



Remigiusz Stachowiak. *Spätmittelalterliche Kirchenkarrieren preussischer Kleriker. Soziale Räume und Netzwerke zwischen Zentrum und Peripherie. Einzelschriften der Historischen Kommission für Ost- und Westpreussische Landesforschung 32. Osnabrück: Fibre, 2023. 565 pp. ISBN: 978-3-9448-7081-6.*

The book authored by Remigiusz Stachowiak is a doctoral dissertation developed in Professor Matthias Thumser's seminar at the Free University of Berlin (Freie Universität Berlin). It aptly fits into the existing research on ecclesiastical careers of various levels of clergy in medieval Europe. The author explores the ecclesiastical careers of the clergy in four towns in Prussia: Danzig (Pol. Gdańsk), Elbing (Pol. Elbląg), Königsberg (Rus. Kaliningrad) and Thorn (Pol. Toruń), as well as in four cathedral chapters (Kulm (Pol. Chełmno), Pomesania, Ermland (Pol. Warmia) and Samland) and one collegiate chapter (Guttstadt, Pol. Dobre Miasto), and also in the Pomeranian archdeaconry; despite the fact that this archdeaconry was seated in Prussia, it was subordinate to the Bishopric of Włocławek. This certainly effected a slightly different character of ecclesiastical careers of the local clergy. In his analyses of various levels of clergy, the author follows the well-known research path and presents the results in the context of social and territorial factors, relations with the Holy See, and relations with heads of the clergy in Prussia. On the one hand, the book is biographical in nature, as biographies of individual clergymen occupy over fifty per cent of the entire work (pp. 254–511). Nevertheless, due to the extensive research in recent years conducted by Polish and German historians and pertaining to the clergy in Prussia, this part of the book is a successful, yet still a synthetic recapitulation of other research works. On the other hand, the author also presents the results of his own prosopographical studies, focusing on a collective biography of the clergy, which is undoubtedly a major contribution to the relevant research developed in the past. The book starts with an introduction, where two fundamental issues are discussed: major problems related to the research conducted and methodological deliberations. This part also includes a review of the relevant scholarly literature and the sources used. The way how the author makes use of the documents from the Vatican Archives (Archivio Apostolico Vaticano) and two Polish archives (the Archives of the Warmia Archdiocese

in Olsztyn (Archiwum Archidiecezji Warmińskiej w Olsztynie) and the State Archives in Gdańsk (Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku)) is certainly noteworthy.

To begin, I would like to address one of the elements of the conceptual framework underlying the book. The author discusses ecclesiastical careers of the clergy from the abovementioned four large towns in Prussia. However, following this research assumption does not provide us with extensive information about the clergy in these towns, as the respective members of the clergy often made ecclesiastical careers in other centres; additionally, in these particular towns, numerous ecclesiastical benefices were in the hands of outsiders. In other words, it is difficult to venture a comprehensive profile of the clergy in individual towns on the basis of the research conducted in the way presented by Remigiusz Stachowiak. This research, however, shows broadly understood ecclesiastical careers, e.g., of the natives of Danzig or Thorn, and yet we do not learn much about the groups of clergy in Thorn, Danzig, Elbing and Königsberg. This seems to be a weak point of the book. Moreover, the author has named Part A of his book (Part B is biographical) not in the most adequate way – “Die großen preußischen Städte und ihre Kleriker” – since the issues discussed therein do not just refer to the abovementioned four towns, but also to cathedral chapters and the Pomeranian archdeaconry of the Włocławek diocese. The title of the first part of Chapter One – “Stadt und Kirche in Preußen” – is also not particularly adequate, as it covers a subchapter devoted to the city clergy, and also the chapter clergy. The inclusion of the cathedral chapter clergy among the city clergy is, however, not a solution, even if we know that these church bodies were seated in towns. Moreover, I am not convinced that the inclusion in this very chapter of the third subchapter, entitled “Zwischen Zentrum und Peripherie” and focused on the relations of the clergy with the Holy See and the system of papal provisions, is a good idea. The third subchapter of Chapter Two, entitled “Rom,” would be much more fitting in this respect. In the first subchapter of Chapter One, issues related primarily to the foundation and organisation of the abovementioned four towns in Prussia and the church bodies located in them are discussed. Chapter Two presents the beginnings and organisation of the four cathedral chapters, the collegiate church in Guttstadt, as well as the church bodies operating in the Pomeranian archdeaconry. I have already indicated that extensive sources facilitate a thorough presentation of the problems analysed. Yet, while discussing the Pomeranian archdeaconry, the author does not make use of Radosław Biskup’s article on the system and organisation of the Włocławek diocese in the Middle Ages (*Dzieje diecezji włocławskiej*, vol. 1, *Średniowiecze*, ed. Andrzej Radziński (Włocławek: Włocławskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 2008), 9–34).

