

RADOSŁAW KRAJNIAK, Kujawsko-Pomorskie Centrum Dziedzictwa w Toruniu
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7016-8859>
radekkrajniak@gmail.com

**Rev.: LESZEK ZYGNER, *BISHOP JAKUB OF KURDWANÓW,
COATS OF ARMS SYROKOMLA (C. 1350-1425)***

Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika,
Toruń 2020, pp. 405

The biography of the Bishop of Płock Jakub Kurdwanowski was written by Leszek Zygnier and was published by Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika as a seventh volume of the publishing series "Ecclesia Clerusque Temporibus Medii Aevi". The editorial reviews, fragments of which were placed in the cover of the book, were prepared by professors Waldemar Graczyk and Krzysztof Ożóg. This monograph consists of four chapters, which are preceded by a table of contents and introduction in Polish and German. The discussed publication ends with conclusion, a list of abbreviations, bibliography, summary in German and indexes of historical figures and authors.

In the "Introduction" (pp. 9-20), Zygnier thoroughly reviews literature devoted not only to Bishop Jakub, but also to other members of the mediaeval Episcopate of the Gniezno metropolis and neighbouring areas. He also explicitly formulates the main purpose of his research, which is to "comprehensively present (with reference to the preserved sources) the ecclesiastical and political activity of Bishop Jakub Kurdwanowski and to order and evaluate the existing research in this" (p. 14). He also carefully examines the source materials, analyses the used manuscript sources (including those that were collected abroad) as well as the published source materials. Finally, he outlines the structure of the review monograph.

The first chapter entitled "The Way to Bishopric" (pp. 21-64) attempts to present the Jakub's way to the Płock Bishopric and answer the question whether this was a model career for the clergyman acting at that time. He commences his analysis with the explication of his

descent and the family of the future Ordinary of Płock. He draws attention here to the erroneous descent of Jakub from Korzków, which still appears in the literature on the subject. He further discusses his social background, describes seals he used, and devotes some attention to the Syrokomla family from which Kurdwanowski descended, including Jakub's immediate family. Next, he considers his education and his work at Roman Rota. He mentions that before graduating from the studies in Italy crowned with a doctorate, he studied at the University in Prague. The author then examines the Jakub's ecclesiastical career prior to assuming the Bishopric of Płock. Here he points to his work at the papal court, where he took up the position of auditor of the Roman Rota in 1386, as well as numerous prelates and canonries which he received during this period. Next, Zygnier focuses on discussing the issue of Jakub's assumption of the Bishopric of Płock and the attitude that the Mazovian dukes and King Władysław Jagiełło had towards this appointment. The former, especially, Janusz I, opposed his papal nomination. As to the latter, he must have received the royal consent, since without this, the assumption of the episcopal throne would be unattainable. The author concludes that the acquired education and work in the Roman Curia influenced the career of Kurdwanowski the most before serving the role of the Bishop of Płock. What is also significant in his "way to bishopric" is the support that he received from fellow natives, but also the royal couple and people from their surroundings.

In the extensive second chapter entitled "The Shepherd and Governor of the Płock Diocese" (pp. 65-212), Zygnier pays attention to a difficult time when Jakub had to take over the Płock Bishopric, part of which, as a pledge, was in the custody of the German monastic authorities, and most of the church properties were occupied by Prince Janusz I. In addition, there were instances of breaches of the ecclesiastical law among the local clergy, including non-observance of celibacy. As a result, the author presents the accomplishment of the programme of the renewal of the Płock church by Jakub Kurdwanowski. Next, he exhaustively discusses legislative, administrative, judicial, pastoral and economic activities. He also attempts to characterise the closest surroundings of the bishop and his relations with the Płock Cathedral Chapter and other church institutions, for instance the College of the Cathedral Vicars and monastic communities. In consequence,

we receive a picture of Jakub as an excellent lawyer and legislator open to reforms, but also a priest conferring indulgences and issuing foundation acts for new parishes or granting parish benefice. Should a need arise, bishop Jakub admonished the clergy who broke the law, some other time he defended the rights of diocesan clergy. Hence, he was an administrator and a judge in his actions, often presiding over the church courts. He also managed the episcopal estates, but oftentimes had to obtain chapter's consent. He spent many years recovering the episcopal estates and revenues lost by his predecessors, and managing them properly. His pontificate was also filled with numerous foundations, mainly at the Płock Cathedral. In many of these activities he was assisted, and sometimes relieved, by numerous collaborators who created Bishop's entourage and court. He also had to cooperate with Płock Cathedral Chapter, where not all members supported his policies and endeavoured to take control over the church life in the Płock Bishopric, even in a turbulent way.

