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## **Senatus aulicus.**

### **The rivalry of political factions during the reign of Sigismund I (1506–1548)**

When studying the history of the reign of Sigismund I, it is possible to observe that in exercising power the monarch made use of a very small and trusted circle of senators<sup>1</sup>. In fact, a greater number of them stayed with the King only during Sejm sessions, although this was never a full roster of senators. In the years 1506–1540 there was a total of 35 Sejms. Numerically the largest group of senators was present in 1511 (56 people), while the average attendance was no more than 30<sup>2</sup>. As we can see throughout the whole examined period it is possible to observe a problem with senators' attendance, whereas ministers were present at all the Sejms and castellans had the worst attendance record with absenteeism of more than 80%<sup>3</sup>. On December 15, 1534

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<sup>1</sup> This type of situation was not specific to the reign of Sigismund I. As Jan Długosz reports, during the Sejm in Sieradz in 1425, in a situation of attacks of the knights against the Council, the monarch suspended public work and summoned only eight trusted councillors. In a letter from May 3, 1429 Prince Witold reprimanded the Polish king for excessively yielding to the Szafraniec brothers – the Cracow Chamberlain – Piotr and the Chancellor of the Crown Jan. W. Uruszczak, *Państwo pierwszych Jagiellonów 1386–1444*, Warszawa 1999, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> In spite of this being such a small group, it must be noted that it was not internally coherent and homogenous. As A. Sucheni-Grabowska indicated this environment was also divided, a fact Sigismund I often complained about, into factions which were present even in the group connected with the Court (for example, the circle of Queen Bona's adherents). See A. Sucheni-Grabowska, *Refleksje nad sejmami czasów zygmunto-wskich*, in: PH, vol. LXXV, issue 4, 1984, p. 769.

<sup>3</sup> *Ostatnie lata panowania Zygmunta Starego i początek panowania Zygmunta Augusta. Wyciąg z rękopisu Joachima Lelewela*, Warszawa 1821, p. 13. cf. W. Uruszczak, *Sejm walny koronny*, Warszawa 1981, pp. 31–32. From the beginning of the XVI century the senators outnumbered the landed deputies. In 1504 the senate was composed of 87 senators (9 spiritual and 78 lay) while there were only 45 deputies. See J. Bardach, *Sejm dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*, in: *Dzieje sejmku polskiego*, ed. J. Bardach, Warszawa 1997, p. 24. This situation was not specific to Poland. When analysing the history of the Parliament in England it is possible to notice an analogous situation. The House of Lords, which developed from the former assembly of barons, as the upper chamber of the Parliament held judicial functions (it tried cases in the first instance, which were submitted by the king and also by its members). From the XIV century it also tried civil servants accused of crimes

Maciejowski wrote to Piotr Tomicki: *Because Your Excellency wishes to know about the course of this Sejm from me, therefore I report. The senators, because they are few and mostly connected by family ties and friendship, without disputes, without belaboring, take care of public affairs*<sup>4</sup>. There is no one simple answer to the question concerning the reasons why the Crown senators did not attend the Sejms. Financial reasons were one of the deciding factors. However, it seems that the main reason for senators' absenteeism was the continuous process of reducing the role of the Senate by the King, resulting from internal divisions, and, more importantly, Sigismund's policy aimed at relying solely on the most trusted associates, which in turn led to the emergence of ersatz privy councils. Nevertheless, the Crown did not see the development of privy councils from among the sitting councils, which was a common practice in the English Parliament at the end of the Middle Ages and in the Modern Era. The functioning of *consilium secretum* in the Crown was suppressed by the development of the General Sejm during the XV century, which in the sixteenth century fully became a forum accessible to the knights<sup>5</sup>.

Public opinion of the 30s of the XVI century defined the senators who were always present at the royal court as *senatus aulicus* – that is the senate of the court<sup>6</sup>. This can also be seen in sources when during Sejms there were meetings of a very small group of nobles (możni) or of that group which deli-

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against the Crown. The representatives (lay and spiritual) sitting in this House were appointed by the monarch (the function was held for life). There were about 50 temporal peers while the number of the spiritual was greater – 2 archbishops, 18 bishops and a large number of abbots. Generally, during the reign of the Tudors the number of Lords fluctuated between 80 and 100. As emphasised in the literature on this subject, constant absenteeism of the members of the upper House weakened its political position in relation to the Commons which was building its strong position during that time. See J. Brzozowski, *Powstanie i funkcjonowanie oraz procedura obrad Izby Gmin w drugiej połowie XVI wieku*, "Białostockie Teki Historyczne", vol. 3, 2005, pp. 33–59, J. Brzozowski, *Marszałek poselski w Sejmie Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów a speaker i clerk w parlamencie angielskim w drugiej połowie XVI wieku*, CPH, vol. LIX, issue 2, 2007, p. 205–219.

<sup>4</sup> *Ponieważ o przebiegu tego sejmu Wasza Przewielebność pragnie się ode mnie dowiedzieć, przeto donoszę. Panowie senatorowie, ponieważ są nieliczni i przeważnie węzłem pokrewieństwa i przyjaźni z sobą złączeni, bez sporów, bez rozstrząsań sprawy publiczne załatwiają. List Maciejowskiego do Tomickiego z Piotrkowa 15 grudnia 1534 roku*, B. Czart. Teki Naruszewicza [hereafter referred to as TN] 51, no. 46. In 1444 the members of the Council turned to Władysław III with a protest in which they accused the monarch of ruling with only the participation of the "crown council". W. Uruszczak, *Państwo pierwszych Jagiellonów 1386–1444*, p. 48. Compare A. Sucheni-Grabowska, *Refleksje nad sejmami czasów zygmunto-wskich*, p. 769.

<sup>5</sup> W. Fałkowski, *Możnowładztwo polskie wobec króla. Zabiegi i działania polityczne wokół monarchy w XV stuleciu*, p. 22. As the author points out, once, in 1452 during the convention in Sieradz, a privy council consisting of eight state dignitaries was summoned. Compare Długosz, book XIII, p. 115.

<sup>6</sup> W. Uruszczak, *Sejm walny koronny*, p. 33.

berated in the presence of the king<sup>7</sup>. The monarch himself limited the possibility of the political influence of the “old” senators, which he had inherited in the council from his predecessor, Alexander. As Jacek Wiesiołowski observed, with the taking of the throne by the penultimate Jagiellon, a process of changing the monarch’s immediate circle began. New, young nobles (możni), who were beginning their great political careers, came to power and influence<sup>8</sup>. With the King, from Głogów, came the Szydłowiecki brothers and Rafał Leszczyński (the younger) who were waiting for Sigismund to assume power<sup>9</sup>. Leszczyński himself made vigorous endeavors to pave Sigismund’s way to the Polish throne. For example, in 1506 he held talks on this subject in Koło during his return from Warmia. He also became involved in the defense of the Prince’s interests at the Sejm in Lublin, where he strove to gain support for the royal prince in Mazovia. This strengthened his position at the King’s side from the beginning of his reign<sup>10</sup>. Earlier (in 1496) Sigismund sent Krzysztof Szydłowiecki with a message to Alexander Jagiellon. It concerned carving out the Duchy of Kiev for Sigismund and giving it over to him for administration. This endeavor ended in failure due to the resistance of Alexander, who feared that this would lead to the partition of the state<sup>11</sup>. They were joined by Piotr Tomicki, Andrzej Szamo-

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<sup>7</sup> Ibidem, p. 32. Also compare *Acta Tomiciana* [hereafter referred to as AT], vol. II, no. 70, p. 81.

<sup>8</sup> It is worth noting that the possibility of finding oneself in the king’s surroundings was dependent on several factors: the office one held, personal authority, one’s position within the circle of a narrow elite of power. W. Fałkowski, *Możnowładztwo wobec króla*, p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> There is rich source material on the subject of Sigismund’s stay in Silesia. See *Glogauesches Furstenthumb Landes Privilegia aus den Originalen an Tag, gegeben Andrea Gryphio*, Leszno 1653, *Lehnsund Besitzurkunde Schlesien Und seiner einzelnen Furstenthumer im Mittelalter*, eds. C. Grunhagen, H. Margrafa, vol. 1–2, Leipzig 1881. In addition to these, it is worth paying attention to the mentioned publications, a large part of which were written on the basis of no longer existing historical sources: F. Minsberg, *Geschichte der Stadt Und Festung Glogau mit Urkunden Und Dokumenten*, Głogów 1853, J. Blaschke, *Geschichte der Stadt Glogau und Glogauer Landes*, Głogów 1913, J. M. Ossoliński, *Historia młodości Zygmunta I, czyli życie jego aż do wstępu na tron*, “Czasopismo Naukowe”, vol. VII, 1834, A. Pawiński, *Młode lata Zygmunta Starego*, Warszawa 1893, E. Breyther, *König Sigismundum von Polen In Schlesien*, Strzegom 1906, W. Dziegiel, *Król polski Zygmunt I na Śląsku*, Katowice 1936, S. Nowogrodzki, *Rządy Zygmunta Jagiellończyka na Śląsku i w Łużycach (1499–1506)*, Kraków 1937, A. Diveky, *Królewicz Zygmunt na dworze Władysława II, króla węgierskiego*, in: *Medievalia. W 50 rocznicę pracy naukowej Jana Dąbrowskiego*, Warszawa 1960.

