

***Rioting Blacksmiths & Jewish Women:
Pillarized Reformation Memory in Early Modern Poland***

In 1539, the Polish monarchy witnessed its only sixteenth-century burning for heresy, when Catherine, widow of the Kraków counsellor Melchior Weigel, was executed in the city's market square for the crime of converting to Judaism. The case was already a decade old. Catherine had received her first episcopal warning to stop consorting with Jews in 1529, and in 1530 she was briefly jailed, before publically abjuring on her knees 'all the heresies, superstitions and errors of the sect and rite of the Jews into which she had fallen', as the court record has it. Bishop Samuel Maciejowski found her guilty of a fatal relapse in 1539, and she was sentenced to death.¹ On the face of it, Catherine's case has little to do with the Reformation. However, it forms a rare common thread which, twisting and turning, runs through early modern historical accounts of the Polish Reformation written by Catholics and Protestants alike. This essay explores how sixteenth and seventeenth century Polish chronicles 'remembered' the Reformation as both a local and international event and how, by failing to produce a shared social memory which commanded widespread support, they in effect collectively failed to remember it – suggesting that profoundly, persistently fragmented memories, or historical narratives, might produce similar outcomes to outright forgetting.

The Polish monarchy offers a good case study for early modern memory of the Reformation, because chronicles produced in this kingdom - the would-be master-narratives of their own times - present us with a number of problems, or riddles. Many of these books barely talk about or acknowledge the Reformation at all. Where they do, their narratives differ so wildly from one another, that there is no consensus among them as to what the key events of the Polish or European Reformation were. The chronicles' accounts also differ significantly from the story of the European Reformation which scholars tell today, their narratives striking us as alien and not immediately intelligible. Furthermore, these texts' heterogeneous accounts of the Reformation differ sharply from the rich Polish archival record itself, most of which never entered chronicle memory at all. The circa 60 trials for Lutheran heresy pre-1540 found in Polish diocesan archives, the scores of royal and episcopal letters lamenting the influx of Lutheranism and Anabaptists, the steady flow of students from the Polish monarchy to Wittenberg, the avalanche of anti-Trinitarian literature in the later sixteenth century – virtually none of this, painstaking pieced together in the archives by modern scholars from Wincenty Zakrzewski (1844-1918) onwards, is to be found in contemporary chronicles.² Early modern Polish chroniclers, then, have given us a story, or memory, in many pieces.

This essay will examine a selection of six chronicles of Polish history printed between 1521 and 1695, to trace how early modern memory of an early modern event (the Reformation) unfolded in its first stages of narration, interpretation and memorialisation. Certain noted Polish chronicles of the early modern period - such as Martin Kromer's *De origine et rebus gestis Polonorum* (Basel, 1555) – are not included here, because they narrated only Poland's pre-Reformation past, stopping their accounts well before the 1520s.

¹ Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Kraków, MS 5357 (papers of Żegota Pauli), vol. 9, fos. 72-73: 'omnemque haeresim, supersticiosam sectam, ritus, erroresque Judeorum in quam inciderat...' (at fo. 73). For debates about religious violence in early modern Poland, see Janusz Tazbir, *A State Without Stakes: Polish Religious Toleration in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York, 1973); Magda Teter, *Sinners on Trial: Sacrilege After the Reformation* (Cambridge, MA, 2011); Natalia Nowakowska, *King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther: the Reformation Before Confessionalization* (Oxford, 2018).

² Wincenty Zakrzewski, *Powstanie i wzrost Reformacyi w Polsce, 1520-1572* (Leipzig, 1870).

