other merchants, both those in Poland-Lithuania as well as those abroad, were of great importance too, especially when taking the sale of the commodities into consideration. Therefore, the mapping of their networks shows Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec’ roles in their trade.

The Contract

The contract was created on 15 November 1669 in Cracow and includes the stipulation that Becker would give his Buda Hozyneszta as a pledge instead repaying his debts to De Gratta and Wodzicki.43 The term ‘buda’ means here

a hut in the forest that served as an accommodation for a potash master who organised the production of potash.\textsuperscript{44} The contract also stated that \textit{Buda Hozyneszta} was appropriate for the production of both potash and weed-ash and nominated Zygmunt Baar as \textit{Buda}'s administrator.\textsuperscript{45} Besides that, Becker promised to: 1) produce commodities in the \textit{Buda} at his own expense; 2) mark them later with Wodzicki and De Gratta's trademark and finally, 3) transport them to Gdańsk. This had to be continued until Becker's debt was totally paid off.

The list of Francesco's debts and credits includes information that Francesco possessed a potash factory ('Fabryka popielna') in Wallachia that was valued at 73,870,17 (probably fl).\textsuperscript{46} This shows that Becker did not repay his debts and Francesco became the owner of this factory; however, Francesco did not use terms such as: \textit{our} or \textit{my Buda} in his correspondence\textsuperscript{47}. According to the contract, both De Gratta and Wodzicki were responsible for the maintenance of Buda Hozyneszta. However, both of them transferred their common resources to Becker for the production of potash. However, Francesco owned the Buda, but it was he, together with Wodzicki, who financed the entire potash production.

\textbf{English Correspondent}

In a letter dated 18 March 1670, Francesco wrote that he received bills from England but was unable to get any information about what was happening with the potash there, and stated that he 'recommend[ed] this correspondent to sell the potash promptly'.\textsuperscript{48} As one can learn from this fragment, he considered the information that his correspondent sent to him as insufficient. Remarkably, he did not mention his contact's name or city of residence. In addition, he treated him as only \textbf{his} correspondent (not their). By that, Francesco hid the name of his contact from his closest business partner. This in turn can be understood as an element of his trade strategy. They had possibly a mutual agreement about not disclosing their correspondents'

\textsuperscript{44} Demski, Naliboki, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{45} ZNiO, 11579/III, p. 393.
\textsuperscript{46} ASL, AS, 123, p. 200.
\textsuperscript{47} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 266: 'obaczę iako się teras bendzie sprawował ſy iezełÿ do Budÿ Meszdÿ [Hozyneszty?] ſę substantią wetknol co odnas zaszdogł [zasiegl]'.
\textsuperscript{48} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 267: 'ŷ rachunký ſprzitim z Angliey, nie odbieram wiadomoszcz cosię ztamtemy Potaszamý Dzieie [...] Ja [...] tamtemu Corespondentowywy recomanduię abý koniec niemý uczinił'.
identities. On the whole, this tactic showed how important Francesco considered it to keep secret all information about his trade contacts. The next information about this English correspondent that he gave was as follows: ‘something must happen immediately [with the potash in England] otherwise I have to employ another friend’\(^49\). From this it is clear that De Gratta considered changing his agent in England in case the old one did not reply.

**Actual Localization**

In his letter dated 18 March 1670, Francesco stated his hope that Jan Wawrzyniec had already informed Kotowski about his actual place of residence. It was one’s duty was to inform other persons that belonged to one’s trade network about one’s actual address. One of the most important aspects of the trade was to be able to find easily where one’s business partners resided or travelled to. Moreover, the decision-making process was undoubtedly positively affected by updated information about the actual place of residence, especially in a situation where the owners of a particular company resided in different cities. Such a situation applied in The De Gratta-Wodzicki case. Francesco often addressed his letters to Jan Wawrzyniec with information as follows: To ‘Cracow or Zywiec’\(^50\) or ‘to the place where he actually is’\(^51\). Such phrases, on the one hand, indicate the knowledge of a local postmaster about the places of actual residence of his clients, but on the other, show that Wodzicki did not inform his partners, including Francesco, about the places that he visited. According to Lindsay O’Neill, a practice of including a note with one’s address was rather a new trend that appeared in the early modern period.\(^52\)

**Experts**

However, returning to the potash trade, Francesco’s next letter, dated 17 June 1670 reveals that he asked Ledel about the quality of potash:

\(^50\) ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 328.
\(^51\) ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 258.
Becker had sent [potash] to us [De Gratta and Wodzicki] [...] Sir Ledel remains of the same opinion as I am that this potash is not that sort which Becker was obliged to send [to us], this commodity is very paltry.\(^53\)

Later, Francesco admitted that he also asked Balaban\(^54\), a Lwów merchant, ‘to evaluate the quality [of potash] and asked if it could be sold as a good product’\(^55\). Francesco had seen in Ledel and Balaban expertise concerning the verification of potash quality. Moreover, he notified Jan Wawrzyniec that he had communicated again about Becker’s debts with Balaban, and this time also with Nesterowicz\(^56\). Francesco had learned from them that Becker ‘was doing well and that he still created new contracts which had been approved by Sir Hospodar [Lord of Wallachia]\(^57\). In addition, they confirmed that Becker was in debt to several merchants.\(^58\) Furthermore, De Gratta stated that they had to remain in close contact with Wallachian traders who transported their goods through the territories of the Crown of Poland in order to be informed about the situation in Wallachia given by Ledel or Becker himself.\(^59\) Balaban and Nesterowicz were seen as experts when it came to the evaluation of the goods’ quality in Francesco’s eyes. At the same time, they also remained his alternative source of information about Becker and the situation in Wallachia. Furthermore, this was the first time he asked Balaban and Nesterowicz for their help, otherwise, he seemed to rely only on Wodzicki’s experts. As Francesco’s correspondence reveals, Balaban was also in possession of a company that exported potash to the western part of Europe. Here, it is especially interesting that Francesco has been told about the new contracts that Becker had signed with his new contractors, which were in turn approved by the Hospodar of Wallachia. By this one can easily observe that


\(^{54}\) Aleksander Balaban, see Constantin C. Giurescu, A history of the Romanian forest (Bucharest, 1980), p. 139.


\(^{56}\) Probably Jan Nesterowicz, about family Nesterowicz, see Niesiecki, Herbarz, vol. 6, p. 530.


\(^{58}\) ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 271: ‘wiedzync onû o długacz Bekiera W Wołoszech’.

the personal contacts with the local authorities that Becker had were of great importance. Therefore, his contacts with Hospodar allowed him to still establish new businesses even while he remained in debt to several merchants.

When Francesco told Jan Wawrzyniec about the experts who judged the quality of Becker’s goods it was his attempt to convince Wodzicki that Becker aimed to deceive them. Probably, Wodzicki did not trust De Gratta’s opinion. This is why the information that Francesco was not an expert when it came to the evaluation of the quality and value of their potash seems to have been only an excuse. Furthermore, Francesco did not trust Ledel, who was a brother-in-law to Becker, as indicated by the fact that he asked Balaban and Nesterowicz to be his additional experts. Thus, one can state that he preferred to describe the economic problems of their company to his competitors than to be dependent only on somebody belonging to Jan Wawrzyniec’s network.

**Market Information**

In a letter dated 17 June 1670, we can read that Francesco sent Jan Wawrzyniec’s potash to England 60 and that he would inform Wodzicki later about the situation with their potash there. As his letter states, Francesco knew that he would receive news from England, which suggests that he had contact with his correspondent in England on a regular basis.61 Such brief information about the market situation as well as contacts with correspondents, included regularly in his correspondence, shows that Francesco reported to Jan Wawrzyniec about his every step with regard to his potash trade.

**Miserable Situation**

Francesco, in his letter to Jan Wawrzyniec, dated 20 June 1670, wrote as follows:

I will not forbear from asking you, Sir, even by this letter, about your opinion on our miserable situation regarding our potash trade, because [potash] is slightly or nothing better than that which you, Sir, received earlier from Mr Becker, who as I see took the commodity in Wallachia without seeing it, or if he had seen it he did not check it, probably he received [potash] at random, but I have my reasons to state that we are

60 ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 273: ‘Dokand posilam 20 fa[s] [of potash]’.
very disappointed with this bad person and I, a miserable person, do not know what misfortune pushed me into entering [the business] with him.\textsuperscript{62}

Francesco described his position and how he questioned Becker’s loyalty. Consequently, he mentioned the fact that Wodzicki’s commodities that he administered previously were of much better quality than those he got from Becker at that time. Moreover, he complained that their potash trade was an unprofitable business. Bearing in mind that Jan Wawrzyniec proposed to Francesco to join his potash trade, the criticism was addressed directly towards Wodzicki. Even if Francesco did not make his claim ad personam, he gave vent to his irritation and wished that Wodzicki would put more pressure on Becker to send them better products. Hitherto, one could observe that the net of agents, the actual localization of persons belonging to the network, as well as the question of expertise were significant factors in networking. These actions suggest that De Gratta was actively engaged in management of the entire trade, but mostly on the transportation and sale stages.

**Price Negotiations**

In his letter dated 20 June 1670, Francesco revealed how he negotiated the price of potash, as follows:

Mr Chomicki [Kłodnicki?] from Kazimierz did not give any [weed-ash or potash] to you, Sir, just 8 lasts of weed-ash and Mr Ledel will receive the next 10 lasts, but it seems that he will get [the potash] of poorer quality, for these 10 lasts. I wonder if you, Sir, will receive 400 zł per last. Next, for 8 lasts if I manage to sell them then I will receive 500 zł, I have already bargained with the Dutch and Mr Ledel sold his weed-ash for 600 zł per last [...] I am afraid that I will have an inevitable problem with him.

[Becker] regarding the money, but I do not want to complain before he deals with me in this matter.63

First of all, the quotation starts with the information that Chomicki (Kłodnicki?), Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec’s contact person, had not registered any goods that were addressed to Wodzicki. As one can learn from this particular fragment, Chomicki resided in Kazimierz – one of the most significant cities on the map of The De Gratta-Wodzicki trade. Thanks to the city’s location by the Vistula River, Kazimierz became an intermediary point of exchange for their goods. Here, the goods arrived from the territories of Wallachia and Moldova via Jazłowiec and Lublin and began their further raft trip by the Vistula River to their final destination in Gdańsk. This is why Kazimierz became such important city, not only due the fact that the commodities were reloaded there, but also because of the opportunity to check goods there.

The next fragment of the same letter reveals more information about Becker and his debts. Francesco reported to Wodzicki as follows:

I know that this traitor [Becker] says that we have discredited him because we did not give him any resources for his [potash] production in Buda, but he is a wicked person, always inclined to excuses, I have been told in a shop that he has huge debts in Cologne, which are estimated at two or three thousands of lewki [lewki – Dutch thalers, lion thalers] at and in this way, his massive treachery has been now revealed.64

This quotation shows a very significant fact that Becker made an attempt to defend himself. Francesco did not receive a letter from Becker but he learned about Becker’s defence from another person. Becker claimed that De Gratta and Wodzicki ‘did not give him resources for his [potash] production in

63 ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, pp. 275–276: ‘P Chomickÿ z Kazmirza nie oddal dla WM tu ieno Lasztow Osim Szmelcugÿ dla WMMM P. a P Ledel ma dotacz drugie dziesiez lasztow, ale ze daie to cosię iemu nie zindzie toiest znacgorzego gatunku, Zeate dziesiencz lasztow wantpię abisz WM czeristo zlotich zalaszt otrzimał, Zadrugich lasztow oseim iezelÿ iamogę przinamię́ zicz topiensed zlotich doindę takem z Hollenderm stargował bile dotrzimal Słowa, P Ledel miał szmelcuge za kturÿ wziol zl 600 Zalaszt [...] Ja się boię ze besklopotu znimsię nie roznądę qwolý Summę iemu wigodoneÿ oczim nie Chcę pisacz asz sobacze iako się zemną rosprawy’.


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Buda’. One should keep in mind that the contract between Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec on the one side and Jan Fridrich Becker on the other, that was created in 1669, does not include any information about the resources which they should transfer to Becker in order to continue their production of potash there. However, the fact that Becker had complained about the lack of resources might be seen to suggest that he had been promised such help from De Gratta and Wodzicki. Moreover, this quote reveals that Francesco had learned about Becker’s debts in Cologne in one of the local shops. This information in turn again demonstrates that Becker was not a person on which they felt they could rely and that he had not fully informed his business partners about his economic situation.

His Majesty the King

In the subsequent part of his letter, Francesco continued with his advice to Wodzicki with regard to their potash trade as follows:

I did not pour out my grievances to you, Sir, but I please you, Sir, to rescue the business, I understand that His Majesty the King will allow the custody of Wallachian traders’ goods that they will not stop ours [goods], but if the traitor Becker colludes with them, then our poverty will be over.65

As the above quotation reveals, Jan Wawrzyniec had to contact King Michael I in order to arrange the custody of Wallachian trading goods. Wallachian traders colluded against Francesco De Gratta and Wodzicki and wanted to stop De Gratta and Wodzicki’s goods. The next part of Francesco’s letter is rather unclear. It seems that Francesco ordered Jan Wawrzyniec to contact the Polish King, but simultaneously he used the phrase: ‘I understand that His Majesty the King will allow the custody’. So, this may even mean that he considered contacting the King himself, but preferred to ask Jan Wawrzyniec first. Nonetheless, in contrast to Francesco’s previous letters he did not complain about the poor quality of goods here, but said he just wanted to have his goods transported in an easy and safe way. Becker had probably taken loans from several persons who undoubtedly wanted repayment as soon as possible. This is why it was highly likely that the goods that Becker transported to De Gratta could be taken over by other merchants. In such a

65 ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 277: ‘Jasię cale NaWMMP. się spuszczam, proszanc abýsz iak nailepi tamtę szczanę ratował, rozumiem ze KJMsci dozwolý aresztý natowarý obiwatelow wołowskich ingentum by nasze tam Hamowacz mielý, ale iezelý zdraica Bekier z nimý wyrozumie to ubostwo nasze zginelo’.
context, Francesco wished to contact the King in order to obtain a form of lifebelt for his and Wodzicki’s company. In other words, Francesco considered providing his and Jan Wawrzyniec’s company with a safety net in times when Becker’s creditors would have liked to take over their commodities.

Becker – Ledel

In his next letter, dated 27 June 1670, Francesco reported to Wodzicki that Becker ‘has invested bigger financial resources [in the potash production] in the Buda that highly overestimated their [De Gratta and Wodzicki’s] provisions’66. Francesco also said that his complaints included in his previous letter had reached Becker.67 This fact shows that Becker was well-informed about De Gratta’s actions and consequently, that somebody from Francesco’s milieu had to report to Becker about his movements. In addition, Francesco said that he had informed Becker about the poor quality of the potash produced by him.

I wrote to him [Becker] that the potash is thin and of a very poor quality. Balaban had better commodities that he did good business with. I do not want to talk about weed-ash, which Mr Ledel sold for a better price 100 zł per last than we did.68

Francesco emphasised here that both Ledel and Balaban’s goods were of better quality than theirs. On the one hand, it is obvious that Becker sent better products to Ledel, but on the other hand, it still remains unclear who produced potash and weed-ash for Balaban. Next, Francesco gave a description of Ledel. He depicted him as an ‘affected elderly man’ and reported that Ledel was considering ‘to travel to Lwów and even to continue his journey to Wallachia’.69 This last fact shows that Ledel wished to meet with Becker as well as to check

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the production of his goods personally. Furthermore, Francesco said that Becker had a closer relationship with Ledel than them. He was even close to making a decision to abort their business activity with Becker.  


Altogether, De Gratta’s letters show that he was responsible for the sale of the products, including the price negotiations. Besides that, one can learn from the letters that he was well-informed about other merchants’ businesses in general and in particular, that his tasks in the potash trade network were of a disposal and informatory nature.

Dutch and English Potash Markets

When it came to Dutch news, Francesco notified Jan Wawrzyniec as follows:

One trade company in the Netherlands wishes to collect all the weed-ash of a better quality to preserve its reputation and because of that they did not want to take weed-ash of a poorer quality.

Later, Francesco added that ‘as usual the production of this [potash of a poorer quality] is the same as that of the best quality’. This particular information shows that the production of goods of better and poorer quality required the same outlay costs. De Gratta could not sell their potash on the Dutch market. However, he saw the possibility to sell their potash in England and informed Wodzicki about it.

From England I have got not any new letters this week, as in the previous week I got to know that [our correspondent] sold one hundred [lasts?] of potash. I delivered to him the next 20 lasts immediately and wrote to him
that I gave him permission for sale of these goods that he is now in possession of and I will send him new ones from here.73

According to the above information, it can be concluded that it was much easier to sell potash and weed-ash in England than in the Netherlands. Presumably, the potash supply was greater for Dutch merchants than for English ones, but most likely it was about Francesco’s network in these countries. The market situation depended on the efficiency of his respective contacts in Amsterdam and in London. Once again, Francesco did not give any names of his contacts in his correspondence. However, according to the other archival sources preserved in Lucca, it can be assumed that Girolamo Parensi was his contact person in Amsterdam.74 Francesco continued with regular correspondence on economic topics with Girolamo and discussed various issues concerning his trade with him. It seems relevant to add here that his nephew Francesco Mollo, together with his companion Gabriel Voet, became the closest business contacts to Francesco in the Netherlands in the mid-1670s.75 This fact shows that Amsterdam was an extremely important place on Francesco’s trade map, where he even dispatched his nephew. With regard to the English context, Heinrich von Loen (‘Von Loeno’, hic!) can be considered as Francesco’s possible contact there. Only he appears in the list of debts and credits with a note ‘Capital in England’.76 However, the list does not reveal that Francesco traded potash with von Loen, but only informed that he kept De Gratta’s resources. Lastly, the name of an English correspondent does not appear in Caspar Richter’s correspondence to Jan Wawrzyniec after Francesco’s death at all.


74 About Girolamo Parensi and his trade activity in Amsterdam, see Cesari, Mercanti. About his trade contacts with De Gratta, see Cesari, Mercanti, p. 61; There are even copies of letters of De Gratta to Priami preserved in the Lucca Archive. ASL, Archivio Mansi (AM), Epistolario, vol. 405ff.

75 In the list of 1676, one may find two notes about debts of the company Voet-Mollo as well as Francesco Mollo’s own account; ASL, AS, 123, p. 201: ‘Capital u PP Voeta y Mollego [...] 106533 [probably fl] [...] Voet et Mollo Conto Corr:co [...] 1078 [probably fl]’.

76 ASL, AS, 123, p. 201: ‘Capital w Angliey u Von’ Laern [...] 15151 [probably fl]’.
Contacts in Wallachia

If the potash will be not of a better quality than this which was sent [by Becker] hitherto, we would not capitalize it without the risk of loss; I sent a sample [of a good potash] to Jazłowiec that Mr Nesterowicz transported and sold [the potash] to Mr Horn by himself.77

This quotation shows that Francesco agreed with Jan Wawrzyniec’s idea about the continuation of the potash business with Becker. In addition, Francesco emphasised that he agreed ‘as long as the commodity will be good’. Bearing in mind that he had recently considered quitting the business with Becker, his statement means that he did not take any responsibility for the misfortune of their business any longer. Consequently, he said that the continuation of trade with Becker was risky and that he would be unable to make a profit from commodities of poorer quality. It seems that he made Jan Wawrzyniec responsible for a possible fiasco. Moreover, Francesco sent a sample of good potash to Jazłowiec. One can see Francesco’s action as an instruction given to his contact, most probably to Adam Kotowski who resided in this city. Nevertheless, it seems obvious that Kotowski who stayed there, as well as his other contacts in other cities, was aware of the bad quality of goods being sent to De Gratta. This is why sending the potash sample to Jazłowiec was nothing more than Francesco’s attempt to verify the knowledge of his contacts. As already mentioned, Ledel went on a trip to meet Becker to discuss with him face to face issues surrounding his potash trade. So, in contrast to De Gratta, he did not send a representative but went himself to Wallachia.

Likewise, Francesco revealed that Horn had a better relationship with his suppliers than he had with Becker, and stated as follows: ‘Mr Nesterowicz transported and sold [the potash] to Mr Horn by himself’. As may be observed, Nesterowicz was responsible for the transportation of goods to Horn and he followed the goods the entire way until they reached Gdańsk harbour. Thus, Nesterowicz and Horn could conduct their transaction in Gdańsk and avoid any issues connected with the shipping of the goods. De Gratta and Wodzicki’s case was the opposite. Becker, their contact person in Wallachia, did not travel to Gdańsk and in general, avoided personal contact with them. Moreover, in his correspondence to Jan Wawrzyniec, Francesco

77 ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, pp. 287–288: ‘Potasz zasz iezel’y lepsz’y nie bendzie anizel’y to co dotego czasu poslano, bez szkod’y ý utrat’y niezpiecziezimie ie co wiedziec kied’y Posilam do Jaslowca probę tego gatunku coSam P. Nesterowicz sam zawiozl ý przedał P. Hornowy’.
often claimed that he was kept ignorant by Becker and of course, that Becker cheated on the quality of the commodities. This clearly shows that in contrast to De Gratta, both Ledel and Horn used a direct form of contact with their production partners. They preferred to contact them face to face while De Gratta chose only to communicate by letter.

