

Regensburg or Augsburg?

The Perpetual Imperial Diet and the last plague epidemic in 1713/1714 through the eyes of the Bohemian envoy

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FILIP VÁVRA

In recent years, interest in the history of diplomacy has burgeoned to an unprecedented extent among Czech and international historians. Nevertheless, there are still numerous unexplored aspects of diplomatic history that remain on the margins of interest. One of these is the issue of envoys to the Perpetual Imperial Diet of Regensburg. Naturally, numerous studies of the Perpetual Imperial Diet have been published, especially in Germany. Key texts include studies by the recently deceased Walter Fürnrohr, Karl Härter, Michael Rohrschneider, Harriet Rudolph and Anton Schindling.¹ However, interest in the Diet's activities is not limited to contemporary scholars; from the 1930s to the 1950s a number of young historians (particularly students of Max Braubach in Bonn, and also students at Vienna University) explored this topic in their dissertations.² By contrast, the topic of Bohemian envoys to the Diet has hardly been explored at all – and that is the gap that this paper seeks (at least partially) to fill.³ The only scholar to have focused his attention on Bohemian envoys was the above-mentioned Walter Fürnrohr, who almost half a century ago wrote a prosopographic study about the Bohemian envoys at the

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¹ Walter FÜRNRÖHR, *Der Immerwährende Reichstag zu Regensburg. Das Parlament des Alten Reiches*, Regensburg-Kallmünz 2001³; Karl HÄRTER, *Der Immerwährende Reichstag (1663–1806) in der historischen Forschung*, *Zeitenblicke* 11, 2012, Nr. 2, par. 1–50, URL: http://www.zeitenblicke.de/2012/2/Haerter/index_html (18. 1. 2023); Michael ROHRSCHEIDER, *Österreich und der Immerwährende Reichstag. Studien zur Klientelpolitik und Parteibildung (1745–1763)*, Göttingen 2014; Harriet RUDOLPH – Astrid VON SCHLACHTA (edd.), *Reichsstadt – Reich – Europa. Neue Perspektiven auf den Immerwährenden Reichstag zu Regensburg (1663–1806)*, Regensburg 2015; Anton SCHINDLING, *Die Anfänge des Immerwährenden Reichstags zu Regensburg: Ständevertretung und Staatskunst nach dem Westfälischen Frieden*, Mainz 1991.

² Andreas BIEDERBICK, *Der deutsche Reichstag zu Regensburg im Jahrzehnt nach dem Spanischen Erbfolgekrieg 1714–1724. Der Verlauf der Religionsstreitigkeiten und ihre Bedeutung für den Reichstag*, Düsseldorf 1937; Gerhard GRANIER, *Der Deutsche Reichstag während des spanischen Erbfolgekrieges (1700–1714)*, Bonn 1954; Friedrich MEISENBURG, *Der Deutsche Reichstag während des Österreichischen Erbfolgekrieges 1740–1748*, Dillingen an der Donau 1931; Robert DROSDA, *Die Verhandlungen auf dem Reichstag zu Regensburg von der Ankunft des Grafen Gottlieb von Windischgrätz bis zum Abschluss des zwanzigjährigen Waffenstillstands im August 1684*, Wien 1939 (Dissertation); Wilhelm HEIN, *Der Regensburger Reichstag von 1740 bis 1745*, Wien 1953 (Dissertation).

³ This topic will be addressed in greater detail in the author's dissertation, which is currently in preparation.

Diet.⁴ He also wrote one study about Bavarian envoys.⁵ Other historians did research about another types of diplomats to the Diet: Alexandra Stöckl wrote about Principal Commissioners, Michael Rohrschneider about envoys from Austria and Köln, Lupold von Lehsten about envoys from Hesse and Ernst Schütz about British envoys.⁶ Most of the researchers wrote about French envoys, including Guido Braun, Heinrich Rubner and Jörg Ulbert.⁷ Books about Habsburg diplomats in general have been published by Klaus Müller and recently Jiří Kubeš.⁸

This paper describes the experiences of the Bohemian Prince-Elector's envoy at the Imperial Diet during the last epidemic of plague there; it is therefore important to take account of the history of plagues in the Early Modern Era. Plague epidemics had a deep impact on society, and as such they have long been a major subject of interest for researchers. General surveys of medical history have been published by Petr Svobodný and Ludmila Hlaváčková or Roy Porter.⁹ Plagues in general have been the subject of numerous publications, of which the articles by Norman Cantor or Eduard Maur can be

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- ⁴ Walter FÜRNRÖHR, *Die kurböhmischen Gesandten auf dem Immerwährenden Reichstag*, Sudeten-deutsche Familienforschung 19, 1977, pp. 25-52. A general historical survey is provided in IDEM, *Die Vertreter des habsburgischen Kaisertums auf dem Immerwährenden Reichstag I-II*, Verhandlungen des historischen Vereins für die Oberpfalz und Regensburg 123, 1983, pp. 71-139; 124, 1984, pp. 99-148.
- ⁵ IDEM, *Kurbaierns Gesandte auf dem Immerwährenden Reichstag. Zur bayerischen Außenpolitik 1663-1806*, Göttingen 1971.
- ⁶ Alexandra STÖCKL, *Der Principalkommissar. Formen und Bedeutung sozio-politischer Repräsentation im Hause Thurn und Taxis*, Regensburg 2018; M. ROHRSCHEIDER, *Österreich*; IDEM, *Friedrich Karl Karg Freiherr von Bebenburg (1709-1773). Ein kurkölnischer Reichstagsgesandter im Spannungsfeld von Region, Reich und internationaler Politik*, Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter 81, 2017, pp. 118-138; Lupold VON LEHSTEN, *Die hessischen Reichstagsgesandten im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert I-II*, Darmstadt 2003; Ernst SCHÜTZ, *Die Gesandtschaft Großbritanniens am Immerwährenden Reichstag zu Regensburg und am kur(pfalz-)bayerischen Hof zu München 1683-1806*, München 2007.
- ⁷ Guido BRAUN, *Der Immerwährende Reichstag aus französischer Sicht in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Zeitenblicke 11, 2012, Nr. 2, par. 1-64, URL: http://www.zeitenblicke.de/2012/2/Braun/index_html (18. 2. 2023); Heinrich RUBNER, *Die französische Gesandtschaft am Regensburger Reichstag (1663-1702)*, Verhandlungen des historischen Vereins für die Oberpfalz und Regensburg 147, 2007, pp. 165-204; Jörg ULBERT, *Der Reichstag im Spiegel französischer Gesandtenberichte (1715-1723)*, in: Olaf Asbach – Klaus Maletke – Sven Externbrink (edd.), *Altes Reich, Frankreich und Europa. Politische, philosophische und historische Aspekte des französischen Deutschlandbildes im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 2001, pp. 145-169.
- ⁸ Klaus MÜLLER, *Das kaiserliche Gesandtschaftswesen im Jahrhundert nach dem Westfälischen Frieden 1648-1740*, Bonn 1976; Jiří KUBEŠ et alii, *V zastoupení císaře. Česká a moravská aristokracie v habsburské diplomacii 1640-1740*, Praha 2018.
- ⁹ Petr SVOBODNÝ – Ludmila HLAVÁČKOVÁ, *Dějiny lékařství v českých zemích*, Praha 2004, pp. 40-42, 65-68; Roy PORTER, *Dějiny medicíny. Od starověku po současnost*, Praha 2013², pp. 39-42, 146-150.

mentioned.¹⁰ Accounts of plagues in the Bohemian Crown Lands (and Central Europe in general) during the Early Modern Era have been written by Marie Ryantová, Eduard Wondrák and most recently by Karel Černý and Pavla Jirková.¹¹ The last epidemic of plague (1713/1714) has been studied by the above-mentioned Karel Černý, Zdeněk Duda and Eva Rozsivalová.¹² Accounts of the plague in Regensburg are given in contemporary reports as well as in older literature;¹³ modern authors who have studied this situation include Tobias Busse and Katharina Kellner.¹⁴ A collection of studies was published to mark the 300th anniversary of this unhappy event, as well as 2020 issue of *Opera historica* journal focused on epidemics.¹⁵

However, none of the existing literature explores the impact of the plague on the Diet in Regensburg between 1713 and 1714. Even Christine Werkstetter in her paper is concerned mainly with communication and the situation in the city of Regensburg (moreover it depicts only about three months in 1713, beginning with the first signs

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¹⁰ Norman Frank CANTOR, *Po stopách moru. Černá smrt a svět, který zrodila*, Praha 2005; Eduard MAUR, *Člověk a mor v dějinách*, Demografie 37, 1995, pp. 36–41.