The third chapter, bearing a title "The Church Activities outside the Płock Diocese" (pp. 213-263), aims at presenting the position of Bishop Jakub in the Polish and universal Church. It opens with a sub-chapter, in which Zygnier depicts the relations of Jakub with the Holy See, including the case of his translation to the Bishopric of Włocławek. His attitude towards the Councils in Pisa and Constance has been referred to, with particular emphasis placed on the latter, since it was there that he partook, although he did not belong to the most active members of the Polish delegation. A subsequent issue addressed in this chapter is the participation of Kurdwanowski in the provincial synods convened by the Gniezno metropolitan bishop, in which the Płock ordinary attempted to take part actively and personally, which, in fact, was not a norm among the Polish Episcopate. Next, relations between Bishop Jakub and diocesan bishops were noted, whom he was meeting during bishops' congresses, conventions of the clergy and nobility, on the occasion of the settlement of various disputes, as well as during diplomatic missions and meetings of the royal council.

Chapter Four entitled "A Politician and a Diplomat" (pp. 265-315) refers to the evaluation of the political and diplomatic activities of Kurdwanowski, his relations and service to King Władysław Jagiełło, as well as contacts with the Mazovian dukes and the Teutonic Order. Bishop Jakub, working closely with the Polish king, seemed to embody

the aspirations for the unity of Mazovia with the Crown, which in turn influenced his relations with the Mazovian power elite. In Jagiełło's entourage, which is quite understandable, he specialised in the politics with the Teutonic Order. He also tried, though, it was not always easy, to maintain correct relations with the Mazovian princes, sometimes, as in matters of war with the Teutonic Order, cooperating with them in agreement. However, these situations were among the exceptions, and in most cases the relations remained quite strained. Relatively numerous were contacts with the authorities of the Teutonic Order, which to a greater extent, is evidenced by extensive correspondence conducted by Bishop Jakub with the Grand Master. Zygnier rightly emphasised that contrary to many other dignitaries of the Polish Kingdom, Bishop Jakub was not negatively inclined to the Order, thanks to which he was undoubtedly respected by its representatives.

The last, short, though very important part of the book by L. Zygnier is "The Summary (the Profile of Bishop Jakub)" (pp. 317-324), in which the author vividly and holistically portrays the figure of Bishop Jakub, in a manner extending beyond simple summary of the research results proposed in earlier chapters.

It appears to be somewhat difficult to raise serious objections. The author is well acquainted with source base and is, in essence, familiar with literature on the subject, although what surprises is the reference to page 52, a purely reproductive and inconsequential fragment of the book by Teresa Borawska and Henryk Rieta dedicated to Bernard Sculteti (when characterising cases which during Kurdwanowski's work at Roman Rota were outlined before this position).¹ It should also be noted that, when referring to the information on Jan Abezier on page 228, Zygnier should quote the most recent studies about him,² rather than encourage the reader to turn to the highly incomplete biography by T. Borawska.³

¹ See: T. Borawska H. Rietz, *Z Kaszub do wiecznego miasta. Bernard Sculteti (ca 1450-1518), kurialista i przyjaciel Mikołaja Kopernika*, Toruń 2019, p. 43.

² See: R. Krajniak, *Abezier Johann (ok. 1375-1424), uczony, dyplomata krzyżacki, uczestnik soboru w Konstancji, bp warmiński*, [in:] *Toruński słownik biograficzny*, pod red. Krzysztofa Mikulskiego, vol. 7, Toruń 2014, pp. 17-19.

³ See: R. Krajniak, *Abezier Johann (ok. 1375-1424), uczony, dyplomata krzyżacki, uczestnik soboru w Konstancji, bp warmiński*, [in:] *Toruński słownik biograficzny*, ed. Krzysztof Mikulski, vol. 7, Toruń 2014, pp. 17-19.

In turn, the editorial and technical sides of this publication look somewhat worse. In the book reviewed, we encounter relatively numerous language mistakes,⁴ misspelled names and surnames of the quoted works,⁵ or mistakes in bibliographical descriptions of the quoted literature on the subject⁶ and sources.⁷ In bibliography, not all

⁴ See: p. 15 „...udziałowi w ruchu soborowych”; p. 32 „...zaszczepił na Mazowszu właśnie biskupa Jakub”; p. 80 „...kościół klasztorne w Czerwińska”; p. 82 „...ordynariuzowi”; p. 112 „...kościół Mariackiego w Gdański”; p. 113 „nowe mansjonarii katedralne”; p. 132 „...miał mu płacił”; p. 134 „...winna być uiszczani”; p. 138 „...żaden z biskupów płockim”; p. 171 „Jednym z ich”; p. 177, footnote 492 „...kanonicy gracjami”; p. 184 „...wybieranego w grona kapitulnego”, „...uzyskał od papieża pizańskiego”; p. 224 „...okresie już już ponad”; p. 229 „...otrzymanie zgodny królewskiej”; p. 253 „...tematem obrad synodalnych miał być udziału polskiej delegacji”; p. 281 „...że w podczas zjazdu”, p. 282 „...Andrzej Łaskarza”; p. 285 „...mówił o dobrowolny nawróceniu”; p. 289 „...Mikołajem Trąba”; pp. 295-296 „...nie było inspirowany przez”; p. 301, footnote 155 „...z tytułem księżęcy”; p. 305 „...toczące się przez komisarzem”; p. 307 „...pomoc z walce z najazdem”.