As one can read in the latter part of his letter, Francesco felt that Maciej, brother of Jan Wawrzyniec, should pay more attention to the commodities and wanted Mr Wroblewski to be present in person at the time of packing of goods to prevent any problems. Furthermore, he even added that Maciej should employ additional persons who were familiar with potash production to avoid interference with their commodities. It is important to note that Francesco notified Jan Wawrzyniec that he would be contacting them. This could be treated as evidence to formulate a claim that both Maciej Wodzicki as well as Wroblewski belonged to Jan Wawrzyniec’s trade network and that De Gratta wanted to influence them. A similar situation appears with regard to collecting Jan Wawrzyniec’s profits. Pestalocci appears to have been a representative of Wodzicki in his businesses as he was sent to De Gratta to record Wodzicki’s incomes. This fact also suggests that Wodzicki did not trust his business companion – to such an extent that he refused to leave the administration of his capital solely to De Gratta.

Transportation Routes

In his letter dated 27 June 1670, Francesco mentioned that he had ordered that his forest commodities should be shipped via Smyrna harbour (today Izmir, Turkey). Smyrna, a city located on the western coast of the Anatolian peninsula, was one of the most important harbours in the Ottoman Empire. This is why the city became attractive to merchants who were economically active in the Commonwealth, and who traded potash and weed-ash produced in Wallachia.

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79 ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 288: ‘dotego ludzÿ znaiacychsię natowarach tich mogł regulare te astrzec się oszukanini lecz tuszę ysz wsztice towar wirobieni nasiemi pieniandzmi, nie bendzie falszowanÿ’.
Separate Accounts

In the same letter, Francesco said that he was worried about his forest goods because of Becker’s bad reputation in Amsterdam. This information reveals that Becker also had debts in the Netherlands and because of that he was afraid that his goods would be confiscated by Becker’s creditors. Next, Francesco informed Jan Wawrzyniec that their own ‘accounts were always separate since this common [potash] business in Buda’\(^{81}\). He continued his argumentation as follows: ‘you, Sir, must be reminded that I suggested to you, Sir, to collect the goods that belonged to you, Sir, in Kazimierz not in Sosnice. You, Sir, should not think that I may be unfair’\(^{82}\). This in turn suggests that Jan Wawrzyniec got into trouble with Becker’s creditors in Sosnice (Sośnica), the village located on the trade route from Jarosław (Ukr. Yaroslav) to Kazimierz. Consequently, Francesco saw the transportation of their goods via Jarosław and Kazimierz as uncertain.

Profits

In the latter part of the same letter, Francesco said that he remained suspicious of his English contact because of the irregularity of his correspondence.\(^{83}\) However, he seemed to excuse him as follows:

> There are several persons around this man and everyone gave me a good testimony about him [English correspondent]. He has to send me by the next correspondence a reliable account that specifies everything that he sold. When I receive such, we will see how much capital this potash will gather for you, Sir.\(^{84}\)

Francesco felt compelled to say to Wodzicki that he had asked several persons to prove his English correspondent’s testimony. This fragment illustrates how the relationship between Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec had developed

\(^{81}\) ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 291: ‘nasz rachunek bel zasze seprataus asz do tey zpulnej roboty w Budzie’.

\(^{82}\) ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 291: ‘apomnisz WMsc Jakasz WMM narzekał ysz nie kazał z wiezc to coWMMP. naleazało do kazimirza anie dososnice WMM nie rozumiej otim ze bim miał WMM krtiwdzič’.

\(^{83}\) ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 292: ‘Prawdaiest ze boiazliwim został widzanc iako teras Szwiat się zepsował y niemasz komu wierzecz ý przeto Corespondent WLondinie insuspecto umnie zostawa, ze leniwie pisze czasem wecztweri niedziely niema od niego pisanie’.

\(^{84}\) ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 292: ‘iednak roznich okolo tego człowieka, a każdy mida dobre testimonium, przinagani ysz tardus do Saldowania rachunkow, malmi poslacz pierwszą poczętę rzetalni rachunek tego wystęskiego co po przedał, co Jako odbiorę obaczemi iaki Capital ztich Potaszow Wmsci sie zbierze’.
some months after Francesco joined Jan Wawrzyniec’s company. Undoubtedly, De Gratta had his contacts in the western part of Europe at his disposal; however, when it comes to the situation in Wallachia, he had to contact people that belonged to Jan Wawrzyniec’s own network. Such a relationship reveals that Francesco maintained his function as Wodzicki’s factor, but he engaged much more in his trade with Jan Wawrzyniec. In contrast to the time before 1668 when he was just a factor to Wodzicki, Francesco now made his own decisions and only informed Jan Wawrzyniec about his actions. Moreover, it seems that he even ordered Jan Wawrzyniec to undertake various solutions, especially when it comes to the contacts with Becker and Jan Warzyniec’s brother. However, De Gratta stayed in regular contact with the majority of their trade agents, which also shows that the sale of the goods was solely his task. This said, the relationship between De Gratta and Wodzicki cannot be characterised as a principal-factor type, but as an association of two more equal actors at that time. As the correspondence also reveals, Jan Wawrzyniec presumably asked Francesco to give an account of his profits on several occasions. Their common businesses do not facilitated sharing of their incomes, but on the contrary became the main reason why some inaccuracies appeared between them. As we shall see later, Francesco undoubtedly used this situation to continue their potash trade even when Jan Wawrzyniec wished to quit it. Lastly, Francesco was the actor in their association who devised a new tactic concerning transportation routes, and who also developed a strategy in order to bypass Becker’s creditors.

In his letter dated 3 October 167085, Francesco continued his remarks on their company and gave additional specific facts about the moment of his engagement in the company.

I am really concerned about Sir’s last letter, that after Sir’s two [last] letters [you, Sir] proposed a new solution that [Francesco and Wodzicki] should resign from the continuation of the potash business that you, Sir, first fervently persuaded me to start because [you, Sir] wanted to create a company [together with me – Francesco].86

85 There are two letters dated 3 October 1670. The first one is a copy and the other one is an original version. This is why, the first is to be considered as his letter sent in late September. This letter is particularly important to the investigation of the connection between The De Gratta-Wodzicki company and the Hospodar of Wallachia.
86 ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 295: ‘Barzo mię ostatni list WMMM Pana zastraszył, gdy po dwoygu pisaniu Swym do inszey Sklonic się raczyles resolutiey, odradzając od
Francesco revealed here that Jan Wawrzyniec wanted to quit their potash business in the face of difficulties that arose around Becker’s involvement in their trade. Furthermore, as one can learn from this particular fragment, Jan Wawrzyniec was at first positively oriented towards their potash business, but later changed his mind and even persuaded Francesco to stop their trade. Moreover, one notices that Francesco in his letter included the phrase: ‘fervently persuaded’ (‘feruide persuadowales’) that showed once more that it was Jan Wawrzyniec who had advised him to join his potash trade.

Francesco had not been interested in joining Jan Wawrzyniec’s company at the beginning. Nonetheless Francesco understood Jan Wawrzyniec’s economic situation, among other reasons from the administration of his potash incomes, and therefore Francesco’s letter was nothing more than his attempt to keep Jan Wawrzyniec in the company. It seems to be obvious that Francesco certainly did not want to quit this business; he just wished to exclude Becker and his creditors.

Contact with the Authorities

Hospodar

In the next part of his letter dated 3 October 1670, Francesco added that Jan Wawrzyniec should not worry about Becker’s creditors and that the most important issue for them at that time was to arrange the transport of their goods so that they arrived safely abroad. This indicates that De Gratta was the partner who took care of the transportation routes. Francesco considered using an official communication channel including the contact with the Wallachian Hospodar in order to lean on Becker. He disclosed his plan to Jan Wawrzyniec as follows:

It will be good in any case, to possess a letter of attestation from Wallachia from His Majesty Hospodar that our goods are produced without any help...
from Mr Becker, because it happened that we had to pay to the Hospodar a rental fee of Buda for Becker.\textsuperscript{88}

Francesco wanted Jan Wawrzyniec to get in touch with the Hospodar of Wallachia and ask him to issue a document for The De Gratta-Wodzicki company that could make their business and especially, transport easier. The quotation above reveals that De Gratta and Wodzicki had to recompense the Wallachian Hospodar for some of the fees that Becker was obliged to pay for the rent of Buda. As can be learned from the letter by Stanisław Kieniarski, a representative of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the Hospodar of Wallachia, dated 30 August 1670, Hospodar had already confirmed the rights of De Gratta and Wodzicki to Buda Hozyneszta.\textsuperscript{89} Kieniarski also informed them that they should pay some kind of fee on a regular basis (arenda) to Hospodar to avoid any further problems. According to this letter, Wodzicki paid Kieniarski to gain such privileges from the Hospodar. In addition, Francesco also proposed that:

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\text{[Our] commodity should be produced [without Becker in Wallachia] and the fee [Arenda] should be paid to Hospodar himself as mentioned here. Becker will possess nothing and will not be a part of it [our potash business].}\textsuperscript{90}
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This quotation shows that Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec wished to buy the protection of the Hospodar and to make the Hospodar a stakeholder. Moreover, the fact that De Gratta and Wodzicki asked for a letter of attestation from the Hospodar showed the realities of the actual political situation in Wallachia. Remembering the fact that they already possessed a similar attestation issued by the King of Poland, the attestation given by


\textsuperscript{89} ZNiO, Rkps. 11573/II, pp. 1–2: ‘Potwierdzenie listowne Hospodara JMsci na Bude Hozyneszte za uspokojeniem Creditorow łatwo wyprawic, bo tu nie pytaią czy ia Buda, tylko zeby nalezyta oddana była pensia Hospodarowoi JMsci a wolno robic, ani jednaBuda od drugiej zadny nie ma folgi w zapłaceniu zwyczajnych rat y myt. Za ofiarowane supplementum unizenie dziekuję WMsci MMPanu, ia tesz co magio do usług Wmsci MMPana na tym mieyscu obligatur zostanę.’

\textsuperscript{90} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 296: ‘towar ten wyrabiać y Hospodarowi Samenemu Arendę zapłacić tak ze pomnieniony Bekier nullo modo do tego nalezec nie moze y nie ma partem’.
Hospodar had to be perceived as an even more powerful document in their eyes. Later, Francesco said that:

I consider that this threat comes from Nesterowicz. It was designed to scare us into leaving our [potash] business, and he along together with Orsacci would like to have such trade in their hands.\(^9\)

Here, Francesco revealed that Nesterowicz together with Giorgio Orsacci\(^2\) wanted to monopolise the entire potash trade in Poland-Lithuania. Consequently, their activity was perceived by Francesco as a threat to his and Jan Wawrzyniec’s trade. Because of that Francesco reminded Jan Wawrzyniec that he should keep in touch with the Hospodar. According to De Gratta, the most important thing was to pay a salary to the Hospodar and thus make him their supporter. Moreover, he suggested that they should check their goods as soon as possible when they arrived at Jazłowiec. He also instructed his companion to sign the goods with their (so, not only Wodzicki’s) initials even before they crossed the border of Wallachia and the Commonwealth.\(^3\) Here, again one can see that Jazłowiec played a very significant role as the very first checkpoint on their trade map.

Later, he also wrote about the potash situation at the local market in Gdańsk. He wrote as follows:

Balaban by his potash has worsened much our and others’ situation. He still receives new batches [of potash] and that means Orsacci received the best factories and best-skilled workers. The weed-ash that he now receives are two hundred zł better than ours, because not only the commodities are extraordinarily good, but also the barrels are huge, everyone admires them [weed-ash] and he promises that he will receive more commodities

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91 ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 296: ‘Uznawam ia to ze ta pogrozka uczyniona pochodzi od Nesterowicza, aby Nas tym odstraszył od zawziętey Imprezy; a Sam tylko wespel z Orsakiem handel takowy w ręku swych mieli’.
92 Giorgio Orsacci (Ursachi), see, for example, Cernovodeanu, *England’s trade*, p. 83.
93 ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, pp. 296–298: ‘upraszam abys WMMM Pan chciał hoc negotium mehus trutinare y zabiezeć iemu, zeby towary nasze niewpadły w inszych ręce wszak gdy towar Stanie w Jazlowcu (iakom rzekl) Scripta takowe wziąc się mogą od Hospodara per modum quietationis a zeby nie rozumiano fictitia esse, w ktorych kazdemu patebit za towary naszem pięniedzi robione, y Hospodar za Arendę takze Satisfactus zostaje [...] To jest za przestroge Wmci Moy Mci Pan racz mieć, aby towar y moim znaczony był iako pierwey ieszcze za granicą’. This sign can be found in the instruction made by De Gratta for Bekier considering the transportation of De Gratta and Wodzicki’s goods (without a date, but it was probably created in connection to the potash contract from 1669), see ZNiO, Rkps. 11579/III, pp. 409–410.
of such sort before winter, as I see, he and Nesterowicz will overtake this all [potash] trade.\textsuperscript{94}

This quotation states that Balaban and Nesterowicz sold potash of a much better quality than that of De Gratta and Wodzicki. Moreover, as one can read above, even Balaban’s barrels were larger. The fact that Balaban and Nesterowicz made a good business from their potash, even while selling it in Gdańsk, shows again that it was a prosperous activity. The only issue that remained unresolved for De Gratta and Wodzicki seems to have been finding a reliable contact in Wallachia who could monitor the entire production and employ highly skilled professional workers. One may ask here about Kotowski or Maciej Wodzicki who resided in Jazłowiec, which was the closest city to Buda Hozyneszta. What role did they play in The De Gratta-Wodzicki company? Could they manage to keep control of the production?

They played another function that also was crucial for the trade. They were obliged to direct the transportation of goods via Poland-Lithuania. Moreover, to produce potash needed specific knowledge as well as contacts in Wallachia that – as everything suggests – both Adam Kotowski and Maciej Wodzicki were lacking. Thus, it seems that Becker was the only person in the network of De Gratta and Wodzicki who possessed such a capacity to produce potash and weed-ash and who had knowledge about the local political and economic situation in Wallachia.

Polish King

In Francesco’s next letter to Jan Wawrzyniec dated 10 October 1670, one learns about his idea concerning how to deal with Becker’s creditors. Francesco stated that the King of Poland, Michael I, was now also involved in the enterprise:

Theses commodities are produced from our resources and by our people and the fee will be paid to the Hospodar and thus none of Becker’s

\textsuperscript{94} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 299–300: ‘Balaban swoime tik potaszem barzo nam ý innem psuie a coras nowe partie wistawia y znacz ze Ursaký nailepsze Budy ma y naisposobniejszych robotników, Szmelcúę kturą teras świeżo dostal est dwumset złotich lepsza nad naszą bo nie tilko towar nader dobrý ale y Beczký barzoWielkie są, wszyscy ią Chwalą, a obiecuję przed Zimą ijeszcze wieczeý tegosz gatunku wistawicz Jako widzę On a Nesterowicz ten Handel cale dosiebie poczagną’.
creditors can take them [commodities] over, to prevent [that] the letters issued by the King and by Hospodar being shown.95

This fragment includes information that the King of Poland, Michael I, had communicated with the Hospodar of Wallachia regarding their problems at least twice (the plural form of letters in the quotation). Unfortunately, one does not know what the contents of these letters were, but they were some kind of attestation letters that informed about both Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec’s professions and functions as royal secretaries in the Polish King’s service. It might also be presumed that the King contacted the Hospodar to state that he should help De Gratta and Wodzicki to find a solution to their difficult situation. Therefore, such letters most probably contained information about Becker and his creditors. In addition, it is important to notice that presumably both De Gratta and Wodzicki contacted the King and the royal court regarding the creation of attestation letters. Both remained in a close relationship with the Polish Kings. Overall, the entire situation described here revealed the connection between their potash trade and their professions, as well as their contacts with the Polish authorities. Lastly, they used the authority of the King of Poland to obtain free passage or at least to gain special documents from the Hospodar of Wallachia that in the longer run could help to free them from Becker and his creditors. This section of the chapter showed that both De Gratta and Wodzicki had contact with the monarchs; however, it is obvious that the contact with the Hospodar went through Kieniarski, who was Wodzicki’s contact.

The Establishment of a New Transportation Route

As one notices, Francesco had already begun to plan a new transportation route for their potash. His solution included transport of their goods via the harbour in Smyrna. He notified Jan Wawrzyniec about his plan, in this way:

So as not to lose there [Jazłowiec] the greater part of our commodities, when they remain free in Wallachia, I must send to them via Turkey […]

to the Netherlands in the direction of Smyrna, if only Sir’s brother can devise the goods’ release from the Wallachian creditors.96

This fragment shows that Francesco eventually considered the southern route via the Black and Mediterranean Seas instead of the route via Poland. As already mentioned, Francesco had notified Wodzicki that he used such transportation routes when he transported his Wallachian ‘forest commodities’. However, it seems that he never considered the same option with regard to the shipping of their common goods. Even if the idea of transporting the goods around the European continent may sound surprising, it was considered safer than shipping via Poland-Lithuania. By this solution, De Gratta and Wodzicki could exclude both Becker’s creditors and the risks connected to the unstable war situation in the Ukrainian lands of Poland-Lithuania. This southern route led from Wallachia to Amsterdam via the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. So, it has to be considered as one taking a much longer time than the route via Poland. However, it still appeared in Francesco’s eyes as a more reasonable alternative. It has to be highlighted that Francesco did not suggest this solution at the time he informed Wodzicki that he used this way for his commodities. This can be treated as evidence that at first Francesco wished to use other solutions proposed by Wodzicki. Lastly, he probably wanted to establish contacts in the Ottoman Empire first as well as to probe the profitability of such an option before presenting it to Wodzicki.

Old Practice

Nevertheless, this new solution did not eliminate their old practice of transporting goods via the territories of Poland-Lithuania. This is why they continuously had to develop strategies to somehow omit Becker’s creditors. De Gratta proposed such a solution:

We have to check and keep an eye on our goods. If anyone [of Becker’s creditors] buys them we can seize those already in Poland and we can

claim [then] the repayment of our resources [invested in the goods’ production].\(^97\)

Here, one can read that the transportation of their goods through Poland still required special management from their side. At any time, their goods could be stopped, checked and seized. Such an unpredictable situation was one of Francesco’s strongest arguments for transporting the goods via the new route.

### Vessels

In the same letter, Francesco while informing again about his English correspondent, said that:

> Our correspondent from London went to Antwerp for a couple of weeks; this is why I did not receive any letter from him. I do not see any way to sell our potash, unless to England where […] our [potash] sells for 36 szafunt [1 szafunt = ca 170 kg] […] and it can even be 38 that we can receive for it, and here in Gdańsk even if I ask 30 I cannot find a buyer, because everyone wants the best sort that comes from all sides, such as from Wallachia [the Duchy of Wallachia] or from Ukraine [the Ukrainian lands of Poland-Lithuania].\(^98\)

This fragment again reveals that it was much easier to sell potash and weed-ash in England than on the local market in Gdańsk. However, to sell goods abroad one had to carry commodities in one’s own vessels or was forced to use somebody’s else’s. As can be learned from the list of debts and credits made after Francesco’s death, he partially owned two vessels: had a quarter interest in ‘Olifant’ and some part of ‘San Salvator’.\(^99\) While such limited marine capacity seems to have been enough to proceed with trade from Gdańsk to Amsterdam or London, it was rather insufficient to transport the goods the entire way from Smyrna to the western part of Europe. Furthermore, in one of his next letters Francesco said that he had sent the goods by

\(^97\) ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 308: ‘abę miano wzgland y baczenie cosię z tim naszemtowarem dziacz się bendzie; bo gdibę kturikolwiek takowe kupił, moglobysię wozancz ie przes Polskę aresztowacz ý nasze Exespensa nanich dochodicz’.


\(^99\) ASL, AS, 123, pp. 200–201.
‘their vessel’\textsuperscript{100}. This suggests that these vessels were partially owned by Jan Wawrzyniec. However, the hypothesis that they owned more vessels than those included in the list of Francesco’s debts and credits cannot be excluded.

As the quotation also presents, the harbour in Gdańsk was full of potash and it can be concluded that it was nearly impossible for one to conduct a profitable business there. This is why the English market was where De Gratta pursued his trade. Furthermore, such a situation required good contacts with his correspondent there who – as this quotation revealed – resided in London. However, one can see that he did not inform Francesco about his trip to Antwerp in advance. Possibly, Francesco learned about that when his English correspondent arrived in the Netherlands. This may suggest that on the one hand, there were problems in the mail service and on the other hand, his English correspondent pursued his own activities without informing De Gratta.

Nonetheless, returning to the southern transportation route initiated by Francesco, it is important to note that Jan Wawrzyniec, in contrast to his business partner, did not know much about such a possibility in advance. Judging by the fact that Jan Wawrzyniec wrote a comment on Francesco’s letter including information about the potash prices in England and the new passage route via Smyrna, it is fair to maintain that he did not consider this option at all. In addition, it is worth recalling that he had wanted to quit their potash business some months before. Thus, the idea of transporting their goods via the Mediterranean Sea should be considered solely as Francesco’s own.