¹¹ Marie RYANTOVÁ, *Ochrana před morem v českých zemích, Bavorsku, Sasku a Prusku ve světle pramenů a úředních nařízení z let 1625–1720*, Documenta Pragensia 20, 2002, pp. 313–327; Eduard WONDRAK, *Historie moru v českých zemích*, Praha 2020², pp. 90–106; Karel ČERNÝ – Sonia HORN (edd.), *Plague between Prague & Vienna. Medicine and infectious diseases in early modern Central Europe*, Praha 2018; Pavla JIRKOVÁ, „Věští-li se, či menší mor.“ *Rané novověké morové epidemie v českých zemích*, Praha 2019.

¹² Karel ČERNÝ, *Morová epidemie v Praze roku 1713 a klementínská kolej Tovaryšstva Ježíšova*, Bibliotheca Strahoviensis 6–7, 2004, pp. 55–66; Zdeněk DUDA, „Vás, o svatí patronové, pobožně vzýváme“ aneb poslední epidemie moru z let 1713–1714 v myšlení a jednání obyvatel města Písku, *Cornova* 1, 2011, Nr. 2, pp. 51–63; Eva ROZSIVALOVÁ, *Morová epidemie v Čechách v roce 1713 a v letech následujících*, Praha 1963 (Dissertation).

¹³ Erasmus Sigismund ALKOFER, *Regenspurgisches Pest- und Buß-Denckmahl. Wegen der im Jahr Christi 1713 allhier grassirten Seuche der Pestilentz...*, Regensburg 1714; IDEM, *Fortsetzung des Historischen Berichts. Welcher in dem vorhergehenden Regenspurgischen Pest- und Buß-Denckmahl enthalten...*, Regensburg 1714; Philipp Friedrich GAMPERT, *Kurze Geschichte der Pestseuche, welche in der Stadt Regensburg, vor einem vollen Jahrhundert, im Jahr 1713 herrschte*, Regensburg 1813; Hermann SCHÖPPLER, *Die Geschichte der Pest zu Regensburg*, München 1914.

¹⁴ Tobias BUSSE, *Die Geschichte der Pest in Regensburg von den Anfängen bis ins 18. Jahrhundert*, Regensburg 2006 (Dissertation); Katharina KELLNER, *Pesthauch über Regensburg. Seuchenbekämpfung und Hygiene im 18. Jahrhundert*, Regensburg 2005.

¹⁵ Richard REIL (ed.), *Die Pest 1713 in Regensburg und Statt am Hoff*, Regensburg 2013; Miroslava KVĚTOVÁ – Marie TOŠNEROVÁ, *Morové epidemie v českých raně novověkých městech optikou narativních pramenů*, *Opera historica* 21, 2020, pp. 153–169; Martin SCHEUTZ, *Göttlicher Zorn, Pestlazarette und Donauinseln. Die Wiener Pest von 1713 und die Obrigkeit*, ibidem, pp. 170–188; bibliography by Ivo CERMAN, *Bibliografie k dějinám epidemii 1500–1918*, ibidem, pp. 329–336, especially pp. 331–333. A general account is provided in Otto ULBRICHT (ed.), *Die leidige Seuche. Pest-Fälle in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Köln-Weimar-Wien 2004.

of infection and ending with departure of the Diet to Augsburg).¹⁶ As a result, it is necessary to turn to historical sources from the period. Interesting insights are provided by documents from the office of the former Bohemian Prince-Elector's envoy, which are now held at the National Archives in Prague – primarily diplomatic reports and their appendices.¹⁷ The main text of this paper is divided into two parts. The first one gives a general account of the Diet and the Bohemian envoys, the second one presents the plague of 1713/1714 as it was seen by the Bohemian envoy Franz Karl Wratislaw von Mitrowitz (1679-1750).¹⁸ How did he view and respond to the threat of plague and the relocation of the Diet? How did the Diet actually operate in the Early Modern Era, and was it possible to ensure that it continued to operate adequately even after its temporary relocation? How did the city of Regensburg react to the Diet's relocation and the economic, political, medical and other consequences? These are just a few of the questions that this text seeks to address.

The Perpetual Imperial Diet of Regensburg and Bohemian envoys

The Perpetual Imperial Diet (*Immerwährender Reichstag*) was based in Regensburg from 1663. This southern German city had already hosted Imperial Diets in previous years; in fact, all the assemblies of the Diet had taken place in Regensburg since 1594. This made Regensburg a logical choice as the location for the 1663 Diet. Originally it was to be an ordinary session of the Diet, of the type that had been common in the Holy Roman Empire since the Middle Ages. It was convened primarily in response to the growing threat posed by the Turks and the resulting need to collect taxes. The decision not to dissolve the new Diet was only taken during the course of the Diet itself; the Diet then continued its activities until the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806.¹⁹

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¹⁶ Christine WERKSTETTER, *Die Pest in der Stadt des Reichstags. Die Regensburge „Contagion“ von 1713/14 in kommunikationsgeschichtlicher Perspektive*, in: Johannes Burkhardt – eadem (edd.), *Kommunikation und Medien in der Frühen Neuzeit*, München 2005, pp. 267-294.

¹⁷ Národní archiv Praha [National Archives Prague], České vyslanectví v Řezně [Bohemian embassy in Regensburg] (hereunder abbreviated as NA, BER), boxes 6-34, reports by Franz Karl Wratislaw von Mitrowitz, unfoliated.

¹⁸ New information on his date of birth: Státní oblastní archiv [State Regional Archives] Třeboň, Records of vital statistics from South Bohemia, 1587-1949 (1952), inv. nr. 2433, serial nr. 1, records of vital statistics, NOZ Kadov, N 1659-1703, pp. 55-56 (inconsistent numbering), URL: <https://digi.ceskaarchiv.cz/4543/30> (18. 1. 2023).

¹⁹ Works on the history of the Empire during the period under investigation include Karl Otmar Freiherr von ARETIN, *Das Alte Reich 1648-1806 II. Kaisertradition und österreichische Großmacht-politik (1684-1745)*, Stuttgart 1997; Johannes BURKHARDT, *Vollendung und Neuorientierung des frühmodernen Reiches 1648-1763*, Stuttgart 2006; Axel GOTTHARD, *Das Alte Reich 1495-1806*, Darmstadt 2013⁵; Peter Claus HARTMANN, *Kulturgeschichte des Heiligen Römischen Reiches 1648 bis 1806. Verfassung, Religion und Kultur*, Wien-Köln-Graz 2011²; Helmut NEUHAUS, *Das Reich in der frühen Neuzeit*, München 2003²; Georg SCHMIDT, *Geschichte des Alten Reiches. Staat und Nation in*

The Imperial Estates held the right to participate in the Diet. These were individuals or corporations that had the status of imperial immediacy (*Reichsunmittelbarkeit*) by virtue of owning territories that were under the direct (unmediated) authority of the Emperor – i.e. no local lord had authority over them. The Imperial Estates included prince-electors, imperial princes and free imperial cities. In the period following the Peace of Westphalia (1648), the Imperial Estates did not participate directly in sessions of the Diet, but instead sent envoys to represent them and vote on their behalf.

