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Title of the dissertation: *Diplomatic activities of Hieronim Łaski (1496-1541)*

## Summary

The diplomatic activity of Hieronim Łaski (1496-1541), his activity in European politics of the Renaissance, is an important research problem. Its topicality has been confirmed and still is confirmed by subsequent geopolitical events. As Stanisław Nahlik wrote in his work on modern diplomacy: "at the end of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Poland is fully aware of international relations and the legation as their instrument", adding that "the times of Sigismund are the golden age of Polish diplomacy". Therefore, an attempt to present the world of 16th-century diplomacy, cultural problems and political conditions of that times, from the perspective of the voivode of Sieradz, then the royal courtier, and finally the voivode of Sieradz, the count of Spiš, the voivode of Transylvania, as well as the ban of Croatia and Slavonia, seems worth implementing and an important cognitive area of research.

Understanding the idea of "diplomacy" as a apparatus, an instrument for the implementation of non-military external policy, while "diplomats" (*orator, legatus, nuntius*) as a professional person, adequate to the era, using these instruments to achieve the assumed goal, or the implementation of the entrusted mission, it can be said that the protagonist of my dissertation fits the above definitions - which I try to prove in this dissertation.

He came from the Korabit family living in the Sieradz region. Jarosław, son of Jarosław, the voivode of Sieradz, and Zuzanna from Bąkowa Góra, was probably born on September 27, 1496, as the oldest of three male descendants of the spouses from Łask. Together with his brothers, he belonged to the first generation brought up in the era of renaissance, in accordance with the spirit of humanistic values and cultural trends prevailing at that time. The career and fame achieved by his brothers: Jan - one of the most important European reformers, a Protestant priest, theologian and Stanisław - a soldier and diplomat, military theoretician, convinces about the effort put into their education, upbringing and preparation to perform the most important functions and dignity.

This work was done by their uncle - Jan, Great Chancellor of the Crown, then the Primate of the Kingdom of Poland. Thanks to his efforts, the sons of the Sieradz voivode received a thorough education and the ability to navigate among the European elites of that time, visiting Western European courts, houses of famous scholars, as well as Italian and German universities. The foundations that Hieronim acquired during his youthful peregrinations shaped his character and strengthened his sense of belonging to the world and the Latin civilization. A sign of this was also the adoption of the Latinized form of his name - Hieronim, which accompanied him until his death.

After receiving an appropriate education and going on a several-year peregrination, at the age of 24, he began serving at the court of Sigismund I. From that moment on, he took part in diplomatic missions. He was noticed by the monarch as an efficient politician, and

with the support of his uncle and friends of his home, he received further dignities in the state. Already as the voivode of Sieradz, in the aftermath of the defeat of Mohaka in 1526 - politically destabilizing Central Europe to a large extent - he unexpectedly decided to enter the service of King John I Zapolya, whom he supported in his efforts to win over the Kingdom of Hungary. Working for the "national king" was at that time in conflict with the interests of the Habsburg house, whose representative – the Archduke of Austria and King Ferdinand I of Bohemia – had been competing with Zapolya for over a decade for primacy in the kingdom of the Arpads. Hieronim became involved in complicated international politics, he meandered between the party of King John I, the growing Ottoman state, the established power of the Habsburgs, confirmed militarily at Pavia in 1525, in Rome in 1527 or the battles for Tunis in 1535, the Jagiellonian policy of neutrality, and the union of Protestant states and cities of the German Reich, remaining under the informal protection of France.

In Łaski's opinion, his involvement on the side of Jan I Zapolya did not receive a sufficient reward, which also motivated him to "change alliances" and start talks with the court of Ferdinand I of Habsburg. Despite the initial reluctance and lack of trust in the Sieradz voivode, Łaski's faith in his own abilities and stubbornness overcame the fears and reluctance of the Roman king. From 1538, Hieronim served him as a commander of the army, but above all as a diplomat, holding legations to King Sigismund I and twice to the court in Constantinople. In such circumstances, Łaski had to function in the political and administrative reality of at least six political entities, thus belonging to the strict elite of European diplomats who shaped international relations in practice at that time. Thanks to these choices, Hieronim Łaski seems to be the right example of a man whose profession has become the diplomatic service, in a dimension that goes far beyond the usual patterns and easy to classify and organize state and dynastic divisions.

At the time of his death (December 22, 1541), Hieronim Łaski was nearly 46 years old, so for those times he was a middle-aged, mature and experienced man. Out of the 46 years mentioned, he spent 22 years on the almost constant work of a diplomat, sometimes a soldier - commanding mercenary units of various kinds. What cemented his image in the European elite of that time was undoubtedly his activity as a diplomat. As a legate, commissioner and representative of European monarchs, he made nearly 30 diplomatic missions, becoming one of the most famous politicians of his time.

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