<sup>10</sup> H. Kowalska, *Rafał Leszczyński*, *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* [hereafter referred to as PSB], vol. XVII, p. 130.

<sup>11</sup> Z. Boras, *Zygmunt Stary w Głogowie*, Katowice 1983, p. 16. Also compare P. Tafilewski, *Jan Łaski (1456–1531) kanclerz koronny i prymas Polski*, Warszawa 2007, p. 78. The author notes that at that time Elisabeth of Austria hoped to enthrone Sigismund in Austria, then another idea appeared to bestow Moldavia on him – neither of these plans could be realized. See Z. Wojciechowski, *Zygmunt Stary*, Warszawa 1979, p. 80.

tulski, and Jan Lubrański<sup>12</sup>. Thus, even before the formal assumption of power in Głogów, a group of people who would play a key role in public life had already formed<sup>13</sup>. Sigismund I appointed his friend from youth, Krzysztof Szydłowiecki, to the office of Deputy Chancellor and Andrzej Kościelecki to the office of Treasurer. Also in the closest circle were: Jan Dantyszek, Jan Karnkowski, Jan Latański, and Andrzej Krzycki. All of them became ministers and bishops during the reign of the penultimate Jagiellon<sup>14</sup>. The King's associates formed a group that was socially and economically heterogeneous. During the initial period of his reign the "old" nobles ("starzy" możni) still dominated (the Tarnowskis, the Tęczyńskis), but slowly others were building their careers: the Szydłowieckis, the Tomickis<sup>15</sup>. These "new" nobles ("nowi" możni) mostly originated from wealthy knights who were made rich thanks to political careers, which allowed them to reap benefits (especially financial benefits) from state revenue sources<sup>16</sup>. It is worth noting that of all the King's supporters only two enjoyed his favor for the longest time: Chancellor Krzysztof Szydłowiecki (from 1515 to 1532), and Piotr Tomicki (from 1515 to 1535)<sup>17</sup>.

Sigismund I selected his group of associates very carefully. Thus, the monarch's personnel policy became a factor that could enable (facilitate) the building of a political career or could lead to its end. From the beginning of his reign Sigismund I sought to create his own political camp, with the help of which he could effectively realize his political ideas<sup>18</sup>. As A. Sucheni-Grabowska points out, this style of ruling lasted until 1538 (until the death of Jan Chojeński) since the monarch found it difficult to find such competent and, most importantly,

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<sup>12</sup> J. Wiesiołowski, *Ambroży Pampowski – starosta Jagiellonów. Z dziejów awansu społecznego na przełomie średniowiecza i odrodzenia*, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków – Gdańsk, 1976, p. 121. See also A. Pawiński, *Młode lata Zygmunta*, Warszawa 1893.

<sup>13</sup> Z. Wojciechowski, *Zygmunt Stary*, op. cit., p. 81. Also compare Z. Boras, *Zygmunt Stary*, p. 29. To those mentioned he adds: Bernat Potocki, Mikołaj Ocieski and Andrzej Chlewicki. It is worth adding that all of the mentioned friends of Sigismund accompanied him during his stay in Cracow in 1501. These were: Krzysztof and Marcin Szydłowiecki, Rafał Leszczyński and Pusota, Lasocki, Racheberg, Sednicki, Stadnicki, Myszkowski, Brodecki. E. Breyther states that Sigismund was accompanied by a total of 70 people who returned to Głogów with him. See E. Breyther, *König Sigismundum von Polen In Schlesien*, p. 17.

<sup>14</sup> A. Wyczański, *Zygmunt Stary*, Warszawa 1985, p. 11.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem. As A. Wyczański emphasises, during the XVI century there was another replacement of the political elite. Idem, *Polska w Europie XVI stulecia*, Poznań 1999, p. 91.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>17</sup> W. Pocięcha, *Królowa Bona. Czasy i ludzie odrodzenia*, vol. II, Poznań 1949, p. 149.

<sup>18</sup> J. Decjusz, *Kronika o czasach króla Zygmunta*, Warszawa 1960, p. 21. Compare A. Odrzywoł-ska-Kidawa, *Podkanclerzy Piotr Tomicki. Polityk i humanista*, Warszawa 2005, p. 15. A. Wyczański, *Polityka i Kościół w dobie Odrodzenia. Nominacje biskupie Zygmunta Starego*, in: *Kultura polska a kultura europejska. Prace ofiarowane Januszowi Tazbirowi w sześćdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, Warszawa 1987, pp. 61–68.

dedicated successors<sup>19</sup>. I have no doubt, as I have mentioned earlier, that there were pressure groups formed around the monarch whose aim was to secure favorable decisions of the King<sup>20</sup>. Key decisions for the state were mostly made in the circle of ministers, while the opportunity to be in the monarch's environment was considered most important. Jan Tarnowski in his correspondence to Deputy Chancellor Piotr Tomicki wrote: *Those offices, with which a man must stay at home and not often look at his Lord, parum et fere nihil auctoritatis in se continent*<sup>21</sup>. It is worth noting that the moment in which Tarnowski wrote these words was exceptional. He sought the office of the Starosta of Cracow (lower than the Sandomierz voivodeship proposed to him) *...in order to often look at His Honor my Lord the King, knowing his grace, by being praesens diligently deserve it*<sup>22</sup>.

From the beginning of the 20s of the XVI century it is possible to observe among the senators an open conflict arising between the so-called court group (Krzysztof Szydłowiecki, Piotr Tomicki) and the opposition group headed by the Archbishop of Gniezno Jan Łaski<sup>23</sup>. These political environments competed with each other not only for power and influence in the royal court. Above all they

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<sup>19</sup> A. Sucheni-Grabowska, *Zygmunt August. Król Polski i Wielki Książę Litewski (1520–1562)*, Warszawa 1996, p. 42.

<sup>20</sup> A. Wyczański, *Zygmunt Stary*, p. 11.

<sup>21</sup> *Te urzędy, z którymi człowiek doma siedzieć musi, a na swego Pana nie często patrzec, parum et fere nihil auctoritatis in se continent*. AT XV, no. 163, p. 235. Quoted after: W. Uruszczak, *Sejm walny koronny*, p. 33.

<sup>22</sup> *...aby był na króla Jego Miłość pana swego często patrzył, jego łaskę znając, będąc praesens, pilnie ją zastugiwał*. Ibidem.

<sup>23</sup> A. Sucheni-Grabowska, *Zygmunt August. Król Polski i Wielki Książę Litewski 1520–1562*, p. 31, Eadem, *Ocieski Jan h. Jastrzębiec (1501–1563)*, in: PSB, Vol. XXIII, 1978, pp. 507–513, A. Wyczański, *Dogonić Europę, czyli Polska w czasach Zygmunta I (1506–1548)*, W. Uruszczak, *Sejm walny koronny*, p. 33. Unacceptable is the common in older literature division into the national and German faction. Bona's faction included: Jan Łaski, Jan Tarnowski, Andrzej Tęczyński, Piotr Kmita and Mikołaj Wolski, Piotr Gamrat and Andrzej Krzycki and Jan Dantyszek. Within the pro-Habsburg faction were: Krzysztof Szydłowiecki, Łukasz Górka, Maciej Drzewicki, Piotr Tomicki, Jan Chojeński, Samuel Maciejowski. This division was proposed after World War II and in no way represents the complicated relationship between the factions or interest groups in the Senate in the XVI century. As Andrzej Wyczański rightly observed, if we consider such a division into factions, we must pay attention to several of its features. It is not known why on Bona's side there was Andrzej Tęczyński, who never cooperated with her, or Jan Tarnowski, who criticized the Queen and even tried to fight against her. Andrzej Krzycki was not her protege and tried to win her favour with poetry. At the same time he could attack her by comparing her in his poetry to the Wawel dragon. There is also proof that Andrzej Krzycki rose against the Queen when he acted for the benefit of J. Karnkowski. He complained to Jan Dantyszek about the spreading of "gynecocracy" that is government by women. A. Wyczański, *Między polityką a kulturą. Sekretarze królewscy Zygmunta Starego 1506–1548*, Warszawa 1990, pp. 158–159.