Our six chronicles showcase the contrasting mnemonic strategies of different groups or confessions, and thus illustrate the fragmentation of early modern Polish Reformation memory. They include the late medieval *Chronica Polonorum* by the Kraków cathedral canon Maciej of Miechów, or Miechowita (Kraków, 1521); the Renaissance humanist chronicle by the diplomat Bernard Wapowski (manuscript, c.1535); the kingdom's first vernacular chronicle, *Kronika Polski*, by the layman Marcin Bielski (Kraków, 1597); the *Libri Quatuor Slavoniae Reformatae* by the Calvinist minister Andrzej Węgierski (Amsterdam, 1679); the *Historia Reformationis Polonicae* written by the exiled anti-Trinitarian Stanisław Lubieniecki (Freistadt, 1685), and a Polish Counter/Catholic Reformation history, *Roczne dzieje kościelne*, by the Jesuit Jan Kwiatkiewicz (Kalisz, 1695). 'Chronicles' is a term here used broadly to include 'secular' chronicles of the Polish *regnum* as a legal-political community focused on the king, chronicles of the universal church, and also hybrids of these two, i.e. histories of a people/realm and its church. By 1517, the national chronicle was a well-established genre across the kingdoms of Northern Europe. In Poland, its master-text was the voluminous *Annales seu chronicae incliti Regni Poloniae* written by the Kraków cleric Jan Długosz (d. 1480). What renders this kingdom's early modern chronicles unusual in a European context is their sheer number. Norbert Kerksen, for example, has counted some 14 new surveys of national histories in sixteenth-century Poland, compared to a European norm of just four to five.³

Early modern chronicles – *chronica*, *Annales*, *historia* or the vernacular *dzieje* – have been analysed in modern scholarship principally as works of history, rather than as deliberate mnemonic acts.⁴ Polish research, for example, continues to analyse their textual motifs or construct more fully their author's biographies.⁵ International scholarship on Reformation and Counter/Catholic Reformation *historia sacra*, meanwhile, has tended to focus on the intellectual models, social functions and polemical strategies of such works.⁶ Clearly, early modern chronicles were produced within the highly self-conscious and long-standing genre of history-writing. Yet if we examine the prefaces and dedicatory letters of Polish authors, we can see that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century historians also explicitly invoked, and appealed to, *memoria*. Setting out their motives for writing history, for example, our Polish authors routinely listed truth-telling, patriotism, didacticism, and the preservation of memory. Miechowita thus declared (1521) that he wrote his Polish chronicle to correct errors made by *inexpertos*, and because without histories 'we cannot know, or remember forever' the origins, growth and deeds of the kingdom.⁷ Bielski (1597) sought, he claimed, to pass on Poland's

³ Norbert Kerksen, 'Reformation and the writing of national history in East-Central and Northern Europe', in Karin Maag (ed.), *The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe* (Aldershot, 1997), pp. 50-71. See also Andrzej Grabski, *Zarys historii historiografii polskiej* (Poznań, 2000).

⁴ See however Piotr Węcowski, *Początki Polski w pamięci historycznej późnego średniowiecza*, (Kraków, 2014).

⁵ For recent scholarship, see Dariusz Śnieżko, *Kronika wszystkiego świata Marcina Bielskiego: pograniczne dyskursy* (Szczecin, 2004); Andrzej Borowski, *Iter Polono-Belgo-Ollandicum. Cultural and Literary Relationships Between the Commonwealth of Poland and the Netherlands in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Kraków, 2007); Waław Urban, 'Andrzej Węgierski jako kaznodzieja włodawski i jego związki z Czechami' *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*, 47 (2003): 173-175.

⁶ Katherine van Liere, Simon Ditchfield & Howard Louthan (eds), *Sacred History: Uses of the Christian Past in the Renaissance World* (Oxford, 2012).

⁷ Miechowita, *Chronica Polonorum* (Kraków, 1521), prefatory letter *ad lectorem*: 'non possunt sciri, nec imperpetuum rememorari'.

deeds to future ages, so that that ‘they did not fade into forgetting’, but lived forever on earth.⁸ The Jesuit Kwiatkiewicz asserted that the great events of his own age needed recording, ‘because they deserve to be known by future generations’.⁹ And the editor of Węgiński’s Calvinist history opened his preface in more general terms by paraphrasing Cicero: ‘History, which bears witness to the passing of the ages, gives life to memory...’¹⁰ An explicit discourse of memory did thus exist within the standard early modern rhetorics, and even *topoi*, of history-writing.