Venetians

In a letter dated 21 February 1671, Francesco revealed more specific facts around the southern passage in the following manner:

I think [to transport the goods via] Smyrna should be undertaken by Turks or the Hospodar, and these [goods] should be sold in Smyrna and there [we can] capitalize them together with [receiving back our] resources that are needed for export.\textsuperscript{101}

The crucial thing here is that Francesco wanted that the Ottoman side (Turks or the Hospodar) to take over their transportation problems. This time,

\textsuperscript{101} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 313: ‘Chiba na Smirnę, ź to trzeba aby turcinowie albo Hospodar nasię wział, takowe wistawicz wSmirnie, y tam zanie pieniadze wziancz wespul z unkosztamý, kture windą nawiwos asz doMieisca’.

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Francesco did not want to transport the goods all the way to the Netherlands, but wished to sell them in Smyrna. Thus, the only problem that remained unsolved was to find a reliable person who could transport their goods from Buda Hozynesza in Walachia to the harbour of Smyrna. In the later part of this letter, Francesco reported to Jan Wawrzyniec that Becker contacted him in this particular matter, as follows:

Becker wants to put me into contact with a Turk who is several thousand ducats in debt to Venetians and who pretends to receive from Becker several thousand lewki.¹⁰²

Undoubtedly, Becker had somehow learned about Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec’s plans to change their transportation route. The fact that Becker proposed to employ a Turk (no name given in his later correspondence) should be considered as an attempt to remain involved in The De Gratta-Wodzicki trade. However, one can see that Francesco disclosed Becker’s intentions and eventually made contact with the Venetians to learn about Becker’s candidate. Francesco was informed by his contacts in Venice that this Turk was in debt to them. In addition, one can also learn that Becker was in debt to the proposed contact. Becker probably planned to repay his debts to the Turk by using De Gratta and Wodzicki’s resources again.

In his next letter, dated 6 March 1671, Francesco continued his deliberation about the southern passage and included a statement that: ‘henceforth, we [Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec] will not think about the transportation of our goods [potash] through Poland [anymore], because I am becoming insane’¹⁰³. This statement suggests Francesco had already decided to use the transportation route via Smyrna and to quit the old route via the territories of the Commonwealth, but he still did not receive Jan Wawrzyniec’s approval. Moreover, in the very same letter, he informed Jan Wawrzyniec that he was continuing to investigate how the southern passage could be used for transport of their goods and said the following:

I wrote [the letter] to Venice about them [Venetian merchants] planning the route for our goods, if only the Hospodar will agree to our proposal

that he takes his part [costs of transportation in Wallachia plus fees] that belongs to him in Smyrna for his own and the creditors’ sake.\textsuperscript{104}

This quotation includes the information that Francesco had again made contact with the Venetian merchants. This time, he asked them to create a transportation plan for the export of his potash. This fact indicates that Francesco relied on his contacts in Venice and saw their knowledge as offering him the possibility for safe export of his goods in Wallachia. Consequently, this demonstrates that also Venetian companies were present in this region and used the southern passage for their trade activities, and shows that Francesco was responsible for the arrangement of this route. Lastly, De Gratta and Wodzicki needed a special letter of attestation issued by the Hospodar in order to make a solution possible. Francesco seemed to be confident that there would not be any problems in obtaining such a letter.

\textbf{Vienna Trade Company}

I will write tomorrow to Constantinople, to the Director of the Trade Company […] this Company have their factors in Galatia, this Director will find some way to obtain the letters [of attestation] from Vizier that will secure our goods. I worry much that the Hospodar will not approve our proposals, then this Director of Vienna Trade Company will send someone that is trustworthy from Constantinople or Galatia to the Wallachian Hospodar with the letter of Grand Vizier or anyone who has authority there, and there he [the negotiator on behalf of the Director of Trade Company] will negotiate with the Hospodar with regard to both [our] goods as well as in Becker’s case.\textsuperscript{105}

First of all, this quotation includes two specific pieces of information that Francesco intended to obtain from the Head of the Vienna Trade Company. This company had been established to conduct trading activities in the

\textsuperscript{104} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, pp. 319–320: ‘Pisalemdo Venetieÿ okolotego, iakoby na drogę nanie odmislicz, iezelÿ Hospodar przestanie napropositią naszę zewezmie WSmirnie to co się iemu odebralo naUkontentowanie iego ý Creditorów’.

\textsuperscript{105} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, pp. 320–321: ‘piszę iutro do Constatinopolu do Directora Companiey Handlow […] ta Compania ma factorow w Galacie, tenze Director naidzie sposobý Jako widzwignacz Zalistami Visira zebespiecznie puidą rzeci, Inqntum bỹ Hospodar nie przestawal Na propositie ucinione iakosz otobarzo się boić; Tedy insze ten Director Negotiorum Widinskich Wiprawy kýgo pewsnego Z Constantinopolu albo ZGalaty do Hospodara Wolowskiego fulliś listem Wilekiego Wisira albo kogokolwiek ktûy bỹ miał powagę, a tam Z Hospodarem tenze tractabit de Eliberatione tak towarow Jako y Bekiera Samego’. 
Ottoman Empire and because Francesco wanted to establish contacts with its leader. The first issue was to gain the letters of attestation from the Grand Vizier, Köprülüzade Fazıl Ahmed Pasha, who was the highest royal authority in the Ottoman Empire. The second issue was about sending a negotiator to the Wallachian Hospodar. Francesco wanted to influence the Hospodar, so that he would finally agree to his proposal regarding the transportation of the ‘forest goods’ produced in Wallachia via Smyrna. This strategy reveals that Francesco also had contacts in Constantinople. However, it remains unclear how De Gratta got to know the Head of the Vienna Trade Company, but it is highly likely that he learned of this person through his Italian network. To conclude, Francesco was actively planning to create the southern transportation route as well as to influence the Wallachian Hospodar to support them by employing both Venetian traders and the Head of Vienna Trade Company. As was mentioned before, Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec already possessed letters of attestation issued by the King of Poland-Lithuania, thus, De Gratta and Wodzicki needed only similar documents from the Hospodar for their southern passage.

In his letter dated 13 March 1671, Francesco notified Jan Wawrzyniec about the result of his contact with the Head of the Vienna Trade Company in the following way:

I expect that my friend from the Vienna Company in Constantinople, will send his negotiator to Jassy [Rum. Iași], who will elaborate with regard to him [Becker] as well as the conditions of our trade to prepare the shipping [of our goods] directly [to the Mediterranean Sea?] rather than via Smyrna.106

The quotation above and the previous ones show that Francesco attempted to influence the Hospodar via higher royal authorities. Besides the Polish King, he wished to use the authority of the Grand Vizier. Keeping in mind, the fact that the Wallachian Hospodar was a vassal to the Grand Vizier, Francesco’s action can be perceived as his very last opportunity to convince the Hospodar. Furthermore, one can see that Francesco did not contact the Grand Vizier and the Hospodar, but did so via his friend in Constantinople.

Furthermore, he certainly decided to rely solely on his own contacts (not Wodzicki’s).

Next, Francesco described how the transportation worked via the southern passage for the first time. He informed Wodzicki as follows:

Weed-ashes arrived in Amsterdam, but not without a great problem. In Galatia [they] were inundated with a three ells of water and because of that the goods became rotten; however, [the goods] even without that were of a bad quality, after their sale I will send the bill to you, Sir.107

This quote reveals that even the use of the southern passage was dangerous. At this time, Jan Wawrzyniec’s goods were damaged by flooding. Moreover, Francesco again informed Jan Wawrzyniec that his goods were of bad quality. Nevertheless, the new route seemed to be free of greater problems. It should be added that this time Francesco reported only about Jan Wawrzyniec’s commodities. This in turn suggests that they still pursued their own businesses apart from their common one.

In a letter dated 20 March 1671, Francesco informed Jan Wawrzyniec about their first common batch of weed-ash.108 This fact is especially significant because it shows that until the spring of 1671 they did not produce weed-ash together. Moreover, there is no evidence to claim that it was different when it comes to the production of potash. Nevertheless, Francesco said that their last batches of potash, which he had sent to England, had been refused by the buyers who complained about their bad quality.109 Furthermore, he accused Balaban of giving them ‘filth instead of potash’110. This information reveals that Balaban had also become involved with The De Gratta-Wodzicki trading company.

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110 ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 329: ‘Insumma ten niećnotliwý Balaban towsztisko zbroił zenam pługastwo nie potaszý oddał a Nailepszy towar drugim Sam poprzedal’.
Orsacci

Even though De Gratta integrated Balaban into his and Wodzicki’s trading company, it did not help them much. From Francesco’s letter dated 20 March 1671, one can also learn that he instructed Balaban to make contact with Orsacci. Orsacci was obliged to create a letter of attestation including the place of production of Francesco’s commodities that in turn could be used as a certificate of his rights to these particular goods.111 It is important to note that Francesco preferred to delegate Balaban to Orsacci than to write a letter himself. However, it should be remembered that Balaban stayed in Wallachia then and could meet with Orsacci in person. That also suggests that Francesco trusted his trade rival, Balaban, at least to such an extent that he agreed to allow his intermediation. Moreover, Balaban was the only one who was in Wallachia at that time who belonged exclusively to Francesco’s own network. It is significant to note that in regard to this matter, Francesco did not make contact with Kotowski or other Polish nobles/merchants that belonged to Jan Wawrzyniec’s own network.

Issues with the Potash Trade

When it comes to our negotiations, it looks like nothing is going well or bad and there need to be a solution about these [goods] that remain in London. If a small amount of [goods] arrive [to Gdańsk] from Moscow as well as from Poland, then the [local] market situation would improve and that God forbid, especially at a time when a war with Turks in Ukraine [the Ukrainian lands of Poland-Lithuania] will start.112

In his next letter, dated 10 April 1671, Francesco revealed that he was concerned about his and Jan Wawrzyniec’s potash businesses, especially when he took the geopolitical situation into consideration. He was afraid that a war in the Ukrainian lands of Poland-Lithuania was inevitable. Francesco saw the dangers of an outbreak of war which could stop their potash production in Wallachia. Furthermore, he considered the price situation at the

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112 ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, pp. 335–336: ‘Cosię ticze NegotiaNostra nihil inaoucatum nec in bonum nec in malum, wiglandacz potrzeba Exitum wodiskaniu tego co zostaje wLondinie, a Potaszÿ ktureta[m]są trzeba niemÿ parientare, Jezelÿ z Moskweÿ maloprzidzie takze zPolskieÿ muszaliibÿ targi poprawicz, aczego P. Boze nie dai timbarzeÿ kiedibÿ pora Woiennasie otworzila zturkiem wUkrainie’.
local market in Gdańsk as negative for their trade. The higher prices in Gdańsk could seriously affect the prices abroad, which in turn could make their trade via Smyrna less profitable.

Later, Francesco wrote that Becker did not recommend the southern passage because of the high costs.\textsuperscript{113} His advice here seems to be nothing more than an attempt to keep his role as their representative and producer there. He saw the change in the transportation route as endangering his own income and his ability to repay debts to his creditors. The petition by Becker to Arlington (presumably Henry Bennet) made in 1672 seems to verify the above hypothesis.\textsuperscript{114} In this petition, Becker recommended Arlington, to use the trade route via Constantinople instead of that via Poland-Lithuania, because it was less hazardous as well as cheaper.\textsuperscript{115}

In a letter dated 4 September 1671, one can see Francesco’s answer to Becker’s warning.

\begin{quote}
I am not at all rejecting the route via Smyrna; the goods that are on the border cannot cost much to transport them to Danube and to raft [them] to the Black Sea could cost totally 6 thousand zł.\textsuperscript{116}
\end{quote}

Francesco revealed here that it was not at all expensive to use the southern passage. However, he stated that the trade route via Smyrna would be rejected only if the situation in Poland-Lithuania improved.\textsuperscript{117} Consequently, he added: ‘if there will be no peace in the country, our speculations [about rejecting the route via Smyrna] will be pointless’.\textsuperscript{118} One can conclude that Jan Wawrzyniec was not so optimistic concerning the southern passage as an export route for their goods, which means that the transportation route through the Commonwealth was more reliable and accurate in his eyes. From the other point of view, Wodzicki realised that by using the southern passage,

\textsuperscript{114} NAL, SP 82/11/220: Petition by John Frederick Booker, Polish merchant, to Arlington.
\textsuperscript{115} NAL, SP 82/11/220: Petition by John Frederick Booker, Polish merchant, to Arlington.
\textsuperscript{116} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 343: ‘ja nie cale dorzucam impresę do Smirną, towarÿ kture są nagranicę nie mogą tak wiele kostowacz gdy się odwiosą do Dunaiu do Spustu naczorne morze ad Summum zł 6/m bikosztowaly’.
\textsuperscript{117} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 343: ‘miograne Secure prowadzicz towarÿ przes Polskę niepotrzebna bicz Via na Smirnę’.
\textsuperscript{118} ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 344: ‘iezelÿ Pokoy niebendzie w Panstwie daremne wszitkie tenasze speculatie bendą’.
Francesco was taking over the entire responsibility for the administration of the potash production along with its export and sale, which excluded nearly all of Wodzicki’s influence.

Epilogue

This was the last letter of Francesco sent to Jan Wawrzyniec in 1671 preserved in Wodzicki’s archive. The next one was sent in October of 1673 and still included Francesco’s complaints about Becker and the potash situation in Wallachia. De Gratta even stated that they ‘had to take care of Becker as usual’119. As one can observe here, Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec still had to deal with Becker and tried to exclude him somehow from their potash trade. Another issue was the military conflict in the Ukrainian lands of the Commonwealth. Consequently, he reported to Jan Wawrzyniec that: ‘the hope lies in this victory of ours [in the battle] of Khotyn. I am considering sending someone reliable there to rescue those goods [that remain there]’120. Furthermore, according to his last letter from 1674 preserved in Wodzicki’s archive, Francesco wrote to Jan Wawrzyniec that Wroblewski had become their representative in Wallachia and he had to check the quality of the commodities produced there.121 According to the archival sources, Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec continued their potash production in Wallachia at least until 1674 and they did not exclude Becker. Such a conclusion on the one hand confirms the hypothesis that Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec kept their trade relationship going for a long period of time (from somewhere around 1668 until most probably 1676) and on the other hand confirms that the potash business in the long run was a profitable activity.

Nevertheless, the list of debts and credits created in 1676 reveals something completely different. Francesco left huge debts, from his potash business, including his company with Wodzicki. Furthermore, one finds that Becker had other loans from De Gratta that made the amount of Becker’s total debt even higher.122

122 ASL, AS, 123, p. 199.
The Networking Actions

What does one learn about Francesco De Gratta’s activity as a Gdańsk trader from his potash trade? How was he able to use his own contact network throughout the decision-making process? In order to answer such questions, it is necessary to take a closer look at the negotiations around the opening of the southern passage for transportation of potash goods. Diagram 4 presents how Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec were able to make contacts with several actors to sway or influence the Hospodar of Wallachia.
Diagram 4. The networking actions of Francesco De Gratta and Wodzicki in order to open a new potash trade route.

The diagram illustrates some of the main characteristics of his decision-making process with regard to the establishment of a new trade route for Francesco and Jan Wawrzyniec’s commodities. Francesco’s and Jan Wawrzyniec’s aim was to avoid Becker’s creditors and thus they decided to change the direction of their trade. As can be seen from the diagram,
Francesco involved more actors in this decision than Jan Wawrzyniec. As a matter of fact, the situation presented here is based solely on Francesco’s correspondence and focuses exclusively on his own actions. Here, nevertheless, it is fair to assume that Francesco played a much more active role than Jan Wawrzyniec had. All the indicators in fact show that Wodzicki did not even know about such a possibility and actually wished to quit the business altogether. This is why Francesco should be perceived here as the central figure/actor (‘star’). One should also remember that Jan Wawrzyniec was obliged to Stanisław Kieniarski – who remained the representative of the Polish Crown to the Hospodar of Wallachia – and had received a letter of attestation that stated he, together with Francesco, owned Buda Hozyneszta. This is why, when it comes to the establishment of the southern route, his engagement should be taken into consideration as well. Nonetheless, it does not change the fact that Francesco mostly employed his own contacts there. He contracted only those from his own trading network. Most likely, he had officially resigned from the services of Wodzicki’s contact persons in Wallachia: Maciej Wodzicki, Adam Kotowski and Jan Kosiński (marked black in the diagram). Consequently, Francesco contracted first Venetian traders who helped him with making a plan including the transportation of the goods via the harbour of Smyrna. Furthermore, he contacted Orsacci, Treasurer in Wallachia. One of Orsacci’s allegiants is believed to have next contacted the Grand Vizier in order to obtain his letter of attestation for The De Gratta-Wodzicki company. This in turn shows that neither De Gratta nor Wodzicki tried to make any contact with the Grand Vizier individually. Furthermore, one should recall that they also refused to communicate with the Hospodar on their own. Both these two cases show that they preferred to use their own intermediaries to make any such contacts.

Concluding Remarks

As this chapter has revealed, De Gratta was able to develop his Polish trade because of his title of factoratus, which he received in 1649. Undoubtedly, the fact that he was a royal factor increased his trading capacity in Wodzicki’s eyes. Moreover, this chapter set out to determine Francesco’s involvement in the development of Jan Wawrzyniec’s potash trade as well as his interactions with his other business companions. This involvement was divided up chronologically into three parts. The first section of the text informed about the title of factoratus as well as the role of factors in one’s trade, while the
second part showed, from an example of Francesco’s work for Jan Wawrzyniec, how their principal-factor relationship actually operated in practice. Here one learned that Francesco’s function consisted of searching out new markets, staying in touch with foreign correspondents, as well as keeping Jan Wawrzyniec informed about the development of his businesses – including information about his incomes – and the political situation in Europe. Thus, Francesco’s task can be characterised here as a manager and counsellor. The third part of the chapter examined the time period when Francesco became a co-owner of Jan Wawrzyniec’s potash company. This section mainly focused on an investigation of the variety of solutions that could eliminate Becker and his creditors from The De Gratta-Wodzicki company’s own trade. Here one of the solutions most prominently discussed was the establishment of the southern passage via Smyrna with regard to the safe export of their goods. Furthermore, their network, in general, can be described as an economic and political one and defined by: on the one hand, the contemporary economic and price situation around potash in the western part of Europe, and on the other hand, the political development, especially, in the south-eastern part of the continent. Altogether, it is fair to maintain that De Gratta entered Wodzicki’s network of contacts and also took a lesson from his previous economic experience, and in this way entered the Polish potash trade.

In addition, some words need to be devoted to the marriage strategies and the function of the intermediates in The De Gratta-Wodzicki networking actions. According to Anita Göransson mentioned by Ojala in his article on social relations in economic networks, the use of arranged marriages can be described as a conscious strategy to: ‘enlarge one’s business through marriages’ (expansion) and ‘to avoid the dissolution of the family firm’ (reduction). In such a light, Wodzicki’s marriage to Anna Maria can be treated both as an expansion and reduction strategy of De Gratta. He wanted both to enlarge his business network, and at the same time to avoid the loss of his important trade contacts with Wodzicki.Remarkably, the marriage of Wodzicki and Francesco’s daughter took place around the date of creation of their potash trade contract. Undoubtedly, this moment showed the increasing role of De Gratta; he was equal to Wodzicki in ownership matters despite their different functions in the network. Thus their relations evolved from a principal-agent relationship to one based on personal commitment,

123 Ojala, Some Implications, p. 178.
which were in turn was confirmed by the marriage of Wodzicki with Anna Maria, seen here as a familial social action. Moreover, according to Ojala, the ‘one way to avoid the principal-agent problem [was] to use intermediates in economic operations’ As The De Gratta-Wodzicki company had shown they had no intermediaries in their relations and they contacted each other personally on a frequent basis; however, they used such actors when it came to the sale of commodities abroad and to production in Wallachia. Here, one may emphasise that De Gratta rather seldom contacted Becker directly; he preferred to do that via Wodzicki. Furthermore, as the archival material shows, their contacts remained solely via correspondence. Concerning the news and prices, De Gratta was the one in the network that possessed such information and the one who had the most influence on the course of their business.

Lastly, strong evidence of Francesco’s cooperation with Italian traders was found when the southern passage was discussed in his correspondence. This fact indicates the existence of a larger network including Italian traders who were residing in the most important economic centres of contemporary Europe. This is why Francesco could more easily discuss his own trade issues with Venetian traders or his friend in Constantinople in an epistolary way without going himself or sending one of his representatives there. In contrast to Francesco’s network, Jan Wawrzyniec’s included mostly Polish nobles and merchants who resided in different cities in the Duchy of Wallachia and Poland-Lithuania. Bearing in mind that Francesco joined Jan Wawrzyniec’s trading company after his business network was already established, he could have taken advantage of such a situation. Francesco lacked contacts with those Polish merchants who controlled the entire potash production and transportation through Polish territories. This is certainly one of the reasons why he joined the company of Jan Wawrzyniec. In addition, this fact reveals that Francesco was better informed when it came to the markets in the western part of Europe than he was regarding the local situation in Wallachia and the Ukrainian lands of Poland-Lithuania. For him, the company with Wodzicki undoubtedly offered the possibility to enlarge his Polish trade as well as to upgrade his business status from being just an individual factor to the co-owner of a trading company. Such a business advance can be understood as an element of his career as a trader – not only in the local Gdańsk milieu – but also in Poland-Lithuania. In addition, the investigation

124 Compare with Ojala, Some Implications, p. 177.
125 Ojala, Some Implications, p. 183.
of his business career revealed some evidence to link his trade development with his other state functions. Indeed, he developed his trade thanks to the royal title of factoratus given him by John II Casimir Vasa. Moreover, he had regular contacts with Polish Kings as he was their secretary. Finally, his postal function gave him not only access to the correspondence going through Gdańsk, but also financial resources and an official title, which resulted in his recognition in noble society and allowed him to start his potash trade with Wodzicki.
The King and the Queen bewail the loss of a great mind and confess that they have lost a great friend.¹

These were the words used in a letter to the Grand Duke of Tuscany from Cosimo Brunetti, Royal Secretary of King John III Sobieski, dated 22 March 1676 (three days after Francesco created his last will) to describe the sorrow of the royal couple at the death of De Gratta.² Francesco De Gratta died on 16 July 1676 in Cracow and according to his last will, his body was transported to Gdańsk and buried in St. Nicholas’s Church.³ In August, De Gratta’s heirs gathered in Gdańsk to execute his last will and testament (on 20 August), having prepared a probate inventory of all his belongings and a list of his debtors and creditors (15 August).