represented different political visions<sup>24</sup>. The monarch also noticed this<sup>25</sup>. However, it was not only the monarch who paid attention to conflicts and clashes between the noble (możni) groups. The knights also protested against the privileges of this faction in terms of wealth and prestige, believing it to be contrary to law<sup>26</sup>. The question is, did the political elite of the time form political factions in the full sense of the word? When introducing this term, the older literature on the subject had another one in use – parties<sup>27</sup>. It seems to me that these terms have not withstood the test of time. I believe that the use of terms such as pro-Habsburg or anti-Habsburg faction is also outdated and does not reflect the reality of that time. If such a need arises, one should indicate specific individuals connected to, for example, the Emperor – such as Krzysztof Szydłowiecki or Maciej Drzewicki, a deputy of Maximilian<sup>28</sup>. The expression interest group proposed by A. Odrzywolską-Kidawą<sup>29</sup> definitely better reflects the realities of the time, especially in relation to politicians associated with Krzysztof Szydłowiecki<sup>30</sup>. I think it is worth quoting the opinion of Aleksander Hirschberg, who ad-

<sup>24</sup> W. Pocięcha, *Królowa Bona*, vol. II, pp. 149–165. The existence of interest groups was not specific to the rule of Sigismund I. When we observe, for example, the political career of Ambroży Pampowski, we can see that after obtaining the office of the Voivode of Sieradz he continued to cooperate with the Kurozwęckis, with whom he shared the idea of creating a counterbalance to the influence of the “old nobility” (starzy możni) of the Crown. The group of the Kurozwęckis supported the knights seeing in them a political force which could paralyze the influence of the nobles (możni). The group’s theoretical assumption that the monarch could rely on the knights and at the same time the nobles (możni) could be deprived of influence was, according to Jacek Wiesiołowski, put to the test in Greater Poland. However, despite his functions and great political influence he did not discontinue cooperation with the knights, from whose ranks he had risen. It should be noted that after Sigismund I assumed power he ousted the “old senators”, including Pampowski, and, as I have mentioned earlier, introduced new, young ones, who as a result could build their position and enter the elite of power. See J. Wiesiołowski, *Ambroży Pampowski – starosta Jagiellonów*, pp. 162–163. Sigismund Augustus, however, did not aim to break the old noble (możni) houses, but tried to create a counterbalance to them with the help of the newly promoted group, who owed their careers to him. See A. Sucheni-Grabowska, *Badania nad elitą władzy w latach 1551–1562*, in: *Spółczesność staropolskie*, vol. I, Warszawa 1976, p. 83.

<sup>25</sup> A. Odrzywolska-Kidawa, *Podkanclerzy Piotr Tomicki. Polityk i humanista*, p. 96.

<sup>26</sup> Sucheni-Grabowska, *Zygmunt August*, p. 31.

<sup>27</sup> A. Odrzywolska-Kidawa, *Podkanclerzy Piotr Tomicki. Polityk i humanista*, p. 151. Also compare M. Bogucka, *Bona Sforza*, Warszawa 1989, p. 108. *Stworzenie własnej “partii politycznej” wymagało jednak zabiegów i czasu. Bona przybywszy do Polski, zastała tu ukształtowany wokół Zygmunta I krąg potężnych senatorów, wywierających zasadniczy wpływ na politykę królewską.*

<sup>28</sup> AT XII, no. 73, 312. Compare T. Silnicki, *Zjazd w Poznaniu w roku 1530*, Poznań 1933, p. 18. Also worth mentioning here is Jan Dantyszek, who held an important position at the court of Charles V and was raised to nobility by the Emperor, while in 1529 a medal was struck in his honour in Spain.

<sup>29</sup> S. Russocki, Les “groupes d’intérêt” dans la société féodale polonaise, *Acta Poloniae Historica*, Vol. XIV, 1966. See also A. Sucheni-Grabowska, *Badania nad elitą władzy w latach 1551–1562*.

<sup>30</sup> A. Odrzywolska-Kidawa, *Podkanclerzy Piotr Tomicki 1515–1535. Polityk i humanista*, p. 16.

dressed the discussed problem stating that ... *a faction is understood as a host of people who together and with consistency pursue certain fixed goals, intend to have an influence either on the state's internal system or its external relations*<sup>31</sup>. It seems to me that, given the many political turns made by Szydłowiecki, Tomicki and their supporters and the ambiguous decisions made in domestic and foreign policy, it is difficult to speak of a political faction in this case. The situation is quite different in the case of people connected to Primate Łaski and the faction formed by him. In this case we are dealing with a mature and most importantly stable political program and a group of supporters who faithfully sided with the Primate until his death<sup>32</sup>.

Krzysztof Szydłowiecki skillfully combined dedication and loyalty to the King with taking care of his own private interests. He strengthened his position through relations with neighboring countries (for example, the so-called treaties of brotherhood and friendship – in 1526 with Prince Albrecht of Prussia and with George Szatmari, Chancellor of Hungary, in 1518)<sup>33</sup>. He also strengthened

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Also compare W. Uruszczak, *Sejm walny koronny*, p. 33. It seems to me, that this was not in any way a client system. If we accept Wolfgang Reinhard's definition, which tells us that the patron-client relationship is a relationship between unequals in which the powerful partner gives the humble one protection and may demand services in return, then it is impossible to see any resemblance to this situation in the relationship between state dignitaries. Antoni Mączak, while analysing the problem of clientelism, points to two more important elements – the permanence and continuity of the phenomenon. This is not visible in the analyzed relationships. See A. Mączak, *Klientela*, Warszawa 1994, p. 12–13. Compare H. Łowmiański, *Polityka Jagiellonów*, Poznań 1999, p. 347.

<sup>31</sup> ...*stronnictwo rozumie się zastęp ludzi, który dążąc wspólnie i z konsekwencją do pewnych z góry wytkniętych celów, zamierza wywrzeć wpływ albo na ustrój wewnętrzny państwa, albo też jego stosunki zewnętrzne*. A. Hirschberg, *Stronnictwa polityczne w Polsce za Zygmunta I*, Lwów 1879.

<sup>32</sup> The simple image of the monarch surrounded by his advisers, who quarrel with each other but subject to his will, is much more complicated due to the informal divisions and relationships between them. In the analyzed period the nobles' (możni) position depended on several factors, amongst which the most significant were: access to the monarch, popularity among the knights and connections with a specific group. Compare W. Fałkowski, *Badania nad elitą władzy w Polsce w późnym średniowieczu i czasach nowożytnych*, PH 86 (1985), 1, p. 131. When analysing the elites of power in Poland on the threshold of the Modern Era the author stresses that it seems that the most important factor determining an individual's or group's position was constant access to the monarch, popularity among the szlachta as well as connection with or open activity in a faction or interest group. In addition to this there was also the issue of the office held and owned property. On the other hand, according to H. Łowmiański in the case of Łaski we cannot use the term "faction". H. Łowmiański, *Polityka Jagiellonów*, p. 347. When analysing the feudal elite in Mazovia J. Piętka tried to identify its composition and the range of its political and legal competence. He concluded that the nobles (możni) did not have real influence on the government of the state because all power, unrestricted by anything, belonged to the duke. J. Piętka, *Mazowiecka elita feudalna późnego średniowiecza*, Warszawa 1975, p. 154.

<sup>33</sup> *Archiwum książąt Sanguszków w Sławucie*, published by B. Gorczak, vol. V, Lwów 1897,

Sigismund's belief that only an alliance with the Habsburgs would ensure real political benefits (he considered himself the creator of the Congress of Vienna in 1515)<sup>34</sup>. On December 9, 1519 he wrote to F. Luzjański: *Hoc tamen observabit, quantum suae M-ti lice bit, Ne quid contra iuramenta et pacta Viennae facta prior fecisse videatur*<sup>35</sup>, thereby destroying and hampering all activities taken by Primate Łaski whose aim was to solve the Baltic problem, and stopping the King from real action ... *so it would not seem that the King was the first to violate the treaties of Vienna*<sup>36</sup>. Szydłowiecki, who was actively engaged in ending the dispute with Danzig, postulated that the King pass sentences as mild as possible, which the King agreed to do. Very soon a sarcastic poem by A. Krzycki appeared in which the author accused him of "a hunger for gold", venality and claimed that just like Judas betrayed Christ for 30 pieces of silver, so Szydłowiecki sold the Christ in his heart for herring. Not without reason was it emphasized that the people of Danzig won favor with the Chancellor and the favor of the King thanks to "gifts" in the form of cloth and herring which had been sent to the Chancellor<sup>37</sup>.

Szydłowiecki combined chancellorship with the castellanship of Cracow, while six major starostwos allowed him to maintain an extensive court with impressive castles in Ćmielów, Łuków, Opatów, Gostynin, Nowe Miasto Korczyn<sup>38</sup>. When building his fortune, he did not only benefit from his position and the property mentioned earlier. He also received a salary of 600 Hungarian ducats a year from Emperor Maximilian I<sup>39</sup>. Among the lay state dignitaries he was

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p. 107. In fact he was very effective on the international arena. In addition to the already mentioned names, he was friends with or sought friendship with: Henry VIII, Cardinal Wolsey and Francis I of France. This did not stop him from simultaneously pursuing an anti-French policy. See M. Bogucka, *Bona Sforza*, Warszawa 1989, p. 110.

