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MARGINALIA

Could a Portuguese Prince become King of Poland?

The Candidacy of Don Manuel de Bragança for the Polish Throne in the Years 1729–33

URSZULA KOSIŃSKA

THE system of government of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, with its foremost principle of free election, has long been the subject of numerous studies and is noted in almost every synthesis of European history. One of the most notable was the penultimate royal election of 1733, when the dual election of Stanisław Leszczyński and Frederick Augustus of Saxony triggered a civil war and became a pretext to a European conflict (War of the Polish Succession, 1733–38). One of the candidates to the Polish throne was *Infante* Manuel, a brother of Portuguese King John V (João V). He usually emerges in the context of the Löwenwolde Treaty of December 1732 (also called the Treaty of the Three Black Eagles), as the joint candidate of Russia, Austria and Prussia. It is surprising that so far no-one has taken an interest in the origins of this idea. Moreover, opinions vary as to why the *Infante* ultimately did not contest the election. Some historians have argued that the new Elector Frederick Augustus won over the Russian court with a promise to grant the Duchy of Courland to Johann Ernst Biron (Bühren), Tsarina Anna Ivanovna's favourite, and he gained Austrian support with a promise to accept the Pragmatic Sanction from 1713 (the succession in Austria for Maria Theresa von Habsburg).¹ Others have written that Manuel himself withdrew his candidature,²

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¹ T. Korzon, *Historia nowożytna*, vol. 2, Warsaw, 1903, pp. 383–84.

² W. Konopczyński, *Dzieje Polski nowożytnej*, Warsaw, 1996, 4th edn, pp. 546, 548 ; H.

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still others believe that at the beginning of the interregnum of 1733 it was Austria and Russia, seeing the strong position of Stanisław Leszczyński's supporters, which dropped the unpopular project.³

As for the *Infante* Manuel himself, he has been the subject only of one work in Portuguese.⁴ A little information can be found in the biography of his brother, King John V.⁵ However, studies on the history of Portugal,⁶ most of the general studies in English, German and Russian on modern European history, Polish history and the War of the Polish Succession mention Manuel in context of the Polish election in merely a sentence or do not mention him at all.⁷ In this respect, even the published sources have not been fully exploited.⁸ Meanwhile, from 1729 Don Manuel's person was the object of a serious diplomatic game between the powers. In this article, in an attempt to present a fuller picture, I draw on and compare diplomatic sources from state archives in Dresden, Vienna, Berlin and Moscow.

Manuel José Francisco António Caetano Estêvão Bartolomeu de Bragança, Count of Ourem, was born on 3 August 1697 in Lisbon. He was the son of King Peter II and Maria Sophia Isabella von Pfalz-Neuburg,

Łowmiański, *Historia Polski*, vol. 1, part 2, Warsaw, 1957, p. 743; E. Rostworowski, *Historia powszechna XVIII wieku*, 3rd edition, Warsaw, 1984, pp. 407, 487; J. A. Gierowski, *Wielka historia Polski. Rzeczpospolita w dobie złotej wolności 1648–1763*, Kraków, 2001, p. 339.

³ J. A. Gierowski, 'Dyplomacja polska doby saskiej (1699–1763)', in Z. Wójcik, *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, vol. 2, Warsaw, 1982, p. 376; *Prusy w okresie monarchii absolutnej 1701–1806*, ed. B. Wachowiak, Poznań, 2010, pp. 317, 330. Stanisław Leszczyński had in 1704–09 occupied the Polish throne with the support of Charles XII of Sweden.

⁴ E. Soares, *O infante D. Manuel (1697–1766). Subsídios para a sua biografia*, Lisbon, 1937 (Arquivo Histórico de Portugal, I série, vol. II).

⁵ B. Nizza da Silva, *D. M João V*, Lisbon, 2006, pp. 24, 38, 58–67, 81–85.

⁶ A. H. de Oliveira Marques, *História de Portugal*, Lisbon 1972; H. V. Livermore, *A New History of Portugal*, London, New York and Melbourne, 1966; José Hermano Saraiva, *História concisa de Portugal*, 1978.