The document dated 20 August 1676 concerning the property left by ‘the Secretary of his Majesty the King of Poland’ was countersigned by Paweł Antoni Grata (hic!), his oldest son; Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki, who signed as a guardian of De Gratta’s daughters, Anna Maria Wodzicka (Jan Wawrzyniec’s wife) and her sister Eufrozina Bairowa (widow of Andrzej Ignacy Bair), with the signatures of both sisters appearing separately as well;

¹ ‘Il Re u la Regina lo compiangono grande mente e confesso che lo perso un gran amico’ (quoted in Pośpiech, W służbie, p. 162).
² Pośpiech, W służbie, p. 162; For Francesco’s last will, see ASL, AS, 114, pp. 67v.-70.
³ See Hadaś, Poczyt, p. 510. There is no evidence of a funeral in the surviving records of St Nicholas’ Church in Gdańsk (a fire destroyed the church’s archives in the early nineteenth century). However, the Church books of St. Mary’s parish include information on Francesco De Gratta’s death in Cracow: APG 354/351, p. 67: ’1676, 16 July, Francisco Grato 63 j, zum Krakau geslorb, SN’; APG 354/352, p. 83: ’1676, 16 July, Franciscus Grato 63 Jahr zum Krakau gestorum’. There is no tomb or epitaph in the Church to confirm. Furthermore, one may notice that Francesco’s last will was created on 19 March 1676 in Cracow, see ASL, AS, 114, p. 69.
Caspar Rychter (hic!), as the guardian of unspecified beneficiaries, presumably De Gratta’s younger children, Alessandro, Francesco Jr., and Elisabetta; Wojciech Jan Braurski, burgrave of Pomerania as a ‘friend’ (Pol. przyjaciel, the term used in the document); and lastly Gotfried (hic!) Ginter, presumably a Warsaw trader, as a witness and a friend. Moreover, the document mentions that Dirich Gauthier (hic!), Jan (hic!) Lauginger and Jan Wawrzyńcic Wodzicki (because of the long distance to his place of residence and his official function) refused to take care of Francesco’s children.

It is also significant that the Polish queen, Marie Casimire d’Arquien, was visiting Gdańsk the very day when probate for Francesco De Gratta’s last will and testament was given. It gives a sense of the importance of the role De Gratta played for the Crown. Although, there is no evidence that the Queen was party to the talks or any other estate business on this particular day, we know where the queen was staying: in the Kamienica, the De Gratta family residence in Długi Targ (Long Market). If nothing else, this seems to verify the reasons for the queen’s visit to the city. More circumstantial evidence that makes it even more likely her visit was connected to the De Gratta family’s affairs is that her arrival was unexpected (the city officials and merchants of Gdańsk had heard of it only a few days before the queen’s arrival). In addition, she traveled all the way from Jarosław to Gdańsk, some 700 km.

This raises the question of how to interpret such a close relationship as there evidently was between the De Grattas and a royal family who grieved for their great friend and made sure a representative was in Gdańsk when his estate was being wound up?

In discussing his property – both his estates and his goods and chattels – together with the disposition of the testament as well as the ownership issues, I set out to show the family’s situation after De Gratta’s death, including the family’s position in society. In other words, an examination of the belongings of the Royal Postmaster in Gdańsk can illustrate not only his function in the administration of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but also the nature of Francesco De Gratta’s business contacts. Moreover, given the socio-

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5 About Ginter family and especially Juliusz Ginter, Warsaw trader and mayor, see, for example, Kersten, Warszawa kazimierzowska, p. 139.
6 ASL, AS, 123, pp. 109–113.
8 The Long Market was an extension of the Long Lane (Langgasse, ul. Długa).
economic networks evident in the probate dealings, the structures of early modern public administration can be investigated as well. Ultimately, the question is:

1. What do Francesco De Gratta’s estates reveal about his administrative functions and his position in society?

From a document dated 20 August 1676, it is apparent that De Gratta’s children were represented by guardians who had worked closely with him – Caspar Richter as a Gdańsk postmaster and Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki as a trade partner. Richter’s correspondence with Wodzicki is central to this research about Francesco De Gratta’s legacies, and includes plenty of information about the Kamienica and the rest of De Gratta’s collection of property scattered across Europe.\(^{10}\)

Apart from his correspondence with De Gratta, there is not much evidence about Richter and his activities in Gdańsk. From the previous chapters, it is clear that he became one of Francesco De Gratta’s closest companions and a guardian to his children, and was also made Head Postmaster in Gdańsk in 1677.\(^{11}\) The latter was presumably how he became involved in the city’s administration and the Royal Mail, while at the same time being active in commerce, organising the exchanges of goods among Polish nobles. After all, De Gratta left some of his business to Richter.

The second person who was close to De Gratta and who was his most important trade partner was Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki. To recall, Wodzicki was an administrator of the Polish salt mining company (żupy krakowskie) and the Treasurer of Nur Land (skarbnik nurski) in Masovia. However, his was not only a business relationship with De Gratta; there were family ties too. In 1669, he married one of De Gratta’s daughters, Anna Maria.

Because of his close ties to both Richter and Wodzicki, the analysis of De Gratta’s will and testament focuses on their joint dealings when disposing of his property. Consequently, the approach adopted in this chapter is to identify the key elements or objects in De Gratta’s social and financial networks by considering Richter’s and Wodzicki’s actions and analysing specific legacies, and more specifically by detailing issues that arose from (i) the De Gratta residence in Gdańsk, (ii) the Potop tapestries, which belonged to the Commonwealth but were held by the De Gratta family as collateral for

\(^{10}\) ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, pp. 37–272.
\(^{11}\) BG PAN, Ms. 719, pp. 579–580, King John Sobieski’s nomination of Richter, 5 October 1677.
the debts of King John II Casimir Vasa, (iii) the Italian assets and (iv) the list of debtors and creditors from 15 August 1676.

The De Gratta Residence in Gdańsk

The house – Kamienica – located in central Gdańsk at Długi Targ 3, is known as being part of the royal residence ‘Palatium Regium’ in the city and, because of the royal visits, was possibly the most important of all of Francesco De Gratta’s properties. It held both the private residence of the De Gratta family and De Gratta’s business offices. The Polish term ‘kamienica’ means a residential tenement building made of stone or brick (originally from the word ‘kamienie’ – stones); in this case, however, it refers not only to one particular building, but to the whole residence, which consisted of the main house (Mittelhaus) and two smaller houses placed in front and back (Vorhaus and Hinterhaus), a yard (Hofraum), and outbuildings including the stable and chicken coop. In character, this complex of buildings was similar to the other tenements to be found in early modern Gdańsk. In the Kamienica, besides reception, living and utility rooms, there were also some office rooms. As the inventory of De Gratta’s house reveals, there were two rooms with such a function: a scriptorium (Schreibstube) and an office (Kanzlei). Consequently, the Kanzlei was the place where the office of the Royal Postmaster was situated, and because of this official function, many problems relating to its management arose after De Gratta’s death.

To the Memory of Sir and Madame De Gratta

The correspondence between Richter and Wodzicki gives the impression that the idea of selling the residence was first mooted in 1676, directly after De Gratta’s death. However, the first letter to mention this was dated 16 July 1677, when Richter stressed that De Gratta’s oldest son, Paolo, wanted to keep it for himself:

12 See Illustration 1 (the Gratta House today)
15 See ASL, AS, vol. 123, p. 141. For more about office rooms and their functions, see forthcoming article by Salamonik, Salamonik, In Memoriam.
Mr Paolo would not sell the Kamienica and wants to live there himself, and have the third part of it to pay his brothers or the rent, rather than to leave and sell the house; there will be longer deliberations about that.  

Evidently, as the letter indicated, Paolo wanted to stay on in the Kamienica alone, even if that meant having to repay his two younger brothers for their shares or paying a monthly rent. In other words, it was still unclear how the problem of the Kamienica’s upkeep was to be resolved almost a year after De Gratta’s death. The conflict concerning the sale of the residence was to escalate. From Richter’s description to Wodzicki of all the ins and outs, two key facts stand out. The first was that Paolo changed his mind about selling the house, and having once been enthusiastic he became wholly opposed to the scheme. The second was that Paolo wanted to keep the house in remembrance of his parents – ‘To the memory of Sir and Madame De Gratta’ (‘in memoriam Nominis et Damus Gratarum’). Once again, Paolo was the oldest of the brothers to whom the Kamienica belonged, and perhaps that is why he decided not to sell it. Nevertheless, the antagonism between Richter and Paolo seems to have stemmed from conflicting interests. Richter pushed for selling the residence as soon as a good price was on offer; however, he wanted to wait for the market to improve, because he wished to increase his chances of getting back his expenses for the maintenance and renovation of the Kamienica. Furthermore, Richter frequently painted a negative image of Paolo in his correspondence with Wodzicki. That in turn suggests that Paolo, who probably had objections to Richter’s dealings over his father’s will, came to distrust both Richter and Wodzicki, who had been appointed his father’s executors. If nothing else, it shows Paolo and Richter’s mutual interdependence.

16 ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 42: ‘Kamienice nie chce P. Paweł pozwolic przedac chcąc sam w niewy mieszkać y mająć tertiam parte’m w niewy, woli płacic Intere’s drugim Braciom, albo tez Czynsz nizeli tety przedady dopuscic, lecz o tym będzie dalsza deliberatia.’

Richter went on to advise Wodzicki that it would be better if the Kamienica stood empty rather than incur further losses. In a letter of 11 February 1678, Richter expressed his annoyance and dissatisfaction about holding and maintaining the Kamienica. Six months later, he complained again about the house, announced that he wanted to report to the King about questions concerning his credit that had arisen because of his expenses for the Kamienica’s renovation and maintenance, and finally said he was set on leaving Gdańsk and moving to another country. Richter’s plans to leave Gdańsk came to nothing, and even the threat to inform the King about the whole situation seemed to be a bluff, and if anything a deliberate ploy designed to get his money back.

In the event, the final division of De Gratta’s property would not take place until the very end of 1678. In a letter dated 16 December 1678, Richter underlined the need to ask lawyers and tradesmen to be present at the moment of the partition, as in that way he and Wodzicki could prepare themselves for potential claims from nobles who wanted to make good their loans. It seems to be for this reason that Richter proposed a new idea for how to evade the senators’ demands: when the senators wanted to borrow money from Francesco De Gratta’s sons, then they could argue that they had Gdańsk citizenship, meaning that the nobles’ claims could easily be bounced on to the Gdańsk City Hall. By this, Francesco’s sons could be freed from the nobles asking for help and credit, which in turn shows that the loaning of money to senators was a common practice of their father. As Richter said, the nobles thought that De Grattas ‘circulated the money as the grain in our granaries to prevent it getting mouldy’. Remarkably, the whole strategy showed that the Kamienica served a public function, and likewise that the De Gratta family, who at first glance were obliged to credit Polish nobles, did not have to do so because they were Gdańsk merchants. Richter also claimed that they should ‘leave it to the Royal Burgrave to say that the city’s government

18 ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 72: ‘Lepiey ze będzie Kamienica ta pustowała, nizeliby utrata miała bydz dla nie’y tak iawna y wielka’.
19 ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 146: ‘dlaczego muszę się absetowac, y uciekac ze Gdanska w inne Kraie’.
21 ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 149: ‘opinia iest taka u ludzi, ze my w szpichlerzach kazemy przerabiac pieniadze iako zboze zeby nieplesniały.’
prohibits [financial loans] and mentioned that ‘the money should be given for ‘Interesse’ to the City Hall’. This in turn shows that Richter wanted to involve the City Hall and the Royal Burgrave, who was the King’s main representative in the city.

After several months of deliberations about the Kamienica, the repayment of a debt by Francesco Mollo – Francesco De Gratta’s nephew and the one of his main business partners, living in Amsterdam – permitted a division of the money, including the costs for the Kamienica itself and its maintenance, between the heirs and their testamentary guardians. The total value of the Kamienica was estimated to be around 49.250.3 (probably fl), an amount given in the accounts of De Gratta’s debtors and creditors drawn up by Richter on 15 August 1676.

The Kamienica was eventually preserved ‘To the memory of Sir and Madame De Gratta’ and became Paolo’s, who lived there until his death in 1712. After 1712, the Kamienica went to Paolo’s brother-in-law, Bartolomeo Sardi, and later to Lorenzo Sardi, the penultimate Royal Postmaster from the Sardi family in Gdańsk.

Metamorphosis

The Kamienica, together with the three tenements: two either side of it at Długi Targ 2 and 4 as well the tenement at Długi Targ 1, was transformed into the royal residence during the royal couple’s visits to Gdańsk. The royal family had their private chambers in the Kamienica, while the Court of Justice was held on the ground floor of the house next door at Długi Targ 1, and royal officials were accommodated in the last tenement. All four houses

24 The business relations between Mollo and De Gratta are discussed in the section of the thesis dealing with economic networks.
25 ASL, AS, 123, p. 199.
26 The money from Archbishop Michał Radziejowski, the primate of Poland (prymas) to repay his brothers their shares.
27 The last one was probably Giuseppe (Joseph) De Reina, who emigrated from Gdańsk with the entire family to Como (‘ad Patriam suam’) 24 September 1741, see ASL, AS, 121, p. 128. Therefore, the information that the last postmaster of Italian origin was Francesco Teodoro Reyna who died in 1730 as stated by Przybyłowka seems to be incorrect, see Przybyłowka, Jakub Kazimierz Rubinkowski, p. 17.
were interconnecting, but only during the royal visits, which suggests preparations on a large scale prior to the King’s arrival to the city.\textsuperscript{28}

In the second half of the seventeenth century, the Kamienica was renovated a couple of times to adapt its living space to meet the needs of the royal family.\textsuperscript{29} One such occasion was the visit in 1677 of John III Sobieski and Maria Louise de’ Arquien, who wanted their child to be born in Gdańsk. Information about the birth of Prince Aleksander Sobieski was confirmed in a letter dated 27 August 1677,\textsuperscript{30} in which Richter informed Wodzicki of the reasons for the renovations – indeed, he used the term ‘restoration’ in this context. Three months later, another letter about the visit of the royal couple to Gdańsk referred to its metamorphose (‘metamorphosis’), which as Richter described, Mrs Gratta would deplore if she were alive.\textsuperscript{31} Remarkably, the restoration is related to the Kamienica as a building, while the metamorphosis applies to the royal residence and its functional character. Despite this difference, both terms had something in common: they referred to the Kamienica’s representative status and maintenance. Undoubtedly, it fell to the De Gratta family to provide the finances for the maintenance and renovation of the Kamienica. As will be seen, the Kamienica in this way became public property, or as near as, which made it almost impossible to sell. For now, the metamorphosis that took place while the royal family visited Gdańsk in 1677 is worth taking a closer look at.

In a letter of 24 December 1677, Richter informed Wodzicki that the King was planning to prolong his stay in Gdańsk until ‘zapusty’ (the last day of the Carnival). In addition, Richter wrote about the changes to the Kamienica during the King’s visit. He complained about crowds, security and people coming and going as they pleased. He went on at length about how easy it was for merchants to just walk in, thus confirming that the Kamienica was open day and night to the public because the coffee house was located in the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Fabiani-Madeyska, „Palatinum Regnum”, p. 160.}
\footnote{About the renovation of this particular building and another in the Old City in Gdańsk, see Lipska, Dekoracje, pp. 95–128.}
\footnote{ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 47: ‘Krolowa Jej msci polog swoy będzie w Kamienicy Wmciow oprawowała, lecz iaka odmiana dopiero zdziwilbys się Wmci MMPan y pewnie nie z pozzytiem to będzie bo trzeba będzie Kamienicę restaurować in toto post discessum, który prolongabit do S. Marcina albo daley’.}
\footnote{ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, pp. 57–58: ‘O wyiezdzie Krolestwa Ich Mciow nic nie słychac interim Kamiennica WMMcio patuitur vim, y zadziwisz się WMc MMPan qualis metamorphosis ia sobie nie raz myślę ze gdy nieboszczka Dobrodzieyka to widziała, pewnieby z zaluumierała’.}
\end{footnotes}
frontal part of the building.\footnote{ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, pp. 59–60: ‘my tu tak scisnieni jestesmy, ze tylko trzy Izby wolne mamy, bo nam naprawadzowno Cappucinowy Dom w Przednie Mieszkanie ze dzien y noc wszystko otwarte stoi, zaczym laćno WMMMPan uważyc mozesz iakiey tulipnoci potrzeba, dla WMMMP mam wola zamowic Gospodę u Pana Szulca na Szerokiey Ulicy, gdzie bdziesz WMMCMPan miał bonam Comeditate wile ze u nas dopiero trudno’.} When it came to overnight guests, Polish and foreign nobles were frequently among their number. As an example of such a visit, there was ‘One Frenchman from Paris, de Arquien (hic!), came here, who in the name of the King and Rzeczpospolita wishes to discuss the Potop’\footnote{ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 53: ‘Przyiachał tuieden francuz z Paryza adnie de Arquien, ktory z Krola y Rzczptey procurne eliberatorem Potopu’.}. He was there for reasons I will return to later, but it is enough to confirm that Richter was not only alert to who was visiting Gdańsk and but also to who was staying at the Kamienica. Equally, the fact that Richter informed Wodzicki about who was coming to the city and to the residence is also worth noticing. Wodzicki, who lived in Cracow, and Richter who lived in Gdańsk, found such knowledge important in terms of their joint business as well as for staying abreast of what was going on in their milieus. Returning to d’Arquien and his stay at the Kamienica, one may underline that his visit occurred at a time when the royal couple was there. This in turn gives weight to the notion that the Kamienica was a kind of meeting point, not only for business partners, as we will see, but also for members of the royal family. That would have made the De Gratta residence one of the most important places in the whole city.

Finally, one may note that this particular visit of the Sobieski family to the city was long. It lasted fully seven months, due largely to the epidemics in Warsaw. Consequently, the length of the King’s stay in the city lies at the heart of the metamorphosis of the De Gratta residence that Richter described in his letters. In addition, Richter asked for Wodzicki to reimburse him for expenses for the house’s upkeep and metamorphosis which were in fact due to the King’s visit. This means that Richter used his own resources.

Publicum Chaus

In a letter dated 9 January 1678, Richter again complained about the maintenance of the residence. He dwelled on the Kamienica’s public reputation as a place where financial aid and ‘assistance when the whole Gdańsk cannot help’ could be found. Among people looking for financial support,
Richter included refugees, bishops, and voivodes. About a month later, on 1 February 1678, Richter retorted that the Kamienica was ‘public for all travellers from the whole world’ (‘publica via Peregrinatum in hoc mundo’). He did not mince his words later when he called the Kamienica a ‘damned nest’ (‘przeklete gniazdo’) and underlined the fact that it needed ‘ten people for its administration because it is the “publicum Chaus”’:

The King is considering to come again to Gdańsk for the summer and because of that no one wants to rent or buy the Kamienica, for the reason that it has become public. It would be better if this damned nest disappeared, rather than my business be ruined. If I had to live there longer I would die of the worries and troubles […] this damned Kamienica needs ten people for administration because it is a public house [publicum Chaus, hic!], but I need a calm apartment.

In Richter’s letter dated 25 March 1678, he informed Wodzicki that he had renovated the Kamienica (‘Kamienice in ordinem reduxi’) and that he was planning to move. He attached a list of the costs of running the Kamienica, probably stemming from the visits of the royal family and nobles, which came to ‘100,000 zł for Senators and Nobles – 6,000 [zł], for nuances – 2,000 [zł], for servant writers and cashiers – 1,000 [zł], for other expenses – 10,000 [zł]’. In the same letter, Richter declared that he felt like a serf of the Crown and compared himself to Francesco De Gratta, who had found himself in a similar position with the Rzeczpospolita and its notables: ‘as was the property of Francesco De Gratta and they understand that I am just such a serf and slave

[34] ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 65: ‘ta miła Kamienica wszystkiemu winna ze mi to pradę caméntum dla vtorowane żdawna drogi u Swiata sprawiła, bo kiedy cały Gdansk ni komu niemoze dopomodz to do Gratowéy Kamienice refugium, Biskupi Wojewodowie pieniędzy szukaia Porenk potrzebują y innych wygod, y tak opuściszyswy wszystkie Interéssa uchodzic potrzeba, Ja załuż wielc zem pod bytnosc Krolestwa IchMciow nieprzenioł gdzie indziey, albowiem przez 7 miesięcy nie wiele w Interessach Harednim sprawiłem kiedy tak wiele było przeszskod, ze trudno zliczyć’.


of the whole Crown as he was’. Later, Richter reported on how the negotiations for the sale of the Kamienica were going:

It was offered to many, but they would not even give 100 Thaler for it, not even for free, as I mentioned, nobody wants to live there, so it would be better if the Kamienica stood empty and better to pay the rent of 600 to the city, than to bear the losses of 20,000 or 30,000 florins that the Kamienica causes to my business, because people come from everywhere looking for money and other conveniences, and this is due to the reputation of the White House [probably the colour of the facade was white].

