

## Summary

Universitas Contra *Haeresim*.

Antiheretical Activity by Stanisław of Skarbimierz  
as a Representative of the University of Kraków

In the first half of the 15th century, Central and Eastern Europe experienced a deep shock caused by the outbreak of the so-called Hussite Revolution in Bohemia. Projects for the Church reform put forward by some Czech intellectuals and preachers in many places took a turn that was in fact contrary to the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church. The new heresy, as Hussitism was called, became to be seen as a threat not only to the congregations in the Kingdom of Bohemia, but also to those in the neighbouring countries, including Poland. The University of Kraków was to play an important role in the agenda of fighting for the purity of faith in the Kingdom of Poland, developed by the secular and clerical authorities. From the very beginning of its existence – particularly since its restoration in 1400 – the University boasted a high level of education thanks to a well-educated staff, consisting largely of graduates from the Charles University in Prague. The university professors were well versed in the field of theology and canon law, and thus ready to conduct polemics with the Hussite postulates; furthermore, they were also familiar with the procedure to be adopted in cases of suspected heresy. The monarch and the bishops used the scholars' knowledge and skills by involving them in the development of statutes against heretics or instructions and manuals for the clergy to prevent the emergence and propagation of doctrinal and liturgical errors, as well as by entrusting them with positions that would allow them to conduct court cases *in causa fidei*.

The present work aims to present the activities undertaken by the University of Kraków in defence of the faith against heretics during the first half of the 15th century. The anti-heretical writings by Stanisław of Skarbimierz (died in 1431), the first rector of the University of Kraków, constitute particularly valuable sources that allow for a partial reconstruction of the procedure to be followed in cases of detecting heresy among members of the academic community, as well as giving some sense of the manner of the scholars' involvement in the fight for the purity of faith. Out of several hundred of his works, only a few are devoted to this issue. These include sermons, *determinationes* treatises, legal opinions, and a letter in the form of a legal act. All these are found in the manuscripts collection of the Jagiellonian Library, but only some of them have been published so far. The annex contains a critical edition of primary research unpublished texts – *Ad eliminandum* and *Contra haeresim*, along with an analysis of the source materials.

The first chapter presents the historical background, showing the beginning of the emergence of the threat posed by the Hussite ideology for the Catholic Church in the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland, and the actions taken by the royal and ecclesiastical authorities to counteract the penetration and proliferation of heterodox thoughts in Polish

lands. The most attention is devoted to discussing the forms of involvement and methods of operation of the University of Kraków. On the basis of the conducted source research, it can be noted that the academic community considered the ethos of promoting the faith and defending the Church to be one of the basic missions of the University of Kraków. At the same time, many scholars were deeply committed to solving the crisis in the Church by means of thorough reforms. However, they did not share the views of Jan Hus – the spiritual father of the Czech Hussite movement – or of other Czech reformers whose ecclesiological and Eucharistic concepts departed from the traditional teachings of the Church. The first polemics with the views of the Prague scholar appeared at the University of Kraków before the Council of Constance. When in 1415 the Council condemned the thoughts of John Wycliffe, who inspired many Czech reformers, and then when it condemned Jan Hus, who was deemed a heretic and sentenced to death, the University of Kraków unequivocally recognized the correctness of the conciliar sentence, as evidenced by a letter sent to the participants of the Council in 1416 r. The university authorities declared their readiness to take all appropriate steps to prevent the spread of heresy. In the 1420s, the University introduced an instruction to report to the rector any information about the books containing Hussite writings or promoting their doctrine. A formula for renouncing any views of Jan Hus and his supporters was added to the university oath taken by students.

The professors of the University of Kraków were often asked for help in resolving cases concerning heresy. In 1413, Stanisław of Skarbimierz, who was the rector at the time, was asked by the authorities of the Franciscan order to deal with the case of an escaped monk, whose views indicated connections with the Hussite movement. In that same year, Cracovian professors participated in the interrogation of the Czech preacher Jerome of Prague, accused of spreading within the territory of Poland the views of Czech reformers who criticised church customs and practices. In 1421, Rector Jakub of Zaborów refused to participate in the debate with the Hussite envoys who came to the royal court in Kraków about Four Articles of Prague containing their program for the reform of the Church. However, scholars were present at the official audience of the delegates, and their involvement resulted in various polemical writings on the Pope's authority in the Church, or Holy Communion received under two kinds (the scholars present were Stefan Páleč, Stanisław of Skarbimierz, and perhaps also Franciszek of Brzeg). The only known dispute between Czech scholars from the Hussite movement and representatives of the University of Kraków took place in 1431 at Wawel castle. Perhaps it was on this occasion that a treatise by Andrzej of Kokorzyn, doctor of theology, had been written. In their polemical writings, Polish scholars emphasized the necessity to submit to the authority of the Pope, to follow the provisions of canon law, and to preserve the existing liturgical practices, especially regarding Holy Communion offered to lay people only in the form of bread.