This essay opens with something the Polish chronicles themselves cannot, or will not, supply: a bird’s-eye narrative overview of the Reformation in this kingdom. We then consider the chronicles in turn, setting out the evolution and splintering of Reformation memory from the 1520s to the 1690s, before analysing its key features. The overriding characteristic of Polish chronicle-memory is that in lieu of a loosely agreed national narrative of Reformation events, each confession (Lutheran, Calvinist, anti-Trinitarian, pre- and post-Tridentine Catholic) produced its own version of local religious history, which did not and could not cohere with each other. This reflected realities on the ground, in a kingdom where a delicate balance of power long endured between many different churches.¹¹ These chronicles, with their memories-in-parallel, suggest that in the Polish kingdom the experience of early modern religious pluralism generated a silo-like, deeply fragmented memory culture – at least at the level of formal written histories. To borrow a phrase social scientists developed to describe the confessionally-based parallel societies of the twentieth-century Low Countries, what we see here is a *pillarization* of memory in early modern Poland.¹² Another notable feature of these chronicles is how, for all their radical ideological differences, they nonetheless share a certain preoccupation with Judaism, talking to and about one another indirectly through the figure of the local Jew, as we shall see. Finally, the Polish chronicles might speak to the wider field of memory theory, which tends to construct ‘remembering’ as active and ‘forgetting’ as more passive and one-dimensional. In their chronicles, each of these Polish confessions forgot in their own way, with cumulative and curious long-term effects.

The *regnum Poloniae* was a classic sixteenth-century composite state, which consisted of five principal territories – western Poland (*Wielkopolska*) and southern Poland (*Małopolska*); the Orthodox areas of Rus-Podolia, today in Ukraine; the appanage duchy of Mazovia with its capital of Warsaw; and Royal Prussia, a German-speaking Baltic province dominated by the Hanseatic towns of Danzig, Elbing and Thorn. The monarchy existed in dynastic union with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, with the two states later fully fusing into a legal whole, or Commonwealth (1569).¹³

⁸ Marcin Bielski, *Kronika Polski* (Kraków, 1597), prefatory letter (unnumbered pages): ‘jakoby w niepamięć z laty nieszły’.

⁹ Jan Kwiatkiewicz, *Roczne dzieje kościelne od roku pańskiego 1198. Aż do lat naszych* (Kalisz, 1695), prefatory letter, unnumbered pages: ‘o których nie mniej należało wiekom potomnym wiedzieć’.

¹⁰ Andrzej Węgiński, *Libri Quatuor Slavoniae Reformatae* (Amsterdam, 1679), preface by Gisbertus Voetius, p. 2: ‘Historiam testem temporum, vitam memoriae...’

¹¹ This point is made also by Kerksen, ‘Reformation’, p. 62.

¹² In the Oxford English Dictionary: ‘Division or organization of society into parallel groups, each with their own hierarchy, on the basis of religious or ideological difference, esp. in the Netherlands and Belgium.’ <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/247175?redirectedFrom=pillarisation#eid> (accessed 1.9.18).

¹³ See Robert Frost, *The Oxford History of Poland-Lithuania* (Oxford, 2015).

In the reign of King Sigismund I (r.1506-48), a precocious influx of Lutheran books into the monarchy's Prussian ports led to full-scale, pro-Reformation revolts in Danzig and Elbing in 1525, headed by radical preachers, blacksmiths and sailors. These briefly established radical reforming regimes, which the king overthrew in person in a military intervention of 1526. Yet at the same time, Sigismund I oversaw the dissolution and secularisation of the Teutonic Order in Prussia, accepting Grand Master Albert of Brandenburg as his lay vassal, converting the monastic state into a fief of the Polish Crown, and permitting Duke Albert to create Europe's first officially Lutheran polity. The 1520s saw a major peasant Reformation revolt in Ducal Prussia, an eastern extension of the ruinous German Peasant's War. Throughout King Sigismund's reign, Lutheran preaching was reported in Kraków, Poznań and many smaller towns, and top magnates such as Lukasz Górka openly favoured Wittenberg.¹⁴

The aged king was succeeded by his son Sigismund Augustus (r.1548-72) who, although Catholic, turned a blind eye both to the first Calvinist synods held in southern Poland, and the arrival of radical Italian exiles such as Francesco Stancaro of Mantua. The Polish reformer Jan Łaski (John a Lasco) returned to his home country in 1556, in the (thwarted) hope of guiding a Crown-sponsored Reformation. In 1570, the major Protestant groups signed the Sandomierz Consensus, seeking to forge a united front. When Sigismund Augustus died without heir in 1572, the Polish territories and nobles were split into three roughly equal camps – Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist. The kingdom also contained some of the most theologically radical communities found in sixteenth-century Europe, in the form of the thriving anti-Trinitarians (also known as Arians, Socinians, or Polish Brethren), in centres such as the town/commune of Raków.¹⁵ In the chaotic interregnum of 1572-5, the nobility drew up the Warsaw Confederation, a guarantee of toleration for those 'dissident in religion'. This was probably the high-water mark of the Polish Reformation.