The Imperial Estates at the Diet were grouped into three colleges (i.e. groups, from the Latin *collegia*) – the colleges of prince-electors, imperial princes, and imperial cities. In view of the context of this paper, the discussion will focus only on the prince-electors, who made up the highest-ranking but also the smallest college. Originally there were seven prince-electors, but at the end of the seventeenth century this number was increased to nine. They were further subdivided into ecclesiastical and secular prince-electors. The ecclesiastical prince-electors traditionally consisted of three archbishops from the Rhineland, specifically from Mainz, Cologne and Trier; the Archbishop of Mainz was the head of this college (and of the entire Diet). The ecclesiastical prince-electors had a higher hierarchical position than their secular counterparts. Among the secular prince-electors were the King of Bohemia, the Count Palatine of the Rhine, the Duke of Saxony and the Margrave of Brandenburg. During the seventeenth century, the college was expanded to include further two secular prince-electors – the Duke of Bavaria (who was from the Wittelsbach dynasty, like the Count Palatine of the Rhine) and the Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg (later known as the Duke of Hanover, after the seat of the Duchy). The problem with the college of prince-electors was that around the turn of the 18th century, a large proportion of its members also became kings; previously, this status had only been given to the Prince-Elector of Bohemia (who had held the royal title since the Middle Ages).²⁰ This caused numerous issues, mainly related to ceremonial matters, as a Prince-Elector was still viewed as a monarch of the second rank, despite the concessions granted in 1648. At the same time, when Charles VI was elected in 1711, the Prince-Electors reached an agreement that they were all of equal status, and

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der Frühen Neuzeit 1496–1806, München 1999; Barbara STOLLBERG-RILINGER, *Das Heilige Römische Reich Deutscher Nation. Vom Ende des Mittelalters bis 1806*, München 2023⁷; Joachim WHALEY, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire II. From the Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich 1648–1806*, New York 2012.

²⁰ Specifically, the Duke of Saxony Frederick Augustus I became the King of Poland (as Augustus II the Strong, 1697, a non-hereditary title) and retained this title with one brief interlude until the death of his son Augustus III in 1763; the Prince-Elector of Brandenburg Frederick III became the King in Prussia (as Frederick I, 1701, a hereditary title); George Louis of Hanover became the King of Great Britain (as George I, 1714, a hereditary title). K. O. VON ARETIN, *Das Alte Reich II*, pp. 58–72.

that they were entitled to the same ceremonial treatment within the Empire; this de facto removed the primacy of the Bohemian King.²¹

Besides the envoys representing the Imperial Estates, other types of diplomats were active at the Diet, and their function and status varied. The two main types were Principal Commissioners and Concommissioners. The Principal Commissioner (*Prinzipalkommisar*) was formally the highest-ranking person at the Imperial Diet, as he was a direct representative of the Emperor. This led to conflicts with the envoy from Mainz, who was the head (and chairman) of the Diet as a body.²² The Principal Commissioner was also superordinate to the Habsburg envoys – i.e. the Concommissioner as well as the Bohemian and Austrian envoys. He was entitled to the same honours as an ambassador, i.e. an envoy of the first rank. However, neither the Principal Commissioner nor the Concommissioner had their own vote at the Diet.²³ The Concommissioner (*Konkommisar*) was the head of the Principal Commissioner's office, and also his representative. His rank was the same as that of the Prince-Electors' envoys, and he held the highest position among them.²⁴ The Principal Commissioner, the Concommissioner, the Bohemian envoy and the Austrian envoy thus made up the group of Habsburg envoys at the Regensburg Diet, but they held various positions within the Diet – the Bohemian envoy was a member of the college of prince-electors, the Austrian envoy sat in the college of imperial princes, and the two imperial commissioners formed a separate category of diplomats.²⁵

Sessions and lawmaking at the Perpetual Imperial Diet involved relatively complicated processes, which should be at least briefly outlined here. In the ideal cases, when a proposal was approved by all components of the Diet at the first instance, the following process then ensued. First there were separate sessions of the college of prince-electors and the college of imperial princes. The college of imperial cities was informed about the situation only after the two higher-ranking colleges had granted their approval. This process of consultation among the individual colleges was known as relation and co-relation. Only after the college of imperial cities had issued its own approval did the entire Diet convene. The sessions took place in the imperial hall (*Reichssaal*) in Regensburg's old city hall; this was the first occasion on which all members of the Diet voted

²¹ Jiří KUBEŠ, *Volba a korunovace Karla VI. římským císařem v roce 1711*, *Český časopis historický* 111, 2013, pp. 805–841.

²² Rudolf REISER, *Adeliges Stadtleben im Barockzeitalter. Internationales Gesandtenleben auf dem Immerwährenden Reichstag zu Regensburg. Ein Beitrag zur Kultur- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Barockzeit*, München 1969, p. 16.

²³ Heinrich Wilhelm VON BÜLOW, *Ueber Geschichte und Verfassung des gegenwärtigen Reichstages I*, [Regensburg] 1792, p. 130.

²⁴ *IBIDEM*, pp. 122, 130, 177.

²⁵ In detail A. STÖCKL, *Der Principalkommisar*.

together. The vote had to be unanimous, so a single dissenting vote would curtail the entire process at this point. If the proposal was approved, a draft of the decision (*Reichsgutachten*) was written, and this was sent to the Emperor. The Emperor then ratified the decision via his Principal Commissioner, producing the final decision (*Reichsschluss*), which became valid in the form of an imperial decree (*Kaiserliches Commissions-Decret*).²⁶ However, this smooth process was an ideal case. In reality, delays occurred during all phases of the decision-making process, and deliberations often lasted months or even years until the necessary consensus was reached.

If we speak about the Bohemian envoys, a more precise designation would be the Bohemian Prince-Elector's envoys, as they were representing the King of Bohemia in his capacity as the Prince-Elector, rather than representing the Lands of the Bohemian Crown as such. These diplomats had not always been present at the Diet; their participation began in 1708. In that year the Emperor Joseph I approved the so-called re-admission of the Bohemian Prince-Elector's vote; in practice this led to the reinstatement of all of the Bohemian King's rights relating to his capacity as the Prince-Elector.²⁷ The King of Bohemia had lost these rights at the turn of the sixteenth century, so his former rights were thus returned to him. However, the changes in Europe's political landscape that had unfolded since the late Middle Ages meant that at the beginning of the eighteenth century the King of Bohemia and the Emperor were always one and the same person. The Bohemian envoy was thus primarily a Habsburg envoy.²⁸ For the Emperor, the re-admission brought a further reinforcement of his influence at the Diet, because in addition to the Bohemian envoy, he was also represented by the Austrian envoy, the Principal Commissioner and the Concommissioner. The college of prince-electors thus had a member who was not merely the representative of a prince-electors, but also of the

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²⁶ Christian Gottfried OERTEL, *D. Heinrich Gottlieb Franckens... Nachricht von der neuesten Beschaffenheit eines Reichs-Tags im Heil. Röm. Reich, und Abriss einer hinlänglichen Reichs-Tags-Bibliothek: Nebst einem Verzeichniße der Reichs-Stände und deren Gesandten auf dem Reichs-Tage vom Jahr 1663 bis zu Ende des Monats Merz 1761*, Regensburg 1761, pp. 109-119; R. REISER, *Adeliges Stadtleben*, pp. 8-9. A complete list of the documents of the Diet is presented in Johann Joseph PACHNER VON EGGENTORFF, *Vollständige Sammlung aller von Anfang des noch fürwährenden teutschen Reichs-Tags de Anno 1663 bis anhero abgefasseten Reichs-Schlüsse...* III-IV, Regensburg 1776-1777. The fourth volume ends in 1740; the subsequent period is covered in Christian Gottfried OERTEL, *Reichs-Tags-Diarium oder zuverlässige Nachricht von dem was unter der Regierung Kaisers Franz des Ersten auf dem Allgemeinen Deutschen Reichs-Tage... von 1745-1765 sich ergeben I. 1745/65*, Regensburg 1766.

²⁷ Jiří KUBEŠ, *Readmise (1708)*, in: Karel Schelle – Jaromír Tauchen (edd.), *Encyklopedie českých právních dějin X*, Plzeň 2017, pp. 175-178; Valentin URFUS, *Císař Josef I. Nekorunovaný Habsburk na českém trůně*, Praha 2004, pp. 122-129.

²⁸ Jiří KUBEŠ, *Spory o český kurfiřtství hlas na volbách říšského panovníka (1519, 1619 a 1742)*, in: K. Schelle – J. Tauchen (edd.), *Encyklopedie XV*, Plzeň 2019, pp. 368-370.