<sup>34</sup> Sigismund the Old wanted to reward K. Szydłowiecki for his merits during the congress in Vienna and so appointed him Voivode and Starosta of Cracow following the death of Mikołaj Kamieniecki. *Archiwum książąt Sanguszków w Sławucie*, vol. V, p. 88.

<sup>35</sup> B. Czart. 1594, p. 553. Also compare L. Kolankowski, *Polska Jagiellonów*, p. 148.

<sup>36</sup> ...*by nie zdawało się, że król pierwszy naruszył traktaty wiedeńskie*. Quoted after: W. Pociecha, *Królowa Bona*, vol. II, p. 150. At the same time he maintained good relations with Francis I. Preserved in the Sanguszko Archive are letters sent by the French monarch in which the author gives his thanks for the goodwill and readiness to offer services. He also asks that he take his envoy Antoni Rinconi under his care and show his support for him to Sigismund I. See *Archiwum książąt Sanguszków w Sławucie*, vol. V, pp. 164, 179, 184, 227.

<sup>37</sup> K. Morawski, *Czasy zygmuntofskie na tle prądów Odrodzenia*, Warszawa 1922, pp. 46–47.

<sup>38</sup> *Kronika Marcina Bielskiego*, vol. II, book. V, pp. 986–987.

<sup>39</sup> *Archiwum książąt Sanguszków*, vol. V, pp. 192, 194, 224. He himself admitted that he had received 40 thousand in cash and a 5 thousand annual salary from Ferdinand for efforts which were to help him gain the Hungarian crown. There is also another letter, whose contents is probably even more important, in which Ferdinand assures Szydłowiecki that he will receive 50 thousand in cash and an annual salary of 10 thousand if he coaxes Zapolya to renounce the Hungarian crown. Also



a serious patron of literature, he maintained relations with humanists of the era (for example Erasmus of Rotterdam), amassed a great library, imported illuminated manuscripts<sup>40</sup>. This does not mean, however, that we can treat him as a great humanist. Before his death, he confessed to Prince Albrecht that he was ... *no Latinist because from youth he spent more time at the courts of princes and the camp than among books*<sup>41</sup>. A great library was inherited from him by his son-in-law Hetman Jan Amor Tarnowski, who expanded Szydłowiecki's patronage activity<sup>42</sup>.

Piotr Tomicki, thoroughly educated in Italy, a humanist who owed his whole political career to Sigismund I, also supported his relatives, caring for the prestige of the family<sup>43</sup>. In domestic policy he strictly opposed Jan Łaski and his closest supporters. This was not only a political issue, but also a matter of a personal dispute. After raising him to the Bishopric of Przemyśl (because of the low income it brought), Sigismund I strove to ensure that he could also keep the benefices held by him: for example the Archdeaconry of Cracow. Orders were sent to Jan Łaski, who was at the Lateran Council (the first one from the King is dated to February 4, 1514) telling him to obtain a preconization for the new bishop and permission to keep these benefices. Tomicki himself also sent letters concerning this issue to his agents, but also to Jan Łaski and Cardinal Achille de Grassis. At the same time, Bernard Wapowski (privately a close associate of Jan Łaski) began efforts to acquire these benefices. The affair began to drag and Tomicki started to accuse the Primate of intentionally detaining the royal letters in order to give time to his protégé, B. Wapowski, to take over the disputable benefices. In response Łaski wrote to the King: *As to the Bishopric of Przemyśl for Mr. Piotr Tomicki with the simultaneous maintenance of hitherto owned benefices, I fervently did everything at the Papal court, which was in*

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compare K. Morawski, *Czasy zygmuntoowskie na tle prądów Odrodzenia*, pp. 46–47, T. Silnicki, p. 18. Krzysztof Szydłowiecki in exchange for a salary passed on information concerning relations between the Polish throne and Zapolya. At the same time the king of Hungary, in exchange for friendship and loyalty, allotted an annual salary of 1000 zlotys to him. *Archiwum książąt Sanguszków w Sławucie*, vol. V, p. 180.

<sup>40</sup> J. Kieszkowski, *Kanclerz Krzysztof Szydłowiecki*, vol. I–II, Poznań 1912. Also compare S. Kormornicki, *Kultura artystyczna w Polsce czasów Odrodzenia*, in: *Kultura staropolska*, Kraków 1912, pp. 559–562.

<sup>41</sup> *...nie jest żadnym łacinnikiem, ponieważ od młodości więcej obracał się na dworach książąt i w obozie aniżeli wśród książek*. Quoted after: W. Pociecha, *Królowa Bona*, vol. II, p. 150.

<sup>42</sup> M. Kamler, *Od szkoły do senatu. Wykształcenie senatorów w Koronie w latach 1501–1586*, Warszawa 2006, p. 160.

<sup>43</sup> K. Morawski, *Czasy zygmuntoowskie na tle prądów Odrodzenia*, pp. 24–25. In 1513 Sigismund I appointed him the Bishop of Przemyśl. It seems that this was a reward for very good work as a secretary in the Royal Chancellery and successful diplomatic missions. See A. Dybkowska, J. Dzięgielewski, *Udział kościoła rzymskokatolickiego w sprawach państwa*, in: *Tradycje polityczne dawnej Polski*, p. 126, P. Tańfowski, *Jan Łaski*, Warszawa 2007, p. 247.

my power, as I ordinarily do for the honor of Your Majesty and the benefit of the Kingdom<sup>44</sup>. However, the case was not so obvious. When we analyze other replies by Łaski, it is impossible to rule out the possibility that he acted for the benefit of Wapowski and against Tomicki. On the other hand, we must remember that this issue could also have actually been stalled in the Roman Curia and Łaski was not able to speed things up. Piotr Tomicki himself remembered the incident quite well, the more so because he did not get any income from his diocese that year and it seems that the strong dislike for the Primate resulted from this fact<sup>45</sup>.

It is clear that Tomicki's aim was to ensure that the political – ideological conflict be moved to the sejmiks, and especially the General Sejm<sup>46</sup>. In domestic policy he was a supporter of prudent and conciliatory politics, but was not as devoted to the Habsburgs as Chancellor Szydłowiecki. He was well aware of the fact (which was overlooked by Szydłowiecki) that the Habsburgs supported the Teutonic Order and also carried out negotiations with Moscow. He considered this to be dangerous to the Kingdom of Poland<sup>47</sup>. Therefore, he did not particularly oppose relations with France and supporting Zapolya. All these measures were aimed at balancing a policy that could lead to the dependence of the Crown on the Habsburgs<sup>48</sup>. At the same time, when the Habsburg diplomacy came out against Jan Łaski accusing him of supporting the Turkish invasion of Austria, Tomicki was very loyal to the Primate<sup>49</sup>. In domestic policy he severely criticized the subjective aspirations of the knights, thus trying to hinder the progress of the Executionist Movement. He was widely regarded as an opponent of the activity of the szlachta, and so he did not agree to the demands connected with the

<sup>44</sup> *Co się tyczy biskupstwa przemyskiego dla Pana Piotra Tomickiego z jednoczesnym zachowaniem dotychczasowych beneficjów, uczynilem gorliwie na dworze papieskim wszystko, co bylo w mojej mocy, jak zwykle czynię dla czci Waszej dostojności oraz pożytku Królestwa.* Ibiem, p. 249

<sup>45</sup> In one of the letters addressed to Sigismund I Łaski admitted that he did in fact keep his letters for four weeks and did not hand them over to the Pope. He explained that he did this because he feared that the letters might in some way refer to issues connected with Prussia, which in his opinion should not be mentioned to the Bishop of Rome. Whereas, in the reply sent to the worried Tomicki he asserted that the documents were intentionally stalled in the Curia because the officials were waiting for payment and only then the Primate could redeem them and promptly send them to the Crown. See *Ibidem*.

<sup>46</sup> W. Pociecha, *Królowa Bona*, vol. II, p. 151. Also compare A. Odrzywolska-Kidawa, *Piotr Tomicki*, see also L. Kolankowski, *Polska Jagiellonów*, Olsztyn 1991, p. 169.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem* p. 138

<sup>48</sup> W. Pociecha, *Królowa Bona*, vol. II, p. 151.