Richter wrote something similar in the next letter on 8 April 1678, in which he referred to the Kamienica’s reputation as a place where the whole world went for help: ‘when all of Gdańsk does not want or cannot help, then the whole world turns to De Gratta’s Kamienica for help’. When it came to the sale of the Kamienica, Richter expressed himself in even stronger terms:

I am leaving this damned business now, and somehow I will rent [the Kamienica] to someone. Only I can leave and break the custom [of asking for help] and show that we are not serving peasants. If God grant it I will show the door to many, because I will not stay in De Gratta’s house. Those of us who want to stay there, whether a great lord or a beggar, God’s punishment is sent down on this House.

He was outraged not only by his own situation, but also that he and Wodzicki might be thought to be ‘serving peasants’. This marks a change of perspective from Richter alone concerning the collaboration with his partner when it

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37 ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 89: ‘Substantiá iako Nieboszczyk więc czynil, y rozumieią ze ia iestem takim poddanym y niewolnikiem Całey Korony iako on był’.
38 ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, pp. 90–91: ‘Lubo iest iuz nieiednemu presentowana niechcą dac arendy nietylko 100 talarow, lecz ani darmo iakom namienil niechcą mieszak, więc lepiey ze ta Kamienica będzie proznawala y lepiej utracic 600 miasto Cynszu, niz zebym ia Haredibus do roku na 20000 albo 30000 fl szkody rachował, którą ta Kamienica causat, bo zewsząd tylko iako nasowe Ludzie biią, y pieniędzy iako tez inney wygody żądaią, ato ex re spectru białej Kamienica’.
40 ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, pp. 99–100: ’Jatez z tey przekłętey mansiey wychodzę iuz, y naymę iakokolwiek y komukolwiek aby tylko ludzi odłozyc y odzyczciaic ad importum tote y pokazac ze nie iestesmy poddanemi Chlopami, iako ze da Bog pokazę nie iednemu drzwí, bonie będę w Gratowey Kamienicy mieszkał. Alias kto z nas by wniwie chciał zostawac, trzeba albo bydz Panem Wielkim albo zebrakiem dla Boga co za tyranstwo y kara Boska za takoczarowana ta iest Kamienica’.
came to the maintenance of the Kamienica. Richter underlined that he had a huge loan for the first time in his life, but still insisted on waiting to sell the house until there was a good offer.\footnote{ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 101: ‘ze ieszcze niemiał nigdy takiey Creditu, iakom teraz Zaczym niech tylko wszystko idzie według zdania mego a będzie dobrze’.} For the moment, Richter wished to receive his expenses from Wodzicki, who seems to have had control of the financial dealings of the De Gratta family. The letter also shows there was another issue: Richter probably suspected he might not be repaid his money, especially if he stayed on in the Kamienica. That is why, despite Wodzicki’s promises guaranteeing his expenses, Richter felt uncertain about Wodzicki. Nonetheless, once again, Richter was living in Gdańsk, and he knew the local situation much better than Wodzicki, who was in Cracow. And, strikingly, Richter had ended his letter of 8 April 1678 by regretting the fact that they had not rented out the Kamienica two years before, immediately after Francesco De Gratta’s death, as it would have resulted in a substantial profit.\footnote{ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 101: ‘byłby iuz znaczny supplemment w Cassie, który iest zaniedbany tylko dla tey Kamienicy’.
}

The metamorphosis thus bears out the public character of the Kamienica. The evidence of its general use confirms the impression that the De Gratta house was a royal residence, but also was open to the public. However, the distinction between the costs of maintaining and renovating the Kamienica and the costs associated with people who came looking for help was marked even more clearly here than it was when discussing the reasons for the King’s visit. That is why its use by nobles – Polish nobles, that is – speaks to the very real function that the Kamienica had for the Commonwealth, and not just to its popular reputation. All the evidence indicates that because of its function, the Kamienica was not easy to sell. No one wanted to buy the Kamienica – a royal residence, especially when the King was planning to visit Gdańsk more frequently. That in turn says something about the role of the royal postmaster and his residence in the administration of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Thus, in looking at the public character of the Kamienica, Richter’s letters show it was a focus for appeals for help, whether nationally from the elite (refugees, bishops and voivodes) or locally from Gdańsk, and was part of the Commonwealth’s administration.

De Gratta-Wodzicki

The attempted sale of the Kamienica sheds some light on the functions of the place and the situation of De Gratta’s family after Francesco De Gratta’s
death. Not only was the Kamienica part of a chain of royal residences, used during the royal family’s visits to Gdańsk, but it was De Gratta and after his death, his children’s guardians Wodzicki and Richter who were responsible for maintaining and renovating the residence. Looking at the two executors, Wodzicki can best be described as channelling money and Richter more as channelling information. An analysis of the ties between Wodzicki and Richter shows their mutual dependence, not only because of De Gratta’s estate and the future of his children, but also because their business contacts depended on where they lived and their own personal networks. It should be kept in mind that Richter was selling goods from Wodzicki and other Polish nobles to the Low Countries, just as De Gratta had done – and business between Richter and Wodzicki was directly affected by the bequests made by De Gratta.43 Similarly, Richter stayed in regular contact with Francesco Mollo and Voet as well as other creditors when he was helping wind up the estate. Because of that, the activity of Wodzicki was limited by the uncontrolled actions of Richter. The ties between Richter, Wodzicki, and the others involved indicate De Gratta’s importance in the local and the Crown’s administrative structures. The formulations such as ‘Publicum Chaus’ or ‘publica via Peregrinatum in hoc mundo’ confirm De Gratta’s position in society. Moreover, Richter’s endless complaints about people asking for financial assistance not only point to the Kamienica’s role, they also tell something about Francesco and his activities.

Given that the royal couple, bishops, magnates, and nobles frequently stayed at the Kamienica, it is clear that it had become a sort of meeting place in Gdańsk for Polish-Lithuanian nobles; one where royal decisions were made. That is how the place became commonly known not only to Gdańsk’s inhabitants, but perhaps even more so to officials of the Commonwealth. Much of the public character of the place could be explained by De Gratta’s role in royal service. Lastly, the fact that Richter characterised the relationship between De Gratta and the Crown as servitude is an indication of why so many public figures required help from Richter after De Gratta’s death. To sum up, the problems the executors had with the Kamienica show the complexities of the mutual dependency of De Gratta’s heirs, business partners, clients, and guests, which should be considered in terms of the social, political, and economic networks built up around the Kamienica as a focal point of this particular network.

43 See, for example, the letter from Richter to Wodzicki dated 16 July 1677. In this letter Richter informed Wodzicki about the prices and sale of potash and grain in the Netherlands, ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 43.
The Potop Tapestries

Not only was the Kamienica a subject of great concern in Richter and Wodzicki’s correspondence, the Potop tapestries were also discussed in detail. The analysis of the issues arising from possession of the tapestries reveals how the Polish administrative structure functioned, and in looking at the tapestries’ value both for De Gratta and the Commonwealth, the focus here is on the parties to the negotiations after De Gratta’s death and their various political and financial agendas. But first, there is the matter of how such immensely valuable tapestries came into the possession of the De Gratta family, and whether they counted as a part of De Gratta’s estate on his death.

Did the fact of their possession affect De Gratta’s role in Polish society?

In early 1669 a magnificent set of tapestries, known even then as the Potop tapestries, were mortgaged by King John II Casimir Vasa to De Gratta in Gdańsk.\(^{44}\) The Potop tapestries (Pol. ‘arrasy’ or ‘obicie potopowe’), which numbered 170 in all and depicted both biblical and landscape scenes as well as fauna and flora, had been commissioned in the Netherlands by the last Jagiellonian king of Poland, Sigismund II August.\(^{45}\) To make it clear, their name came from the biblical deluge (Pol. potop) which was to play such an important part in the tapestries’ history, and therefore not from ‘the Deluge’, the name given by Poles to the Swedish–Polish war of 1655–1660. Part of the great royal collection that hung on the walls of Wawel Castle in Cracow, the tapestries symbolised the wealth and dignity of the Jagiellonian dynasty. In that, they were not unusual. Such tapestries were popular at royal courts and bishops’ residences across Europe in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and they were often used for decorative or symbolic purposes.\(^{46}\)

In the seventeenth century, the question of ownership of the Polish tapestries was controversial. The royal family’s right to own them was questioned, and their public character and status as belonging to the whole Commonwealth were underlined. Nevertheless, the tapestries were treated as royal property, as the abdication of King John II Casimir demonstrated.\(^{47}\) John II Casimir handed the tapestries to Francesco De Gratta, apparently as security for a loan of 100,000 fl, although it remains unknown exactly how

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\(^{44}\) ASL, AS, 121, p. 577. The list from 18 February 1669 numbered 170 tapestries, see Szymydk, Zbiory artystyczne, p. 10.

\(^{45}\) Hennel-Bernasikowa, Dzieje arrasów, p. 20ff.


\(^{47}\) Czermak, Ostatnie lata, p. 282, 309.
much the King received for them (according to an earlier valuation of 1665, they were judged to be worth that amount). De Gratta, in letter to Wodzicki on 3 October 1670, gave the amount of 130,000 fl as the security (‘assecuratia’), while in letters from Richter to Wodzicki the amount of 100,000 fl is referred to. From De Gratta’s letter, it should be noted that these 130,000 fl were secured by Tito Livio Burattini on behalf of the King:

I understand that Mr Miaskowski will now be residing at the royal court and administrating the affairs of King John Casimir; to him I would like to entrust my business, because I have made my entrustment to Mr Burattini for all of the king’s pledged property thus I want to keep this assurance for the Potop tapestries for the amount of 130,000.

The question of the true value of the tapestries should not obscure the strategy and relationships at work here, although the plain fact that they were worth at least 100,000 fl is ultimately what made the tapestries so important. Crucially, possession of the tapestries by the members of the De Gratta family resulted in a situation where the Commonwealth was in their debt. In other words, in order to retrieve the tapestries, the Commonwealth, in the shape of the Diet, was obliged to repay John II Casimir’s debt. That eventually happened on 31 July 1724, when Jerzy Przebendowski, the Grand Treasurer of the Crown (podskarbi wielki koronny), confirmed the receipt of the tapestries from Lorenzo Sardi, heir of Paolo De Gratta. In total, the transaction concerned 156 arras, as noted in the document signed by Prebendowski and in Sardi’s own detailed description. This indicates that not all of the original 170 tapestries had made their way into the possession of the De Gratta family and later on to Sardi. Equally, there is no indication of the total figure repaid to Sardi either, only the information that at some

48 According to Ryszard Szmydki; however, the amount of 1,000 florins given by Szmydki seems to be a gross underestimate, see Szmydki, Zbiory, p. 9.
49 ZNiO, Rkps. 11572/II, p. 303: ‘Rozumiem ysz WMM P. Miaskowski teraz bendzie resiowal u Dworu y administrowal interessa KJMsci Jana Casimira ktoremu prosz moie interesse Comendare, gdyś mam assicuratią daną P. Burattiniemu, Na wysitkie dobra KJMsci zacim trzimacz się myślę vigornie tey assecuratiey na potopwego obicia nasumę 130/m’.
50 ASL, AS, 123, p. 125.
51 ‘Informazione’ was a detailed account of the progression of the tapestries by Francesco De Gratta and a catalogue of the collection with its detailed description of the scenes shown in the tapestries: Registro delli Arazzi chiamati del Diluvio, ASL, AS, 121, pp. 101–108.
point in the two last years of the debt’s existence, following the Diet resolutions of 1722, the contracted amount had been paid.

For Appearances

What, then, was the situation immediately after De Gratta’s death? In a letter of 16 July 1677, Richter wrote that ‘Potop was still in Warsaw, but it will be given back’. Evidently not all of the tapestries were kept in the Kamienica. One reason for this may have been their use in royal ceremonies, the event that springs to mind being the coronation of John III Sobieski in 1676. Further information as to their location can be found in a letter of 9 January 1678, when Richter reported that ‘6 pieces are with the Grand Treasurer of the Crown, located in the Castle, God only knows in what condition’.

From there, some of the tapestries were lent to the King through the Grand Treasurer of the Crown, even though formally they remained the property of the De Gratta family, as a letter later that year shows:

It is commonly known that [the property of Francesco De Gratta] should not be used or borrowed, but who could oppose the King when he asked, and now [some tapestries are] in Warsaw in the Castle and the Grand Treasurer rules upon them.

As we have seen, the different locations of the tapestries were the main obstacle to resolving the issue. This last letter also shows that Richter was in touch with Bartolomeo Sardi, the Royal Postmaster in Warsaw. Sardi was entrusted with negotiations for the Potop tapestries with the Diet. The personal concerns of Richter, Sardi, and Wodzicki came into play when agreeing on who owned the tapestries, as all of them were involved as beneficiaries of De Gratta’s will: in the case of Richter and Wodzicki directly, and in Sardi’s case indirectly by his marriage with Eufrosina De Gratta. Later, in the same letter, Richter gave an account of how the tapestries came into De Gratta’s possession in the first place:

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Mr Sardi should ask and closely investigate whether Mr Burattini confiscated those Potop tapestries, because we always assert that King John Casimir gave a pledge for 100,000 to Mr Burattini. If the Rzeczpospolita were to repay those 100,000 florins then the Potop tapestries would be returned to the Crown, but the money is not Mr Burattini’s, but Mr De Gratta’s; Francesco De Gratta’s debenture [via Burattini] was done for appearances [apparentia, hic!].

This is the first real indication that the tapestries were mortgaged to Francesco De Gratta. It makes obvious that not only John II Casimir and De Gratta were involved, but also Tito Livio Burattini – according to Richter, it was through him that the money had been transferred. In this way, Burattini became the middleman (broker) between creditor (De Gratta) and debtor (John II Casimir), and, as the letter notes, this was ‘done for appearances’. As one may recall from Chapter 6, Burattini was a leading figure in the administration of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and a wealthy one, who leased several of the mints of the Polish Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and was embroiled in a financial scandal. The question of Burattini’s role raises certain questions about De Gratta himself, of course. Why make this arrangement for the sake of appearances, and why was it was not De Gratta himself who was formally named the owner of the tapestries? Burattini’s mediation might have been useful because he was by then a member of the Polish aristocracy, but also perhaps to hide the real location of the tapestries. Here, some similarities to De Gratta’s engagement in the minting affairs can be found. De Gratta at this time also refused to be a ‘star’ in his network, but remained only a ‘node’.

Another aspect of the treatment of the Potop tapestries surfaces in a letter of 9 September 1678. During his visit to Warsaw, Paolo De Gratta had threatened a Mr Habsburski about the tapestries and claimed them as his by right, ‘threatening [him] because of the Potop, which should belong to him alone’. That is why Richter underlined the need for speed in their dealings,

56 ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 67: ‘Trzeba aby się Imć P. Sardi kształtnie P. Burattiniego przepytał iezeli on na to Obicie Potopowe areszt uczynił, bo my zawsze tymi się składamy iz Król Jmci S. P. Jan Kazimierz dał w zastawie 100/m fl P. Boratiniemu y takgdy Rzeczpta zapłaci te 100/m fl natenczas będzie tez Potop od nas powrocony, do tego ze te pieniądze nie są Pana Burattiniego, ale Pana Graty, y dalejszy tego apparentiey była zawsze ta Obligatia u Nieboszczyka’.

57 The financial dealings between Burattini and De Gratta are described in Chapter 6.

because ‘About this Potop we should confer properly in order to resolve the problem at the next Diet, because I do not know what we will have to do’.\textsuperscript{59} Evidently, Paolo’s claim on the tapestries was felt to threaten Richter and Wodzicki’s position, much like Burattini’s hand in the business.

Returning to Burattini, Richter wrote about the need for a commitment from Burattini on 2 October 1678: ‘Mr [Grand] Treasurer of the Crown wrote immediately to Mr Sardi in Warsaw that the assistance of Mr Burattini should be seriously considered while negotiating over the Potop’\textsuperscript{60} It seems that Sardi, acting on behalf of Richter and Wodzicki, had wanted to exclude Burattini from the negotiations, which in turn shows that Burattini was under suspicion of profiting from the tapestries (possibly as part of a bilateral agreement dating back to 1668). This is the case as it was presented by Sardi in his ‘Informazione’, his account of everyone’s dealings with the tapestries, drawn up prior to their return to the Crown in 1724.\textsuperscript{61} He wrote that the plan had been that Burattini would repay De Gratta, and then reclaim the money from the Diet later. The repayment was to be made from the profits of the leasing of the mint of Wilno, ‘di summa anai maggiore per conti di Zecche’.\textsuperscript{62} In all this, there was one more important issue to take into account. There was no formal evidence of the De Gratta payment.

The Evidence

The Potop tapestries are in pledge and we have no document for that and when it comes to the moment when such will be requested, that will be a shame […] because of Francesco De Gratta’s actions we cannot avoid carrying out that [transaction through Burattini]; otherwise we would destroy his good name in the Commonwealth, that is why we must insist on the repayment to Mr Burattini of those 100,000 florins and then the Potop shall be returned.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{59} ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 109: ‘Względem tego Potopu trzeba się też nam będzie naradzić dobrze, aby naprzyszłym Seymie zbydż zglowy bo niewiem co daley z nim czynic będziemy’.
\textsuperscript{60} ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, p. 117: ‘Imć Pan Podskarbi Wielki Koronny prętko speratur w Warszawie piszę instantissime do Jmci Pana Saredgo aby in assisténtia Imci P. Buratyngiego serio tractowali z Imscią o eliberatią Potopu z rąk naszych’.
\textsuperscript{61} ASL, AS, 121, pp. 101–102.
\textsuperscript{62} ASL, AS, 121, p. 101.
\textsuperscript{63} ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, pp. 125–126: ‘Potop wzastawie aniemamy documentu nato y gdy czasu swego kazą pokazac wewstydzie przyidzie zostac [...] bo Nieboszczyk Dobrodzieży tak udawał, agdybysmy inacze udali zniewazylibysmy Nieboszczyka w grobie ze szedł
This letter of Richter’s on 14 October 1678 reveals that there was no
documentation for the transactions to do with the tapestries. Richter, in
describing this state of affairs, dwelled on the ‘shame’ this entailed. This fear
seems to have been central in all the negotiations up to that point, and remains
an overriding concern. Richter, who tried different strategies, stated that there
was no formal confirmation of the amount of money given to John II Casimir
by De Gratta. How, then, were the De Grattas to get their money back?

The only solution was to negotiate with Burattini, as Richter acknowled-
ged. Burattini had to admit to the Diet that it was he who had paid the
money – this was when Burattini was entangled in a huge scandal about his
mint operations. In the 1660s, he had been convicted of fraud, having cheated
the Crown over the amount of silver in the coinage. This fact would have
done little to increase the Diet deputies’ faith in Burattini’s word, and meant
it would be almost impossible to get the Crown treasury to pay out the money
to redeem the tapestries to him. Some two months later, on 16 December
1678, Richter informed Wodzicki that ‘Mr Sardi will be at the Diet session in
Grodno (Bel. Hrodna), where there will be negotiations with Mr Burattini
about the Potop as well as the mint affairs.’64 Sardi failed to arrange things to
their satisfaction, as a letter written on 10 March 1679 after the end of the
session of the Diet showed.65 However, he enjoyed one success. On 10
February 1679 he managed to obtain a receipt for the tapestries from the
Grand Treasurer of the Crown.66 By 16 June 1679, when Richter wrote to
Wodzicki ‘about the Potop, to restore it or to return it for the whole
Commonwealth,’67 he was clearly signalling that the tapestries belonged to
the whole Commonwealth, not only to the royal family. The last mentions of
the Potop tapestries in the Richter–Wodzicki correspondence concern the
negotiations with Burattini: Wodzicki was planning to visit Gdańsk via
Warsaw in August of 1679, solely in order to meet Burattini. Richter went on
to warn Wodzicki of the complicated situation that had arisen concerning the tapestries (14 July 1679), but again hoped to resolve the problem (18 August 1679):

While in Warsaw, you should confer with Burattini about the Potop tapestries so as to free us from this yoke that we bear for them [the mint officers], because I have heard that they have taken 100,000 florins from the Treasury […] If Mr Sardi receives a debenture, then it is likely that we will have to return this nice Potop to Rzeczpospolita.68

There had thus been renewed efforts to persuade Burattini to claim the repayment for the Potop, now with the question of the mint’s organisation featuring in the discussion. It seems that the credit had been advanced on the basis of profits from the mint, on which more people had a claim before the value of the tapestries could be repaid to the De Gratta heirs. All in all, this last letter reveals the direct connection between the mint system and the De Grattas’ capital bound up in the tapestries.