⁷ Karl A. Roeder, *Austria's Eastern Question 1700–1790*, Princeton, NJ, 1982, p. 67; Jeremy Black, 'British Neutrality in the War of the Polish Succession 1733–1735', *International History Review*, 8 February 1986, 1, pp. 351–52; *The Cambridge History of Poland from Augustus II to Pilsudski*, ed. W. F. Reddaway, Cambridge, 1951, p. 25; H. R. H. [Maha Vajiravudh] Prince of Siam, *The War of the Polish Succession*, Oxford, 1901, pp. 17–18; A. McCandles Wilson, *French Foreign Policy during the Administration of Cardinal Fleury 1726–1743*, Cambridge, 1936 (reprinted Westport, CT, 1972), p. 241. For more, see V. I. Ger'e (Guerrier), *Bor'ba za polskij prestol v 1733 godu*, Moscow, 1862; R. Beyrich, *Kursachsen und die polnische Thronfolge, 1733–1736*, Leipzig, 1913; W. Strobl, 'Österreich und der polnische Thron 1733', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Vienna, 1950; S. G. Nelipovič, *Soúz dvuhglavyh orlov*, Moscow, 2010.

⁸ I am referring to Saxon, French and British accounts included in *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obshchestva* (hereafter, *SIRIO*), St Petersburg 1870, 1889, 1892, vol. 5, 66, 81, and Russian reports and instructions in 'Istoricheskoe izvestie ob izbranii na polskii prestol korola Avgusta III v 1733 godu', ed. D. N. Bantysh- Kamenskii, *Russkii vestnik*, 1841, no. 4.

brother of John V (1706–50). His aunt Eleonora Magdalena was the wife of the Holy Roman Emperor, Leopold I. Manuel was prepared for a military career. After his brother's accession to the Portuguese throne, he came into conflict with him. In 1714 he escaped secretly from the country to the Netherlands. Ignoring calls to return home, he travelled to France, Germany, Italy and Spain. He took part in the Battle of Petrovaradin in 1716 and in the capture of Belgrade in 1717, and was then appointed Field Marshal of the Imperial army. In 1725 he tried to obtain a cardinal's hat or to press his suit with some Italian princesses. Travelling from court to court, Manuel became the hero of many romances. He lived mainly at the expense of his cousin the Emperor Charles VI, causing him a great deal of trouble.⁹ So the Habsburg ruler tried to find for this 'prince with no land' a proper wife and means of supporting himself.

Don Manuel appears for the first time in Polish history in 1727 in connection with the rejected proposal of marriage between his sister Francisca Josefa and the just widowed 57-year-old Polish king, Augustus II (who was also the hereditary Elector of Saxony).¹⁰ From June 1728 it was rumoured that Don Manuel himself might marry one of the Russian princesses and that Imperial Minister Franz Karl von Mitrowitz Wratislaw had most likely gone to Russia to '*négotier pour le prince de Portugal*'. The Saxon envoy in Moscow Jean Le Fort claimed that two influential Russian ministers, Andrei Ivanovich Ostermann and Pavel Ivanovich Iaguzhinskii, had swallowed the hook dropped by Wratislaw.¹¹

Since 1726 the health of King Augustus II had been deteriorating. European courts began to seek a candidate for the Polish throne. France since 1725 had been backing Stanisław Leszczyński, the father-in-law of Louis XV. Russia and Prussia signed in 1726 a treaty to exclude both Leszczyński and the Saxon Wettin family, and to promote a so-called '*Piast*' (a native Pole), not related to any foreign dynasty.¹² In the agreement between Russia and Austria of 1726 there was no such clause, although Prussia did its best to influence Russia to obtain a similar declaration from Austria. But Vienna had no interest to limit its capacity for action.¹³

⁹ *O infante*, pp. 29–31; *Bor'ba*, pp. 126–30.

¹⁰ J. Staszewski, *August II Mocny*, Wrocław, 1998, pp. 245–46.