In addition to texts aimed at defending the Catholic doctrine, the customs adopted in the Church, and the traditional ecclesiastical structure, there is also one opinion that probably arose in court circles regarding political alliances with heretics. The author of the note beginning with the words *Revocatur in dubium* defended the decision of the Polish king to establish military cooperation with the Hussites in a just war against Catholics (Teutonic Knights). A number of the arguments cited lead to the conclusion that Stanisław of Skarbimierz should be excluded from the group of potential authors of this legal opinion.

In the first half of the 15th century, several cases of accusations of heresy against members of the University of Kraków are known. One of these regarded the student Wincenty, who was obliged to submit to the rector the forbidden Hussite books that he had been distributing. As he ignored the command, he was excommunicated and probably expelled

from the university. His case was dealt with by both the rector's court and the bishop's court, and the papal inquisitor was also involved. In turn, in 1449, in the apartment of one of the long-time professors of the Department of Seven Liberated Arts, Andrzej Gałka of Dobczyn, the writings by John Wycliffe were found, containing annotations that praised the condemned concepts of the English intellectual. Before the suspect could be interrogated, he fled to Silesia, whence he sent letters criticizing Wycliffe's opponents. Andrzej Gałka was concluded to be an unrepentant heretic who tainted the honour of the University of Kraków's scholar.

The biography of Stanisław of Skarbimierz and a discussion of his anti-heretical works can be found in the second chapter. The texts relating to the problem of heresy in general and to the Hussite postulates and their erroneous doctrine in particular were analysed. The oldest of those texts was the sermon titled *De haereticis* delivered to the entire university, most probably in 1416, in connection with the sending of the letter by the university authorities to the Council of Constance endorsing the sentence on Jan Hus. In it, the scholar exposed the insidious and duplicitous nature of heretics, while emphasizing the dire consequences of following their teachings. The main message of the sermon was to prove that the judgment of the Council of Constance, condemning the teachings of John Wycliffe and Jan Hus, was legally valid and just, and that it should be the duty of educated people to fight in defence of the faith against attacks by heretics.

In connection with the arrival of the Czech delegation to Kraków in the spring of 1421 and the presentation of the Hussite program contained in Four Articles of Prague, over a short period of time Stanisław of Skarbimierz wrote a series of treatises-sermons called *determinationes*. As a result of the conducted study of primary sources, it was possible to establish that only four of his surviving texts can be included in this category of writings (namely: *Ad enervandum*, *Ad subducendum*, *Ad ostendendum*, and *Quia inter synagogam*). *Determinationes* constitute an excellent example of a complementary approach to ecclesiological issues questioned by the Hussites, a particular summary of which can be found in the work related thereto, titled *Contra haeresim*. The *determinationes* relate to the same ecclesiological and liturgical issues, but each of them shows the problem from a slightly different perspective. The choice of polemical arguments is also different. In some, the preaching style is predominant, while others present an example of a matter-of-fact legal argument. The focus of the first rector of the University of Kraków was not to criticize the thoughts of Jan Hus or even the individual postulates of the Hussite movement, but to assert that disobedience to the Pope and the Council and undermining the authority of the Church deprives one of the chance of salvation. Making the reader realise this fact became the overriding goal of all his anti-heretical writings.

The second category of works by Stanisław of Skarbimierz devoted to the issues of heterodoxy are the writings documenting the participation of that Cracovian scholar in proceedings against various person accused of heresy. Chapter three is devoted to the discussion thereof. Four such cases are known from the period after the conclusion of the Council of Constance in 1418, and the year 1429, in which this Cracovian doctor of canonical law was involved in various roles.

The work *Contra et adversus vulpeculas* concerns a tailor named Stanisław, who was accused of undermining the real power of the *exequiae* (funerary rites) and prayers for the dead, criticizing the cult of the images of saints, and questioning the death sentence issued on Jan Hus. Stanisław of Skarbimierz was appointed to initiate proceedings *in causa fidei* against the tailor as acting vicar general *in spiritualibus* or as a delegated judge. The preserved text is a typical *sermo generalis*, that is, a sermon preached publicly at the end of the

trial, intended to show the accused's mistakes and to make him abandon those mistakes and reconcile with the Church. The Cracovian professor showed a lot of understanding for the accused, finding the circumstances that would alleviate his guilt and focused on convincing him that only staying within the Church would guarantee his salvation.

