

University of Rzeszów

Faculty of Humanities

Institute of History

Supervisor: Fr. Dr. Hab. Sławomir Zabraniak, prof. UR

Father Marcin Kromer in the service of King Zygmunt August and the Crown

MA Maciej Polak

The main research problem of the undertaken issue is to present the figure of Marcin Kromer and his public activity. Inhabitant of Biecz was one of the most frequently used royal secretaries. As a Roman Catholic clergyman, he also took action to defend Catholic orthodoxy threatened by the Reformation. The work answers the questions of whether Kromer can really be considered one of the leading and significant Polish diplomats and one of the most trusted implementers of the royal policy? Were the results of the cases entrusted to him met with the ruler's approval? The aim of this dissertation was also to show the stages of Marcin Kromer's career and the factors that made it possible. First of all, the important aspects were his origin, family and education. It was also important to look at the official circles, their contacts with representatives of the Church and the secular elite, as well as the royal court. The main axis of the work is the course of Kromer's service to the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland and Sigismund Augustus, ending with the date of the death of the last Jagiellon and the final assumption of the Warmia coadjutorship.

The dissertation consists of four chapters, arranged chronologically and problematically. The author focused in the chapters on presenting subsequent stages of Marcin Kromer's life and career, with particular emphasis on his diplomatic activities in the service of Sigismund Augustus and the Crown. The first chapter focuses on presenting the place from which Marcin Kromer came. The Kromer family is presented, as well as the issue of inhabitant of Biecz upbringing. Marcin's educational paths led through attempts to establish himself as a poet towards the royal secretariat and the church and court elites. The patronage extended to him and the beginnings of his priestly path are discussed.

The second chapter presents Marcin Kromer's activities in the public and legal sphere in the first years of the independent rule of the last Jagiellon on the Polish throne. The obedience mission to Pope Paul III is discussed. Then, the focus is on the implementation of a

number of royal orders concerning Prussian issues. They were, as it were, an introduction to the slow takeover of duties and replacing Stanisław Hozjusz in the royal secretariat. The actions undertaken by Kromer in defense of the Catholic Church are also presented. The issue of organizing the Archive of the Crown Treasury at Wawel is also presented.

The third chapter presents Kromer's missions to the court of the Viennese Habsburgs, in particular to Ferdinand I. It discusses nine subsequent visits to the Habsburg court of various lengths. In Hungarian matters, the case of Sigismund Augustus' sister and her son John Sigismund stood out. Border and trade issues were equally important. The most difficult and causing him many problems was the Bar case. Side issues were also discussed and an attempt was made to characterize Kromer's actions as a representative of Sigismund Augustus.

The fourth chapter presents the last stage of Marcin Kromer's service to Jagiellon. The focus is on the cleric's implementation of the ruler's orders, but attention is drawn to his estrangement from the royal court. However, the end of the first phase of the military struggle for the *dominium maris Baltici* brought Marcin the title of royal commissioner during the peace talks in Szczecin. The last chord of diplomatic actions undertaken by Kromer, together with his co-commissioners, on behalf of the Crown and Sigismund Augustus is described. The entire work is closed with a fragment concerning the Warmia coadjutorship, trying to take a closer look at the background of its assumption.

In the case of research on the life of Marcin Kromer, the obvious place to conduct research were Polish outposts, mainly in Kraków and Warmia. In this context, it was necessary to take into account the church archives in particular: the Archive of the Metropolitan Curia in Kraków, the Archive of the Archdiocese of Lviv (the so-called Archive of Archbishop Eugeniusz Baziak in Kraków), and above all the Archives of the Cracow Cathedral Chapter and the Archive of the Archdiocese of Warmia in Olsztyn. In turn, Kromer's correspondence was sought in the following institutions: the Jagiellonian Library, the Czartoryski Princes' Library in Kraków, the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz zu Berlin and the Stifts- och Landsbiblioteket i Linköping. In search of the effects of the royal secretary's activities, extensive materials were examined from the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna, also from the Rigsarkivet in Copenhagen, the State Archive in Szczecin and many other institutions.

An in-depth analysis of the sources made it possible to provide answers to the previously established questionnaire. Therefore, it should be recognized that Marcin Kromer, thanks to hard work and innate talents, became one of the most frequently used and trusted royal secretaries of Sigismund Augustus. His activity seems to indicate that he was not an outstanding diplomat, and he did not display the characteristics of a politician of the Polish „Golden Age”. He was also a faithful executor of royal decisions and instructions, which he skillfully implemented. On the other hand, the friendships he made and his activity on many levels brought him pan-European fame. Equally important was his role as a Catholic priest and defender of Catholic orthodoxy.

Keywords: Marcin Kromer, Zygmunt August, Polish diplomacy of the 16th century, foreign policy