The tide started to turn from the 1580s, when the Vasa royal family of Sweden established themselves as the Jagiellonian dynasty's heirs and successors in the Commonwealth. King Sigismund III Vasa (r.1587-1632) supported Counter Reformation preachers such as Piotr Skarga, urban violence occurred against Protestant churches in the 1590s, and non-Catholics increasingly found royal offices barred to them. The establishment of highly successful Jesuit colleges across Poland and Lithuania, from the 1580s, attracting pupils of all confessions, precipitated a major shift back towards Catholicism among the nobility.¹⁶ A devastating invasion of the Commonwealth (the Deluge, 1655-60) by the Vasa's Swedish Lutheran cousins sharpened confessional identities and conflicts. King John Casimir (r.1648-68) accused the anti-Trinitarians of plotting with Protestant Swedes to defeat the Commonwealth, and in 1658 a parliamentary decree ordered this community to convert or leave.¹⁷ The dates of the Polish Reformation can thus tentatively be sketched as 1518-1658. How this story has

¹⁴ For a fuller narrative, see Nowakowska, *King Sigismund*, Chapter One.

¹⁵ See Mihály Balázs, 'Antitrinitarianism', in Howard Louthan & Graeme Murdock (eds), *A Companion to the Reformation in Central Europe* (Leiden, 2015), pp. 171-194.

¹⁶ See also Piotr Stolarski, *Friars on the Frontier. Catholic Renewal and the Dominican Order in Southwestern Poland, 1595-1648* (Farnham, 2010).

¹⁷ George H. Williams, *The Polish Brethren: documentation of the history and thought of Unitarianism in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and in the Diaspora, 1601-85* (Missoula, Mont, 1980).

been recalled in the modern era, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries, is a drama in its own right, but this essay will limit itself to the question of early modern memory.¹⁸

Let us turn to our first chronicle, by the geographical theorist, medical professor, university rector, cathedral canon and polymath Maciej of Miechów (1457-1523). His *Chronica Polonorum* – recalled and censored in 1519, and reprinted in 1521 – was the first printed chronicle of Poland.¹⁹ It narrates the affairs of the kingdom only up to the year 1506, but it was completed during the Luther affair (1517-21). Miechowita's work thus provides us with an important benchmark for how an essentially late medieval writer, on the very cusp of the Reformation, might handle religious affairs within a chronicle of kings. The *Chronica Polonorum* thus offers a kind of control, or baseline point of departure, for later Reformation-era histories of the monarchy, many of which incorporated chunks of this work wholesale. While much of the chronicle simply repeated Długosz, the account covering the years 1480 to 1506 was Miechowita's own. In keeping with the conventions of the form, the chief subject matter of this portion of the *Chronica* is the deeds of kings – royal succession, military campaigns against the Turks, Tartars and Muscovites – spiced up with a fair share of omens, comets and monstrous births.

Within this framework, there is room for plenty of religious events, both normative and transgressive. Normative religious developments, reported by Miechowita with approval, included ecclesiastical patronage by the Polish royal family: pious gifts to Kraków cathedral by Queen-Mother Elizabeth (d.1505), the founding of new benefices by King Alexander (d.1506), or financial support of the university by King John Albert (d.1501) out of love for 'the divine cult'.²⁰ Miechowita also diligently reported appointments to Polish bishoprics, and papal acts such as the issuing of the 1500 Jubilee Year indulgence.²¹ Transgressive religious events, by contrast, included bad decisions by the royal family, such as an attempt to marry Princess Elizabeth (d.1517) to an Orthodox Moldavian prince of a different rite, or the nepotistic ecclesiastical career of Cardinal-prince Frederick.²² Transgressions also included acts of physical and metaphysical religious disorder, such as looting of diocesan lands by royal soldiers returning from the eastern front.²³ Bad religion might also involve charlatans, outsiders and outcasts. Miechowita recounted the expulsion of Kraków's Jews into the neighbouring town of Kazimierz in the 1490s in the wake of a major fire, the birth of a monstrous child to a Jewish mother, and secret activity by alchemists in the royal capital.²⁴ He was particularly exercised by the case of 'the prophet Baliński', a Greek-speaking soothsayer, doctor and fraud who extorted money from the poor and tricked courtiers.²⁵ To this late medieval catholic clerical chronicler, then, bad religion essentially consisted of scandals – and this motif of the religious scandal would later morph into something quite different in early modern Reformation historiography, used to different ends.