Chapter Three of Remigiusz Stachowiak's book is entitled "Zwischen Zentrum und Peripherie," and this centre, in the author's view, is actually the Holy See. In this chapter, the role of the Order's Procurators General is analysed, mainly in the context of their activities for the clergy in Prussia; these considerations, however, do not go beyond the excellent research of Jan-Erik Beuttel. The system of development of papal provisions is also discussed, and the author relies on well-known scholarly literature. This system was not that important to the Teutonic Order's clergy in Prussia, as they could not apply for provisions for ecclesiastical benefices, with the exception of prelates and canons of the secular chapter in Ermland. Chapter Two of the book ("Soziale Räume") addresses social issues, analysing the ecclesiastical careers of the Prussian city clergy with a view to the church bodies in Prussia, Livonia, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Kingdom of Poland. For his discussions of the clergy who had their background in the abovementioned four Prussian towns, the author has developed thought-provoking tables that demonstrate the participation of members of clergy from these towns in the composition of the chapter bodies. He also endeavours to show the impact of chapters, bishops, grand masters, and – in the case of the Ermland chapter – also popes, on prebendary appointments in individual chapters. For obvious systemic and political reasons, the Holy See performed the least significant role in granting benefices in these bodies. The author has conducted similar analyses of cathedral chapters in Livonia, namely, the Courland chapter, which was the only chapter under the Teutonic Order's rule, as well as those outside the Teutonic Order's rule, such as the chapters in Dorpat (Est. Tartu), Reval (Est. Tallinn), and Ösel-Wiek (Est. Saare-Lääne). The results of this research clearly show a relatively small participation of sons of Prussian burghers in these church bodies. The situation was similar with regard to cathedral and collegiate chapters in the Holy Roman Empire. However, the underlying reason for this was the widespread exclusivity of the nobility there, which prevented the sons of Prussian burghers from aspiring to ecclesiastical benefices. Yet, Stachowiak correctly indicates that the highest number of Prussian clergymen were present in the Wrocław cathedral chapter and in the Silesian collegiate chapter (see tables 10 and 11, pp. 117–118). Research results on how burghers from Danzig, Elbing, Thorn, and Königsberg became bishops in Prussia and in Livonia (three in the Bishopric of Courland, two in Dorpat, and two in Ösel-Wiek) are also very interesting. In the last part of the subchapter, acquiring minor ecclesiastical benefices by burghers is discussed; this happened primarily at the beginning of their careers. In the third subchapter, the author focuses on the education of those clergymen and its impact on their future ecclesiastical careers. Engaging com-

parisons show that burghers from the four Prussian towns most often studied in Leipzig (since the university was established in 1409), and many Prussian burghers also studied in Bologna, Prague, and Cracow. In the subsequent subchapters, the activity of this group of clergy in Rome is discussed, especially at the papal court and at the office of the Order's Procurator General. The author also presents the ways in which these clergymen acted for the Teutonic Order (and lawyers with a university education background played a special role), both at the Polish royal court after the Second Peace of Toruń and also at the court of Emperor Charles IV. The final part of this subchapter addresses the decisive role of the patrician family background of the clergy in individual towns with a view to their later ecclesiastical careers. The author clearly indicates the considerable significance of service to the Order in the case of members of clergy who took over affluent parish benefices, especially in Danzig, Thorn, and Königsberg. However, they were not always held by clergymen coming from those towns.

The third, very interesting subchapter of Chapter Two is devoted to the network of social connections of the clergy in question. The author demonstrates genealogical connections and provides very convincing examples in this respect that relate to significant patrician families, referring, for example, to the Thorn-based Watzenrode family, the Tiergart family from Danzig, or to the mutual connections between the two Danzig families of Rogge and Ferber. Ultimately, the author finds that the burghers in the four Prussian towns held 20 bishoprics and 112 chapter prebends.

The book by Remigiusz Stachowiak, despite my reservations and the somewhat controversial opinions it presents, was developed in compliance with research standards, and it fully utilizes existing archival and printed sources as well as very extensive scholarly literature. It will certainly fit well into the core reading list of works focusing on clergymen in Late Medieval Prussia.

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