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Piotr Skarga – “Swordsmen of the Counter-Reformation” towards other confessions

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To the Memory of Professor Janusz Tazbir (1927-2016)

Piotr Skarga (1536-1612) was a Jesuit theologian, preacher, hagiographer, Catholic polemicist, one of the greatest prose writers of the Polish Renaissance, the author of, among others, famous the *Kazania sejmowe*¹. Thanks to the historical and literary legend created during the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and surviving to modern times, he became a symbol of a great priest – a patriot who, guided by love to his homeland, warned the nation like a prophet before the fall of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Jan Matejko played a huge role in promoting the cult of Skarga as a prophet, who in 1864 showed Krakow the image of *Kazanie Skarga*². The idealization of the character and his works is also evident in some scientific works, and not only in the older historiography. There is a black legend of Piotr Skarga, in which he appears as a huge *nietolerant* and almost eager for blood of dissidents. There is no lack of objective studies on the other hand, along with a critical analysis of the works of Piotr Skarga³.

The attitude of Piotr Skarga to the Orthodox citizens of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is closely connected with the projects of the union of the Eastern Church with Rome. He wrote about it most extensively in two treatises: *O jedności Kościoła Bożego pod jednym pasterzem. I o greckim od tej jedności odstąpieniu. Z przestrogą i upominaniem do Narodów Ruskich, przy Grekach stojących* published

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¹ Bibliography of works dedicated to Piotr Skarga in OTWINOWSKI 1916; BERGA 1916; GRABOWSKI 1912; TRETIAK 1912; WINDAKIEWICZ 1925; WACZYŃSKI 1963: 25-40; GUSTAW 1971: 700-711; GRZEBIEŃ 1983: 84-92; TAZBIR 1983; TAZBIR 1997-1998: 35-43; OBIREK 1994a; DMITRIEW 1995: 39-73, 74-100.

² STARNAWSKI 1969; CHRZANOWSKI 1971; KRAWCZYK 1990, TAZBIR 1984; TAZBIR 2002.

³ This is evidenced, for example, by the discussion on the links between Skarga's thoughts and contemporary Western absolutist concepts. The thesis that the *Kazania sejmowe* were to be denounced by P. Skarga from the pulpit was also rejected in the historiography; See: KOŚCIELNY 1989: 21-40; ŁUŻNY 1993; TAZBIR, KOROLKO 1995: XCVI-XCVIII.

in Vilnius in 1577, and in the second, revised edition of 1590 (Cracow) under the title *O rządzie i jedności Kościoła Bożego pod jednym pasterzem i o Greckim i Ruskim od tej jedności odstąpieniu*.

Union initiatives, both Roman and Ruthenia, were in line with the first speeches of Piotr Skarga. In 1574, he announced to his superior, provincial of the Jesuit order, Franciszek Sunyer, that he wrote in Polish a book the *De Schizmate*, which he dedicated to a certain Rusin. The book did not appear in print, the author withdrew it from typography. It is not known why – Janusz Tazbir supposes that the Complaint did not receive the permission of Rome to print it, or simply the author's courage it failed him⁴. A few years later, on the orders of his religious director, he wrote the main work the *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*. When he was sending a book to Rome, the author wrote to his superiors that “he published it on the order of the Jesuit Provincial”⁵. Skarga came across Orthodox citizens of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during his stay in Lviv and in Rohatyn, he met then the Russian language that he needed to conduct polemics with the Orthodox. In the sermon delivered at the funeral of Jan Krzysztof Tarnowski in 1567 in the presence of the most eminent and the most significant in Russia, Konstanty Ostrogski, he also raised the problem of union with the Eastern Church. He will mention this event in the preface to the first edition of the book *O jedności Kościoła Bożego pod jednym pasterzem*, dedicating it to Ostrogski⁶.

Dedication of the book to the Ostrogski was associated with the great hopes that the supporters of the union put in the prince. According to Bolognetti, the nuncio of the Holy See, the Catholic spheres were counting on Ostrogski's help in implementing the plans of the union. Here are the words that Skarga addressed him: “And that your Prince's Majesty is the first in this Greek law, and a kind of great ancestors of his, and kindness to the things of God, and the glory of virtue and a great potency from the Lord God, you are endowed with... It would be much to follow the example and efforts and dignity and wisdom of your Prince's Majesty to this unification of the Russian nations in this state, about which in the third part [of the book - T.Ch.-H.], he said, help could!”⁷.