⁵ See: p. 22, footnote 4 „Griewe” instead of Grieme (similar to index on p. 399); p. 24, footnote 13, p. 31, footnote 32, p. 33, footnote 43 and p. 34, footnote 46 „Szczaniecki” instead of Szczaniecki (similar to bibliography on p. 366 and index on p. 404); p. 39, footnote 75 „K. Polackzówna” instead of H. Polackzówna; p. 113, footnote 181 „F. Simson” instead of P. Simson (similar to bibliography on p. 364); p. 171, footnote 460 „Radizmiński” instead of Radzimiński; p. 224, footnote 36 „A. Bieszk” instead of K. Bieszk; p. 277, footnote 44 „J. Józwiak” instead of S. Józwiak (similar to bibliography on p. 349); p. 333 „Perzawowski” instead of „Perzanowski”; p. 368 „M. Rachoń” instead of „M. Rechowicz”; p. 373 „Griwe” instead of „Grieme”.

⁶ See: p. 21, footnote 2 „Dokumenty królewskie i ich funkcje... i pierwszych Jagiellonów 1370-1440” instead of „Dokumenty królewskie i ich funkcja... i pierwszych Jagiellonów 1370-1444”; p. 35, footnote 54 „Malbork 2011” instead of „Malbork 2010”; p. 46, footnote 107 „aż do naszych dni włącznie” instead of „aż do dni naszych”; p. 65, footnote 2 „synody diecezji płockiej” instead of „synody płockie”; p. 66, footnote 4 and p. 67, footnote 10 „kapituły katedralnej w Płocku” instead of „kapituły katedralnej płockiej”; p. 105, footnote 154 „statuty synodlane” instead of „statuty synodalne” and „ubioru uchownych” instead of „ubioru duchownych”; p. 112, footnote 180 „Działalność synodalne” instead of „Działalność synodalna”; p. 132, footnote 252 „krakowski kapituły” instead of „krakowskiej kapituły” (similar to p. 351); p. 151, footnote 334 „organizacja i funkcjonowanie” instead of „organizacja I funkcje”; p. 156, footnote 362 „RH 64 (1995)” instead of „RH 61 (1995)”; p. 170, footnote 453 „Prażaci i kanonicy” instead of „Prażaci i kanonicy”; s. 229, footnote 56 i s. 340 „Geburstag” zamiast „Geburtstag”; s. 251, footnote 157 „Mikołaj Trąb” instead of „Mikołaj Trąba”; p. 252, footnote 160 and p. 348 „z lat 140-1435” instead of „z lat 1420-1435”; p. 259, footnote 188 „Die Herschft” instead of „Die Herrschaft”; p. 273, footnote 27 „136-1434”, instead of „1386-1434”; p. 288, footnotes 98-99 „Dwa dominikanie krakowsy” instead of „Dwaj dominikanie krakowsy”; p. 336

registered sources and source materials used in the text have been listed.⁸ It so happens that the authorship or co-authorship of some books has been attributed to the wrong persons.⁹ Comments should also be made on the two indexes appended to the book, which omit

„Hildensheim” instead of „Hildesheim”; p. 339 „Dekrets „Haec Santa” instead of „Dekrets Haec Sancta”; p. 340 „un die polnische” instead of „und die polnische”; p. 342 „Capellai Papae” instead of „Capellani Papae”; p. 347 „Nominacje biskupów” instead of „Nominacja biskupów”; p. 348 „mit besonder” instead of „mit besonderer”; p. 349 „Andrzej Łaskarz, dyplomaa” instead of „Andrzej Łaskarz, dyplomata”; p. 350 „währenddes” instead of „während des”, „późnego średniowiecz” instead of „późnego średniowiecza”; p. 351 „kapituły katedralnej krakowskiej” instead of „krakowskiej kapituły katedralnej”; p. 358 „Mały Płock 2103” instead of „Mały Płock 2013”; p. 363 „Jakubem z Kurdanowa” instead of „Jakubem z Kurdwanowa”, „Padeborn” instead of „Paderborn” (similar to p. 371); p. 368 „statutu wareckiego” instead of „statutu warckiego”; p. 373 „ratitudo” instead of „Gratitudo”.