The negotiations about the Potop tapestries, which were undertaken over two years (1677–1679) differ from those about the Kamienica. They were not brought to a successful conclusion. The debt was finally repaid by the Crown in 1724, some 45 years after Richter, Wodzicki, and Sardi’s efforts came to nothing. Nevertheless, Richter and Wodzicki’s correspondence and the documents collected by Sardi offer a great opportunity to observe the various strategies for overcoming the obstacles thrown up in their path, exactly who was involved, and detailed descriptions of the different sides to the problem. The tapestries pitted Wodzicki, Richter, and Sardi, as De Gratta’s heirs, against Burattini, with the Grand Treasurer of the Crown, as the representative of the Rzeczpospolita, caught in the middle, who sometimes even acted as a mediator in the drawn-out proceedings. Two things should be underlined. The first is that, unlike the Kamienica, the Potop tapestries were not included in the probate inventory of assets and debts drawn up after De Gratta’s death, or rather, they were listed together with chattels and property in the probate inventory, but without a statement of their value. The second is that no official documentation was forthcoming to confirm the payment of

68 ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, pp. 226–227: ‘Będąc dopiero w Warszawie racz WMć MMPan z Imcią Burattinim rozmowic strony Potopowego Obicia aby nas uwolnił od tego Jarzma, które dla JMci ponosimy, bo słyszałem ze JMć wziół ze skarbu 100/m fl […] lubo obligatia wręku Imsci Pana Sardyego była, przęto jezeli tak jest, to tylko przydzie oddac ten miły Potop Rzp’tey’.
100,000 florins to Burattini, who – in such a way – most probably hid his own profits from his mint operations.

The Italian Assets

The third part of Francesco De Gratta’s legacy besides the Kamienica and the Potop tapestries, chosen for discussion here is the Italian assets. Like the tapestries, this does not appear in the probate inventory, but the way in which it was managed also shows the interpersonal interactions involved and, more particularly, reveals who had contacts in Italy who could check their value. Ultimately, it offers a useful comparison with the assets that De Gratta left in Poland-Lithuania such as the Kamienica in Gdańsk or the tapestries. How, then, was the question of De Gratta’s Italian assets managed?

In a letter dated 16 July 1677, Richter informed Wodzicki that Sardi was coming to Gdańsk on business and was going to take the opportunity to discuss the ‘Milanese goods’ (‘dobra mediolańskie’). Richter was quite specific about where De Gratta’s Italian effects were, as he mentioned Milan by name. How did the items in Milan become part of De Gratta’s estate without being mentioned in the probate inventory?

In the inventory of the Kamienica there is the following entry in the section listing privileges and documents: ‘Inventarium di Seniori Antonio De Gratta aus Mobilien In Italien’. Despite the fact that we do not know what items were included, there is a strong possibility that they might have been left to De Gratta by his father, Giovanni Antonio. It is worth remembering that, while De Gratta had business in various European cities, there is no indication that he had business dealings in Milan. In looking into the origins of the De Gratta family and its elevation to the Polish nobility in 1676, the Duchy of Milan appeared frequently in the sources as their homeland. Moreover, the family was described several times as ‘Famiglie Nobile Milanese’. In addition, a confirmation of their Italian noble status was

70 ASL, AS, 123, p. 159.
71 Information about Eufrosina De Gratta, ASL, AS, 203, p. 3: ‘figlia dal Nobile Milanese e Pollacco signore Francesco De Gratta’. However, here there is incorrect information about their Polish origin, saying that it was Francesco’s sons and not Francesco himself who received the Polish Indygenat.
issued by the ‘city councillors of the city of Milan’, which states that the family originated from Cannobio, located in the Duchy of Milan.\textsuperscript{72}

Winding up the Italian part of De Gratta’s estate, which was very much a feature of the correspondence between Richter and Wodzicki, called for a particular kind of strategy. Richter wrote on 7 April 1679:

> I have asked Mr Sardi and Mr Pestaloci about the Milan properties to get information about them […] I will implore Mr Pestaloci again, as a person who knows about those properties, for any information.\textsuperscript{73}

Clearly it was hoped that Sardi and Pestalozzi (Pestaloci was its Polonized form) would be instrumental in Richter’s and Wodzicki’s plan for proceeding with any Italian assets. This reveals that neither Richter, Wodzicki, nor even Sardi had any idea what those Milanese assets were, let alone their value. That is why Pestalozzi, as one who knew at least something about them, was deputed to search for more information. Richter’s letter implies that Sardi had told him about Pestalozzi’s, and that is how Richter came to ask for his help. Who was Pestalozzi and why would he know about De Gratta’s belongings in Italy?

As one may recall from Chapter 6, the Pestalozzi family was active in several European cities, including Cracow and Milan, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and Giovanni Baptista Pestalozzi, who lived in Warsaw and represented De Gratta in the contract with Burattini once, was the letter’s ‘person who knows’. It seems likely that Giovanni Baptista Pestalozzi was in touch with his brothers in Italy (who probably lived in Milan), and that is why he was able to obtain more information about De Gratta’s property there. The most interesting fact for the present analysis is that Richter and Wodzicki had no knowledge whatsoever of De Gratta’s Italian effects – only that they existed – and that in turn casts a new light on the relationship between Richter and De Gratta in particular. De Gratta simply had not told his partners about his property in Italy. This seems to be borne out by the time that elapsed between the first comment about assets in Milan (July 1677) and the first mention of Pestalozzi (April 1679). The interval may well be explained by De Gratta’s executors attempting to find someone trustworthy who might have the information they needed. The situation is even more

\textsuperscript{72} ASL, AS, 123, p. 125.

\textsuperscript{73} ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, pp. 183–184: ‘O Mediolanskich dobrach lubom prosił y IMci P. Sardeo y P. Pestalociego aby się wiedziawszy chcieli nas informare […] będę znowu upraszał Pana Pestalociego iako wiadomego tych dobr o Informatią’.
intriguing when one factors in that De Gratta’s youngest son, Francesco Jr., had been studying in Parma and was well on his way to becoming a canon in Milan. Despite the fact that Francesco Jr. subsequently resigned from the canonry, the very fact that he had been a student and had prepared to become a canon there indicates that De Gratta may have been keeping his property in the Duchy of Milan for that purpose – to fund the education of his youngest son.

The question of the Italian property is discussed regularly by Richter and Wodzicki, with Richter first hoping for clues to how to proceed, and then making his own decisions. In a letter of 26 May 1679, Richter wrote that he hoped that the Milan goods would be sold.⁷⁴ In another letter on 16 June 1679, he reported that Sardi would be visiting Cracow soon, and that would be a good time for Wodzicki to discuss the problem.⁷⁵ If nothing else, it shows that Sardi also kept himself informed about how the investigation was going.

A letter dated 13 September 1680 reveals the solution to the problem of De Gratta’s assets in Italy:

> When it comes to the goods in the Kingdom of Milan, those will be sold because they will be unnecessary according to Mr Mollo, and they will be worth no more than 2,000 Thaler. I have not been idle at this time, because I have calmed down Mr Sardi and I have had good negotiations with Mr Mollo.⁷⁶

As Richter informed Wodzicki, the ‘bona in Ducatu Mediolanensis’ were to be sold for 2,000 Thaler, or about 1,000 florins; not a small sum, even though not as great as the value of the Kamienica, for example (which was about 49,250 probably fl). In the end, the transaction between Richter and Francesco Mollo, who was based in Amsterdam, should be seen as Richter’s own chosen course of action. He informed Wodzicki and Sardi, whom he had to ‘calm down’, after negotiations he had conducted on his own initiative. Sardi, it must be stressed, did not trust Mollo. The fact that he sent his son Cesare⁷⁷ to Amsterdam after Francesco De Gratta’s death to keep an eye on

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⁷⁶ ZNiO, Rkps. 11574/II, pp. 249–250: ‘Co sie tycze Bona in Ducatu Mediolanensis, te maia bydz przedzane, ile ze niepotrzebne będą według zdania samegosz Pana Molla, y ze więcey na 2000 talarow nie wyniosą, atoli przez tenczas nieprzozwoalem, bom Imsci P. Sardeg uspokoil y z Panem Mollo uczynilem dobrą Negotiatią’.
⁷⁷ Cesare Sardi (+ 1737), banker and merchant in Amsterdam, who ran an insurance company, see Sardi’s last will translated to English: NAL, PROB 11/649/234, pp. 193–194.
the negotiations to realise De Gratta’s profits from the trade with the Netherlands and England is a mark of his distrust of Mollo, who unofficially controlled De Gratta’s property in Amsterdam (Mollo was not named in the will, but often features in later documents). For that reason, the sale of the Milan assets, which had never been formally listed as part of the estate, was veiled in secrecy. That is how it is best analysed: in terms of a secret agreement.

The network’s strategy, revealed in the dealings concerning the Milan assets, was focused on the Richter–Sardi–Wodzicki triangle, with Pestalozzi and Mollo as the external actors (brokers): Pestalozzi, who played an informative role, and Mollo, a causative one.

It seems likely that Mollo knew from the beginning about the Italian goods, but had never been asked for help (the references to Mollo in the Richter–Wodzicki correspondence are largely concerned with the difficulties with the repayment of the De Gratta money left in Amsterdam) and if so, that would demonstrate Richter and Wodzicki’s rights and duties as executors in taking the initiative regarding De Gratta’s estate. The lack of other strategies (the opening with Pestalozzi seems to have come to nothing) together with Richter’s keen interest in his potential profit led to the arrangement with Mollo. It is in this light that Richter’s remarks about his ‘good negotiations’ should be read, especially given that he had not had much good to say about Mollo otherwise.

To sum up, the handling of De Gratta’s Milan assets shows some of Richter and Wodzicki’s strategies in managing the legacies left by De Gratta.

The List of Debtors and Creditors

In general, the list of debtors and creditors from 1676 cannot be used to show the ongoing business relationships of De Gratta, but it can substantially help to reconstruct the social network that Francesco had at his disposal. Furthermore, the list is perceived here as a legacy that Francesco left to his heirs. This archival source includes a list of persons that appear in other documents discussed in the previous chapters. Moreover, the list includes sometimes just functions or just name or surname and this is why some of the persons listed below are impossible to verify. For the purpose of this chapter, the persons that appear in the list will be categorized into four groups distinguished by the person’s origin and the social strata that they belonged
to, as follows: the Polish-Lithuanian nobles/merchants (including clergymen), the Greater Gdańsk merchants and traders, the actors of Italian origin and the actors of foreign-origin (exclusively Italians).78

Table 1. The Nobles/Merchants (including clergymen) from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (excluding Greater Gdańsk):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name79</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Debit/Credit</th>
<th>Sum in florins80</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Becker Jan (Johann) Fridrich</td>
<td>Merchant, trader in the potash company with De Gratta and Wodzicki</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonarowski Damian</td>
<td>Possibly a member of the family Boner/Bonar – a Cracowian merchant family originating from the Netherlands81</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buzynski (Bużeński Stanisław)</td>
<td>A Canon of Warmia and Gniezno (kanonik warmiński, gnieźnieński)82</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czarlinski (Czarliński) Samuel (z Czarlina)</td>
<td>Wojski (Lat. tribunus83) of Dorpat (wojski derbski)84</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

78 Due to the fact that some names/professions have not been recognised, they are classified by spelling of the name or surname or the functions given in the list.
79 Names as they appear from the list of debts and credits from 1676. In the brackets follow the names in their full form.
80 One may note that the information about the currency is missing in the list. However, in Gdańsk probate inventories the amounts of money were usually given in florins and therefore it is also relevant to use florins here. In addition, taking into account that the debt of Konopacki was recorded once in zł – 2000 and the same amount was recorded in the list, the amounts were probably converted to florins 1:1. About the prices included in the probate inventories in the eighteenth century, see Edmund Kizik, Ceny domów na gdańskim rynku nieruchomości w latach 1774–1792 w świetle rękopiśmiennej gazety, „Danziger Monathliche Sammlung”, in Edmund Kizik (ed.) Studia i materiały do dziejów domu gdańskiego, vol. 3 (Gdańsk-Warsaw 2015), p. 91.
83 Augustyniak, History, p. 87.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Initials</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czartoryskie (Czartoryscy Jan Karol and Magdalena, maiden name – Konopacka)</td>
<td>Jan Karol Czartoryski – Chamberlain of Cracow (<em>podkomorzy krakowski</em>)[^85]</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demuth (Ludwik Wawrzyniec)</td>
<td>Canon of Warmia[^86]</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doenhoff (Denhoff) Theodor</td>
<td>Crown Court Chamberlain (<em>podkomorzy wielki koronny</em>)[^87]</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>172; 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gninski (Gniński Jan)</td>
<td>Voivode of Chełmno (<em>wojewoda chełmiński</em>), Regent of royal cabinet (<em>regent kancelarii</em>)[^88]</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorayski (Górajski) Stanisław</td>
<td>Member of the Diet (<em>posel na sejmy</em>) from the Ruthenian voivodeship[^89]</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>9416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heidenstienowa (Heidenstein) Elizabeth</td>
<td>Abbess at the Żukowo convent (<em>Xieni Zarn[owska]</em>)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konopacki Jerzy (Karol)</td>
<td>A son to Jakub Oktawian Konpacki and Sophia Heidenstein</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosowski Adam</td>
<td>Member of the Diet (<em>posel na sejmy</em>) from the Podlaskie voivodeship[^90]</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>26443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotowic (Kotowicz) Andrzej (Andrzej)</td>
<td>Lithuanian Great Notary (<em>pisarz wielki litewski</em>)[^91]</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^89]: *Elektorów poczet*, p. 98.
[^90]: *Elektorów poczet*, p. 165.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kozłowski Tomasz (Jacek) Hiacynth</td>
<td>Pantlern of Czersk (stolnik czerski)</td>
<td>C 700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kozuchowscy (Kożuchowscy)</td>
<td>(Stanisław Kożuchowski, Member of the Diet (poseł na sejmy), and Barbara, maiden name – Siewierska)</td>
<td>C 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lubomirska (maiden name – Ossolińska) Helena (Tekla)</td>
<td>The wife to Aleksander Michał Lubomirski, Crown Equerry (koniuszy wielki koronny)</td>
<td>C 272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lubomirski (Jerzy Sebastian)</td>
<td>Grand Marshal of the Crown</td>
<td>C 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madalinski (Madaliński) Bonaventura</td>
<td>Bishop of Plock and Włocławek</td>
<td>C 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malachowski (Małachowski Jan)</td>
<td>Crown Refendary (referendarz koronny), Deputy Chancellor of the Crown (podkanclerzy koronny), bishop of Cracow</td>
<td>C 402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miaskowski (Andrzej)</td>
<td>Abbot of Trzemeszno and Przemęt, Royal Secretary</td>
<td>C 132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

93 Władysław Czapliński, Kożuchowski Stanisław, *PSB*, vol. 15, pp. 78–79.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mornstein (Morsztyn Jan Andrzej)</td>
<td>Grand Treasurer of the Crown (podkarbi wielki koronny)</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>107531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morstin (Morsztyn) Sbiegnec (Zbigniew)</td>
<td>Poet, Soldier, Sword-bearer of Mozyrz (Bel. Mazyr)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olszowski (Andrzej)</td>
<td>Deputy Chancellor of the Crown (podkancléry koronny), the primate of Poland-Lithuania (1674–1677)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ossowski Anastasius (Anastazy)</td>
<td>Royal Secretary and Commissioner</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>3312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otrébosz Sigmundt (Zygmunt)</td>
<td>Canon of Poznań, Royal Secretary and Commissioner</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pac (Krzysztof Zygmunt)</td>
<td>Grand Chancellor of Lithuania (kanclerz litewski)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pac (Michał)</td>
<td>Lithuanian Grand Hetman (hetman wielki litewski), Voivode of Wilno (wojewoda wileński)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plaskowski (Pląskowski) Franciszek</td>
<td>Crown Treasury Notary</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>844</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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100 This amount of money was probably connected to the repayment of the tapestries; therefore, it will be not counted as an individual loan/debt in the diagrams below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position and Role</th>
<th>City/Location</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prebendau (Przebendowski) Piotr</td>
<td>District Judge of Lębork (sąd ziemski lęborski), a Member of the Diet (posł na sejm)</td>
<td></td>
<td>109 Stefan Ciara, Przebendowski Piotr, PSB, vol. 28, pp. 662–664.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reusner (Johann) Valentin</td>
<td>Publisher in Königsberg</td>
<td></td>
<td>110 Kranhold, Frühgeschichte, p. 243.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sbąski (Zbąski Jan Stanisław)</td>
<td>Bishop of Przemyśl and Chełmno</td>
<td></td>
<td>112 See, for example, Piwarski, Bużeński, p. 158.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Szczuka Władisław (Władysław)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>114 Agnieszka Biedrzycka, Jacek Kowalkowski, Szczepański Zygmunt Ferdynand, PSB, vol. 47, pp. 367–368.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Szpeanska (Szczepańska, maiden name – Konopacka) Teresa</td>
<td>A wife to Gabriel Ferdynand Szczepański, Mayor of Grudziądz (Ger. Graudenz) (starosta grudziądzki), a daughter to Jakub Oktawian Konopacki</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

110 Kranhold, Frühgeschichte, p. 243.
112 See, for example, Piwarski, Bużeński, p. 158.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Debit/Credit</th>
<th>Sum in florins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuchołka Jan Piotr</td>
<td>Chamberlain of Malbork (Ger. Marienburg) (podkomorzy malborski), a Member of the Diet (posel na sejmy)(^1^{15})</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wapczynski (Wapczyński) Casimiro (Kazimierz)</td>
<td>Wapcyńscy – noble family from voivodeship of Chełmno(^1^{16})</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wąsowicz Felician</td>
<td>Mayor of Narew (starosta narewski)(^1^{17})</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Wielhorski Jerzy?)</td>
<td>Chamberlain of Włodzimierz (Ukr. Volodymyr-Volynskyi) (podkomorzy włodzimirski), Castellan of Volhynia (kasztelan wołyński)(^1^{18})</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wołowski (Jan)</td>
<td>Canon of Warmia and Chełmno(^1^{19})</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Załuski (Andrzej Chryzostom)</td>
<td>Bishop of Płock and Kijów (Ukr. Kiev)(^1^{20})</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The Greater Gdańsk Merchants and Traders:

\(^{15}\) Elektorów poczet, p. 381.
\(^{16}\) Niesiecki, Herbarz, vol. 9, p. 226.
\(^{18}\) Niesiecki, Herbarz vol. 9, p. 295.
\(^{19}\) Niesiecki, Herbarz, vol. 9, p. 423.
\(^{20}\) Komaszyński, Piękna, p. 12, 154.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breeman Peter</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ditmer Hans</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engelman Severin</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fincks Mikolaj (Nikolaus)</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graeff Wouter van de</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>14969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grossa Teressa</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hacki (Michał Antoni)</td>
<td>Abbot of Oliva, Royal Secretary</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmes Jean (Jan)</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>349; 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoene Jean Battista von der</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>8397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoene Gernerdt von der</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>19775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jansonowa (Konstantia Jantzen?)</td>
<td>Mrs Janson (widow of Daniel Jantzen?)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1993; 9120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauginger Jan (Johann)</td>
<td>Merchant, trader</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>5478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauginger Tobiasz</td>
<td>A merchant family, Gdańsk</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ledel) Friedrich</td>
<td>Merchant, trader</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoniszowa (Pastorius?)</td>
<td>Mrs Pastonius (Pastorius?)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pfennigschlager Jan Hein</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puklitz Adam</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riegel Esraim</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>45397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rozner Vincento</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schlot Dirk</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>6000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Debit/Credit</th>
<th>Sum in florins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wahl Jan (Johann)</td>
<td>Councilman, Royal Burgrave in Gdańsk(^{124})</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wahl Jan (Johann) Jerzy (Georg)</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilke Daniel</td>
<td>(Kunstmeister)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winkler Jan (Johann)</td>
<td>Evangelical preacher in Gdańsk(^{125})</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolsowa (Elisabeth Wahl, maiden name – Hax[el]berg?)</td>
<td>Mrs Wols (widow of Johann Wahl?)(^{126})</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zacharias Caspar</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3. The Actors of Italian Origin:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Debit/Credit</th>
<th>Sum in florins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affacta (Affaitati Carlo)</td>
<td>Canon of Warmia(^{127})</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandinelli Angelo Maria</td>
<td>From Florence, Mint master, Postmaster General of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth(^{128})</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>7326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandinelli Wawrzeniec (Lorenzo)</td>
<td>A cousin to Angelo Maria Bandinelli(^{129})</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernardi (Berardi?) Bernardo</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boratini (Burattini) Tito Livio</td>
<td>From Agordo, Mint master, scientist(^{130})</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>11163</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\(^{124}\) Zdrenka, *Rats- und Gerichtspatriziat*, p. 316.


\(^{126}\) Zdrenka, *Rats- und Gerichtspatriziat*, p. 316.


\(^{128}\) Kazimierz Kaczmarczyk, Bandinelli Anioł Maria, *PSB*, vol. 1, pp. 255–256.

\(^{129}\) Mazzei, *La trama*, p. 228.