¹¹ U. Kosińska, *August II w poszukiwaniu sojusznika. Między aliansem wiedeńskim a hanowerskim (1725–1730)*, Warsaw, 2012, pp. 504–05.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 352–62, 484–85.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 254, 347–52, 355, 484.

It seems that the idea to put up the candidacy of Don Manuel for the Polish crown crystallized early in 1729, when Wratislaw presented this proposal to Emperor Charles VI. The project stipulated that Leszczyński would be excluded from the throne. It expected the co-operation with Russia and Prussia to establish in Poland a candidate suitable to all neighbours. However, Vienna would promote not only a 'Piast', but also other princes of the blood, including the son of the Elector of Saxony, if Augustus II accepted an alliance with Austria and the Pragmatic Sanction. The project was approved by the Emperor, and instructions were sent on 25 July 1729 for the envoy in Warsaw Heinrich Wilhelm Wilczek. They contained an alternative: if no agreement was concluded with the Wettins, then the candidate for the Polish throne should be a prince favourable to Austria, but insignificant or without any land. The person perfectly satisfying the condition — as it was emphasized — was Manuel of Portugal. His candidacy was, as yet, neither strong, nor the only one. What draws our attention is the need for an understanding between the three neighbouring courts, with the principal accent on the relationship with Russia.¹⁴ Talks were held about Manuel as early as May 1729 with the Russian envoy in Vienna Ludwik Lančinskij.¹⁵

Suddenly, in early 1730, Tsar Peter II died, and was succeeded by Anna Ivanovna. Russia, weakened after the death of Peter I, quickly began to arouse itself from political stagnation. In the summer Manuel of Portugal travelled to Moscow. There were rumours that it was not his own arbitrary action (as it was later claimed) and that the Emperor financed the trip.¹⁶ In July 1730 the *Infante* appeared *incognito* in Warsaw and later headed east, arousing of course the interest of other courts.¹⁷

Don Manuel came to Russia under the assumed name of Count von Setúbal. He assured his listeners that the sole purpose of his visit was to see Moscow. Wratislaw also asserted that Manuel's trip was a private one. On 12 August 1730 Manuel was brought to Moscow, quartered in a palace and, to his dismay, put under strict supervision. He was ordered to leave the capital immediately after a period of eight days had expired. The

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 348, 350–51.

¹⁵ 'Istoricheskoe izvestie', p. 124; *Bor'ba*, p. 49.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

¹⁷ Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Imperii, Fond 79 Snoshenia s Polshei, op. 1, 1730, d. 7 (hereafter, AVPRI 79/1, 1730/7), fol. 111: Mihail Petrovich Bestuzhev-Riumin to Anna Ivanovna, 2/13 July 1730; Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin, Hauptabteilung I, Repositur 11 Rußland (hereafter, GStA PK, HA I, Rep. 11), no. 6709, fol. 182–82v.: Frederick William I (hereafter, FW I) to Axel von Mardefeld, 1 August 1730 (sent 22 August).

Infante had little time to win the Empress over to his plans. But what were these plans? Some people claimed that Wratislaw and Ostermann wanted to marry him to the young princess of Mecklenburg, Elisabeth (sister of the Empress), known in Russia as Anna Leopoldovna; the plot could also include Elizaveta Petrovna. The Prussian envoy, Mardefeld, was fairly certain that Manuel's matrimonial efforts would fail, not least because of the prince's Catholicism. The Empress received him with reserve and did not invite him to her table, while the princess did not seem to have approved of him either.¹⁸ If Manuel's goal was to marry one of them, he failed completely. Ostermann's attempt to help him was also unsuccessful. Wratislaw — apparently aware of the prince's cool reception — avoided talking to him in private.¹⁹ In Vienna the conference of ministers was aware of Don Manuel's poor reception.²⁰ The unwelcome guest left Moscow, having been presented by the Empress with 15,000 roubles worth of gold and diamonds.²¹ He left everyone certain that his expedition had had a secret purpose. King Augustus II began to suspect that his neighbours considered the *Infante* as a possible candidate for the Polish throne.²² The British Consul General in Russia, Claudius Rondeau, informed his court that Manuel's plan was to win the Russians over, believing that their vote at a future interregnum in Poland would count more than the rest of Europe's.²³ The French diplomat Magnan rightly remarked that the rumours about Manuel's matrimonial intentions were used as an excuse to cover the real plans related to the Polish throne.²⁴ The Portuguese envoy in Vienna, João Gomes da Silva Count Tarrouca, indicated that this was part of a wider project which involved Wratislaw, the Dowager Empress Amalia and the influential Spaniard at the Austrian court, Ramon de Vilana Perlas Marquis Rialp. This was a project to marry the newly elected Polish king Manuel to Archduchess Maria Magdalena Josepha (1689–1743), sister of Charles VI.²⁵