⁴ TAZBIR 1983: 70.

⁵ CHODYNICKI 1934: 209, not. 3 (the author uses the edition: *Listy ks. Piotra Skargi*).

⁶ *O jedności Kościoła Bożego pod jednym pasterzem. I o Greckim od tej jedności odstąpieniu. Z przestroją i upominaniem do narodów Ruskich, przy Grekach stojących: Rzecz krótka na trzy części rozdzielona, teraz przez K.Piotra Skargę, zebrania Pana Jezusowego wydana.* “Please, Father, let them be one, as we are one” (Joan. 17). w Wilnie, z drukarni Jego Książęcej miłości Pana Mikołaja Chrzysztopha Radziwiłła, Marszałka W. Ks. Lit. etc. 1577; reprint: Russkaja Istoriceskaja Biblioteka, t. 7, Petersburg 1882, p. 228 (further references are based on the above edition).

⁷ *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, 229-230: “A iż wasza książęca mość pierwszym w tym Greckim zakonie, i rodzajem wielkich przodków swoich, i uprzejmością ku rzeczom Boskim, i sławą cnót a możliwością wielką od Pana Boga obdarzony jesteś... Wiele by się za przykładem i staraniem i powagą i mądrością, waszej Książęcej Mości do tego zjednoczenia narodów Ruskich w tym państwie, o którym się w trzeciej części mówi, pomoc mogło!”.

Ostrogski did not accept the dissertation dedicated to him, the answer was commissioned to Arianin Motowilla, to offend the opinion of the Orthodox Church⁸. The Orthodox party responded critically to the Complaint's proposals only later.

In the introduction to the treatise *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, the author blamed the Reformation for its reason there was a split in the Christian world, “rozerwanie ludu chrześcijańskiego (a rupture of the Christian people)” that must be combined again, because unity is a necessary condition for achieving salvation. The motto of his book is the words of Saint John, “Proszę, Ojczy, aby byli jedno, jako i my jedno jesteśmy (Please, Father, that they may be one, as we are one)”. The work of Piotr Skarga consists of three parts: dogmatic – *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, historical – *O greckim od tej jedności odstąpieniu* and the paranetical part – *O przestrodze i upominaniu narodów Ruskich przy Grekach stojących, aby się z Kościołem świętym i ze Stolicą Apostolską zjednoczyli*.

In the first part, containing fourteen chapters, the author presented a Catholic view on the concept of unity. In his argument, Skarga relied on the authority of the Church Fathers and Greek historians, which he quotes. He also remains under the influence of new thoughts in connection with the criticism of reform ideas, as Stanisław Obirek SJ emphasizes in an article published a few years earlier, entitled *Teologiczne podstawy pojęcia jedności w dziele księdza Piotra Skargi “O jedności Kościoła Bożego”*⁹.

The statement from which his argument begins, is: “**Aside from church unity, no one can have salvation**”¹⁰.

The true Church, according to Skarga, is based on three foundations: shepherd, faith and baptism. At the same time, he criticized the supporters of “heresy” and hence “sasów, luteranów, zwinglianów, nowokrzęćców”¹¹, who are deprived of tradition, heritage and power taken from Christ, while the Orthodox does not accuse the lack of faith and obvious baptism, but the fact that they do not want to recognize the Vicar of Christ on earth in the person of the Pope, without whom peace and unity in the church are impossible.

“Heretics have baptism, but they do not have faith - writes Skarga - And the apostates [that is, the Orthodox - T. Ch.H] and baptism have and have faith, but the heads of one and the shepherd do not have. Therefore, all these church members are not”¹².

⁸ CHODYNICKI 1934: 223-224.

⁹ OBIREK SJ 1994b: 185, not. 3; Obirek also emphasizes the fact that the problem of the Church's unity also existed in earlier eras, when this unity was threatened by various heretical trends.

¹⁰ *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, 239.

¹¹ *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, 261: “Okrom kościelnej jedności, nikt zbawienia mieć nie może”.

¹² *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, 266: “Heretykowie chrzest mają, ale wiary nie mają - pisze Skarga - A odszczepieńcy i chrzest mają, i wiarę mają, ale głowy jednej i pasterza nie mają. Przeto wszyscy ci kościelnymi członkami nie są”.