\(^{130}\) Aleksander Birkenmajer, Burattini (Buratyni) Tytus Liwiusz, *PSB*, vol. 3, pp. 133–136.
| Brunetti (Cosimo?) | Royal Secretary, Indygenat 1673\textsuperscript{131} | C | 20 |
| Buonvisi (Francesco) | Cardinal, the Apostolic Nuncio in Warsaw/Vienna\textsuperscript{132} | D | 160 |
| Cinacki (Cinacchi) Jean (Giovanni) | A trader in Cracow and Warsaw, minting affairs with De Gratta | C | 7045 |
| Cinaki (Cinacchi) Bartolomeo | A vogt (wójt) of Wilno, minting affairs with De Gratta | C | 525 |
| Dziboni (Gibboni) Jan (Giovanni) | The superior of Mines in Bobra (later in the diocese of Kielce)\textsuperscript{133} | C | 257 |
| Fantoni Ludovico | Priest, Royal Secretary, Warsaw\textsuperscript{134} | C | 15 |
| Frasinelli (Frassinelli Paolo?) | Merchant in Cracow, a nephew to Ludovico Fantoni\textsuperscript{135} | C | 5 |
| Gramignoli (Francesco) | Trader? Resided in Warsaw, informant for Cardinal Virgini Orsini\textsuperscript{136} | C | 381 |
| Isola Francesco Del | The deputy of the Habsburgs\textsuperscript{137} | C | 7748 |
| Locci Jan (Giovanni) | Indygenat in 1676\textsuperscript{138}, son to Augustino Locci, architect\textsuperscript{139} | C | 45 |

\textsuperscript{131} Tygielski, 	extit{Włosi}, p. 316, 387.
\textsuperscript{132} Komaszyński, 	extit{Piękna}, p. 108, 117; Tygielski, 	extit{Włosi}, p. 398.
\textsuperscript{133} Gibboni gained his Polish Indygenat in 1654, see Tygielski, 	extit{Włosi}, p. 386.
\textsuperscript{134} Tygielski, 	extit{Włosi}, p. 71.
\textsuperscript{136} 	extit{Repertorium}, pp. 177–179.
\textsuperscript{137} Targosz, 	extit{Hieronim Pinocci}, pp. 208–209.
\textsuperscript{138} Tygielski, 	extit{Włosi}, p. 388.
\textsuperscript{139} Wojciech Fijałkowski, Locci Augustyn, 	extit{PSB}, vol. 17, p. 508.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Debit/ Credit</th>
<th>Sum in florins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manfredi Benedict (Benedetto)</td>
<td>A merchant and trader from Lucca, Cracow(^{140})</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manfredi Jan Wawrzeniec (Giovanni Lorenzo)</td>
<td>A merchant and trader, brother to Benedetto(^{141})</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masini Christophoro</td>
<td>From Modena, Royal Secretary(^{142})</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>6754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micotti Dioniso</td>
<td>Merchant in Warsaw(^{143})</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picciniardi (Piccinardi Giovanni)</td>
<td>A poet(^{144})</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarantani Jean (Giovanni) Battista</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sardi Bartolomeo</td>
<td>Mint master, Postmaster General of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth(^{145})</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talenti Tomaso (Tomasso)</td>
<td>Royal Secretary(^{146})</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. The Actors of Foreign Origin (excluding those of Italian origin):

\(^{140}\) Mazzei, *La trama*, p. 235.
\(^{141}\) Mazzei, *Traffici*, p. 86, 127, 134.
\(^{142}\) Masini gained his Polish Indygrenat in 1662, see Mazzei, *Traffici*, p. 161; Karolina Targosz, Masini (Massini, Massinus, Mazyni) Krzysztof, *PSB*, vol. 20, pp. 117–119.
\(^{143}\) Mazzei, *Traffici*, p. 66, 83, 155.
\(^{144}\) Bolesław Klimaszewski, *Jan III Sobieski w literaturze polskiej i zachodnioeuropejskiej XVII i XVIII wieku* (Cracow, 1983), p. 54.
\(^{145}\) Adam Kaźmierczyk, Sardi Bartłomiej, *PSB*, vol. 35, pp. 188–189.
\(^{147}\) Tygielski, *Włosi*, p. 68.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Place of Residence</th>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>François Jean Battista</td>
<td>(French?)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haitz Salomon</td>
<td>(German?)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loen Heinrich von</td>
<td>Trader, De Gratta’s contact person in England (Dutch?)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>20318</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noyers (Pierre) Des</td>
<td>Queen Marie Louise’s Secretary (French)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverend</td>
<td>(French?)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vrints Jean Battista (Baptiste)</td>
<td>Habsburgian Postmaster in Hamburg (Spanish)</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>711</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These tables are quite revealing in several ways. As can be seen from them, the Polish merchants, nobility and clergymen dominate among Francesco De Gratta’s debtors and creditors (Table 1. 40 persons, 39% of total). The proportion of persons recognised as greater Gdańsk inhabitants is somewhat less (Table 2. 29 persons, 29% of total). The next group of persons classified here as of Italian origin is smaller in number than the first two groups (Table 3. 23 persons in the table, 23% of total). Finally, the percentage of other foreign-origin actors is 9% of the total (Table 4. 8 persons in the table). Generally, it is apparent from these tables that Francesco De Gratta’s creditor activity was mostly directed towards the Polish nobles and clergymen. Nevertheless, these results show that even Gdańsk merchants as well as foreign – mostly Italian – actors had borrowed money from De Gratta; however, to a lesser extent than Polish nobles and clergymen.

Now, the two largest groups of creditors: Polish nobles and merchants (‘Polish nobles’ in the diagram below) and Gdańsk merchants and traders (‘Gdańsk merchants’ in the diagram below) should be highlighted. Diagram 5 shows that the total sums of credits are more than twice as high for Gdańsk merchants (129.) than for Polish nobles (70,539). However, if one takes the debts into consideration, one can discover that the result is opposite (Polish nobles: 3815, Gdańsk merchants: 4057). This means that Gdańsk merchants and traders remained De Gratta’s most substantial business partners when it comes to his loans. Presumably, De Gratta lent more money to Gdańsk merchants and traders than to Polish nobles, because of his place of residence, his business activities and the state of Gdańsk merchants’ finances,
which most likely were in a better shape than those of Polish nobles and clergymen.

Diagram 5. Credit and debt according to the social groups.

The next two diagrams below are intended to show the structure of debts and credits according to the origin of the persons listed in the tables above. These charts demonstrate that Gdańsk merchants dominate among the creditors (50%), but when it comes to the debts, they are in the second position (25%). In reference to the Polish nobles, one can see that this group is in the second position considering credits and third considering debts – respectively 27% and 23%. In consideration of Italian actors, one may observe that they appear in the third position when it comes to the credit (15%) and in the first position in regard to their debt (43%). Lastly, one may notice that the total credit of the other actors of foreign origin is very low (8%) in comparison to the other groups. Their debt is somewhat higher (9%); however, it is still lower than the above numbers.
The data from tables 1–4 presented in diagrams 5–7 can be perceived as indicating some general trajectories of Francesco De Gratta’s network that were inherited by his heirs in 1676. One may claim that even though Polish nobles dominate as regards the number of creditors and debtors, their total credit and debt was lower than Gdańsk merchants’ credit as well as Gdańsk
merchants’ and Italian actors’ debts. This shows that Francesco De Gratta also lent much money within his Italian network, which mostly included the actors engaged in his activity in the mint system of Poland-Lithuania. Next, one may conclude that Gdańsk merchants had seen in De Gratta a source for borrowing money. To lend money to Gdańsk merchants was most likely a strategy of De Gratta that was intended to gain business companions. Their loans were generally much higher than those of the Polish nobles and that in turn can be seen as a result of Francesco De Gratta’s trade connections in Gdańsk.

Lastly, one may notice that Francesco’s financial network that appeared from the analysis of the list of the debts and credits includes a large number of Gdańsk merchants – almost to the same extent as actors of Italian origin; however, it was the group of Polish merchants and nobles that dominated among debtors. Furthermore, the data contained in the list confirms that De Gratta evenly established himself in the local, regional and the Polish-Lithuanian environments. Most of the creditors included in the list as Polish-Lithuanian nobles originated from Royal Prussia. In such a light, the credits and debts can be discussed not only in terms of financial profits or losses; they also show some general patterns of De Gratta’s social interactions. On the one hand, Polish-Lithuanian nobles and the Polish Kings were important actors in his social status development, but on the other hand, his web of contacts in Gdańsk allowed him to develop his trade and to pursue his most profitable financial actions.

Concluding Remarks

The regularity of the correspondence between Richter and Wodzicki permits an analysis based on the frequency with which certain issues concerning the De Gratta estate were discussed. While the sale of the Kamienica tops the list in Richter’s letters, being mentioned far more often than the Potop tapestries and the Italian assets, several issues connected to the repayment of the loans are also frequently visible. In all cases, the regularity with which something was mentioned seems to have been determined by the location of the property, the certainty of its ownership, the network involved, including special and professional support, and the degree of secrecy and trust among those concerned.
The biggest problems seem to have been caused by the property’s location; however, even familiarity with local conditions and habits did not guarantee a successful outcome, as the example of the Kamienica shows. The Kamienica was the subject of constant complaints from Richter, especially regarding the cost of maintenance and its public character, the latter going some way to explaining why the Kamienica was not easily sold. Its status as a royal residence, with the Kamienica temporarily transformed during the royal family’s visits to Gdańsk, appears the most apparent reason for this. Also related to the sale of the Kamienica is the personal factor, because apparently not only was Richter unwilling to sell it at a lower price, preferring to wait until a good offer came along, but he could act on this preference – in other words, he was best able to control the question of the sale of the Kamienica because he was the one living in Gdańsk. It was not for nothing that De Gratta had willed him sole charge of his business. By contrast, Wodzicki stayed on in Cracow, where he had greater opportunities to wield influence at the royal court owing to his direct access to the Crown’s administration, including the most influential noble families. This was noticeable in the example of the repayment for the Potop tapestries. Similarly, when Wodzicki had to confer with Burattini he had to go to Warsaw to do so: the location of the Potop tapestries changed from time to time, and they were even split up and placed in various royal residences. And as for the assets in Italy, Richter and Wodzicki found it was impossible for them to identify the assets and estimate their value.

The question of the ownership of particular legacies was the second headache for the executors. In the case of the Kamienica, this was a source of their conflict with Paolo De Gratta, who as the eldest son wanted to keep it for himself, but ultimately there was no problem with demonstrating the De Gratta family’s ownership of the Kamienica per se. The opposite was true of the Potop tapestries. It was De Gratta who had lent the money to King John II Casimir with the tapestries as collateral, but he had done so via Burattini, who appeared here as an intermediary (brokers). In other words, on paper it was ostensibly Burattini who held the Potop tapestries, sponsored by De Gratta. A similar strategy can be recalled from Chapter 6, when De Gratta lent money to Burattini and other mint masters for the leasing of the mints. Returning to the tapestries, De Gratta’s heirs had no document that could confirm their ownership of the tapestries or their part in the loan, and that could lead to repayment. That is why the part played by Sardi and Burattini was far more important in this instance compared to the other two legacies. Sardi tried to
assert the De Gratta family’s rights to the Potop tapestries at sessions of the Diet, but without any success. The negotiations with Burattini failed.

In general, the strategy here was different to the line taken over the sale of the Kamienica, and the role of external actors must be underlined. In the case of the Italian assets, meanwhile, the argument for external professional support was even more pointed. Besides Richter, Wodzicki, and Sardi, Pestalozzi and Mollo were brought in on the negotiations. Mollo’s participation, as with the Kamienica, would prove decisive. In both instances, Mollo resolved the outstanding financial problems: in the case of the Kamienica he repaid his debt, allowing the executors to deal with the outstanding situations, while in the case of the Italian assets it was he who stepped in to sell the items. Even when Sardi was clearly against Mollo’s involvement, Mollo’s part was decisive, although he did not figure in the negotiations at first (of course, Richter may have had other reasons not to mention this). This last point says much about secrecy and trust – especially towards the people the executors had asked for specialised help. Secrecy and trust factors were explicit in the case of the Potop tapestries, where the absence of essential documentation was discussed as something to be kept secret. The same seems to have been true of the Milan assets, because until Sardi’s appointment of Pestalozzi it took a long time to get information about the goods’ value.

An analysis of these four legacies – the Kamienica, the Potop tapestries, the Italian assets and the list of debtors and creditors – revealed some of the crucial aspects of the heirs’ management of such an estate using several strategies and external actors (intermediaries). Essentially, it revealed not only the issues concerning the sale of assets or repayment of debts, but above all the role of Richter and Wodzicki, and their mutual ties. For the Kamienica, Richter’s role could be characterised as the administrator and Wodzicki’s as the financier, a division evident as early as their application for probate, in which they appeared as guardians of Francesco’s children. Their personal relationship with De Gratta was also crucial. Richter was Francesco’s secretary, which gave him access to De Gratta’s documents and transactions after his death concerning mostly the Royal Mail and De Gratta’s creditor actions, whereas Wodzicki was one of his main trade partners, and as Francesco’s son-in-law, acquired a special place in his business affairs. When it came to the Potop tapestries, Wodzicki played a much smaller part than he had in the negotiations about the Kamienica, and the same was true of their attempts to resolve the question of De Gratta’s Italian assets, where Richter appeared to exert himself far more than Wodzicki. Lastly, the involvement of
the royal couple, especially in the business of the Potop tapestries, should not be ignored. It points to the royal interest in the tapestries, true, but also De Gratta’s service to them.

Finally, this chapter was designed to determine the importance of Francesco De Gratta’s legacy for his heirs. The analysis of the four legacies has revealed that they were not only a form of economic capital that Francesco’s heirs inherited after his death, but also a social one. This may be clearly seen by the example of the list of debtors and creditors created in 1676, which consisted of Polish nobles, Gdańsk merchants and Italian merchants/nobles, the latter being the largest contingent among the persons of foreign origin. This was a web of contacts that Francesco established during his life and left to his children. The list is also evidence of his social advancement as well as an indicator of his main trade interests. Similarly to the other legacies, the repayment of the debts by creditors caused many problems. This suggests that Francesco De Gratta’s businesses and estates were not solely about economic profit, but were intended to enlarge the network that he used during his career, as well as to express his social status and symbolise his royal function.
The study has gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of early modern careers from the political and economic spheres of Poland-Lithuania. In general, the empirical findings of this study provide a broader perspective of the roots of families of different origins in the Polish-Lithuanian noble society. The findings suggest that Francesco De Gratta pursued his career by both familial social actions as well as through a number of interdependent economic strategies. Before proceeding with a discussion of career path formation for actors of Italian origin who lived in Poland-Lithuania, together with a discussion of the space and place factors involved in De Gratta’s working life development, a closer look will be taken at the subsequent stages of Francesco De Gratta’s career. They will be presented in chronological order.

Career Course

In 1649, Francesco De Gratta obtained Gdańsk citizenship, his first official postal function as a Royal Postmaster in Gdańsk, and was given the title of factoratus. It is certain that obtaining a Royal Secretary title was part of his plan for his earlier career in the political structures of the Commonwealth, which is why De Gratta had to obtain this title some time around 1649. In 1648, Francesco married Agatha van Classen, a daughter of an established merchant of Dutch origin. The next stages in his postal career were combined with his functions as the Head Postmaster in Gdańsk, that he started in 1654, and as the Postmaster General of Royal Prussia, Courland, Semigallia and Livonia in 1661. His last postal function correlates also with another task of being a commissioner chosen to resolve the Polish-Brandenburgian postal conflict of 1660–1661. From this time onwards, Francesco served through his business-related creditor activities to the Prussian cities. He financed the
Prussian Diets, where he was perceived as the royal representative. In the mid-1660s, he lent money to the mint masters in order to lease mints in Poland-Lithuania, and was engaged in the import of silver from the New World to the Commonwealth. The archival sources have shown that at the same time, Francesco De Gratta got in touch with Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki and started work as his factor in Gdańsk. In the late 1660s, he joined forces with Wodzicki’s company that exported potash from Wallachia to the western part of Europe. In 1668, he even began his own potash business while simultaneously continuing with Wodzicki’s and his own company, too. He remained engaged in the potash trade until the mid-1670s.

This overview clearly shows that De Gratta’s administrative career as a postmaster at various levels helped him in turn to develop his own business contacts. To put it other way, his postal activity should be seen as preliminary work that allowed the development of his economic career. Due to his official function, De Gratta could undoubtedly meet and establish business relationships with several actors both at the micro (Gdańsk), the meso (Royal Prussia and Poland-Lithuania) and the macro (European) levels. The example of his potash trade revealed how he – as an established postmaster in the city – married off his daughter, Anna Maria to Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki, a Cracowian merchant (1668) to whom he had served as a factor. Wodzicki was not part of the Polish-Lithuanian nobility yet, being ennobled in 1676. This fact shows that Francesco De Gratta was mostly interested in his trading situation at this time when he was aiming to strengthen his status as a tradesman in Gdańsk while enlarging his economic network instead of attempting to upgrade his own social status, if he then married off Anna Maria to a Polish nobleman. However, the marriage of his second daughter, Eufrosina in 1673 showed an opposite result. This time, De Gratta had chosen a Polish nobleman as a husband for his second daughter. These two marriages had at least one common feature. Both husbands to Francesco’s daughters were of Polish origin. This shows that Francesco aimed to root his family in the Polish-Lithuanian milieu. Moreover, his last daughter, Elisabetta, became a nun in the convent in Żukowo, Royal Prussia, which also showed his local, Royal Prussian interest. Another pattern appears when one takes the future of Francesco’s sons into consideration. Two of them resided in Gdańsk and continued with their father’s own profession. One migrated to Italy and became a cavalier. Lastly, one may conclude that the death of Giovanni Antonio – presumably in 1654 – coincided in time with Francesco retaining the function as the Head Postmaster in Gdańsk, which naturally followed the inheritance practice of offices being handed down to the eldest son.
To sum up, the main factors that affected Francesco De Gratta’s administrative and economic career were not only his several businesses and familial social actions that allowed him to increase his influence on several actors, but also of the patronage of the Polish monarchs. Indeed, the Polish monarchs provided him with the privileges required for his office and also guaranteed his and his family’s right to run the postal system over several decades. Francesco De Gratta became an influential person in different milieus (merchant, noble, Italian and Polish-Lithuanian). As Chapter 6 revealed, he managed to keep several actors’ dependent through his continuous creditor activity.

Taking into consideration his career course, De Gratta received his postal offices under the reigns of John II Casimir Vasa and Marie Louise Gonzaga. This post was reconfirmed by successive monarchs. However, his career developed mostly under the reign of these two above-named monarchs. Besides this, he became one of commissioners who negotiated the postal deal of 1661, acting as the King’s representative at the Prussian Diets, lent money to the royal couple, and eventually took over the collection of tapestries, slightly before John II Casimir’s abdication in 1668. Presumably, in the mid-1650s, he bought the Kamienica, and in the 1660s he continued to expand his minting affairs. These developments show again that his postal function went hand in hand with his own economic progress.
Furthermore, one may conclude that when he became a royal official in Gdańsk, Francesco De Gratta was no longer a private person. He represented the King at various functions and every business that he maintained could be seen as a side effect of his official status, especially when one takes into account the Polish-Lithuanian nobility and its hierarchical structure. Consequently, De Gratta gained functions and titles that made the further development of his career possible. He never became naturalized into the Polish nobility, yet still he had an opportunity to move up in the administrative and monetary spheres. Moreover, his life choices showed that he did not have to marry a woman from Italy or Poland-Lithuania, but he chose to marry a daughter of a Gdańsk merchant of Dutch origin. This fact may lead one to conclude that he and his father, Giovanni Antonio, were not limited to the Italian world, but set down family roots in Gdańsk, the city where they resided, and could pursue their businesses from the early seventeenth century onwards.

Returning to the ‘early modern’ career line formation that was mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, it could be stated that the career of Francesco De Gratta in the administration of Poland-Lithuania followed a number of the common patterns of career development. As a reminder, in his article about career line formation in the Ottoman bureaucracy, Joel Shinder argues that the ‘early modern’ career occurred together with the appearance of a particular order of office-holding, and pointed out some of its indicators such as: specialisation, work in a one system area, a strict system of titles and offices (stratified promotion) limited to a narrow social group linked by endogamy and patronage as well as inheritance of offices. Throughout his entire working life, De Gratta served within just one official service – the Royal Mail. Performing this work probably made it possible for him to purchase his residence Kamienica, which was located in the central area of the city and became a part of the royal residence in Gdańsk. Concerning the arrangements of his daughters’ marriages, it is fair to state that he followed endogamous practices, which gave him the possibility to develop his economic career as well as enlarge his network of contacts. Furthermore, he gradually moved up within the postal service and gained access to the correspondence that went throughout the city as well as to the income his postal service generated. This last fact coincides in time with Francesco’s most important business affairs, namely loaning money to the mint masters, buying the tapestries, and the purchase of his residence. In such circumstances, these steps can be seen as a form of agreement between him and the Polish King, John II Casimir Vasa. It was this King who appointed De Gratta
to his official functions and received economic help when he was in need of that before his abdication.