¹⁸ *SIRIO*, 5, pp. 382–83; *SIRIO*, 81, p. 91–99; GStA PK, HA I, Rep. 11, 6709, fol. 183–84v., 187v., 190v.–91: Mardefeld to FW I, 7, 10, 14 August 1730.

¹⁹ *SIRIO*, 5, p. 383; *SIRIO*, 81, pp. 92–98, 101–02; GStA PK, HA I, Rep. 11, 6709, fol. 190v.–191, 218v.: Mardefeld to FW I, 14 August, 26 October 1730.

²⁰ Strobl, 'Österreich', p. 24.

²¹ GStA PK, HA I, Rep. 11, 6709, fol. 194–194v., 206, 218v.: Mardefeld to FW I, 28 August, 26 October, 18 September 1730.

²² HHSAW, HA I, Pol. II, 66, Fasc. III, fol. 271–71v.: Charles VI to L. W. Waldstein, *ostensible*, 22 December 1730.

²³ *SIRIO*, 66, 230.

²⁴ *SIRIO*, 81, pp. 108–12, 128–29.

²⁵ *O infante*, pp. 45–46.

Leaving Moscow, Manuel went to Riga, whence he departed in November 1730 and began his journey to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.²⁶ On 24 December 1730 he visited incognito the monastery of Jasna Góra in Częstochowa — the spiritual capital of Poland. He was recognized by one of the monks, Bruno Chojnacki, who had studied theology in Vienna and remembered the *Infante's* countenance. Therefore the guest was received with honours and his three-night stay gave him the opportunity to get acquainted with the monastery and Polish Christmas customs. His humility and piety were recorded in the annals of Jasna Góra.²⁷ The historian has to suppose that this visit was not an element of the propaganda to prepare the ground for the Portuguese candidacy for the Polish throne. It was even said that the Russian envoy, Johann Bernhardt Weissbach, had tried to negotiate Bragança's marriage to the fabulously rich widow of Field-Marshal Stanisław Denhoff, Maria Zofia, née Sieniawska, but she had rejected the *Infante's* advances.²⁸

Manuel's Polish trip did not prove a success. He gained no sympathy from the Poles (except perhaps among the Pauline Fathers of Jasna Góra), and found no wife among them.²⁹ So after his return to Austria, Manuel lived in Silesia at the expense of the Emperor.³⁰

At the same time Magnan noticed that, even if one considered the 'Portuguese' project as incredible, since the autumn of 1730 the understanding regarding Polish matters between the courts of Vienna and Moscow had been deepening.³¹ It could be no coincidence that shortly after the *Infante's* departure from Moscow, Count Wratislaw presented Osterman with a proposal to enter an Austro-Russian treaty in the event of the death of Augustus II. On 14 December 1730 the Austrian provided the complete project. His conditions were very similar to those of 1729: 1) the exclusion of Leszczyński; 2) the succession of the elector of Saxony would be acceptable only if he agreed to the allies' demands; 3) if not, the candidature of a 'Piaśt'; 4) if the allies could find no suitable 'Piaśt', a German prince or some younger son of a king in order to prevent the future union of the Commonwealth with any German state. On 13 January

²⁶ *SIRIO*, 81, p. 149.

²⁷ Roman Winiarek, 'Emanuel (1697–?) infant portugalski (Przebywali w Częstochowie)', *Gazeta Częstochowska – Tygodnik Regionalny*, no. 49 (530) 20 December, 2001, section: history.