¹⁸ For modern memory, see Natalia Nowakowska, 'Forgetting Lutheranism: the Historiography of the Early Reformation in Poland', *Church History & Religious Culture* 92(3): 281-303.

¹⁹ See Henryk Barycz (ed.), *Maciej z Miechowa 1457–1523. Historyk, geograf, lekarz, organizator naukowy* (Wrocław & Warsaw, 1960).

²⁰ Miechowita, *Chronica Polonorum* (Kraków, 1521), fos. 359, 376, 378.

²¹ Miechowita, *Chronica*, fo. 360.

²² Miechowita, *Chronica*, fos. 368, 373.

²³ Miechowita, *Chronica*, fo. 364.

²⁴ Miechowita, *Chronica*, fos. 349, 360.

²⁵ Miechowita, *Chronica*, fo. 368.

Our second chronicle dates from the following decade, also from a learned Kraków milieu. It was the work of Miechowita's fellow cathedral canon Bernard Wapowski (1450-1535), a diplomat, doctor of canon law, cartographer, and author of panegyric Latin orations for the royal court, who today enjoys the distinction of having a crater on the moon named after him.²⁶ Wapowski's untitled chronicle, which circulated widely in manuscript in the sixteenth century, is a far more purist, consciously humanist, classical, Renaissance work than Miechowita's gossipy tale. Wapowski's focus is upon the grand affairs of diplomacy and war, with ecclesiastical matters scarcely touched upon. His chronicle has virtually nothing to say about the Reformation. The canon was extremely well informed about general European affairs: he describes, for example, Charles V's meeting with Henry VIII in Dover (or 'Dobra') in 1522, the fall of Rhodes, the internal politics of the kingdom of Naples, and events in Milan, Genoa, Constantinople and Crimea, in a tale covering a vast geographical panorama.²⁷ Yet the European Reformation does not make it into his survey of European history from 1480 to 1535. Wapowski reported German high political events, such as the death of the Emperor Maximilian, but anybody looking for references to the Luther affair, *Exsurge domine*, the Diet of Worms, or the 1530 Augsburg Diet in his work will come away disappointed - even though we know from contemporary correspondence that the latter gathering was avidly followed in Poland.²⁸

When writing of the Polish monarchy itself, his story's centre of gravity, Wapowski did pay some lip-service to the Reformation, but only where it directly impinged on his preferred themes of geopolitics and war. He notes, for example, that Danzigers had succumbed to 'the nepharious impiety of the Lutheran heresy', provoking fear that the city would spark a wider Baltic war.²⁹ King Sigismund's 1526 pacification of Danzig is the only aspect of the Reformation domestically covered by Wapowski in any detail - as a tale of a king, his army, and a military campaign. The execution of 12 rebel leaders and the 'religious' elements of the Danzig crisis merit only two passing lines, before Wapowski returns to the bigger military landmarks of 1526-7, the Battle of Mohacs in Hungary, the capture of Rome by imperial troops, and the Ottoman siege of Vienna.³⁰ Lutheranism in King Sigismund's monarchy functions as a mere subplot in the bigger drama of Polish royal power in the Baltic. In Wapowski's humanist text, history is a chessboard-like stage, on which kings, princes, emperors and armies make moves. Heretics are not an acknowledged or legitimate actor on his board. Thus, in this learned Latin work we see the mould-breaking events of 1517-35 awkwardly squashed into a rigid, prestigious, classical framework of history writing. In part, the genre itself limits what should, or with dignity could, be said. By 1535, therefore, no Polish chronicle had fully addressed, described or acknowledged the Reformation at home or abroad head on.

The first vernacular history of the kingdom was the *Kronika Polska* (1597), a family effort begun by the lay nobleman Marcin Bielski and finished by his son Joachim (d.1599). Bielski junior had been educated in Lutheran Silesia, but converted to Catholicism, taking up a place at the Vasa royal court.³¹ The *Kronika* offered some coverage of the European Reformation,

²⁶ Bernard Wapowski, *Kroniki Bernarda Wapowskiego*, ed. Józef Szujski (Kraków, 1874); <https://planetarynames.wr.usgs.gov/Feature/14541> (accessed 3.8.18).