<sup>49</sup> W. Pociecha, *Królowa Bona*, vol. II, p. 151. Worth quoting after the author is the opinion expressed by Wincenty Zakrzewski who believed that Tomicki really wanted turmoil around Łaski and weakening his influence in the Curia, of which he was afraid. Compare W. Zakrzewski, *Rodzina Łaskich w XVI wieku. I. Jan Łaski arcybiskup gnieźnieński*, "Ateneum" 2, 1882, pp. 520–522.

execution of the laws<sup>50</sup>. At the same time he emphasized the primary role of the monarch in the country<sup>51</sup>. He was of the opinion that the king is the one with the legislative prerogative in accordance with the principle of *lex est rex*, and therefore should not be limited in this matter<sup>52</sup>. When the *szlachta* requested the right to control legations abroad, Tomicki protested: *What's this, he said, you who should rather be called tillers (aratores) than deputies (oratores) meddle with the affairs of the Chancellor? And why do you not remember that the range of your powers is no wider but that without you nothing new may be established in the Commonwealth? For everyone should keep to their boundaries, and not recklessly follow someone else's actions*<sup>53</sup>. Therefore, we can see that Tomicki presented the same vision as the King concerning limiting the participation of the *szlachta* in public life, skillfully influencing public opinion, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, which was treated in an instrumental way. Despite such a critical position towards the *szlachta*, as A. Odrzywolska-Kidawa notes, the Deputy Chancellor enjoyed great authority in these circles. His mediation skills became apparent soon after his death, when it turned out just how important a role he played in dealing with the knights<sup>54</sup>. What is more, the personal allegations against him for violating the *incompatibilitas* principle were relatively rare and were often hushed up because, it seems, of the authority that he enjoyed among the *szlachta*<sup>55</sup>.

It seems to me that the thesis which states that until the mid-30s of the XVI century Szydłowiecki and Tomicki co-created the domestic and foreign policy pursued by Sigismund I is possible. Until 1535 all attempts at destroying their political position ended in failure. In 1525 Krzycki wrote: *the King will not do anything of himself; but will do everything the important senators want; that is why one needs to stimulate him*. Whereas Piotr Tomicki claimed: *My Lord is*

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<sup>50</sup> A. Odrzywolska-Kidawa, *Podkanclerzy Piotr Tomicki. Polityk i humanista*, p. 7. Piotr Tomicki was also an ardent supporter of the *vivente rege* election of Sigismund Augustus, to which he evidently contributed. After the election he ordered that in all the churches in his diocese solemn services be held and *Te Deum laudamus* be sung. Compare A. Sucheni-Grabowska, *Zygmunt August*, p. 19.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 239–240.

<sup>53</sup> *Cóż to, powiedział, wy, których raczej należałoby nazwać oraczami (aratores), niż posłami (oratores), mieszacie się do spraw kanclerskich? A dlaczegoż to nie pamiętacie, że nie szerszy jest zakres waszych uprawnień, jak tylko, aby bez was nic nowego nie ustanowiono w Rzeczypospolitej? Powinien bowiem każdy swoich się trzymać granic, a nie śledzić nierozważnie cudzych czynności* K. Warszawicki, *De optimo statu libertatis*, Cracow 1595, p. 82, Quoted after: *Panowanie Zygmunta Starego w świetle źródeł*, ed. W. Pocięcha, Kraków 1923, pp. 22–23.

<sup>54</sup> AT, Vol. XVII, p. 754–755 A. Odrzywolska-Kidawa, *Podkanclerzy Piotr Tomicki. Polityk i humanista*, p. 239–240. A. Sucheni-Grabowska, *Zygmunt August*, p. 36.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*.

*difficult in all things and is a great cunctator*, while Kammerer (an Austrian diplomat) bluntly explained: *I can see that the Bishop (Tomicki) and the Chancellor (Szydłowiecki) are like these two good guardian angels, leading Tobias*<sup>56</sup>.

Jan Łaski, who in literature is called “the leader of the national faction” began his political career at the court of Alexander Jagiellon<sup>57</sup>. At the end of March 1502, he was appointed to the post of Royal Secretary, and on November 27, 1503 he assumed the office of the Grand Chancellor of the Crown<sup>58</sup>. Łaski’s role increased during the reign of Alexander, reaching its peak in 1506, during the monarch’s illness prior to his death. It was also at that time that Łaski began to be active in the public arena propagating slogans in which he demanded raising the importance of the knights and the need to strengthen their position in the Sejm. He maintained these views until his death<sup>59</sup>. During the reign of Sigismund I he created his own political base which comprised: Michał Łaski, Jan Rybieński, Jan Boner (they all took care of his finances), Jan Latalski, Andrzej Zakrzewski, Stanisław Górecki, Mikołaj Zamoyski, Stanisław Oleśnicki, Jan Górski, Jan Dąbrowski, Maciej of Górka, Paweł Chodakowski, Wincenty Łagiewnicki, Jan Grot, Dominik of Sacemin, Jerzy Myszkowski, Maciej Śliwnicki, Spytek of Bużemin, Stanisław Borek, Mikołaj Czapiel, Arnold of Kuchary, Piotr Piątkowski, Jan Grochowicki, Paweł Chodakowski, Klemens of Piotrków, Maciej Matejak, Jakub of Zalesie, Paweł of Wieliczka, Grzegorz of Ciechanów<sup>60</sup>. In addition to these, also associated with the Primate were: the Rusockis, the Kościeleckis, the Tęczyńskis, the Tarnowskis and the Rozrażewskis. Bona’s Polish court largely consisted of

<sup>56</sup> *...król nic nie uczyni sam z siebie; zrobi jednak wszystko, czego chcą ważni senatorowie; dlatego trzeba dodawać mu bodźca. / Pan mój we wszystkim jest trudny i jest wielkim kunktatorem... / Widzę że biskup (Tomicki) i kanclerz (Szydłowiecki) są jakby owi dwaj dobrzy aniołowie stróżowie, prowadzący Tobiasza*. Z. Wojciechowski, Zygmunt Stary, p. 265. Also compare L. Kolankowski, *Zygmunt August*, Lwów 1910, pp. 10–11, L. Kolankowski, *Polska Jagiellonów*, p. 167.

<sup>57</sup> H. Zeissberg, *Johannes Łaski Erzbischof von Gnesnen (1510–1531) Und sein Testament*, Wiedeń 1874, p. 123, H. E. Wyczawski, *Łaski: Słownik polskich teologów katolickich*, ed. H. E. Wyczawski, vol. II, Warszawa 1982, p. 552. See also J. Korytkowski, *Arcybiskupi gnieźnieńscy, prymasowie i metropolici polscy od roku 1000 aż do roku 1821 czyli od połączenia Arcybiskupstwa Gnieźnieńskiego z Biskupstwem Poznańskim*, vol. II, Poznań 1888, p. 581, S. Tymosz, *Szkic historyczno-biograficzny prymasa Jana Łaskiego*, in: *Arcybiskup Jan Łaski. Reformator prawa*, ed. S. Tymosz, Lublin 2007, p. 14.

<sup>58</sup> R. Mazurkiewicz, *Jan Łaski jako kanclerz wielki koronny*, in: *Arcybiskup Jan Łaski. Reformator prawa*, pp. 77–78.

<sup>59</sup> S. Grad, *Kościelna działalność arcybiskupa i prymasa Jana Łaskiego*, in: *Studia z historii Kościoła w Polsce*, eds. T. Krahel, S. Grad, vol. V, Warszawa 1979, p. 195. See also R. Mazurkiewicz, *Jan Łaski jako kanclerz wielki koronny*, p. 81, H. E. Wyczawski, *Biskup Piotr Gembicki (1585–1657)*, Kraków 1957, p. 89.

<sup>60</sup> P. Tańkowski, *Jan Łaski*, pp. 255–256. As the author notes, most of the mentioned agents (especially the financial ones) were used only once to fulfill a specific task. It is worth remembering that a large number of them was treated as officials working for the Primate, and their relationship had an official character, not personal.

Łaski's trusted men, especially two of her advisers – Hofmeister Mikołaj Wolski, and the Bishop of Kamieniec Wawrzyniec Międzyzyleski<sup>61</sup>. In addition to this, it should be remembered that during Łaski's lifetime a greater part of the Queen's court came from Mazovia and to a greater or lesser degree was associated with the Primate. Even if it was not him who directly "suggested" his candidates to the Queen, his trusted man, the former Hofmeister Mikołaj Wolski did it. Belonging to this group were: Maciej Łobucki (Archdeacon of Gniezno, Canon of Poznań, Dean of Łęczycza), Wawrzyniec Międzyzyleski (Bishop of Kamieniec), Duke Jan Lewicki, Rogala coat of arms, Jan Gruszczyński (the Queen's carver, from 1530 the Castellan of Inowłódz and from 1533 the Starosta of Sieradz), Wilhem Jarocki (the Canon of Cracow and Provost of Wojnicz)<sup>62</sup>.

Łaski also succeeded in locating his people at the court of Sigismund I. They were: Andrzej Zakrzewski (Secretary of the Royal Chancery, after 1520 he held the position of the Wojski of Poznań and the Burgrave of Cracow) and Marcin Rambiewski (the Dean of Gniezno and Poznań, the Canon of Cracow, Royal Secretary, nephew of the Primate)<sup>63</sup>.