In the summary of considerations on the unity of the Church, Skarga wrote in an authoritative way: “Without this capital [Rome - T. Ch.-H], as a headless member, every faith must lose and die in unbelief must. From this Roman Peter and the shepherd of all the sheep of Christ who will depart, he will not go to the truth of God”¹³.

Yet, I think, he developed his thought more clearly in the second part of the dissertation, in which he presented the history of the split between the Eastern and Western Churches. In this part, Skarga showed a more talented polemic than diplomats what he became with his temperament more like many other polemical writers of that time. He blamed the Orthodox for all the division in the Church, for he wrote: “Not Latins from the Greeks, but the Greeks have renounced the Latins: and that the Supreme Pastor of the Church, the Pope, who do not listen to the apostate, are as separated as limbs from the head”¹⁴.

Noteworthy is also the fragment in which Skarga explains why the followers of the Eastern Church are called dissidents:

“The Greeks, a great and severe wound in this one body of Christ, cutting off many members from him, did. For which the renunciation lasted for a long time, it was often healed, it was constantly renewed, many nations failed, and not only the faith of the saint, but the profound loss of the ordinary, secular and Christian things. Which in stubbornness, in the end, remained, in hand and in the pagan captivity, remained, and opened the door of the Turks to Christianity, as you will hear below. And that the schism, that is, the split in the church they did, rightly they are their language of schismatics, that is, the renegades are called. After all, to cover the stubbornness of their disobedience, searching for it, they set their faith differently, wanting the Latin Church to be insulted, the healing and hereticalism came to us”¹⁵.

According to the author, the four main reasons caused that the Greeks withdrew from ecclesiastical unity and declared obedience to Rome: “hardość (the hardness)” of the Tsarograd patriarchs, “greckie kacerstwo (the Greek hacktivism)”, the tyranny

¹³ *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, 332: “Bez tej stolicy, jako członek bez głowy, każdy wiarę świętą tracić i umrzeć w niedowiarstwie musi. Od tego Piotra Rzymskiego i pasterza wszystkich owiec Chrystusowych kto odstąpi, do prawdy Bożej nie trafi”.

¹⁴ *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, 341: “Iż nie Łacinnicy od Greków, ale Grekowie od Łacinników odstąpili: a iż najwyższego pasterza Kościoła wszystkiego papieża nie słuchając odszczepieńcy są, tak jako członki od głowy oddzieleni”.

¹⁵ *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, 338: “Grekowie wielką a srogą ranę w tym jednym ciele Chrystusowym odcinaniem wielu członków od niego, uczynili. Których odszczepieństwo długo trwało, często się goiło, zawsze się odnawiało, wiele narodów zawiodło, i nie tylko wierze św[iętej], ale rzeczy pospolitej świeckiej, chrześcijańskiej niezmierną utratę uczyniło. Który w uporze na koniec zostając, w rękę i niewoli pogańskiej zostali, i wrota Turkom do chrześcijaństwa otworzyli, jako niżej usłyszysz. A iż schizma, to jest odszczepienie w kościele uczynili, słusznie się ichże językiem schizmatyki, to jest odszczepieńcy zowią. Acz po tym, na pokrycie uporu nieposłuszeństwa swego przyczyni szukając, inną sobie wiarę ukowali, chcąc Łaciński Kościół potwarzać, sami w kacerstwo i heretyctwo wpadli”.

of the Tsarograd emperors, and finally the revenge of the emperors caused by the fact that King Charles the Great was crowned in Rome on the Roman Emperor.

In the second part of the treaty Skarga also presented the history of the Florentine Council, which efforts went towards the unification of churches “pod jednym papieżem (under one Pope)”.

In the third part the author addressed directly to the Ruthenian nation with a call to return to the bosom of one Church: “**I speak to you too, the Rus nation (...)**. Return to the faith of one, to the sheepfold of one and the shepherd, at which the old and holy Greeks were, your fathers, for a thousand years and beyond”¹⁶.

