

The nunciature and the Borromean League

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In 1579 Borromeo asked the Pope to establish a permanent nunciature with the Confederates. Because the Roman curia hesitated, the nunciature in Lucerne was created only in 1586, two years after his death.¹ The Five Inner Cantons had asked for it, and Lucerne, the Catholic *Vorort*, became its seat. Apart from temporary moves to Altdorf (1725–1730) and Schwyz (1835–1843), the nunciature remained in Lucerne until the break of 1873. It was re-established in Berne in 1920. Throughout this period the nuncio was the permanent representative of the Holy See in Switzerland, a channel for papal policy and the official who reported to Rome on the Swiss Church and examined the suitability of candidates in episcopal elections and appointments.²

On 5 October 1586, the seven Catholic cantons, namely Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Zug, Fribourg and Solothurn, concluded an alliance in Lucerne for the preservation of the Catholic faith in the Confederation. They promised each other mutual support against external and internal dangers and accepted a right of intervention if the Catholic religion were threatened in any of them. The alliance was called the *Goldener Bund* (Golden League) after the gilded initials of its charters. It received the name of Borromean League in 1655, when Carlo Borromeo, canonized in 1610, was declared its patron. Appenzell Inner Rhodes joined in 1600 and the Catholic part of Glarus in 1655. The League lasted until the end of the old Confederation in 1798.³ One year later, in 1587, the old capitulations between the Duchy of Milan and the Confederates were extended into an alliance between Habsburg Spain and the Catholic cantons. Solothurn stayed out because of its obligations towards France. The alliance gave the Spanish crown the right to recruit soldiers and to pass troops, in return for pensions, trade privileges and the supply of grain and salt.⁴ The religious alliance and the military and commercial alliance were thus two sides of one policy. A later section examines the second.

1 Notes

1. Crivelli, "Borromeo, Carlo" (above): "nel 1579 B. chiese l'istituzione di una nunziatura permanente presso i Conf., che per le resistenze della curia romana venne tuttavia creata solo nel 1586". ↩
2. "Nuntiatur", in HLS, version of 3 November 2011, <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/011742/2011-11-03/> (establishment in 1586 at the wish of the Five Cantons; Altdorf 1725–1730, Schwyz 1835–1843; break in 1873; Luigi Maglione nuncio in Berne from 8 November 1920; functions of the nuncio). ↩
3. Rudolf Bolzern, "Lega d'Oro", in DSS, version of 9 September 2005, <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/it/articles/017187/>; German version, "Goldener Bund", <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/017187/> ("so benannt nach dem vergoldeten Anfangsbuchstaben der Vertragsurkunden"; name Borromäischer Bund from 1655, when Borromeo was declared patron). ↩
4. Fritz Glauser, "Mailänder Kapitulate", in HLS, version of 13 January 2011, <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/017199/2011-01-13/>. ↩

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