Another important element of building family influences were coat of arms adoptions. Piotr Tańkowski notes that the most spectacular move in this respect was the admittance into the family and the Korab coat of arms of a Cracow Jew Stefan (name after baptism) of the Fiszel family together with two sons: Jan and Stanisław. Prior to this Łaski also admitted Maciej Zimmerman to his coat of arms (a mayor and wealthy merchant of Danzig) and Mikołaj Czepel<sup>64</sup>. But above all, Łaski took care of the interests of his immediate family – his brother Jarosław, who became the Voivode of Sieradz and also his nephews: Hieronim, Jan and Stanisław<sup>65</sup>.

Jan Łaski was a supporter of the ideas found in the statutes of 1496 and with these in mind he proposed that the King build a position based on the faction of the middle szlachta, internal reforms, the codification of the law and ordering the return of unlawfully seized property belonging to the royal domain<sup>66</sup>. His proposals were put down in the work written by his associate Stanisław Zaborowski under the title *Traktat o naturze praw i dóbr królewskich oraz o naprawie królestwa i o kierowaniu państwem*<sup>67</sup>. It seems that the Constitution of 1505 was in

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<sup>61</sup> W. Pocięcha, *Królowa Bona*, vol. II, p. 156. Also compare K. Morawski, *Czasy zygmunto-wskie na tle prądów Odrodzenia*, p. 59.

<sup>62</sup> P. Tańkowski, *Jan Łaski*, pp. 265–266.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 267.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 268–269.

<sup>65</sup> H. Łowmiański, *Polityka Jagiellonów*, p. 350.

<sup>66</sup> S. Tymosz, *Szkic historyczno-biograficzny prymasa Jana Łaskiego*, p. 15.

<sup>67</sup> *Tractatus de natura iurium et bonorum regis*. R. Mazurkiewicz, *Jan Łaski jako kanclerz wielki koronny*, p. 83. Also compare W. Pocięcha, *Królowa Bona*, vol. II, p. 153.

many ways consistent with the program created by Jan Olbracht in 1496, and Jan Łaski was its continuator<sup>68</sup>. In the years 1521–1526 Executionist slogans became a tool of the Primate's political struggle with Szydłowiecki and Tomicki. He demanded the execution of the laws, especially restoring respect for the principle of *incomaptibilitas*<sup>69</sup>. Laid out in the treaties was the principle according to which *...public good should be placed above the good of the individual*<sup>70</sup>. His political rivals accused him of *... inciting the crowd in the Commonwealth against the King himself*<sup>71</sup>. It seems that the key slogans put forward in this text were: the treasury and the army. *Let us try to always have the strongest army possible. In order to put it out, you should make every effort to collect money, because money is the nerve of war, without which a war cannot be waged. You will find money if all the long existing tributes and income from the whole kingdom, without the oppression of the poor, are gathered into one public treasury, and from this you will be able to regularly pay the fighting soldiers*<sup>72</sup>. Contrary to Church policy Łaski saw the need for the clergy to make contributions for the public good<sup>73</sup>. To a great extent the resolution of the synod of 1511 concerning a voluntary contribution of 40 thousand zlotys made by the clergy, which was allocated for the repurchase of the pawned complex of royal property in Busko, was his doing<sup>74</sup>. Moreover, he was a supporter of the idea that all Crown lands should be taken away and a public treasury be created for the protection of the borders thanks to the equal taxation of all the estates, including the clergy<sup>75</sup>. The knights readily drew from

<sup>68</sup> Z. Wojciechowski, p. 176.

<sup>69</sup> Ibidem, p. 186.

<sup>70</sup> *...dobro publiczne ponad dobro jednostki przedkładać należy*. W. Pocięcha, *Królowa Bona*, vol. II, p. 153.

<sup>71</sup> *...podburzał tłum w Rzeczypospolitej przeciw samemu królowi*. Ibidem, p. 187.

<sup>72</sup> *Starajmy się mieć zawsze jak najsilniejsze wojsko. Ażeby je wystawić, powinniście wszelkimi siłami zbierać pieniądze, albowiem pieniądz jest nerwem wojny, bez którego wojny prowadzić się nie da. Znajdziecie zaś pieniądze, jeżeli wszystkie z dawien istniejące daniny i dochody całego królestwa, bez uciemiężenia biednych, zgromadzicie w jeden skarb publiczny i z niego żołnierzom walczącym żołd regularnie zdotacie wypłacać*. Quoted after: Ibidem, p. 153.

<sup>73</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>74</sup> W. Uruszczak, *Sejm walny koronny w latach 1506–1540*, p. 34.

<sup>75</sup> At the sejm in Piotrków in 1530 Jan Łaski presented the project of setting up a pious bank (Mons Pietatis) of a national character. The bank's capital was to consist of taxes from the szlachta and the clergy, one-off taxes of 50% and fixed taxes of 5% of the annual income. This capital, later lent with an addition of a 4–5% annual interest, was to constitute the national wealth for the country's defense needs. The project was never implemented. Later it was taken up by A. F. Modrzewski who postulated the taxation of all citizens with the exception of serfs and merchants. He also recommended that tangible property which had not been passed on by will as well as pecuniary fines and penalties be allocated to the pious bank's fund. The bank's headquarters were to be located in the royal castle on Wawel Hill and in Piotrków Trybunalski. It was to be at the sole disposal of the king. Modrzewski's project was never implemented either. S. Tymosz, *Recep-*

Łaski's thoughts and ideas, especially accepting ideas concerning reform and the execution of the laws. He himself was accused of the political strengthening the Crown szlachta. In 1522 Maciej Drzewicki stated: *For this disobedience, which brought such disarray everywhere in the Commonwealth, and the fact that the landed deputies also appropriated power, is his work*<sup>76</sup>. In the same year, 1522, Bishop Erazm Ciołek (whom Łaski prevented from implementing the exemption obtained in Rome of his diocese in Płock from the metropolitan authority of the Primate), directed a memorandum to Sigismund I incriminating and slandering the Primate<sup>77</sup>. The letter prompted an immediate response from the Archbishop, who wrote: *I am gladly responding to this letter not to exonerate myself, but to show its mendacious impudence and to the best of my ability attest to this bishop's [referring to E. Ciołek Jacek Brzozowski] long growing hatred towards me and towards all of my men, as well as to my innocence, so that no one can judge this falsely. [...] the Bishop's letter itself will attest to his haughty pride without any further explanation*<sup>78</sup>. In addition to this he asked Sigismund to ... *crush the insolence of that bishop*<sup>79</sup>.

We should also remember Łaski's merits in the field of organizing the law in the Crown. As Grand Chancellor of the Crown, he undertook an attempted to codify the law in Poland. The resultant collection, the so-called *Łaski's Statute*, was released in print in Latin in 1506 after having been approved by the King and the Sejm. This collection was the first step to the development of one common legal code<sup>80</sup>. The importance of the *Statute* lay primarily in the fact that it contributed to the knowledge of the law becoming more widespread. The collection, which contained materials collected from the archives, privileges of the szlachta, the Statutes of Casimir the Great, royal edicts, records of the union

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*cja reformy trydenckiej w działalności kanoniczno-pastoralnej arcybiskupa Wacława Hieronima Sierakowskiego w latach 1740–1780. Studium historyczno-prawne*, Lublin 2002, p. 267. See also W. Pocięcha, *Królowa Bona*, vol. II, p. 154.

<sup>76</sup> *Albowiem to nieposłuszeństwo, które taki zamęt wprowadziło wszędzie w Rzeczypospolitej i to, że postowie ziemscy także władzę przywłaszczyli sobie, jego jest dziełem*. Quoted after: *Ibidem*.

<sup>77</sup> W. Dworzaczek, *Łaski Jan*, PSB, vol. XVIII, issue. 2, p. 233.

<sup>78</sup> *Na ten list chętnie odpowiadam nie po to, by się samemu oczyścić, lecz by wykazać kłamliwą jego zuchwałość oraz by w miarę możliwości zaświadczyć o wznagającej się z dawną nienawiścią tego biskupa do mnie i do wszystkich moich, a także o mojej niewinności, by nikt nie mógł o tym sadzić fałszywie. [...] sam list tego biskupa zaświadczy o jego wyniosłej pysze bez jakichkolwiek dodatkowych wyjaśnień*. Quoted after: P. Tańkowski, *Jan Łaski*, p. 238.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>80</sup> K. Niesiecki, *Herbarz Polski*, ed. Jan Bobrowicz, Vol. VI, Lipsk 1841, p. 218. S. Tymosz, *Statut Łaskiego i jego wpływ na inne zbiory prawa*, in: *Arcybiskup Jan Łaski. Reformator prawa*, op. cit., p. 88. Also compare S. Rzońca, W. Uruszczak, *Najdawniejszy zbiór systematyczny prawa polskiego z końca XV wieku*, *Czasopismo Prawno Historyczne* [hereafter referred to as CPH] 21, issue 1, 1969, S. Kutrzeba, *Źródła statutu Jana Łaskiego*, in: "Sprawozdanie z Czynności i Posiedzeń" PAU, 1910, Z. Kaczmarczyk, *O kanclerzu Janie Łaskim*, Warszawa 1955.

with Lithuania, records of the peace treaties with the Teutonic Order, records of the common law, was the largest such collection in Europe<sup>81</sup>.