²⁷ Wapowski, *Kroniki*, pp. 159, 192, 187, 197.

²⁸ For Poland and the Augsburg diet, see *Acta Tomicianae*, vol. 12 (Poznań, 1906).

²⁹ Wapowski, *Kroniki*, pp. 200-201, 'nepharia impietate Lutheranam haeresim suscepit'.

³⁰ Wapowski, *Kroniki*, pp. 209-11.

³¹ Henryk Barycz, 'Joachim Bielski', *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* 2 (1936): 61-4.

albeit idiosyncratically so: Bielski's dedicatory letter to King Sigismund III stated that history is the foundation of Christian faith because it transmits knowledge of the Bible and Christ, yet all he offers us on the European Reformation in over 800 pages is a short paragraph on the German Peasants' War (1524-5), and a papal letter to Kraków condemning the 'unChristian' behaviour of Henry VIII of England (1535).³² There is still no Luther Affair, Worms, or Augsburg. Regarding Reformation events in Poland itself, Bielski repeated Wapowski's account of the Danzig crisis, embellishing the trial and sentencing of the Lutheran leader Johannes Scholz with dramatic dialogue.³³

Yet as a chronicler Bielski, in common with Miechowita eighty years earlier, is most animated by religious transgressions or boundary-crossing – by scandals which, in this case, have seemingly nothing to do with the Reformation or Protestantism, but with Jews. In contrast to its indifference towards Protestantism, the *Kronika* contains two lengthy anecdotes about Christian-Jewish relations. It tells the story, for example, of the nobleman Stanisław Radwankowski, who having disgraced himself in war in the 1520s fled to Lwów, where 'out of desperation' he stole a consecrated Host and sold it to the Jews. For this, the parliament condemned him to death, and twelve of Radwankowski's noble companions had to swear they had known nothing of his intentions.³⁴ Bielski's only mention of the Reformation as a general crisis in Christendom, meanwhile, comes when he reports, for the year 1540, that many Poles were converting to Judaism:

At this time, the Jews saw that people were in disagreement about the Christian faith and seemingly in doubt about it. Not a few Christians here converted and were accepted into the Jewish faith, and so that these were not punished, the Jews sent them through Hungary to Turkey... And in this way Satan did his work.³⁵

In this passage, Protestantism and confessional conflict are not broached head on, but presented obliquely via the phenomenon of local Judaism. This would become an increasingly important feature of Polish chronicles as they entered the seventeenth century.

By 1600, total surveys of Polish history published in the large, prestigious *folio* format and graced with fine woodcuts, such as Miechowita's magnum opus or Bielski's *Kronika*, were dying out, giving way to accounts of recent military campaigns, or biographies of living kings.³⁶ If in the sixteenth century 'chronicles of Poland' had been the vehicle for talking about the Reformation (or not), the seventeenth-century saw a major shift towards writing the histories of individual churches instead. Here, we see an explicitly Protestant Polish historiography in action for the first time and, by the century's end, an explicitly Counter/Catholic Reformation church history as well. Such confessional chronicles, in Poland printed in smaller *quarto* or *octavo* formats, were a new enterprise. As Roger Mason puts it, Protestant responses to Catholic critics 'perforce took a historical form', and they 'quickly

³² Bielski, *Kronika*, pp. 555, 573.

³³ Bielski, *Kronika*, p. 556.

³⁴ Bielski, *Kronika*, p. 549.

³⁵ Bielski, *Kronika*, pp. 580-81: 'Żydowie tego czasu widzac iz sie ludzie ieli o wierze swey Chrześcianskiey gadac y swarzyc iakoby watpiac o niey nie mało Chrześcian u nas na Zydzowska wiarę zwiedli y onych pobrzewoali: a żeby sie tego nie kaiali z korony ie do Wegier a potym do Turek wysyłali... Tak był niele poczał Szatan swe proponze rościagnac'.