²⁸ *SIRIO*, 81, pp. 119–120; *SIRIO*, 66, pp. 229–30.

²⁹ *Bor'ba*, p. 130.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 128–29

³¹ *SIRIO*, 81, p. 126.

1731 it was approved by Anna Ivanovna.³² Although Austria officially had not presented the *Infante* as its candidate, already at the end of 1730 Vienna sent to her representatives in Poland and Saxony series of rescripts about the Portuguese.³³

Since Russia welcomed the *Infante* reservedly, the search had been on for a new candidate entirely compliant with the Commonwealth's neighbours who could jeopardize the chances of both Leszczyński and the next elector of Saxony. The search for such a person turned out to be a total failure, so from Vienna's perspective, Manuel remained the primary option.³⁴ In the middle of 1731 talks to establish a treaty between the three neighbours of the Commonwealth gained momentum. The Russian deputy Karl Gustav Löwenwolde embarked on a journey via Berlin to Vienna to negotiate the alliance between Russia, Austria and Prussia.³⁵ It was then that the Imperial court must have presented Löwenwolde with the candidature of *Infante* Manuel as the man 'von einem friedfertigen und so beschaffenem Gemüt, der seinen Nachbarn weniger Unruhe verursachen wird'. The Russian envoy promised to win over the Empress Anna and the King of Prussia to the idea.³⁶ To gain the support of Berlin, Russia declared that the King of Prussia might become the master of Polish Prussia. Then Frederick William I wrote on Mardefeld's report: '*paratissimus sum*'.³⁷

In March 1732 Löwenwolde appeared in Berlin, where he reported to the Prussian ministers and Austrian diplomat Friedrich Heinrich von Seckendorff on the coming election in Poland and potential candidates. Then Seckendorff mentioned Manuel, pointed to his peaceful nature and assured that King John V would cover the cost of the election. Don Manuel was acceptable to Berlin due to his weakness, both political and intellectual. This would guarantee to the neighbouring states that under his rule the Commonwealth could be kept in ongoing inertia. The financial means were considered less important.³⁸

³² Solov'ev, *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen*, vol. 19, Moscow, 2003, p. 381; *Souz*, pp. 93–94; 'Istoricheskoe izvestie', pp. 126–29.

³³ HHStAW, HA I, Pol. II, 66, Fasc. III, pp. 267, 271–71v.: Charles VI to Waldstein, 22 December 1730.

³⁴ HHStAW, HA I, Pol. II, 66, Fasc. IV, fol. 21v–23: Charles VI to Waldstein, 14 September 1731; 'Istoricheskoe izvestie', p. 148; *O infante*, p. 33; *Bor'ba*, pp. 129–32.

³⁵ 'Istoricheskoe izvestie', pp. 129–30; M. Braubach, *Prinz Eugen von Svojen. Eine Biographie*, Vienna, 1965, vol. 4, p. 366.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 367, 381.

³⁷ J. G. Droysen, *Geschichte der preußischen Politik*, Leipzig 1869, vol. 4, part 3, pp. 144–45.

³⁸ GStA PK, I HA, Rep. 11 Nr 6712, fol. 89: FWI to Mardefeld, 5 April 1732; *Geschichte*, vol. 4, part 3, p. 145; Strobl, 'Österreich', pp. 28–29.