In foreign policy he did not want to allow for the domination of the Habsburgs over Bohemia and Hungary, he also postulated a project concerning the Polonization of the Teutonic Order or completely removing it from Prussia. Following the example of Spain, he believed that the estates of the Order should be annexed into the Crown with the king as the Grand Master of the Order, which would lead to the Polonization of the Order. He also took action aimed at incorporating Western Pomerania into the Crown. In 1511, while taking part in the Congress of the Estates of Royal Prussia, he contributed to the finalization and approval of the Prussian electoral law<sup>82</sup>. In 1523 he was the head of a delegation to Danzig whose aim was an alliance against Brandenburg and the Order with Denmark, Mecklemburg and the Pomeranian dukes Jerzy and Barnim. It was signed on March 14, 1524<sup>83</sup>. Another proposal initiated by Łaski aimed at reforming the state was a project to remove German law from the cities of the Crown and replacing it with a new one, based on the principles of Roman law. The document was prepared by his relative and pupil, Maciej Śliwnicki and was titled *Sigismundina iura constitutionesque Sigismundinae*<sup>84</sup>. The project was presented to Sigismund I who rejected it in 1523<sup>85</sup>. As a supporter of the direct incorporation of Prussia into the Crown he headed a minority in the Senate protesting against the secularization of the Order<sup>86</sup>.

He sought an agreement and alliance with Sweden (against Moscow) and brought up the need for a closer relationship with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Mazovia (while the Dukes of Mazovia were still alive). In European politics he pointed to the benefits of an alliance with France and establishing lasting and peaceful relations with Turkey<sup>87</sup>. Although at the turn of the years 1512–1513, while in Rome with the Primate of Hungary T. Bakocs, he had visions of an anti-Turkish crusade led by Sigismund I<sup>88</sup>. Throughout the whole time he warned against establishing ties with the Habsburgs and advised remaining

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<sup>81</sup> R. Mazurkiewicz, *Jan Łaski jako kanclerz wielki koronny*, p. 82.

<sup>82</sup> W. Dworzaczek, *Jan Łaski*, p. 231.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 233.

<sup>84</sup> The main motive for this was the eradication of foreign (Saxon) elements from the law for towns and villages. It was a concept aimed at the Polonization of the law. A. Dembińska, *Zygmunt I. Zarys dziejów wewnętrzno-politycznych w latach 1540–1548*, Poznań 1948, p. 291. Compare W. Pociecha, *Królowa Bona*, vol. II, p. 155, J. Reszczyński, *Sądownictwo i proces w kodyfikacji Macieja Śliwickiego z 1523 roku*, Kraków 2008.

<sup>85</sup> W. Dworzaczek, *Jan Łaski*, op. cit., p. 233.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>87</sup> W. Pociecha, *Królowa Bona*, vol. II, p. 155.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 231.



officially neutral. According to him control of the Habsburgs over the whole of Hungary would be a greater evil for the Crown than an agreement with Porta. Habsburg diplomats in Rome severely hit Jan Łaski. In December 1529, during the consistory, a complaint was filed against the Primate. On January 9, 1530 Cardinal Schepper brought forward a formal accusation and at the same time presented a document in which Łaski was accused of allying with Turkey, using church money to support his nephew Hieronim, financing Lutheran mercenaries on their way to Vienna to help the Turks with the goods of the archdiocese, as well as supplying Turkish troops with military equipment. In the document Łaski was called a traitor, the brother of Judas, the archdevil of Gniezno, a man stripped of honesty and the fear of God, breaking his oath and worse than the Jews, because they did not dare split Christ's robe, and he tore this tunic of his, the sacred unity of the Church<sup>89</sup>. Having received the document Sigismund I did not accept the monitory and sent it back to the Cardinal Protector, explaining that he could not fulfill the wishes of the Pope for several reasons: first – he did not feel it appropriate to issue a decree against the Archbishop and Primate since this matter fell under the jurisdiction of the Church, and second – he did not want to offend Zapolya. What is probably most important, Sigismund I also stated that he would not interfere if the Pope chose to use his own organs of law enforcement to deal with this matter<sup>90</sup>. After the death of the main advocate of this issue (Cardinal Gattinara) a decision was made at the court not to raise the matter again treating it as obsolete<sup>91</sup>. It should also be remembered that the whole affair did not only concern Łaski. There is no doubt that the authors of the monitory and this whole diplomatic campaign wanted to force Sigismund I to declare himself against Zapolya and officially pursue a pro-Habsburg foreign

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<sup>89</sup> AT XII, no. 13, 30, 40, 65. In the Polish account of this event, which was written in Bologna on January 10, 1530), Jan Dantyszek, who at the time was Sigismund's permanent envoy to Charles V, informs the King that the day before, by the Emperor's order, Cornelius Schepper spoke against Łaski before the College of Cardinals. Since he did not have any instructions Dantyszek did not take any position (apart from a general protest against infringing the rights of Sigismund I and against meddling in the internal affairs of the Crown). He reported that the Emperor's diplomats quickly took action and on January 13, 1530 during the consistory Cardinal Farnese introduced the subject of Turkey. At the same time Cardinal Gattinara (the Chancellor of Charles V) once again brought up the issue of Jan Łaski. Dantyszek succeeded in gaining access to the articles directed against the Primate, which he immediately sent to Piotr Tomicki. He also received the text of a monitory, which he sent to Cracow. There is no doubt that the Emperor's diplomats used the Roman Curia to launch an attack on the Primate. At the same time Hieronim Łaski (the Primate's nephew) also came under attack. Also compare T. Silnicki, *Zjazd w Poznaniu w roku 1530*, pp. 12–13, W. Dworzaczek, *Jan Łaski*, p. 234.

<sup>90</sup> AT XII, no. 104. *Zygmunt I do Kardynała Protektora Polski, 25 kwietnia 1530 roku*. Following this reply, the whole matter was hushed up in the Curia. Compare T. Silnicki, p. 15.

<sup>91</sup> W. Dworzaczek, *Jan Łaski*, p. 235. Piotr Tomicki himself recommended that the matter be abandoned, then it would disappear by itself. T. Silnicki, p. 15.

policy<sup>92</sup>. These were not the only attacks of this kind against the Primate. In the Crown Piotr Tomicki wrote about him that for his own benefit he was ready to do the worst and most injurious things while Krzycki stated that he was a disgrace to his nation, traitor of the King<sup>93</sup>. In 1518, at a general meeting of the Gniezno Chapter Łaski complained that *...a vicar from Mąkolice is attempting on his life and threatens to burn the estates of the archbishop*<sup>94</sup>.

The time after 1525 is a period of Łaski's political decline as a result of the loss of influence at the monarch's court<sup>95</sup>. Initially Sigismund I was in favor of most of his proposals, especially ideas concerning the treasury and defense. He did not, however, share the idea that the knights should form the foundation of his power. It seems that the King cared about Łaski only because he consented to the clergy bearing some of the public burdens<sup>96</sup>. There is no doubt that granting the archbishopric to Łaski was at the same time an attempt to move him away from the center of power. In spite of this, as it is emphasized in the literature on this subject, the Archbishop of Gniezno was first in the Senate and presided over its deliberations<sup>97</sup>. Despite all this, many of his projects were never completed, but they point to the grandeur of this person and the farsightedness of his political concepts. In foreign policy his priority was not giving up the policy of strengthening the position of the Crown in Prussia with limited trust in the Habsburgs. In domestic policy he proposed an interesting package of reforms, which was to result in the centralization of the monarch's power exercised with reliance on the middle szlachta while reducing the influence of the nobles (możni). His

<sup>92</sup> AT XII, no. 40. We must remember that the monitory was given to the royal envoy who was to present it directly to the King. The King was not only to publish it, but also implement it. The point of the whole campaign was that if Sigismund would refuse to carry it out, he himself would be similarly accused. If, however, he agreed to carry out the recommendations of the Curia, he would formally take the Habsburg's side. That is how Jan Dantyszek understood this, which he described in the instructions given to his brother Bernard who was going to Poland at that time.

<sup>93</sup> Ibidem, p. 236.

<sup>94</sup> J. Korytkowski, *Jan Łaski, arcybiskup gnieźnieński, prymas Królestwa Polskiego i Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, Gniezno 1880, p. 37. Also compare P. Tańkowski, *Jan Łaski*, p. 237.

<sup>95</sup> As early as 1523 he noted that with all the arising objections the King himself moved him to the archbishopric. AGAD, Biblioteka Baworowskich no. 246. P. Tańkowski, *Jan Łaski*, p. 81. As the author observes, this appointment was advantageous because of the Primate's pro-state attitude and his political experience.