In the second case conducted by Stanisław of Skarbimierz against the Dominican friar Mikołaj of Kraków's convent, the capacity in which the scholar acted is not entirely clear. It is known that he initiated the denunciation process at the request of the curates; however, it is not known whether he had such competences due to holding a specific office in the episcopal curia or due to being a representative of the university under the authority of the rector. For if the defendant is to be identified as the Dominican Mikołaj of Racibórz, which seems probable in the light of the arguments quoted, then at the time of his denunciation he belonged to the group of students of the Kraków university, supervised by the rector. Among all kinds of accusations, Stanisław of Skarbimierz found only one doctrinal error in Mikołaj's sermons, concerning the mystery of bread transubstantiation during the Eucharist. The accused referred to each of the accusations and declared his devotion to the orthodox teachings of the Church, and the case ended in a conciliatory manner.

The most mysterious case considered by Stanisław of Skarbimierz was the inquisition proceedings against a certain magistrate called *Sculteti* (Sołtysowic). The lack of other source information on this case, apart from the text by Stanisław of Skarbimierz titled *Ad eliminandum*, makes it difficult to identify the accused and establish the precise date of the trial. The work itself is a sermon concluding the trial *in causa fidei*, in which as many as 18 allegations concerning errors of faith were exposed. Some of those evidently referred to the thought of John Wycliffe and the postulates of the Hussite movement, others were characteristic of the heresies of the first centuries of Christianity, and still others concerned eschatological issues in the context of dissenters. They were probably taken out of context from various writings by Sołtysowic, which became the basis for the accusation of heresy presented to the university rector. The content of the sermon shows that the university authorities informed the bishop about the incident, and in turn the bishop called the papal inquisitor to investigate the matter. The proceedings against the accused were conducted with the participation of both church officials and university delegates, including Stanisław of Skarbimierz.

The most famous trial for heresy, in which Cracovian professors were involved, was brought against the court astrologer to the Queen, called Henryk Czech, who was accused of practicing magic, maintaining contacts with Czech Hussites, and promoting heretical views. The sources concerning the above case probably come from the year 1429, in which the accused was tried as a fallen heretic who, after renouncing his mistakes, relapsed and returned to his errors, furthermore defending them. Stanisław of Skarbimierz acted as a legal expert during the trial. In three separate legal opinions, the scholar proved that due to the deeds he had committed and his unbending attitude, the astrologer should be considered an unrepentant heretic (*haereticus relapsus*), but due to the support he enjoyed from the royal couple and other influential persons, he recommended that in this case, the death penalty should be foregone in favour of a life sentence. There were also other opinions, prepared by other unnamed scholars, differing from that of Stanisław of Skarbimierz, however, they have not survived to the present. It is also known that Andrzej of Kokorzyna, who most likely conducted inquisition proceedings, played an important role in the trial, as did other representatives of the university. The case of Henryk Czech perfectly showcases the cooperation of the ecclesiastical court with people of learning during the *in causa fidei* trial.

The fourth chapter is devoted to the reconstruction of the views of Stanisław of Skarbimierz on Jan Hus and the ideology of the Hussites contained in Four Articles of Prague

compiled in 1420. For him, the basic criterion and condition of orthodoxy was obedience to the Pope, who is Christ's Vicar on earth (*vicarius Christi*), as well as upholding the teachings and customs of the Catholic Church. He wrote little about Jan Hus himself, noting only the attitude of the Prague scholar, who, in his opinion, showed disregard for the decisions of his superiors and the Pope, as well as persistently defending his erroneous views, for which he was rightly condemned to death as an unrepentant heretic. The Four Articles of Prague were probably known to Stanisław of Skarbimierz from the polemical writings of other scholars (e.g. Andreas of Brod, Maurice Rvačka of Prague, or Stephen Páleč); nevertheless, his works have an original layout, and the selection of arguments used in them is well-thought-out, based on the Holy Scriptures, canonical law, as well as statements by the Fathers of the Church and medieval intellectuals, especially St. Thomas Aquinas. Postulates of the free proclamation of the Word of God, distributing the Holy Communion under two kinds, depriving the Church of riches, and punishing mortal sins by secular authorities, in his opinion, were contrary to canonical law or constituted a form of dissent against accepted church customs. The scholar showed the faulty foundations on which the Hussites based their arguments, as well as the dangerous consequences of implementing them. He devoted most of his attention to the problem of Utraquism, which became a symbol of the Hussite movement.

The works of Stanisław of Skarbimierz are important for research on the shaping of Polish ecclesiological thought, whereas his opinions on heresy may be considered a representative voice for the entire University of Kraków. His texts are an excellent testimony to the fact of close collaboration between the church judiciary and the University of Kraków and members of the academic community in matters relating to the defence of the faith.