The evidence shown in this study suggests that such independence was mutual and clearly determined by patron-client relationships. De Gratta depended on the subsequent monarchs, when it was so necessary to gain a royal privilege to obtain his postal office and to develop his career. Yet, De Gratta’s loaning money strategy was rather different. He used his credit not only to enrich himself, but also to build his social network. He loaned money to the Kings, nobility, clergy and traders. In such a perspective, Caspar Richter’s claim that Francesco was a servant of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth means that Francesco De Gratta had deliberately made himself financially subordinate to the Polish Kings and nobles in order to develop his trade and to root his family in the Commonwealth’s milieu. However, one may remember that the financial resources that he lent to several actors, including kings and nobles, were undoubtedly acquired in great part due to his postal rights given by the Polish monarchs.

Postmasters vs. Mint Masters

The results of this research support the idea that the activities of several actors of Italian origin within postal and monetary systems were intertwined with one another and sometimes even involved the same figures. However, the development of their careers was in many cases different from that of De Gratta. First, it is worth looking at what kind of network linked Italian actors with De Gratta, and later, to discuss their working lives in Poland-Lithuania. First of all, the relationship will be presented between De Gratta and three subsequent Postmaster Generals of Poland-Lithuania who were of Italian origin: Carlo Montelupi, Angelo Maria Bandinelli and Bartolomeo Sardi. Secondly, De Gratta’s financial activities as regards his minting affairs will be examined.

Postmasters

From Chapter 5, one learned that Carlo Montelupi was a Postmaster General of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth until 1662. He formally approved Francesco De Gratta for his postal position. The present analysis has also shown that Francesco was in possession of some of Montelupi’s goods. Nonetheless, the archival sources are silent about any economic or trade relationships between De Gratta and Montelupi. The next actor, Angelo
Maria Bandinelli, remained a Postmaster General of Poland-Lithuania from 1663 until 1673, and was engaged in the import of silver from America to Poland-Lithuania as well as in minting affairs in the Duchy of Lithuania. For these reasons, he can be classified as an actor that was connected with De Gratta in both the postal and economic spheres. The final actor, Bartolomeo Sardi, became a Postmaster General of Poland-Lithuania after Bandinelli’s resignation from his office. He was engaged in economic activities with De Gratta, however on a much smaller scale than Bandinelli. Furthermore, Sardi married Francesco’s daughter, Eufrosina. Hence, it is easy to recognise three types of connections between Francesco and himself from the occupational, economic and familial linkages.

C – Carlo Montelupi  
F – Francesco De Gratta  
A – Angelo Maria Bandinelli  
B – Bartolomeo Sardi


This diagram shows that not only Francesco De Gratta can be perceived as the ‘star’ (marked black in the diagram) in his network; Angelo Maria Bandinelli was connected to De Gratta through several linkages and had many relationships in common, and therefore he could also be categorized as an additional ‘star’. Concerning Montelupi and Sardi, they only played a significant role on certain occasions rather than on a continuous basis (blank
in the diagram). Montelupi was an important ‘node’ in the network, especially at the beginning of De Gratta’s career. Sardi appears in a similar manner; however, he did not have a role until the mid-1670s.

Mint Masters

From Chapter 6, one could see how the credit activity of De Gratta functioned in regard to the mint masters. Tito Livio Burattini was the actor with the greatest importance in this network (marked black as a ‘star’ in Diagram 10 below). Even though the relationships between subsequent actors in the network remain partially undiscovered (clusters between actors: A, B and C), such a dependence makes it possible to claim that De Gratta enlarged his particular Italian network with Bandinelli and Burattini by adding the Cinacchi brothers and Bianchi in the 1660s. Furthermore, one may note that Angelo Maria Bandinelli and Giacinto Bianchi (Royal Postmaster of Wilno)\(^1\) were apparent in both networks – the postal and minting ones. As a consequence, they can be seen as the linking persons between the occupational network of De Gratta which was built up in the 1650s and 1660s, and the economic one when it comes to minting affairs in the mid-1660s. What is outstanding here is the fact that none of these Italian actors were engaged in De Gratta’s potash trade, neither in his own potash business nor the company operated with Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki.

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\(^1\) Wnęk, Wielkie afery, p. 177.
Finally, some words need to be devoted to the career course of the above-named Italian actors. Besides De Gratta, who was born in Gdańsk, all of these persons were newcomers in Poland-Lithuania (first generation). They migrated to Poland-Lithuania during the reigns of Władysław IV Vasa and John II Casimir Vasa.\(^2\) However, it should be highlighted that some of them had already established contacts in Poland-Lithuania, for example: Angelo Maria Bandinelli whose brother – Roberto Bandinelli gained Cracowian citizenship in 1618 and established a regular postal office in Lwów in 1629\(^3\), and Carlo Montelupi whose family was connected to the postal service in Poland-Lithuania from the year 1568, when Sebastiano Montelupi received his postal privilege to create a regular postal connection between Cracow and

\(^2\) The time of migration to Poland-Lithuania by Carlo Montelupi, Angelo Maria Bandinelli, Tito Livio Burattini and Bartolomeo Sardi, Tygielski, Włosi, p. 182 (Montelupi), 184 (Bandinelli), 185 (Sardi), 278 (Burattini); the time migration of Cinacchi’s brothers, Mazzei, Traffici, pp. 43–44 and Giacinto Bianchi, whose time of migration remains undiscovered and is only estimated here, Tygielski, Włosi, p. 530.

\(^3\) Tygielski, Włosi, p. 184.
Venice. Therefore, the fact that De Gratta was born in Gdańsk seems not to have been a decisive factor in his career. To put it clearer, all of them had established contacts in the Commonwealth. They mainly resided in the capital cities and/or largest regional municipalities such as Cracow, Warsaw, Lwów and Wilno. Moreover, when it comes to the Polish Indygenat or nobility title, the Montelupi family received their nobility title in 1567, Tito Livio Burattini (Indygenat) in 1658, Giacinto Bianchi (Indygenat) in 1662, and the De Gratta family (Indygenat) in 1676 and the Bandinelli family (Indygenat) in 1726. The Cinacchi family did not appear among the Italian actors included in the list created by Barbara Trelińska and quoted by Wojciech Tygielski in his book on Italians in Poland. Thus, one may conclude that the majority of actors were naturalized to the Polish nobility around the time of their minting affairs with De Gratta. Consequently, besides Montelupi, all of them (in the case of the Cinacchis there is no evidence) possessed noble titles from Italy. Another aspect that undoubtedly says something about the career strategies of foreign actors in a new milieu is how their marriages can be understood in terms of familial social actions.

Previous research has noted that Angelo Maria Bandinelli was married to Katarzyna Struzbiczówna, Tito Livio Burattini to Teresa Opacka and Giovanni Cinacchi to Anna Giżańska. As previously shown in Chapter 3, Bartolomeo Sardi was married to Eufrosina De Gratta and Francesco De Gratta to Agatha van Classen. Unfortunately, the marital status of the last three actors, Montelupi, Bianchi and B. Cinacchi, remains undiscovered. Despite this lack of information, one may conclude that Italian nobles who moved to Poland-Lithuania married the daughters of local nobility or merchants and in such a way established or confirmed their ability to enter nobility networks.

Therefore, one could ask if Francesco De Gratta’s own career differed from those of similar Italian migrants?

Taking all of the above described factors – time of migration, nobility title and marital status – into consideration, it becomes clear that De Gratta did

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4 Tygielski, Włosi, p. 181.
5 Tygielski, Włosi, p. 384.
6 Tygielski, Włosi, p. 386.
7 Tygielski, Włosi, p. 386.
8 VL, vol. 6, p. 232.
10 Boniecki, Konarski, Herbarz polski, p. 95.
11 Tancon, Lo scienziato, p. 70.
12 Wnęk, Wielkie afery, p. 177.
not follow the patterns of career strategies used by his business companions. He did not marry a Polish noblewoman, nor did he aspire to obtain the Polish Indygenat. However, even though he took a merchant path, he frequently presented his family as a noble one, which had been assimilated into the Polish-Lithuanian society. It should be highlighted that any of the Italian nobles presented here married Italian noblewoman. Therefore, their marital choices seem to have been highly strategic actions by which they strove to root themselves in the Polish-Lithuanian milieu. Furthermore, as this study shows, not everyone was interested in obtaining the Polish noble title. The Indygenat was probably mostly requested by those actors who wanted to enter the court structures at the local level and those residing in Cracow or Warsaw. From this thesis, we have learned that a noble title was not necessary to develop one’s administrative career in Gdańsk. As a consequence, it can be stated that De Gratta, who spent almost his entire life in Gdańsk, did not depend on the Polish nobility in order to receive his postal function in contract to other postmasters, who resided in other parts of the Commonwealth. Lastly, the fact that De Gratta arranged his creditor activity mostly with these nobles – who were newcomers to the Polish-Lithuanian reality – appears as an extraordinary pattern of his career. The same tendency can be observed when analysing his trade relationship with Jan Wawrzyniec Wodzicki, who also lacked noble status, especially by the time he started his company with De Gratta. Altogether, the fact that De Gratta chose companions who were not established in the noble milieu (newcomers) allows us to maintain that he wished to: (1) strengthen his social position by his network-building actions, (2) influence new actors by his credit activity and (3) gain a leadership role (as can be seen in his potash trade or the purchase of Kamienica and the tapestries). Lastly, one might remember that De Gratta’s contacts were not only limited to newcomers and merchants. As it will be discussed next, he was also linked to Polish-Lithuanian higher nobility and took part in the institutional practices of the Commonwealth.

Next, one may observe that the career of Francesco De Gratta in Poland-Lithuania – even if its background (marriage, noble status, place of residence) was different from those of other actors of Italian origin – followed a similar official pattern for early modern postal officials in the Commonwealth. Not surprisingly, De Gratta chose a career path that involved the patronage of the kings; he became, among other roles, their secretary, factor and postmaster. Nonetheless, his activities were not limited to the monarchs. He was engaged widely in money lending services, which gave him access to the noble society. The investigation of De Gratta’s actions and contacts with the monarchs
clearly showed that the kings fostered his occupational development, which in turn influenced his social status. In this matter, De Gratta’s case demonstrated some specifics of behaviour of actors of Italian origin, once they moved to Poland-Lithuania and aspired to official positions. Nonetheless, one may remember that only some biographies of such actors are known nowadays. The total scale of the Italian immigration to the Commonwealth remains unknown and therefore, all conclusions about its general scope and features must be drawn with great caution.13 Similarly, the number of actors of Italian origin in Gdańsk also remains unknown; however, while the language barrier, the religious situation as well as the long distance to the Apennine peninsula will be taken into account, it is rather obvious that the scale of immigration to the city was low. Therefore, one cannot speak about the representativeness of De Gratta’s case in regard to his trade and credit activities in comparison to the other actors of Italian origin who resided in the other parts of the Commonwealth, for example Cracow, where the Italian community was much larger and better organised. Once again, Gdańsk, even if it was a royal city, differed much from the other cities in the Commonwealth. Undoubtedly, the place of his residence gave Francesco special possibilities, but also limited his trade development and networking actions, which must be understood through Gdańsk’s unique character and position in the Commonwealth.

Place of Career: In Gdańsk I stay…

For now, the role of Gdańsk in Francesco De Gratta’s career is worth taking a closer look at. How did Gdańsk influence his career and career possibilities? In order to answer this question, the city’s role will be presented according to the following metaphors: Gdańsk as a bridge, a home and a gateway.

A Bridge

The bridging role of Gdańsk can be traced in De Gratta’s career, following its social, religious and economic settings. In Francesco’s network, there can be found both Gdańsk merchants and Polish-Lithuanian nobles, Protestants and Catholics. In addition, he acted in both hierarchical (feudalistic) noble structures and in the mercantile culture. Gdańsk was the place where the Polish nobles and their agents met with Gdańsk merchants and foreign

13 Compare with Tygielski, Włosi, p. 295.
traders in order to sell their goods. Thus, Gdańsk as a bridge allowed Francesco to develop his broker and credit activity as well as to pursue his potash and grain trade. He stayed far (in distance) from the Polish nobility but still remained well connected to them through his correspondence.

A Home

Gdańsk was the birthplace of Francesco De Gratta. He built his home and his working life there. This is why it is not an exaggeration to claim he felt that he belonged to this city. Moreover, he referred to Gdańsk as ‘his pleasant city’ in a letter to Wodzicki. The fact that he did not move to his father’s homeland, as a number of migrants of Italian origin did, seems to confirm this statement. Gdańsk as a home may mean not only his place of residence, but also his anchor point on his map of interactions. Such an interpretation is likely, especially if one considers the fact that there were only a few actors of Italian origin in Gdańsk. Consequently, it might be assumed that De Gratta made it impossible for other Italians to come and establish their businesses in the city. This aspect of exclusiveness could in turn explain his role as an agent to both other noblemen as well as Polish monarchs, who saw him as a business partner and creditor. As the present thesis showed, Francesco De Gratta’s social aspirations targeted mainly the Polish nobility; however, his contacts and interactions with Gdańsk merchants cannot be underestimated. Even though he served as a royal official in the city, he was dependent on local officials as well as other tradesman when it came to his postal career and economic businesses there.

A Gateway

Finally, Gdańsk can be perceived as a gateway for Francesco to his administrative and economic career. Living in the main harbour city of Poland-Lithuania, De Gratta had possibilities to enlarge his trade exchange and network in the western part of Europe for such trade cities as: Amsterdam, London and Cádiz. He administered the postal system in Gdańsk and undoubtedly, the city’s location allowed him to receive information and news from the western part of Europe first, before it reached the territories of the Crown of Poland. This possibility certainly had a positive impact on the development of his trade on the one hand, and on the other, it strengthened his function as a Royal Secretary there. Remarkably, he remained a loyal servant to the Polish monarchs mostly by taking responsibility for tracing their correspondence, and by establishing a regular postal connection
between the Polish royal court and the French one. Next, Gdańsk was a gateway to Poland-Lithuania, and having his place of residence there gave him access to royal privileges as well as the chance to represent monarchs on several official occasions in the city and the region.

All of the above discussed matters show that Francesco De Gratta’s administrative and economic career was not only made possible by his place of residence and space of interactions, but also limited by these factors. For example, he was unable to control the development of the Wallachian production of potash, which simply remained impossible to direct from Gdańsk. Therefore, the geopolitical location of Gdańsk can be perceived as a starting point in the development of his career, but also as a limiting factor – to a much lesser extent – when it comes to his potash trade and contacts with the south-eastern part of the continent. Finally, the fact that even though he died in Cracow, he wished to be buried in Gdańsk, symbolised his strong sense of belonging to the city.

Space of Career: Poland-Lithuania

Lastly, the present thesis investigated the administrative and economic career of Francesco De Gratta through his networks and activities. The findings of this study touched on several issues of early modern state building. They oscillated around the creation of the postal system and the changes in the monetary system. However, what can one learn from the career of De Gratta about the functioning of the early modern state in general and Poland-Lithuania in particular?

In order to answer this question, the theoretical assumptions from the beginning of this thesis should be reconsidered. According to Antoni Mączak, the governmental sphere of Poland-Lithuania solely remained a platform for activity of Polish or Lithuanian noblemen. Likewise, Thomas Ertman argued that the lesser nobility, city merchants as well as villagers, had become totally subordinated to the clusters of higher nobility, especially when as regards their presence in the political and governmental structures. There were narrow groups of local elites (higher nobility) who dominated the public institutions of the Commonwealth. Thus, according to both Mączak and Thomas Ertman, there was limited space for merchants and newcomers in the public institutions of Poland-Lithuania as they lacked integration with the local nobility.14

14 See, for example, Mączak, Pierwsza Rzeczpospolita, p. 24.
The findings of the present thesis have shown that even though the possibilities for newcomers and merchants were limited, they did exist and allowed several actors of foreign origin to enter the governmental sphere of Poland-Lithuania – both at the local and central levels. As they mostly served in the royal offices, they established a strong relationship with the Polish kings. Therefore, their contacts with the nobility, who in fact ruled the Commonwealth, are worth taking a closer look at now.

The nobility was often seen as ‘prestigious others’, to use McLean’s term, who helped newcomers in developing their careers. The nobility was often interlinked with actors of foreign origin by familial social actions and economic transactions. For example, one could observe such interconnections, while analysing some marriages of postmasters of Italian origin. Moreover, as this study has shown, the Diet – the representation of the noble society – agreed upon new ennoblements and naturalizations of foreigners to the Polish and Lithuanian nobility. In addition, Francesco De Gratta or Bartolomeo Sardi were often presented in person at the places where sessions of the Diet took place. This shows that even if foreigners could not enter the Diet, they gathered together and pursued their economic affairs in the city, where the Diet debated. In other words, the Diet was a meeting platform where they could directly contact their patrons and clients as well as observe their privileges. Hence, even if the representative institutions such as the Diet were in the hands of the nobility, they remained a connecting platform linking the nobility, especially the lesser nobility, with newcomers. Therefore, it is fair to conclude that both social groups cooperated with each other in order to develop their businesses. Despite the complaints of the nobility about newcomers who made rapid careers in the postal, monetary and news sectors, the nobility did not sufficiently strive to limit this practice.

Anthony Giddens’s theory about expert systems that appeared in Europe in the early modern period seems to explain this tendency. The newcomers, who: (1) possessed enough financial resources to finance their activities as well as to financially help the domestic nobility, (2) mastered several languages, (3) were educated and had experience from other countries and (4) had their networks and contact persons around Europe were surely perceived as specialists (experts) in the Polish-Lithuanian reality. Consequently, the monopolisation of the postal and mint systems by foreign actors showed that in return for their credit, they received protection, privileges, as well as noble titles, which gave them the possibility to develop their careers and economic businesses in the noble republic.
Thus, the newcomers were often brokers between their patrons and their business companions. An example of this is the potash trade of De Gratta and Wodzicki – even if Wodzicki remained a merchant and was not established in the noble milieu yet. It was De Gratta, who remained Wodzicki’s factor (broker) and who sold their products in Europe. Moreover, De Gratta possessed several contacts with various actors around Europe, whom he worked with to develop their potash business. Thus, the actors of foreign origin, in fact, were perceived by Polish merchants and nobles as offering a chance to develop their trades. Moreover, the credit activity made such actors – as Richter frequently named De Gratta in his letters to Wodzicki – servants and serfs of the Commonwealth, who could not disengage from the people coming and asking for financial help. Therefore, the credit activity and contacts with the nobility resulted not only in the development of somebody’s career, but also were associated with being prepared to provide financial help when needed. In addition, as observed by De Gratta’s example, such duties were hereditary.

To sum up, the main spheres that gave an opportunity for newcomers to pursue their careers were mainly associated with postal and monetary systems as well as the Royal Secretary’s duties. This is why, not surprisingly, the great majority of postmasters and mint administrators at the subsequent levels were actors of foreign origin (mostly Italians) during the early modern period. Moreover, the analysis of the royal postal service has shown that the second half of the seventeenth century was a crucial time for the creation of the national postal infrastructures. During this time, the postal system was restructured and new functions were created, for example the function of the Postmaster General for Royal Prussia, Courland, Semigallia and Livonia. This function in turn symbolised not only the growing interest in the north edges of the Commonwealth by the Polish monarchs, but also an attempt to preserve these territories within the Commonwealth’s borders. The postal conflict that appeared between Brandenburg-Prussia and Poland-Lithuania was undoubtedly an effect of such growing political interests of both sides of the conflict. Furthermore, at the personal level, the postal career of De Gratta showed on the one hand that he remained the Polish kings’ trusted man in the city and on the other that the Polish kings preferred to encourage foreigners than to employ domestic nobility in the governmental sectors that belonged to their jurisdiction. In addition, De Gratta’s credit activity had demonstrated that ‘early modern’ career consisted of patron-client relationships, where loans were not only seen in terms of profit-making actions, but
also as social actions, which remained a kind of powerful tool that allowed Francesco to enlarge his well balanced and rich personal network.
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Maps and Illustrations

Cover Illustration
Curicke, Reinhold, Der Stadt Danzig historische Beschreibung [...] (Amsterdam und Danzig, 1687), PAN BG, Od 4503a 2°, p. 49. Photo. PAN BG, Gdańsk, Poland.

Map 1
A new and most exact map of Europe: described by N I Visscher and don into English and corrected according to I Bleau and others with the habits of the people and the manner of the cheife citties the like never before [map]. Biblioteka Narodowa ZZK 23 579. Accessed March 1, 2017. https://polona.pl/item/26151 821/0/. Photo. Biblioteka Narodowa, Warsaw, Poland.

Map 2

Map 3

Illustration 1
The Gratta House (the third from the right). These first three houses – the royal residence when the royal family visited Gdańsk. Photo. Michał Salamonik.

Illustration 2
The De Gratta family’s coat of arms. Dział Rękopisów ZNiO, 11575/II, p. 301. Photo. ZNiO, Wrocław, Poland.

Illustration 3


Illustration 1. The Gratta House (the third from the right). These first three houses – the royal residence when the royal family visited Gdańsk. Photo. Michał Salamonik.
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The remarkable career of Francesco De Gratta (1613–1676) began in the late 1640s. Francesco exploited a number of possibilities offered by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, becoming Royal Postmaster and Secretary, which also allowed him to expand his trade and credit activities.

This book details and analyses the unfolding of Francesco De Gratta’s career, how he used his family as well as a number of executors and benefactors in his social and economic advancement. This volume also asks how his career can be related to the institutional practices of the noble republic, how his different activities and occupations were interconnected and what roles the different networks played in them.

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