In September 1732 negotiations between the ‘Three Black Eagles’ accelerated. A major role was played by news about Augustus II’s poor health and that he had signed an alliance with France — the enemy of Austria.³⁹ On 12 September 1732 in Wüsterhausen, Prussian ministers signed the so-called ‘Punctuation’ put forward by Löwenwolde. Four days later in Berlin, Seckendorff approved it. The three states were planning to cooperate to put on the Polish throne a compliant prince. Manuel’s candidacy was listed as the only one.⁴⁰ There was also a clause about reimbursement from Portugal for the money invested in the election or at least to provide a reasonable equivalent. In Vienna the ministerial conference pointed out that the allied invasion of Poland had to be carried out under the banner of the *Infante*’s enthronement and of protecting Polish ‘liberties’. Otherwise this would provide Russia and Prussia with grounds to partition Poland and entirely destroy Manuel’s chances of success.⁴¹ Some doubts were also raised as to whether it would be possible to obtain financial support from the Portuguese king.⁴² On 27 November 1732 in Berlin, Seckendorff submitted the modified draft of the treaty. The offensive objective of the alliance was hidden under the phrase of protecting free election in Poland. Points about territorial acquisitions for Berlin and the candidature of Don Manuel were dealt with in separate clauses. The Prussian king accepted the Imperial proposal.⁴³ At the same time (November 1732) in St Petersburg Wratislaw was persuading Russian ministers to sign the agreement. The Russian court welcomed the Austrian proposal, but had not yet indicated a preferred candidate. They stated that the best person to become King would be a Piast, however, if none was found, a foreign prince with no land, preferably the Portuguese *Infante*, would be acceptable.⁴⁴

On 13 December 1732 in Berlin the alliance known as Löwenwolde’s Treaty was signed. It declared that, after the death of Augustus II, the

³⁹ *Geschichte*, vol. 4, part. 3, pp. 144–45; Wilson, pp. 215–39; Rostworowski, *O polską koronę. Polityka Francji w latach 1725–1733*, Wrocław, 1958, pp. 249–319.

⁴⁰ GStA PK, Rep. 11 no. 6730, fol. 1a–1d v.: Punctuation; see also *Geschichte*, vol. 4, part 3, p. 174. In the endnotes to Löwenwolde’s Treaty edited by Victor Loewe (*Preußens Staatsverträge aus der Regierungszeit König Friedrich Wilhelms I*, Leipzig, 1913, p. 432) is not the punctuation but the later (November 1732) Austrian counter-project; see Strobl, ‘Österreich’, pp. 33–34, i–x.

⁴¹ GStA PK, Rep. 11, 6730, fol. 1b v.: Punctuation, art. 5; Strobl, ‘Österreich’, pp. 35–41.

⁴² *O infante*, p. 33; GStA PK, Rep. 11, 6730, k. 22–24; Preussens ministers to FW I, 27 November 1732.

⁴³ *Geschichte*, vol. 4, part. 3, p. 129.

⁴⁴ *Bor’ba*, pp. 53–54; ‘Istoricheskoe izvestie’, pp. 134–35; HHStAW, HA I, Weissungen 66, fol. 34–35; Charles VI to Wilczek, 15 June 1732; *Soüz*, pp. 99–100.

signatories would present a joint candidate who would guarantee the maintenance of the existing political system and 'liberties' in Poland. The signatories expressed their willingness to use armed force. The only person to be excluded was Stanisław Leszczyński. A separate and secret clause stated their support for the candidacy of Manuel. Each state was to send to Warsaw bills for 36,000 red złotys (ducats). The Emperor was later to procure the reimbursement from the Portuguese king. The signatories declared that neither Prussia nor Russia would demand money from Manuel or any lands of the Commonwealth. If the candidate died before the election, or if it turned out that his enthronement was unsuccessful, the allies could arrange for another person under similar conditions. The ratification of the treaty was due in two months.⁴⁵ Here we must correct the mistake repeatedly occurring in the literature — the treaty did not exclude the Elector of Saxony openly; the alliance's provisions were fairly favourable for the Wettins. In the future this provided the legal basis for agreement with the Elector of Saxony.⁴⁶

The two months prescribed by the treaty passed, but no ratified documents were exchanged. It is known that on 25 January 1733 Anna Ivanovna signed the relevant document. However, at the request of Vienna, the handing over of the ratification was postponed.⁴⁷ On 1 February Augustus II died. This opened the question of implementing Löwenwolde's Treaty. I shall deal only with the fate of the candidacy of Manuel of Portugal. Unexpectedly all the signatories of the treaty soon began to withdraw from it. As early as 5 February 1733 imperial ministers expressed the view that Austria should not give the *Infante* too strong support and obstruct the road to the throne for other candidates, in particular, to the *Kurfürst* of Saxony.⁴⁸ In the instruction for the envoy in the Commonwealth, it was stated that Manuel remained Vienna's official candidate, yet there was no reason to tie their hands for him.⁴⁹ On 11 February the Russian diplomat

⁴⁵ *Sobranie traktatov i konvetsii zakliuchennykh Rossieiu s inostrannymi derzhavami*, vol. 1: *S Avstriei*, ed. F. F. Martens, St Petersburg, 1874, pp. 311–24; *Preußens Staatsverträge*, pp. 429–40; *Istoricheskoe izvestie*, pp. 136–44.