Emperor himself. However, there was now also a representative of the Prince-Elector of Hanover (a non-Catholic), which to some extent diluted the overall effect.²⁹

Seventeen Bohemian envoys served at the Regensburg Diet over the course of a century (1708-1806).³⁰ My focus here is primarily on the second envoy in this series: Franz Karl Wratislaw von Mitrowitz (who held the office from 1709 to 1723).³¹ In order to understand his position, it is useful to be aware of his life outside Regensburg and his family background. Franz Karl Wratislaw came from an old Czech family originally belonging to the lower ranks of the nobility, which experienced its greatest period of glory in the first half of the 18th century. During that period, a number of the family's members were elevated to the rank of counts – including Franz's father Wenzel Ignaz (1645-1727) as well as Franz himself. Franz Karl Wratislaw von Mitrowitz was the only Bohemian envoy at the Imperial Diet who was not born as a count. Many members of the Wratislaw family rose to high-ranking positions during this period, either as state officials (such as Johann Wenzel, about whom more details are given below) or ecclesiastical officials (siblings Johann Adam and Johann Joseph, both of whom were bishops of Hradec Králové; Johann Adam was also the Bishop of Litoměřice and the elected Archbishop of Prague).³² Franz's father lived a long life and also had some experience of diplomacy, but his main success came from his business activities, and he used the wealth earned in this way to support his son's education and career. As a result, a prominent career in diplomacy awaited Franz after he left Regensburg. He was one of the few diplomats to remain in the service of the Habsburgs for almost his entire adult life. In the 1720s and 1730s his duties took him to the Saxon-Polish state (1724-1728

²⁹ For details of the earliest period see Ulrich KÜHNE, *Geschichte der böhmischen Kur in den Jahrhunderten nach der Goldenen Bulle*, Archiv für Urkundenforschung 10, 1926, Nr. 1, pp. 1-110; a detailed account is given in Alexander BEGERT, *Böhmen, die böhmische Kur und das Reich vom hochmittelalter bis zum Ende des Alten Reiches. Studien zur Kurwürde und zur staatsrechtlichen Stellung Böhmens*, Husum 2003, pp. 24-274.

³⁰ However, there were eighteen periods of office in total, as Rudolph Joseph Colloredo held the office twice. Interim envoys are not counted. For basic data see Ludwig BITTNER – Lothar GROSS (edd.), *Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter aller Länder seit dem Westfälischen Frieden (1648)* I. (1648-1715), Oldenburg-Berlin 1936, p. 138; Friedrich HAUSMANN (ed.), *Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter aller Länder seit dem Westfälischen Frieden* II. (1716-1763), Zürich 1950, pp. 57-58; Otto Friedrich WINTER (ed.), *Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter aller Länder* III. (1764-1815), Graz-Köln 1965, p. 71; W. FÜRROHR, *Die kurböhmischen Gesandten*; IDEM, *Die Vertreter* II, pp. 99-118; Josef KOLLMANN, *České vyslanectví v Řezně 1708-1748*, Praha 1978 (Inventory).

³¹ The incorrect date formerly given for the end of the mission (1722) was due to the fact that Wratislaw indeed left Regensburg for around five months in that year, but in the following year he returned to the city to complete his mission. The last report is dated 19th August 1723. J. KOLLMANN, *České vyslanectví*, p. 5; NA, BER, box 34, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Regensburg, 19. 8. 1723.

³² Eva HAVLÍKOVÁ – Petr POLEHLA, *Intronizace královéhradeckých biskupů v 17. a 18. století*, Červený Kostelec 2020, pp. 61-64, 71-76.

and 1733-1740),³³ and in the meanwhile he spent several years as an envoy in Russia (1728-1733).³⁴ He was also the Lord High Steward of the Court (*Obersthofmeister*) for Maria Josepha of Austria,³⁵ an office which he held while also serving as an envoy in Saxony-Poland, and which he retained until 1747.³⁶

Let us now return to Franz Karl Wratislaw's time in Regensburg. After a brief mission by Franz Ferdinand Kinský, he was the first long-serving Bohemian envoy at the Diet. He was also the person who held this office for the longest time – fourteen years in total. His appointment was undoubtedly assisted by his close links with Kinský (they were brothers-in-law) and the future Supreme Chancellor of the Kingdom of Bohemia, Johann Wenzel Wratislaw von Mitrowitz (1670-1712).³⁷ Franz Karl Wratislaw effectively created the office of the Bohemian envoy in Regensburg, and he left an imprint on the office that would last for many subsequent years. In the early phase of his career, his approach to dealing with everyday issues was characterized by a degree of caution. This can be seen in the following citation from a report that he sent to Vienna in 1709. The new envoy found himself in a situation in which he did not receive instructions on how to proceed in a particular matter (the provision of compensation to Eichstätt and Kempten), so he had to wait, and could only anticipate the eventual outcome: „*Chur Böhmen wäre zwar von Kay[serliche] M[ajestä]t seinem allergnädig[sten] herr in dieser indemnisations-Materie noch nicht instruiert, zweifelte aber nicht, wan von denen Damnificirten ein bequehmes mittl zu ihrer schadtloßhaltung an handt gegeben: und die sach durch ein*

³³ Nela MICHALICOVÁ, *Polská princezna Marie Josefa a její hofmistr hrabě František Karel Vratislav z Mitrovic v letech 1724-1728*, in: Wojciech Iwańczak – Agnieszka Januszek-Sieradzkiej – Janusz Smolucha (edd.), *Świat kobiet w Czechach i w Polsce w średniowieczu i we wczesnej epoce nowożytnej*, Kraków 2018, pp. 147-168; EADEM, *Ke králi i k sejmku. Císařští diplomaté a habsburská politika vůči sasko-polské unii v druhé půli vlády Augusta II. (1719-1733)*, Pardubice 2018 (Master's thesis).

³⁴ Vítězslav PRCHAL – Filip VÁVRA, *Jídlo a slavnosti na císařské ambasádě v Petrohradě ve 30. letech 18. století*, in: Blanka Jedličková – Milena Lenderová – Miroslav Kouba – Ivo Říha (edd.), *Krajiny prostřených i prázdných stolů I. Evropská gastronomie v proměnách staletí*, Pardubice 2016, pp. 93-108; Filip VÁVRA, *V hlavní roli ambasáda. Diplomatičtvo dům a problematika jeho držby na příkladu ruské mise Františka Karla hraběte Vratislava z Mitrovic v letech 1728-1733*, in: Jaroslav Dibelka – Jan Šimánek (edd.), *Historie 2016/2017. Sborník prací z 22. celostátní studentské vědecké konference konané 6. a 7. dubna 2017 v Českých Budějovicích*, České Budějovice 2018, pp. 159-186.

³⁵ The eldest daughter of Emperor Joseph I and the wife of the Saxon Prince-Elector and the King of Poland Augustus III.

³⁶ Nela MICHALICOVÁ, *Vyslanec hofmistrem – hofmistr vyslancem. Jeden rok o dvojí roli hraběte Františka Karla Vratislava z Mitrovic u sasko-polského dvora v roce 1726*, in: Kateřina Kovárová – Zbyněk Sviták (edd.), *Historie 2015/2016. Sborník prací z celostátní studentské vědecké konference Brno 21.-22. dubna 2016*, Brno 2017, pp. 115-134; most recently J. KUBEŠ et alii, *V zastoupení císaře*, pp. 293-317.

³⁷ For information on him see especially Petra VOKÁČOVÁ, *Příběhy o hrdé pokoře. Aristokracie českých zemí v době baroka*, Praha 2014, pp. 16-95.

*Reichsguettachten an Kay[serliche] M[ajestä]t gebracht werden solte, selbige sodann einem jeden seine Convenienz gar gerne vergönnen würden.*³⁸ After four years in office, he was faced with perhaps the toughest challenge of his career so far – an outbreak of plague; this tested his skills and abilities (and indeed it represented a challenge for the entire Diet).