He also believed that the continuation of the separation threatens the supporters of the Orthodox faith **without receiving salvation**. Not only in his opinion, not the recognition of the papal authority, but also the serious errors in which the Orthodox stuck, posed a danger in obtaining salvation. Skarga counted them nineteen¹⁷. according to the author's opinion, they include, among others: denial by the Greeks of the origin of the Holy Spirit from the Son (*Filioque*), not recognizing the primacy of the pope, differences in views on saints and purgatory, ease of obtaining divorce in the Eastern Church, Greek recognition of only the first seven councils and rejection of later ones, the issue of sour bread in the Eucharist and the transformation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of the Lord, disregarding the confessions of the Orthodox, the matter of the priests' marriage, or paying too much attention to “ceremonii i obrzędów (ceremonies and rites)”¹⁸. In addition, he reminded the Ruthenians that the three obstacles stand in the way of leading “dobrego rządu (a good government)” in their church and observing the purity of the faith, he repeated the question of clerical marriage, the use of Slavonic language in services and the influence of lay people on church matters. He believed that these factors caused the ignorance of the Orthodox clergy and the decline of manners.

“But in Rus, let us know this - we quote the words of Skarga - that all this science has fallen, and that it is drowned, and that it is never as necessary, that the sheep can have little comfort, which the Greek people, the Rus people, have deceived you to the greatest, they did not give their Greek. But in this Slav, they stopped saying that you never come to right understanding and learning. Because only

¹⁶ *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, 464-465: “Także ja też mówię do ciebie, narodzie Ruski (...). Wróćcie do wiary jednej, do owczarni jednej i pasterza jednego przy którym byli starzy i święci Grekowie, ojcowie waszy, przez tysiąc lat i dalej”.

¹⁷ To this problem he devoted the second chapter.: Artykuły błędów tych, które się w ruskim nabożeństwie znajdują in *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, 471.

¹⁸ It should be pointed out that the language of the Complaint is, for example, the term “heresy”. In the meaning of Skarga, heresy is more dangerous than “error” and “dissociation”; “że twierdzą iż, Duch Św. nie pochodzi od Syna, tak jako i od Ojca, nie tylko błąd jest, ale i kacerstwo sprośne (that they claim [the Orthodox - T. CH.-H.] that the Holy Spirit does not come from the Son, as from the Father, not only is the mistake, but the obscene obscenity)” in *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, 471; NN 1976: 5-6.

two are languages, Greek and Latin, whose faith is widespread and vaccinated after all the world, around which no one in any science, especially in the clergy, the perfect faith can be. [...] No scientist can ever speak from Słowieński's language. [...] Fortunate is the Roman Church, which everywhere he infected, he founded Latin schools”¹⁹.

Uniting the Churches would bring, in Skarga's opinion, religious benefits that would ensure salvation, as well as cultural benefits that would raise their mental level, but also the power of another kind: “this state would be more powerful in secular matters, and more than you and the lords would be celebrated, the Polish kings and this Lithuanian land gave in, and ordered you”²⁰. At that moment, the preacher came up with quite specific propositions that were to encourage the Russian nobles and fuller trust in the monarchy. He encouraged Lithuanian dignitaries that after the unification they be able to obtain state offices.

Skarga also touched the issues of the rite and ecclesiastical customs which, in his opinion, could remain “because the Church of God, with no accountability (without opposition), is assumed as a queen in the paints of garments and stones and various pearls”²¹. Stanisław Obirek, quoted above, thinks that Skarga represents the view that Catholic unity is a unity in multiplicity, a unity that respects otherness, that the full value of the liturgy of the separated Church can give it access to the Catholic Church.

Kazimierz Chodyncki and Janusz Tazbir put a different emphasis on these issues. They prove that Skarga resigned in favor of Ruthenia, only tactically, seeing most willingly the acceptance of the Catholic liturgy.

In the final passage of the treatise *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, Skarga pointed out the main implementers of the proposed ecclesial union – that is, the clergy, the nobility and the magnates of both religions. If, however, the Orthodox authorities refused to join in one Church, then the complaint persuaded the Ruthenian society to depart from them and recognize the supremacy of the Pope.