<sup>96</sup> S. Tymosz, *Szkie historyczno-biograficzny prymasa Jana Łaskiego*, p. 20. For more on the subject of Łaski's synodal activity see M. Kaleta, *Synody prowincjonalne arcybiskupa Jana Łaskiego*, in: *Arcybiskup Jan Łaski. Reformator prawa*, pp. 135–136.

<sup>97</sup> K. Niesiecki, *Herby i familie rycerskie tak w Koronie jak i w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim zebrane*, Lwów 1728, pp. 17–18, P. Tańkowski, *Jan Łaski*, p. 81. See also A. Sucheni Grabowski, *Prymasi XVI stulecia w polskim systemie parlamentarnym*, in: *Prymasi i prymasostwo w dziejach narodu polskiego*, ed. W. J. Wysocki, Warszawa 2002.

political thought was continued by Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, who worked in Jan Łaski's chancellery in the years 1523–1525<sup>98</sup>.

Jan Łaski's death on May 18, 1531 opened another chapter in the relations between the senators and the balance of power in the Royal Council<sup>99</sup>. Łaski's closest associates either joined Bona's circle or the group of the so-called "chancellors". The Queen very quickly (after 1518) became involved in public life, becoming a very important entity in this sphere<sup>100</sup>. In the thirties of the sixteenth century by creating her own circle of nobles (możni), with the King becoming weaker, she tried to play a leading role in the political life of the Crown<sup>101</sup>. In a letter to Jan Chojeński Piotr Tomicki wrote ... *a secret adviser who solicits and acts in no other way as to make the king completely oust us, his real and legitimate advisers, from his soul and do everything according to her own inclinations and will*<sup>102</sup>. However, Tomicki's opinion is not the most important in this case. With the death of senators who were very close to the King (Stanisław Chodecki d. 1529, Mikołaj Szydłowiecki d. 1532, Krzysztof Szydłowiecki d. 1532, Piotr Tomicki d. 1535) the Queen strengthened her own interest group by elevating its members to key state positions<sup>103</sup>. However, we should not forget that the death of

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<sup>98</sup> S. Tymosz, *Szkic historyczno-biograficzny prymasa Jana Łaskiego*, p. 97.

<sup>99</sup> *Kronika Marcina Bielskiego*, Vol. II, book V, p. 1049. This was a significant moment because of the shifts in episcopal positions. As Bielski notes, after Łaski's death the Archbishopric was taken over by Maciej Drzewicki, whose Bishopric of Kujawy was taken over by Jan Karnkowski who left the Bishopric of Przemyśl which was taken over by Jan Chojeński.

<sup>100</sup> *Ostatnie lata panowania Zygmunta Starego i początek panowania Zygmunta Augusta. Wyciąg z rękopisu Joachima Lelewela*, pp. 15–19. A. Sucheni Grabowska, *Zygmunt August*, p. 42. The author points to the fact that at the end of the thirties of the XVI century the state's policy lost its homogenous character, which was due to two reasons – the deteriorating health of Sigismund I and the weakening of the main center of power with Bona and her power base taking over influence. W. Uruszczak, *Sejm walny koronny*, p. 34.

<sup>101</sup> Ewa Dubas-Urwanowicz rightly claims that until 1544 Bona's position constantly grew making the monarch and his power base weaker, which does not mean that his position would have been stronger if he had a different wife, less engaged in politics. E. Dubas-Urwanowicz, *Stronnicy królewscy i opozycjoniści wobec monarchy w dobie zjazdu lwowskiego i rokoszu sandomierskiego. Próba porównania*, in: *Król a prawo stanów do oporu*, eds. M. Markiewicz, E. Opaliński i R. Skowrona, Kraków 2010, p. 107. A. Dembińska took a similar position on this issue when she wrote that there were undoubtedly differences between the royal spouses but Sigismund I knew how to smooth out the differences and resolve conflicts, and he recommended that his son do the same. She also stated that it was next to him that Bona's creative energy could fully shine. A. Dembińska, *Zygmunt I. Zarys dziejów wewnętrzno-politycznych 1540–1548*, p. 298.

<sup>102</sup> ...*tajnego doradcę, który nie inaczej zabiega i działa jak o to, aby król nas prawdziwych i prawych doradców z duszy swej całkowicie wyrzuciwszy wszystko wedle jej własnej skłonności i woli czynił*. AT XVI/2, no. 557, p. 324. Quoted after: W. Uruszczak, *Sejm walny koronny*, p. 34.

<sup>103</sup> A. Przeździecki, *Jagiellonki Polskie w XVI wieku. Obrazy rodziny i dworu Zygmunta I i Zygmunta Augusta Królów Polskich*, Kraków 1868, vol. 1, pp. 74–75. Compare E. Dubas-Urwanowicz, *Stronnicy królewscy i opozycjoniści wobec monarchy w dobie zjazdu lwowskiego i rokoszu*

the leaders of the warring camps did not lead to the death of their political ideas. The leadership of the Executionist camp was taken over by Piotr Kmita while at the head of the Habsburg-friendly faction were Hetman Jan Tarnowski and the First Secretary of the Royal Chancellery, Tomicki's deputy during his time in office, Bishop Jan Chojeński<sup>104</sup>. It is also worth noting that Queen Bona after the deaths of Szydłowiecki and Tomicki wanted Piotr Gamrat to be appointed to the office of Chancellor. She failed in her attempts, as Sigismund I appointed Chojeński to the office of Chancellor, while a man close to her, Paweł Wolski, took the office of Deputy Chancellor<sup>105</sup>.

The composition of the ruling group underwent great changes and modifications during the reign of Sigismund I (1506–1548). Nevertheless, we can identify a group of nobles (*możnowładcy*) whose position and political influence stood out in a special way. They were: Krzysztof Szydłowiecki, Mikołaj Szydłowiecki, Jan Łaski and Piotr Tomicki. This was particularly evident in the second half of the reign of Sigismund the Old when Queen Bona's political influence was becoming stronger and stronger, the Senate more and more divided, the knights were gathering strength and the King, because of his age and deteriorating health, reduced his political activity and lost influence on personnel policy in favor of his wife<sup>106</sup>. Therefore, in the analyzed period we can see the formation of two circles of the elite: the group associated with Sigismund I and the one connected with Queen Bona. This was not an advantageous situation from the point of view of *raison d'état* and the position of the monarch. In addition to this, as E. Dubas-Urwanowicz observes, the dynamics of change within these elites during this period was not conducive to the cohesion of this group. The lack of a tradition in which members of a family would remain in the Senate was common among the newly appointed senators. This is a significant fact, since it led to this group's inability to develop a political program, which would be an alternative to the developing political program of the *szlachta*<sup>107</sup>.

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*sandomierskiego*, p. 105. Also compare *Ostatnie lata panowania Zygmunta Starego i początek panowania Zygmunta Augusta. Wyciąg z rękopisu Joachima Lelewela*, p. 19. W. Uruszczak, *Sejm walny koronny*, p. 35.

<sup>104</sup> M. Z. Wojciechowski, *Polska Piastów i Jagiellonów*, Poznań 1946, p. 418.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 418–419.

<sup>106</sup> A. Odrzywolska-Kidawa, *Podkanclerzy Piotr Tomicki. Polityk i humanista*, pp. 15–16.

<sup>107</sup> E. Dubas-Urwanowicz, *Stronnicy królewscy i opozycjoniści wobec monarchy w dobie zjazdu lwowskiego i rokoszu sandomierskiego*, p. 107.

### ***Senatus aulicus.***

#### **Rywalizacja stronnictw politycznych w okresie panowania Zygmunta I**

Badając dzieje panowania Zygmunta I, można zauważyć że monarcha w sprawowaniu władzy korzystał z wąskiego i zaufanego grona senatorów. Tak naprawdę większa ich liczba przebywała przy królu tylko w czasie obrad sejmowych, chociaż nigdy nie był to pełny skład.

Zygmunt I bardzo starannie selekcjonował grono współpracowników. Tym samym polityka personalna władcy stawała się czynnikiem ułatwiającym budowanie kariery politycznej bądź prowadziła do jej zakończenia. Od początku panowania Zygmunt I dążył do stworzenia własnego obozu politycznego, przy pomocy którego skutecznie realizowałby pomysły polityczne. Kluczowe dla państwa decyzje zapadały w gronie zwłaszcza ministrów, a najistotniejsza była możliwość bycia w otoczeniu monarchy. Opinia publiczna lat trzydziestych XVI stulecia określała senatorów, którzy byli stale obecni na dworze królewskim, mianem *senatus aulicus* – czyli senat dworski.

Skład grupy rządzącej w okresie rządów Zygmunta I (1506–1548) ulegał silnym zmianom i modyfikacjom. Mimo to możemy wskazać grupę możnowładców, których pozycja oraz wpływy polityczne zaznaczyły się w sposób szczególny. Byli to: Krzysztof i Mikołaj Szydłowieccy, Jan Łaski, Piotr Tomicki.