The plague epidemic of 1713/1714 and the relocation of the Imperial Diet to Augsburg

Epidemics of plague had been a part of human life since ancient times. The first reports of plague in Regensburg date from the ninth century, though it was probably not plague in the modern sense of the word; the true plague – an infectious disease caused by *Yersinia pestis* bacteria – apparently did not appear until a later date.³⁹ These early reports of plague in Regensburg can be seen in the context of the fact that by the 11th century, the city was already one of Germany's largest urban centres and one of the region's foremost hubs for trade and commerce.⁴⁰ The plague epidemic of 1713/1714 was the last occasion on which the plague struck in Regensburg (and indeed in Central Europe), but it took a very heavy toll. Over the course of six months, between 7 000 and 8 000 people died in the city, representing around one-third of its total population (20 000);⁴¹ in addition, around 7 000 people fled the city during this period.⁴² As a consequence, Regensburg lost two-thirds of its population in just a few months. This was not the first time in history that a plague epidemic had led to discussions on the possible relocation of the Diet. This happened during the epidemic of 1679/1680, and on that occasion too, the main candidate for the Diet's temporary home was Augsburg. In 1679 the Diet eventually decided to remain in Regensburg, partly because Augsburg was considered to be too close to the city, and therefore not adequately protected from the potential spread of the epidemic.⁴³ An interesting comparison can be made with the imperial court. In 1679/1680, the court moved from Vienna to Prague, and then to Linz, due to the threat

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³⁸ NA, BER, box 6, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Regensburg, 13. 8. 1709, appendix 1, minutes from the session of the college of prince-electors held on 9. 8. 1709.

³⁹ H. SCHÖPPLER, *Die Geschichte*, pp. 17-18; T. BUSSE, *Die Geschichte*, p. 35.

⁴⁰ H. SCHÖPPLER, *Die Geschichte*, p. 19.

⁴¹ Susanne FRIEDRICH, *Drehscheibe Regensburg. Das Informations- und Kommunikationssystem des Immerwährenden Reichstag um 1700*, Berlin 2007, pp. 65-66; Ch. WERKSTETTER, *Die Pest*, p. 267; R. REISER, *Adeliges Stadtleben*, p. 5.

⁴² K. KELLNER, *Pesthauch*, p. 92.

⁴³ NA, BER, box 13, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Regensburg, 22. 8. 1713; *IBIDEM*, appendix 2, prince-electors' report on the temporary relocation of the Diet, [Regensburg], 18. 8. 1713; *IBIDEM*, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Regensburg, 25. 8. 1713, appendix 2, prince-electors' report and the joint conclusions of the three colleges concerning the departure of the Diet, Regensburg, 23. 8. 1713.

of plague, while during the plague epidemic of 1713/1714 it stayed in Vienna. In 1713 it was the Diet that moved, from Regensburg to Augsburg.⁴⁴

When the plague epidemic struck in 1713/1714, Wratisslaw was already an experienced diplomat, and his reports to Vienna included more of his own personal observations and evaluations. In these reports, he wrote that the plague began to spread within the region during the summer of 1713, and the Diet first discussed the situation in early August. The Bohemian envoy was rather surprised that the Diet (and Regensburg's city council) waited until August to address the problem, because by May it was already known that the plague was present in the city, after two boats had arrived from Vienna carrying Jews who were infected.⁴⁵ However, for a long time these reports were not taken seriously, and the issue was downplayed by the authorities, mainly for economic reasons (trade and commerce would suffer if the presence of plague was confirmed).⁴⁶ Nevertheless, by the beginning of August the situation had deteriorated to such an extent that it was no longer possible to pretend that Regensburg was safe; infected individuals were living in the city, and this was clear for all to see. The infection spread rapidly in the summer heat, and many of the envoys opted for the traditional solution – departing for their country estates, where the population density was lower and the risk of infection therefore also lower. There was also no time to lose. Troops patrolled the boundaries of the city, which was encircled by Habsburg-controlled Bavaria, and there was a similar situation on the border with Upper Austria. The authorities introduced a number of measures based on the actions that had been taken during a similar epidemic in 1619.⁴⁷ If people arrived in the city from a region that was known to be affected by the plague, they had to be quarantined for six weeks at a location that was free of infection – in line with the original meaning of the word *quarantena*, i.e. a forty-day period that was introduced in Venice during the fifteenth century to combat plague epidemics.⁴⁸ It was also announced that if the city council considered the situation to be deteriorating, it would impose a complete blockade on the city. The main fear among high-ranking officials was that the epidemic would spread into the army, which could

⁴⁴ Ivana ČORNEJOVÁ et alii, *Velké dějiny země Koruny české VIII. 1618-1683*, Praha-Litomyšl 2008, pp. 186-187.

⁴⁵ NA, BER, box 13, report by F. K. Wratisslaw, Regensburg, 8. 8. 1713. This is also confirmed (based on other sources) by K. KELLNER, *Pesthauch*, p. 88; T. BUSSE, *Die Geschichte*, p. 123. Alkofer dates the discovery of the first symptoms in Regensburg to the first half of July, see E. S. ALKOFER, *Regens-purgisches Pest- und Buß-Denckmahl*, pp. 133-134. For plague in Vienna see Hilde SCHMÖLZER, *Die Pest in Wien. „Des wütenden Tods Ein umständig Beschreibung...“*, Wien 1985.

⁴⁶ K. KELLNER, *Pesthauch*, p. 89.

⁴⁷ NA, BER, box 13, report by F. K. Wratisslaw, Regensburg, 8. 8. 1713.

⁴⁸ Philip A. MACKOWIAK – Paul S. SEHDEV, *The Origin of Quarantine*, *Clinical Infectious Diseases* 35, 2002, pp. 1071-1072, URL: <https://academic.oup.com/cid/article/35/9/1071/330421> (22. 1. 2022); T. BUSSE, *Die Geschichte*, p. 138.

have had a devastating effect on ongoing military operations.⁴⁹ The final phase of the War of the Spanish Succession was culminating, and the period between the Peace of Utrecht and the Peace of Rastatt was characterized by a form of international uncertainty; the French had seized some of the Empire's territory in their Rhine offensive, and in the autumn of 1713 they occupied the fort of Landau and the city of Freiburg.⁵⁰

It is interesting that not only the city council, but also the Imperial Diet became involved in dealing with the situation. The Diet was responsible for the introduction of systematic visits by medical inspectors who went into the city's individual districts, streets and houses, determined how many people were infected, and arranged for them to be interned at a plague hospital located in the district of Unterer Wöhrd. The inspectors were doctors and pharmacists, and nobody was exempt from the home visits – including clergymen and envoys, which normally enjoyed special treatment.⁵¹ The plague hospital in Unterer Wöhrd was funded by the city, unlike a different hospital at Jakobshof (within the city walls), which was used by wealthy burghers who had to pay for its services.⁵² By the middle of August, the situation had become so serious that the city was no longer considered safe, so it was decided to relocate the Diet. This decision was taken despite the medical inspectors' opinion that the situation was not as extreme as people said it was, and that when moving through the city, „*die menge der verdächtigen Kranckhen nicht angetroffen worden*“.⁵³ The Bohemian envoy had access to the lists compiled by the medical inspectors (evidently via the Principal Commissioner), and he sent copies of them to Vienna; the lists demonstrate that the inspectors carried out very thorough checks in each individual household, and recorded everything diligently. The lists included not only those who displayed symptoms of the plague, but everybody who was sick; for example, the inspectors listed one burgher who had suffered a stroke seven years previously. The direst situation was among the city's poor, and the five inspectors often saw scenes of horror: „*Das wir viele ungekleidete arme undt bloße kleine Kinder angetroffen [...], und auf mangl des brodts gleichsamb als die meißlein daran gekiefflet*“.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ NA, BER, box 13, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Augsburg, 8. 8. 1713, appendix 3, final decision of the three colleges, [Regensburg], 5. 8. 1713.

⁵⁰ Vít VLNAS, *Princ Evžen Savojský. Život a sláva barokního válečníka*, Praha-Litomyšl 2001, pp. 450-455.

⁵¹ E. S. ALKOFEK, *Fortsetzung*, pp. 17-18; for information on hospitals in nearby Austria see Martin SCHEUTZ – Alfred Stefan WEISS, *Das Spital in der Frühen Neuzeit. Eine Spitalandschaft in Zentral-europa*, Wien 2020, pp. 135-150. On exterritoriality Edward Robert ADAIR, *The Exterritoriality of Ambassadors in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, London 1929.

⁵² K. KELLNER, *Pesthauch*, p. 98.