⁴⁶ J. Dygdała, 'Gra pozorów: zabiegi dyplomacji cesarskiej o rosyjską interwencję zbrojną w Rzeczypospolitej w 1733 r.', in U. Kosińska, D. Dukwicz, A. Danilczyk (eds), *W cieniu wojen i rozbiorów. Studia z dziejów Rzeczypospolitej XVIII i początków XIX wieku*, Warsaw, 2014, p. 141; *Bor'ba*, pp. 57–59, Strobl, 'Österreich', pp. 48, 54.

⁴⁷ *Preußens Staatsverträge*, p. 431.

⁴⁸ A. Beer, 'Zur Geschichte der Politik Karls VI', *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 55, 1886, p. 11; K. Strohm, *Die kurländische Frage (1700–1736): Eine Studie zur Mächtepolitik im Ancien Régime*, Berlin, 1999, p. 62.

⁴⁹ 'Gra pozorów', p. 143.

in Vienna reported to St Petersburg that the Emperor was willing to put up another candidate, for example the younger Duke of Lorraine Karl Alexander, or the new Elector of Saxony, Frederick Augustus II.⁵⁰

Two weeks after the death of Augustus II, Berlin also signalled to Vienna that the allies should rather support the Elector of Saxony, that he could join the Emperor and accept the Pragmatic Sanction.⁵¹ This information, so contrary to the conviction which remains among historians about the unconditional rejection of the Saxon candidature by Berlin, finds confirmation in the account of the Portuguese ambassador to Austria, Count Tarrouca.⁵²

Meanwhile in March it became clear that, although the Polish nobility generally favoured Leszczyński, the number of Wettin supporters proved to be unexpectedly high and Manuel could not expect to have as many adherents.⁵³ In mid March the new Elector of Saxony Frederick Augustus II sent to Vienna his declaration that he would acknowledge the Pragmatic Sanction in return for support of his aspirations to the Polish crown.⁵⁴ The Emperor concluded that, because of his character, the Elector would not cause as many problems as his father. Forcing the Portuguese candidacy became pointless. Between March 19 and 24 messengers from Portugal came to Vienna. As Lanchinskii was later informed, John V allegedly wrote that he was not able to provide his brother with much money. All this, as Lanchinskii was informed, induced Austria to treat Don Manuel doubtfully.⁵⁵ In fact it was a good pretext for Vienna to change its decision, although John V assigned for his brother's election the substantial sum of 400,000 cruzados, giving Count Tarrouca extensive powers to make use of the money. The ambassador prepared the credit line in the banks of London and Amsterdam, but soon ordered its closure. He justified his decision by the fact that the Emperor had begun to promote someone else.⁵⁶ Indeed, on 24 March 1733 Charles VI made a fateful decision: if the Saxons guaranteed

⁵⁰ 'Istoricheskoe izvestie', pp. 148–49.

⁵¹ H. J. Pretsch, *Graf Manteuffels Beitrag zur österreichisches Geheimdiplomatie von 1728 bis 1736*, Bonn, 1970, pp 122–23.

⁵² *O infante*, p. 36.

⁵³ Strobl, 'Österreich', p. 73; 'Istoričeskoe izvestie', p. 236; *Bor'ba*, pp. 144–46; J. Dygdała, 'Konfederacja krakowska Teodora Lubomirskiego z początków bezkrólewia 1733 roku a polityka Austrii wobec Rzeczypospolitej', in Ł. Kądziela, W. Kriegseisen and Z. Zielińska (eds), *Trudne stulecia. Studia z dziejów XVII i XVIII wieku*, Warsaw, 1994, pp. 51–52.