¹⁹ *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, 485-486: “Lecz w Rusi to znać - cytujemy słowa Skargi - iż tym wszytka nauka upadła, a popi schłopieli, i nigdy z niej takiej jakiej trzeba, pociechy owce mieć nie mogą, któremu wielce cię oszukali Grekowie, narodzie Ruski, iż ci wiarę świętą podając, języka swego greckiego nie podali. Aleć na tym słowieńskim przestać kazali, abyś nigdy do prawego rozumienia i nauki nie przyszedł. Bo tylko dwa są języki, Grecki i Łaciński, któremu wiara święta po wszem świecie rozszerzona i szczepiona jest, okrom których nikt w żadnej nauce, a zwłaszcza w duchownej, wiary świętej doskonałym być nie może. [...] Z Słowieńskiego języka nigdy żaden uczonym być nie może. [...] Szczęśliwy Kościół Rzymski, który wszędzie, gdzie jedno wiarę szczepił, zaraz nią szkoły Łacińskie fundował”; in this matter see: OBIREK 1994b: 192-194; OTWINOWSKA 1974: 263-264; inter alia. on the attitude of Skarga and Hosius to the Old Church Slavonic language and the view of its role as a liturgical language in WACZYŃSKI 1963: 34-35.

²⁰ *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, 490: “państwo to w rzeczach świeckich byłoby potężniejsze, i więcej by się wam i panowie przesławni, królowie Polscy i ta Litewska ziemia dufała, i większe wam urzędy zlecała”.

²¹ *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, 491-492: “bo Kościół Boży rozlicznością (bez sprzeczności) przybrany jest, jako królowa w farby szat i kamieni i perel rozmaitych”.

“If your elders do not want unity and ecclesiastical love, leave them rightly! Because they departed unjustly from their elder pope”²². Appeals by Skarga, that the Orthodox Church in Rus would unite with Rome, convinced, as we know, only part of the Ruthenian community.

He wrote about the Reformation in a separate book entitled *Upominanie do ewangelików i wszystkich społem niekatolików, iż o skażenie zborów krakowskich gniewać się i nic nowego i burzliwego zaczynać nie mają*. The work published in 1592 simultaneously in Cracow and Poznań, anonymously, although it is not questioned by its authorship, because it was included with the changes to the *Kazania o siedmi sakramentach* (Cracow 1600)²³.

The complaint justified the perpetrators of the church-based tumult in Cracow in 1591. He explained that it was only the children who started the innocent fun “from the church, they got a rag and ripped off and used to play in the church”²⁴. He blamed Protestant, who reacted with the weapon “As the wolves between sheep, with sharp swords, the innocent people beat, sleeve, chopped, and murdered [...] so that two hundred injured were counted”²⁵.

The *Upominanie do ewangelików* brought a biased and incomplete account of the events of Cracow. The cloth made by the children was in fact a puppet depicting Satan, the father of “heresy”. This was a frequent way of provoking dissenters. Not only the children ran through the church, but also a crowd of adults composed of mobs, commoners and students, stirred up in advance. When the building was stormed, Protestants stood up in defense of their temple. However, Skarga does not mention about this and other robberies as well as attacks by the Catholic crowd²⁶.

The main part of the booklet of Piotr Skarga, the *Upominanie do ewangelików*, concerns primarily the fight against the Warsaw Confederation: “And while we are chaste, for those reasons that will show up, but neighbors' peace with you, and what is troubling you, we never think nor think, not confederacy, but patience and love here and hope for you to come to your senses”²⁷.

The *Proces konfederacyjej*, issued in 1595 in Cracow, is devoted to this same issue²⁸. The all advocates of this law, Skarga calls “heretics”. The royal preacher

²² *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, 501: “Jeśli starszy twoi duchowni jedności i miłości kościelnej nie chcą, odstap od nich słusznie! Bo oni od swego starszego papieża odstąpili niesłusznie”.

²³ KOROLKO 1974: 149-.

²⁴ *Upominanie do ewangelików*, 4: “z kościoła się wyrwawszy jakąś szmatę porwały i do zboru igrać pobieżały”.

²⁵ *Upominanie do ewangelików*, 3-4: “Jako wiley między owce, z ostrymi mieczami, lud niewinny bili, kłuli, siekli, mordowali [...] tak, iż do dwu set rannych naliczonych było”.

²⁶ TAZBIR 1983: 164-165; On the subject of tumults on denominational background in WISNER 1982: 82-109.

²⁷ *Upominanie do ewangelików*, 7: “I choć my ją ganim, dla tych przyczyn, które się pokażą, jednak pokoju sąsiedzkiego z wami odstępować i co burzliwego wobec wam poczynać nie myślimy nigdy ani myślim, nie konfederacyją ale cierpliwością i miłością tu wam i nadzieją opamiętania waszego przywiedzieni”.