⁵³ NA, BER, box 13, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Regensburg, 15. 8. 1713, appendix 5, medical inspection visit documents, memorandum to the Imperial Diet on a medical inspection visit, Regensburg, 13. 8. 1713.

⁵⁴ IBIDEM. For information on the lack of food see also E. S. ALKOFEK, *Regenspurgisches Pest- und Buß-Denckmahl*, pp. 144-145; IDEM, *Fortsetzung*, p. 12; K. KELLNER, *Pesthauch*, pp. 86-87.

According to Wratislaw's information, a total sixty-six people died in the city (and at the hospital) between 16th July and 13th August.⁵⁵

By mid-August it was already obvious that the proposed relocation of the Diet would take place, but it was still not clear where its new location would be. Several cities that remained unaffected by the plague were proposed as candidates, and it was the college of prince-electors that had the final say in the decision.⁵⁶ The chief candidates were Straubing, Landshut, Ingolstadt, Nuremberg and Augsburg. The first two were eliminated from the list at the first stage of the deliberations. The Principal Commissioner (i.e. the Emperor's representative) was in favour of Ingolstadt, but the city did not have enough accommodation for all the envoys to live there in comfort; the move would affect several hundred people, including all staff and servants. Brandenburg was in favour of Nuremberg, but this choice lacked wider support. Eventually, a compromise was reached and Augsburg was chosen as the Diet's temporary home. One factor in this decision was the city's almost equal Catholic and non-Catholic populations. Another reason was the fact that Augsburg had just as much experience of hosting the Diet as Regensburg did; many Diets had been held there especially during the sixteenth century, so the city had sufficient accommodation to cater for the large numbers of people involved. Moreover, in the seventeenth century Augsburg had hosted two events of supreme political importance – the election of Ferdinand IV as the King of the Romans, and the election and coronation of Joseph I.⁵⁷ According to a report written by Wratislaw on 22nd August, the relocation was scheduled to take place in approximately eight days. The envoys were initially given the choice of whether they wished to leave Regensburg or remain in the city, as „*mithin die apprehension und forcht zwischen vielen Gesandten sehr groß*“.⁵⁸ However, by the end of August the situation had worsened to such an extent that all journeys were prohibited (with the obvious exception of envoys participating in the relocation). As soon as it became clear that the envoys would travel to Augsburg, they began dealing with practicalities, and they received assurances that they would not be charged excessive prices for their accommodation in the city.

Before the Diet was able to undertake the complete relocation, the entire move had to be thoroughly planned and organized – and naturally, that took time. It was necessary

⁵⁵ A partial list of these persons is also available. NA, BER, box 13, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Regensburg, 15. 8. 1713; *IBIDEM*, appendix 5, medical inspection visit documents from 11.-14. 8. 1713.

⁵⁶ *IBIDEM*, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Regensburg, 22. 8. 1713; *IBIDEM*, appendix 2, prince-electors' report, [Regensburg], 18. 8. 1713; *IBIDEM*, appendix 3, Reichsgutachten, Regensburg, 18. 8. 1713; *IBIDEM*, appendix 4, Imperial Commission decree, Regensburg, 19. 8. 1713; E. S. ALKOFER, *Regenspurgisches Pest- und Buß-Denckmahl*, pp. 148-149; P. F. GAMPERT, *Kurze Geschichte*, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁷ Jiří KUBEŠ, *Trnitá cesta Leopolda I. za říšskou korunou (1657-1658). Volby a korunovace ve Svaté říši římské v raném novověku*, České Budějovice 2009, pp. 23, 74.

⁵⁸ NA, BER, box 13, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Regensburg, 22. 8. 1713; E. S. ALKOFER, *Regenspurgisches Pest- und Buß-Denckmahl*, p. 150.

to guarantee unhindered passage for all involved, and to enable them to reach their destination as quickly and simply as possible. Letters were therefore sent to all the places through which they would be passing, instructing them to enable the travellers to pass and also to provide them with fresh horses. Time was running out. Regensburg was being hermetically sealed, and it was expected that a complete blockade would soon be imposed (preventing travel into and out of the city); the envoys had been granted an exemption, so they would be permitted to leave even after the blockade had begun. One of the first to leave was the Principal Commissioner Prince Maximilian Karl von Löwenstein-Wertheim-Rochefort (1656-1718); he departed on the morning of 26th August. The other envoys planned to leave at a later date, and two weeks were scheduled for their journey.⁵⁹ The exodus culminated on 30th August, when all the remaining envoys left the city, accompanied by their staff, servants and luggage. The journey was either across land, via Munich, or by water, along the Danube and the Lech. Unfortunately, we have no information on which route Wratislaw took. Despite previous assurances that the envoys would not be overcharged for their accommodation in Augsburg, almost immediately there were complaints about the prices. Even before departing from Regensburg, Wratislaw had asked the Emperor for money to cover the expected high costs of accommodation in Augsburg. After his arrival, he complained that the only available lodgings in the city were of poor quality and rents were extortionate (up to several hundred gulden), and he also noted that food and other essentials were being sold at inflated prices. To support his words, he noted that the other envoys had likewise requested extra money from their lords.⁶⁰

Wratislaw's journey took approximately three weeks. No more information is available about the journey or about where he stayed in Augsburg. Not everybody had the good fortune to arrive safely at their destination. This was not only due to the weather, which was unusually wet for the season. The Hanover envoy Dr. Christoph von Schrader never reached Augsburg, as he died at the beginning of September near Neuburg, either of a stroke or of the plague.⁶¹ Immediately on his arrival, Wratislaw had to deal with more problems. At first, only the envoys themselves (plus essential staff) were admitted to the city; the remaining staff and servants (and the envoys' luggage) had to wait outside the city walls or on boats – a situation which was made even more unpleasant due to the rainy weather. After several complaints, requests and interventions, the city council eventually – albeit reluctantly – decided to allow the other members of the parties to enter the city. But that was not the only obstacle that the council placed in the Diet's

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⁵⁹ NA, BER, box 13, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Regensburg, 25. 8. 1713; *IBIDEM*, appendix 4, prince-electors' report on unhindered passage to Augsburg, [Regensburg], 25. 8. 1713; E. S. ALKOFFER, *Regenspurgisches Pest- und Buß-Denckmahl*, p. 151.

⁶⁰ NA, BER, box 13, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Regensburg, 30. 8. 1713.

⁶¹ F. HAUSMANN (ed.), *Repertorium* II, p. 443; T. BUSSE, *Die Geschichte*, p. 166.

path. The councillors drew up a document consisting of seven separate points, which summarized the city's most pressing problems and introduced measures to address them. They asked for a list of which people belonged to which embassy, so that they would know who precisely was in the city; they prohibited non-local traders from operating in the city, and they also expelled Jewish inhabitants.⁶² The document stated (inter alia) that the city lacked sufficient land and people to meet the envoys' needs, and that trade in the city was suffering (they claimed that this was due to the siege and bombardment of the city that had taken place ten years earlier, and that some of the damage, for example to the city walls, had still not been repaired). Nevertheless, after these initial disputes with the city council, it appeared that nothing more stood in the way of the Diet's work. The city hall was designated as the venue for its sessions.⁶³

In reality, the situation was far from straightforward; by the end of September the epidemic had worsened to such an extent that there were proposals to relocate again, or even to dissolve the Diet completely.⁶⁴ Added to this was the continuing military threat posed by the ongoing wars; Prince Eugene of Savoy had undertaken to provide military support to the Diet if necessary.⁶⁵ Although the French-occupied territories were around 250 kilometres away from Augsburg, the threat was nevertheless viewed as a very real one. This is again evident from a report sent by Wratislaw before his departure from Regensburg, in which he wrote that Augsburg, if threatened by the troops, would possibly be an even more dangerous place to stay than Regensburg threatened by the plague.⁶⁶ The situation escalated in the autumn of 1713. Other German cities (such as Hamburg) introduced stringent restrictions on movement, and the plague continued to spread (reaching Nuremberg, among other places).⁶⁷ The military threat was also escalating, and the possibility of relocating the Diet once again was seriously considered. This time the candidates were other Bavarian towns – Nördlingen and Weißenburg.⁶⁸ At the end of October, Augsburg followed Regensburg in imposing a mandatory forty-day quarantine (to be spent outside the city walls) for all people arriving in the city; failure

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⁶² NA, BER, box 13, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Augsburg, 22. 9. 1713, appendix 1, seven points of the Augsburg city council, Augsburg, delivered 18. 9. 1713.