⁷ While quoting parchment documents from the collection of Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin-Dahlem, the author mistakenly refers to this collection several times and instead of „Pergamenturkunden” writes „Urkundenbuch” (see: p. 156, footnote 366; p. 172, footnote 474; p. 200, footnote 570), or Pergamenturkundenbuch” (see: p. 137, footnote 275; p. 279, footnote 55; p. 280, footnote 57; p. 282, footnote 69; p. 290, footnote 107; p. 294, footnote 132), although it happens that he uses the correct record (see: p. 242, footnotes 115 and 117). Minor mistakes can as well be observed in the bibliographical descriptions of the printed sources, see: p. 33, footnote 43 „Kraków 1867” instead of „Kraków 1865”; p. 45, footnote 106 „Acta Camere” instead of „Acta Camerae”; p. 121, footnote 208 „Księga ziemska płońska 1400-1407” instead of „Księga ziemska płońska 1400-1417”; p. 326 „seculi decimi quinti” instead of „saeculi decimi quinti”; p. 331 „Monumenta Historica Universitatatis” instead of „Monumenta Historica Universitatis”; p. 336 „res gestae Bohemicas” instead of „res gestas Bohemicas”.

⁸ No quoted information about: on p. 11 of the article by T. Wojciechowski about the Polish Episcopate in the times of Zbigniew Oleśnicki; on p. 45 of the biographic entry by J. Kopec dedicated to Johann Borsnitzow; on p. 54 of the book by S. Szczur on the papal treasury; on p. 57 of the source edition entitled „Codex diplomaticus Silesiae”; on p. 66 of the book by J. Grabowski entitled „Poczet książąt i księżnych mazowieckich”; on p. 105 of the article by S. Konarska-Zimnicka on the Polish synodal statutes; on p. 107 of the book by S. Bylina on the christianization of the Polish countryside at the end of the Middle Ages; on p. 149 of the article by J. Grabowski on documents and chancellery of the Płock Bishop Klemens Pierzchała; on p. 153 of the biographic entry by J. Wiśniewski dedicated to Gerhard Stolpman.

⁹ On p. 54 in footnote 139 S. Sroka was mistakenly ascribed the authorship of the monograph on the papal treasury, instead of S. Szczur. In turn, on p. 152 in footnote 341, K. Kopiński (not K. Kwiatkowski) was ascribed the authorship of the book on the war of Poland and Lithuania with the Teutonic Order.

both some of the historical figures,¹⁰ and the authors or editors of the quoted publications.¹¹ In total, it testifies to imprecise proofreading and editorial work of the reviewed monograph, which places the burden on the author of the book and also on Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika in Toruń.

Despite the pointed remarks, it should, however, be stated that we received a very good and mature work. It should as well be reminded that in the opening pages of the monograph, the author informed the readers that 20 years had passed between the creation of the first version of the work and its publication in print (p. 20). Regardless of the fact what the reasons for this were, the above situation can be summarised in the following way: Good books are even worth waiting so many years for.

It is always worth waiting many years for such books.

RADOSŁAW KRAJNIAK – doctor of humanities in history, graduate of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. Laureate of the START Program of the Foundation for Polish Science for outstanding young scientists. Scholarship holder of the Lanckoroński Foundation and the Polish Historical Mission in Würzburg. He has implemented and is implementing individual and team grants funded by the National Science Center, the National Program for the Development of the Humanities, and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. He is the author of dozens of works devoted mainly to medieval clergy.

¹⁰ The missing are: on p. 52 Pope John XXII; on p. 103 Jan Brańczuch; on p. 119, footnote 205 Rogali of Węgrzynów and Wigant Ciołek of Powsin; on p. 124 Jan of Samplawa; on p. 125 priest Stanisław; on p. 141, footnote 289 papal legate Opizon; on p. 142 Wszebór; on p. 151 the alleged auxiliary Bishop of Płock Jakub. Apart from this, Mroczek of Grąbec appears more times in the text than it is listed in the index on p. 391 (see: pp. 77-80, 101).

¹¹ In the index we cannot find the following people: on p. 12: A. Borek, S. Gawlas, P. Żmudzki; on pp. 51, 54: F. E. Schneider; on p. 71: G. Ryś; on p. 86: B. A. Rodriguez, F. C. Rodriguez, A. Garcia y Garcia, R. I. Card. Castillo Lara; on p. 93: M. Saczyńska, E. Wólkiewicz; on p. 95: Ae. Fridberg; on p. 105: S. Konarska-Zimnicka; on p. 114: J. T. Lubomirski; on p. 164, 166: J. Vincke. Apart from this, it was not noted that D. Wróbel also appears on p. 17.