⁵⁴ *Kursachsen*, p. 15.

⁵⁵ HHStAW, Pol II, Weis 66, 1728, fol. 77–81: 'Ecrit destiné pour Mr le comte Tarrouca', [March/April 1733]; 'Istoricheskoe izvestie', pp. 161–62, 176–79; Strobl, 'Österreich', p. 76.

⁵⁶ *O infante*, pp. 36–37, 45.

the Pragmatic Sanction, with the knowledge and consent of Russia and Prussia, he was willing to support his Wettin neighbour. On 31 March 1733 the conference of ministers confirmed it. For the time the *Infante's* candidacy remained formally valid, because the agreement with the Saxons had not yet been signed. Preliminaries with Dresden were agreed on 18 April and a formal treaty was signed on 16 July 1733.⁵⁷ However, the key decision had already been taken at the end of March.

Fairly soon the Elector of Saxony also gained the support of Russia. Over the following days in March 1733, relying on reports from Warsaw and Vienna, the Russian court strengthened the conviction that Manuel did not stand a chance.⁵⁸ As early as 19 March they sent instructions to Warsaw that, although the *Infante* was still Russia's candidate, there was no way of putting him on the throne. On 4 April the news reached the Russian court of Vienna's talks with the Elector's representatives. Almost simultaneously the Saxon envoy presented to the Russians the new Elector's proposals regarding the Duchy of Courland for Biron. While St Petersburg had not yet fully revealed its stance, before 18 April 1733 the Empress was ready to support Frederick Augustus Wettin, if he formed with her and the court in Vienna 'a perfect friendship'.⁵⁹ By the beginning of May Dresden knew this.⁶⁰

The Convocation *Sejm* assembled in Warsaw on 27 April 1733 to define the conditions for the royal election. Thus the Portuguese *Infante* was abandoned before the open rivalry for the throne had even begun. The jilting of Bragança resulted from the rational political calculations of the signatories of Löwenwolde's Treaty. It is, therefore, necessary to consider the role played by Manuel in the history of the negotiations between the 'Three Black Eagles'. It seems that the essential objective was to forge their alliance, to put a weak ruler on the Polish throne in order to maintain the political status quo and block any attempts to reform the Commonwealth. When selecting a common candidate, negative criteria were decisive: no support from other countries, and intellectual weakness promising a lack of initiative both in foreign policy and in reforming the Commonwealth. In the years 1729–32 Russia, Austria and Prussia failed to find a candidate other than Manuel who met all these criteria. When it turned out that the

⁵⁷ Strobl, 'Österreich', pp. 80, 83–85, 87–88; *Kursachsen*, p. 16; K. Kantecki, *Stanisław Poniatowski*, Poznań 1880, vol. 1, p. 200.

⁵⁸ *Bor'ba*, Supplements, p. 55; GStA PK, I HA, Rep 11, 6716, fol. 63; Mardefeld to FW I, 17 March 1733.

⁵⁹ 'Istoricheskoe izvestie', pp. 163–64, 172–73; *SIRIO*, 81, pp. 575–76; *Kursachsen*, p. 19.

⁶⁰ *Stanisław Poniatowski*, vol. 1, p. 200; *Kursachsen*, pp. 4–5.

new Elector of Saxony was ready to meet the demands of Vienna and St Petersburg, and that his chances of being elected easily surpassed those of Manuel, the Portuguese was abandoned. As for Berlin, even though the reasons behind the Prussian withdrawal from Löwenwolde's Treaty have not been sufficiently investigated, the sources provide evidence that there, too, nobody wanted to 'stick firmly' by Manuel.

In early 1734 Manuel left Vienna and returned to Portugal to spend the rest of his life in Quinta de Belas, away from politics, leading an active social life, surrounded by writers and artists. He died unmarried in 1766.⁶¹

Translated by Piotr Jackowski

⁶¹ *O infante*, pp. 40, 50; *D. M João V*, pp. 64–67.