⁶³ IBIDEM, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Augsburg, 22. 9. 1713.

⁶⁴ IBIDEM, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Augsburg, 25. 9. 1713.

⁶⁵ IBIDEM, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Augsburg, 22. 9. 1713, appendix 2, extract from a letter by Prince Eugene of Savoy to the Principal Commissioner Prince Löwenstein, Mühlberg, 8. 9. 1713; IBIDEM, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Augsburg, 13. 10. 1713.

⁶⁶ IBIDEM, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Regensburg, 22. 8. 1713.

⁶⁷ IBIDEM, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Augsburg, 13. 10. 1713; Carolin PORZELT, *Die Pest in Nürnberg. Leben und Herrschen in Pestzeiten in der Reichsstadt Nürnberg (1562–1713)*, St. Ottilien 2000.

⁶⁸ NA, BER, box 13, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Augsburg, 20. 10. 1713, appendix 2, extract from an imperial rescript, Vienna, 4. 10. 1713.

to comply was a capital crime.⁶⁹ The quarantine period was subsequently increased to forty-two days. New arrivals had to provide credible proof (i.e. official documentation) that in the previous forty-two days they had not spent any time at a place where plague was present; if they could not do this, they had to undergo quarantine.⁷⁰

Augsburg's city council also imposed further limitations on trade and commerce. From the envoys' perspective, it is important to realize that initially they were not granted the customary exemption from direct and indirect taxes on food.⁷¹ This caused a wave of resentment, which further inflamed the already tense situation, and after difficult negotiations the exemption was eventually granted. It applied to all goods, and the envoys were also permitted to import their own goods (i.e. same legal arrangement that had applied to them in Regensburg). Moreover, the exemption from taxes applied not only to imported goods, but also to goods purchased within the city (including wine, beer, meat and other foodstuffs). The Diet also managed to secure a retrospective exemption, so that taxes already paid by the envoys were reimbursed to them or deducted from the prices of future purchases.⁷²

This gradually stabilized the situation, and the Diet was neither relocated for a second time, nor was it attacked by foreign troops. It operated in Augsburg for almost a year. It dealt with practically the same issues as had previously been the case in Regensburg. These included the collection of taxes (especially to fund the army), the ongoing war and related problems experienced by the various Imperial Estates, the Treaty of Rastatt (which also had a religious dimension, as manifested in the disputes over Article four of the Treaty of Ryswick and Article three of the Treaty of Rastatt),⁷³ and the post-war payments compensating the Imperial Estates for damage incurred.⁷⁴ In the spring of 1714 the epidemic began to recede, and discussions began to focus on the Diet's return

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⁶⁹ IBIDEM, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Augsburg, 27. 10. 1713, appendix 2, final decision of the colleges of the prince-electors and imperial princes regarding the plague, [Augsburg], 21. 10. 1713.

⁷⁰ IBIDEM, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Augsburg, 9. 11. 1713, appendix 3, final decision of the three colleges regarding the plague, Augsburg, 31. 10. 1713.

⁷¹ IBIDEM, appendix 4, memorandum of the city of Augsburg regarding taxes on Akzise and Ungelt, [Augsburg], 25. 10. 1713. Akzise (octroi) was a type of indirect tax on food and Ungelt was a tax on the import and sale of food. Jaroslav PÁNEK (ed.), *Akademická encyklopedie českých dějin I. A-C*, Praha 2009, pp. 30-31; Libuše SPÁČILOVÁ – Vladimír SPÁČIL – Václav BOK, *Glosář starší němčiny k českým pramenům*, Olomouc 2014, p. 849.

⁷² NA, BER, box 13, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Augsburg, 16. 11. 1713, appendix 5, final decision of both higher colleges on the memorandum of Augsburg city council regarding Akzise and Ungelt, Augsburg, 14. 11. 1713.

⁷³ This protected the Catholic population in the traditionally Protestant territory along the right bank of the Rhine, i.e. the territories returned by France to the Empire after the Peace of Rijswijk in 1697.

⁷⁴ See NA, BER, box 13-14, reports by F. K. Wratislaw from Augsburg, 22. 9. 1713 – 30. 8. 1714.

to its original location. The city of Regensburg lobbied hard for this course of action, as it was keen to lift the blockade that was devastating its economy. The council supported its proposals with medical reports written by local doctors, who were in favour of ending the restrictions because the epidemic was in retreat; in early March the plague hospital did not have a single patient. The Diet approved this proposed course of action.⁷⁵ However, the move was again delayed, this time due to the international situation. In the spring of 1714 the Peace of Rastatt was signed, bringing the long-lasting War of the Spanish Succession to a definitive end.⁷⁶ The return to Regensburg began to take on firmer contours in the summer, when all three of the Diet's colleges approved the proposal; the relocation was scheduled for either August or early/mid-September.⁷⁷ This schedule was maintained, and on 30th August Wratislaw sent his last report from Augsburg – exactly a year after he had departed from Regensburg.⁷⁸ The return journey again took around three weeks, and by the end of September he was again installed on his old premises.⁷⁹ It was mainly the Protestant contingent of the Estates who were in favour of the move to Regensburg, and in a conversation with the Brandenburg envoy, Wratislaw commented on this with his typical humour: „... *daß ich denselben* [Kurbrandenburgischen Gesandten], *äußerlich auß scherz, fragte: wo sie dann, weilien die abreiße so eilfertig, mittlerweile, [...] zu Regenspurg wohl machen oder zusam[m]en schmieden würden?*“⁸⁰

⁷⁵ IBIDEM, box 13, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Augsburg, 26. 3. 1714; IBIDEM, appendix 1, letter from Regensburg city council on the lifting of the blockade, [Regensburg], 23. 2. 1714, appendices 1 and 2, statements by the Regensburg plague doctors Johann Christoph Spieß (20. 2.) and Johann Leonhard Hechtel (19. 2.); IBIDEM, appendix 2, letter from Regensburg city council on the lifting of the blockade, [Regensburg], 6. 3. 1714; IBIDEM, appendix 7, Reichsgutachten regarding the lifting of the blockade, Augsburg, 23. 3. 1714. Hechtel also wrote a text on how people could protect themselves from the plague, including instructions for making various medicinal potions – Johann Leonhard HECHTEL, *Consilium antipestiferum, oder wohlmeinendes Bedenckhen. Wie man sich anjetzo bey grassirenden pestilentialischen Seuchen und Kranckheiten, sowohl praeservativè als curativè mit erträglichen Mitteln durch Göttlichen Beystand verwalten solle...*, Regensburg 1713.

⁷⁶ The treaty was not officially signed until September, in the Swiss town of Baden, after it had been deliberated by the Diet. For the most recent account see Katharina ARNEGGER et alii (edd.), *Der spanische Erbfolgekrieg (1701-1714) und seine Auswirkungen. In memoriam Teodora Toleva*, Wien 2018.

⁷⁷ NA, BER, box 14, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Augsburg, 9. 7. 1714; IBIDEM, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Augsburg, 12. 7. 1714; IBIDEM, appendix 3, prince-electors' report regarding the relocation of the Diet to Regensburg, [Augsburg], 10. 7. 1714; IBIDEM, appendix 5, final decision and Reichsgutachten regarding this matter, Augsburg, 10. 7. 1714; IBIDEM, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Augsburg, 26. 7. 1714, appendix 5, Imperial Commission decree on the Diet's return to Regensburg, Augsburg, 25. 7. 1714.

⁷⁸ IBIDEM, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Augsburg, 30. 8. 1714.

⁷⁹ IBIDEM, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Regensburg, 25. 9. 1714.