²⁸ *Proces konfederacyjej*, 47.

sharpened his stance against the supporters of the confederation. In the *Proces konfederacyjnej* he wrote that the old tares, joined with wheat should be left (that is, old “heretics”), while the fresh tares, the recent supporters of the Reformation, first of all foreigners must be immediately removed. It should be emphasized here that the work of Skarga appeared just before the Sejm of 1595, which dealt with constitutional affairs against tumult.

He spoke for the last time regarding the Warsaw Confederation of 1573 during Zebrzydowski's sedition. The preacher, criticized from various positions, only managed to publish a summary of his paper from before twelve years. The *Proces konfederacyjnej*, which this time in a shorter version, titled the *Dyskurs na konfederacyją* (1607). He wrote there, among others, listing ten causes of evil that the Warsaw Confederation brought, these words: “What should a lover of the worship of God's and the Fatherland should do [...] Listen to God first than people. Defend the first Church and human souls than the homeland. [...] Let the first eternal homeland acquire the temporal one”²⁹.

Leaving aside the issues of the types of arguments, rhetorical phrases and other means of expression, it is still necessary to recall the famous the *Kazania sejmowe* by Piotr Skarga, cited at the beginning of the article.

In his sermons Skarga discusses, as we know, the most dangerous diseases afflicting the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Of the six diseases such as: lack of love of the homeland, “niezgody i roztyrki sąsiedzkie (discord and neighborhood quibbles)”, weakening of the monarch's power, unjust laws “grzechy i złości jawne (open sins and anger)” (here he understood them as violating church privileges and public rights) – one of the diseases was in his opinion – **tolerating “heresy”**. In the third sermon he wrote: “You probably already know, and you almost touch it with your fingers, that the affirmations and various false beliefs that one wants to spoil the real one, the reason is the greater of your disagreements. For as long as these unhappy sects were not between you, you were as one husband, one heart and the will of one that it is at home, and at the Sejms, when you have devised the needs of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth”³⁰.

The fourth sermon is entitled: *O trzeciej chorobie Rzeczypospolitej, która jest naruszenie religii katolickiej przez zarazę heretycką*. In this sermon, he wrote, among others, these words criticizing the Warsaw confederation: “Prawa tu sobie konać na sejmach chcą, które konfederacyją zwać, którymi by pomalu z królestwa wiarę

²⁹ *Dyskurs na konfederacyją*, (unnumbered, according to my numbering, 16): “Cóż ma czynić miłośnik czci Bożej i Kościoła Bożego i Ojczyzny. [...] Pierwej słuchać Boga niżli ludzi. Pierwej Kościoła i dusz ludzkich bronić aniżeli ojczyzny. [...] Pierwej wiecznej ojczyzny nabywać niżli doczesnej”.

³⁰ *Kazania sejmowe*, 63: “Naprzód zapewne już wiecie i tego prawie palcami dotykacie, iż kacerstwa i różne fałszywe wiary, które jedną prawdziwą zepsować chcą, przyczyną są naprzedniejszą tych niezgód waszych. Bo póki te nieszczęśliwe sekty między wami nie były, pótyście byli jako jeden mąż, jednego serca i wolej jednej; iż doma, i na sejmach, gdyście potrzeby Rzeczypospolitej obmyślali”.

wszytkę chrześcijańską wycisnęli (They want to plot in the Sejm here, they want to confess that they would squeeze all Christian faith out of the kingdom)". Skarga did not like the Warsaw confederation, but neither did he notice that the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth did not flow in blood, because it was the inter-faith accord.

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Summary

Piotr Skarga – "Swordsmen of the Counter-Reformation" towards other confessions

Piotr Skarga was a Jesuit theologian, preacher, hagiographer, Catholic polemicist, one of the greatest prose writers of the Polish Renaissance, the author of, among others, famous the *Kazania sejmowe*. Thanks to the historical and literary legend created during the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and surviving to modern times, he became a symbol of a great priest – a patriot. There is a black legend of Piotr Skarga, in which he appears as a huge nietolerant and almost eager for blood of dissidents. There is no lack of objective studies on the other hand, along with a critical analysis of the works of Piotr Skarga.

Keywords: Piotr Skarga, Jesuit, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Reformation