

**Aleksandra Barwicka-Makula, OD WROGOŚCI DO PRZYJAŹNI. HABSBUROWIE AUSTRIACCY WOBEC POLSKI W LATACH 1587–1592 (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2019), pp. 366; ISBN 978-83-226-3290-1**

*MAGDALENA JAKUBOWSKA*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8116-2500>

Faculty of History, University of Warsaw

Aleksandra Barwicka-Makula is an experienced scholar based at the Faculty of History at the Silesian University in Katowice, specialising in diplomatic relations between the Polish line of the Vasa dynasty and the Habsburgs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Her work focuses mainly on Sigismund III's reign (1587–1632). This is so in the case of the reviewed book, which is an extended version of the doctoral thesis completed by Barwicka-Makula in 2013.

The volume is devoted to Polish-Lithuanian relations with the Austrian line of the Habsburg dynasty during the first five years of Sigismund III's reign. The opposing elections in 1587 to the Polish-Lithuanian throne of Sigismund Vasa and Maximilian III, Archduke of Austria, marked this pivotal period. After the Polish-Lithuanian Parliament in 1592, the newly-elected Sigismund began his reign in earnest.

The book is based on impressive archival research. The author used primary sources in various languages (German, Latin, Polish) preserved in Vienna (Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv), Warsaw (The Central Archives of Historical Records), Cracow (Princes Czartoryski Library), Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) Kórnik Library, and Wrocław (The Ossolineum Library). The selection of secondary literature is also first-class, and it is worth mentioning that the author also used works in Czech, crucial to understanding the various issues investigated.

The book is divided into four chapters framed by an introduction, a foreword and a bibliography. The first chapter focuses on the organisation of Habsburg diplomacy during the first two election Diets in 1573 and 1575 after the death of Sigismund August, the last Jagiellon on the Polish-Lithuanian throne. The second chapter explores Habsburg policy in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the third election in 1587, i.e. the conflicting elections of Sigismund Vasa and Maximilian III, Archduke of Austria. The third and fourth chapters constitute the central axis of the book, in discussing how Habsburg-Polish relations slowly warmed after the clashes over the royal election. The author has precociously reconstructed diplomatic missions, meetings and less official gatherings. She carefully traces Polish-Lithuanian moves and shows how Sigismund Vasa changed his political image from being the Habsburgs' staunch opponent to becoming the husband of Austrian Archduchess Anna of Styria and the son-in-law of Maria Anna of Bavaria.

By using the example of the Polish-Lithuanian elections, Barwicka-Makula assesses the activity of Habsburg diplomatic and bureaucratic processes (she elaborates, for example, on how documents were prepared, dispersed, and understood). In fact, it is an excellent study of how the Imperial diplomatic corps worked in practice.

The author makes a significant call to elaborate *Polonica* in Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna (pp. 292–93). This would be crucial for all early modern researchers familiarised not only with Habsburg or Polish-Lithuanian history but also the Ottomans and Eastern Europe.

The book is well-balanced and well-written. The primary sources strongly support the arguments, but there is some uncertainty from the author at certain points. She seems to doubt that the marriage of Sigismund III and Anna of Austria in 1592 was a crucial point in Habsburg-Polish-Lithuanian relations, although, for anyone familiar with this issue, this marriage was the evident symbol of change, as shown by Jan Paul Niederkorn in his book *Die europäischen Mächte und der 'lange Türkenkrieg' Kaiser Rudolfs II. (1593–1606)*. Of course, the author is acquainted with this volume (p. 23), hence her lack of assuredness is hard to understand.

One of the aims of this book was to systematise and extend the knowledge of legations between the courts of Prague and Cracow (p. 344). This promise is ultimately fulfilled on the text level. Still, there is a lack of any graphic representations of processes such as maps, diplomatic missions' tables or connections graphs that would be extremely helpful for a reader to understand the convoluted processes of diplomacy better.

The book also has no index. This editorial omission is very inconvenient for a reader and should not appear in a book that includes numerous small actors, often rarely mentioned.

To conclude, the book under review is highly reliable and an important publication for anyone interested in Habsburg-Vasa relations, as well as Eastern Europe in the last decades of the sixteenth century in general. Indeed, it is possible to argue whether writing books without more contemporary methodological inspirations is necessary, especially while having a well-developed issue of New Diplomatic History. However, even if the book in question is the example of more of a traditional diplomatic history approach, it is still an excellent analysis of vast source material, setting the standard for other publications of its ilk.

**Magdalena Jakubowska** – PhD student at the University of Warsaw, working on her thesis 'In the service of king or chancellor? Polish-Lithuanian diplomats activity during Long Turkish War (1597–1606) – a prosopographical study inspired by Actor-Network Theory'. Her academic interests include early modern diplomatic everyday life and material culture; e-mail: m.w.luto@gmail.com