⁸⁰ IBIDEM; T. BUSSE, *Die Geschichte*, p. 162. Envoy of Brandenburg-Prussia was either Ernst von Metternich (1657-1727) or his son Ernst Eberhard (1691-1717), which were jointly in Regensburg

The complete Imperial Diet met for the first time after its return to Regensburg at the beginning of October. Its experiences of operating in a different location, and in different epidemiological and economic circumstances, had led to changes in the structure of the Diet's sessions. As a result, there were intense discussions over whether the Diet should again meet three times a week (as had been the standard practice in Regensburg before the plague), or whether it should only convene twice a week (as in Augsburg). Eventually a compromise was reached; the Augsburg model was retained (with sessions on Mondays and Fridays), but it was agreed that sessions could be held more often if necessary. In practice, the Diet generally convened either twice or three times a week in the following months – though this was not always observed, as in some weeks it met only once, or it met on different days.⁸¹ The threat of plague continued to hang over the city for some time. At the end of 1714 there were new cases of plague in nearby areas of Bavaria, and people travelling to Regensburg again had to present valid passports. Nevertheless, this time the city avoided the plague, which never returned.⁸²

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to describe the activities of the Perpetual Imperial Diet in the turbulent period of its relocation from Regensburg to Augsburg in response to a plague epidemic, drawing on the documents of the Bohemian envoy Franz Karl Wratislaw von Mitrowitz. The relocation of the Diet was an unprecedented step, and it occurred only twice in its 150-year history – for the first time during the plague of 1713-1714, and for the second time during the Wars of the Austrian Succession (1742-1745), when it temporarily moved to Frankfurt am Main under Charles VII.⁸³ The Imperial Diet was the supreme political body of the Holy Roman Empire, and it was the subject of much attention. In 1713/1714 it faced threats from various sides – not only from the plague epidemic that devastated Regensburg in 1713, but also the military threat that existed during the final phase of the Wars of the Spanish Succession. During the existence of the Diet, there were also several other occasions when relocation was proposed – e.g. in 1679 (also due to plague) – but in all these cases it ended up staying in Regensburg.

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 between 1713 and 1717. L. BITTNER – L. GROSS (edd.), *Repertorium* I, p. 34; F. HAUSMANN (ed.), *Repertorium* II, p. 294.

⁸¹ NA, BER, box 14, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Regensburg, 2. 10. 1714.

⁸² *IBIDEM*, box 15, report by F. K. Wratislaw, Regensburg, 11. 12. 1714; *IBIDEM*, appendix 2, final decision of the three colleges regarding the re-appearance of the disease, Regensburg, 10. 12. 1714.

⁸³ K. O. VON ARETIN, *Das Alte Reich* II, p. 440; Michael ROHRSCHEIDER, *Strukturgegebenheiten und Vernetzungen der Reichstagsgesandtschaften Franz' I. und Maria Theresias (1745–1763). Ein Problem-aufriß*, *Zeitenblicke* 11, 2012, Nr. 2, par. 1-50, here par. 6, URL: http://www.zeitenblicke.de/2012/2/Rohrschneider/index_html (29. 1. 2022).

The Diet played a key role in the decision-making on how best to protect Regensburg against the plague – by introducing a system of medical inspection visits and in cooperation with the city establishing two plague hospitals. The Diet discussed its possible relocation to another city in the Empire, and Augsburg was eventually chosen from a list of candidates. The decisive role in this decision was played by the most influential part of the Diet – the college of prince-electors. As preparations for the move culminated, an exemption from the planned blockade of Regensburg was negotiated for the envoys. Their actual departure lasted just a few days: the Principal Commissioner Prince Löwenstein was the first to leave (on 26th August 1713), and on 30th August the remaining envoys left the city (including Wratislaw). They travelled to Augsburg either by land (via Munich) or by water (along the Danube and the Lech). Unfortunately, the sources do not reveal which route Wratislaw took; we only know for sure that his journey took around three weeks. However, the move to Augsburg did not bring an end to the problems; the worsening epidemic and military situation eventually led to a proposal to dissolve the Diet completely. During the autumn of 1713, Augsburg, like Regensburg before it, began to impose restrictions (including quarantine) in an attempt to prevent the spread of the plague. The relocation caused numerous problems for the envoys – not only during their journey, but also after their arrival. They faced substantial financial difficulties, as the situation had led to rising prices of food and accommodation (despite tax exemptions that had been negotiated for the envoys).

The Diet thus did not have to cease its activity during the plague epidemic, and it remained active in Augsburg for an entire year. In fact, after some organisational difficulties at the beginning, it functioned there in relative political stability. Its return to Regensburg brought a return to the way of life that it had known before the plague. The city of Regensburg lobbied hard for this return, as it had been hermetically sealed by a blockade during the epidemic, and its economy – as well as its population – had been devastated by the plague. The Augsburg episode also left a permanent imprint on the internal mechanisms of the Diet, which began to meet not three times but only twice a week (as had been the case in Augsburg).⁸⁴

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⁸⁴ This research was realised within the scientific team *Diplomacy and communicational networks at Habsburg courts in the early modern period* at the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, University of Pardubice.

Image attachment

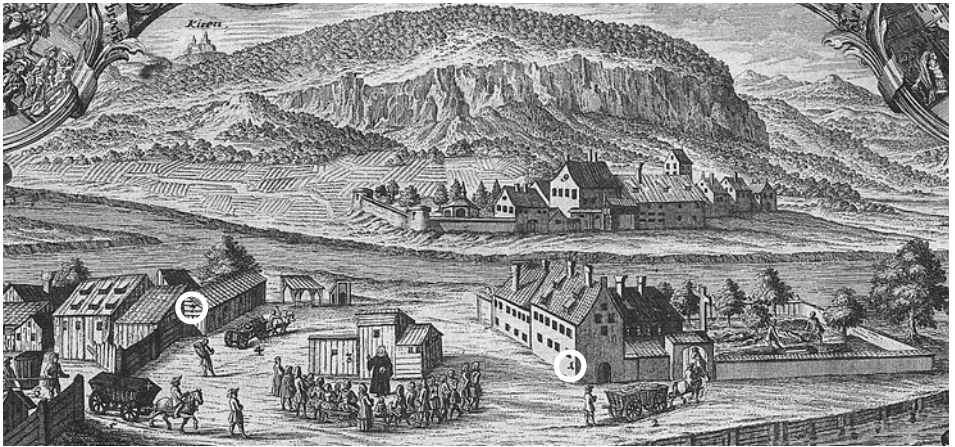


Fig. 1. Hospital at Unterer Wöbrd (marked with nr. 1, right), convalescents' houses (marked with nr. 7, left) (Jacob Andreas FRIDRICH, *Das Regenspurgische Lazareth. Mit seiner gantzen Gegend, Regensburg 1714*, engraving, carving, accessed 29th January 2022, URL: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fd/Das_Regenspurgische_Lazareth.jpg)

Fig. 2. Regensburg during the plague (1714). The Archangel Michael with a sword, a rod and a skull is punishing the city with the plague. In the foreground is a repentant woman with her children praying to God. On the ground are crossed keys – a symbol of St. Peter, the patron of the city. At the right, beyond the river, is a hospital. (Johann Jacob Weißhoff, frontispiece of the book Erasmus Sigismund ALKOFER, *Regenspurgisches Pest- und Buß-Denckmahl. Wegen der im Jahr Christi 1713 allhier grassirten Seuche der Pestilentz...*, Regensburg 1714, engraving.)



Filip Vávra

Regensburg or Augsburg?

The Perpetual Imperial Diet and the last plague epidemic in 1713/1714 through the eyes of the Bohemian envoy Franz Karl Wratislav von Mitrowitz

Abstract

The article explores issues relating to the Perpetual Imperial Diet and the consequences of its relocation from Regensburg to Augsburg in response to an epidemic of plague. A key figure in these events was Franz Karl Wratislav von Mitrowitz, who at the time was the Bohemian envoy to the Diet; he experienced the situation in person, and documents from his posthumous estate – especially the diplomatic reports which he sent – are a valuable source of information. Because the functioning of the Diet and the activities of its envoys have been almost completely neglected by Czech (and indeed international) historiography, this article aims to provide an introduction to the topic. To do so, the first part of the text gives details of the Diet's structure and the legislative process. The second part focuses on the plague epidemic of 1713/1714 and its consequences for the Diet.

KEY WORDS:

Perpetual Imperial Diet of Regensburg; Habsburg diplomacy; 18th century; plague; Franz Karl Wratislav von Mitrowitz