³⁶ See Grabski, *Zarys Historii*, pp. 50-53.

saw the necessity of rewriting ecclesiastical history'.³⁷ Paul Knoll too has noted how one effect of the Reformation was 'the enhancement of historical writing as a tool used by advocates to determine and argue the validity of their religious tradition'.³⁸

The first Protestant history of the Reformation in Poland was written by Andrzej Węgierski (1600-1649), a man rooted in Poland's Calvinist community. He was a minister in eastern Poland (as were all his brothers), who saw his parish and library burnt in the Chmielniecki Cossack rising of 1648.³⁹ Węgierski's *Libri Quatuor Slavoniae Reformatae* was published posthumously in 1652, with a new edition of the text printed in 1679.⁴⁰ As Euan Cameron has written, 'Protestant history was always ecclesiastical history, the history of the ecclesia, the congregation, the community living its religious life'.⁴¹ The *Libri Quatuor* marks a departure from late medieval and humanist chronicles – its scope is not the Polish kingdom but the wider Slav lands, and its subject not a *regnum* but a true church. The *Libri Quatuor* is an ambitious, ground-breaking but anarchic text. It consists of three books which tell the history of Polish and Slav religion in three parallel narratives: a history of the true churches, of persecutions, and of local 'theologians and pastors'. The text often takes the form of simple lists of names, and much material is repeated across the three books. Węgierski, in keeping with by then well-established impulses within Protestant historiography, sought to prove the antiquity and existence of a true church in the Slav lands. He first told the story of medieval dissent in central Europe, of Waldensians, Hussites and Bohemian Brethren, the theologically adventurous Polish priest Biernat of Lublin (c.1500), and early martyr Adam of Kujawy, burnt for Hussitism. Węgierski went on to list the 'evangelical doctors' who had then preached the Reformation in Poland in its early decades.⁴² Thereafter, the Calvinist synods held in Poland from the 1550s are enumerated in vast, rich historical and biographical detail, up to the 1620s.

This effect of this grand new narrative of the Reformation was two-fold. Firstly, it presents, or imagines, the Polish Reformation as chiefly a Calvinist affair. Not only did Węgierski flatten out all differences between his highly heterogeneous collection of late medieval martyrs, presenting them as uniformly Protestant in intent. He also effectively wrote out the Lutheran first generation of Reformation activity in Poland: Węgierski does this by omitting Prussia entirely from his story, and because he includes minimal information (three pages) on Polish Protestantism before 1550, followed by hundreds of pages on Calvinist activity. This creates the impression that nothing much had happened in the Polish monarchy by way of religious change before Calvinist preachers arrived, and in effect shifts the start date of Poland's Reformation movement to thirty years later than it really was. Many of his

³⁷ Roger A. Mason, 'Useable pasts: History and Identity in Reformation Scotland', *Scottish Historical Review* 76:201 (1997):54-68, at p. 56.

³⁸ Paul Knoll, review of 'History of the Reformation' by G.H. Williams, *Sixteenth Century Journal* 28:2 (1997): 567-70.

³⁹ Janusz Tazbir, introduction to facsimile edition of Andrzej Węgierski, *Libri quatuor Slavoniae reformatae* (Warsaw, 1973), pp. v-xxv.

⁴⁰ Andrzej Węgierski, *Andreae Wengerscii Libri quatuor Slavoniae reformatae* (Amsterdam, 1679). First published as *Systema Historico-Chronologicvm, Ecclesiarum Slavonicarum per Provincias varias, Praecipue, Poloniae, Bohemiae, Lituaniae, Rvssiae, Prvssiae, Moraviae, etc. Distinctarum* (Utrecht, 1652).

⁴¹ Euan Cameron, 'Primitivism, patristics and polemic in Protestant visions of early Christianity', in van Liere et al, *Sacred History*, pp. 27-51, at p. 29.

⁴² Węgierski, *Libri Quatuor*, pp. 71-4.

chapter-titles start explicitly in 1550, or 1551.⁴³ The dramatic Prussian events of the 1520s', so gripping to sixteenth-century chroniclers, have all but vanished.

And for Węgierski too, Judaism is important if uncomfortable. He repurposes as authentic Calvinist history not only a ragbag of late medieval figures, but also the kingdom's most famous convert to Judaism. Catherine of Kraków, executed in 1539, plays a central role in his Polish martyrology, and thus in his historical vision of the church in Poland – as a woman killed, as Węgierski has it, for denying the transubstantiated presence of Christ in the Eucharist, as Calvinists themselves adamantly did. Here, the Jew helpfully becomes a sacramentarian. Węgierski did not however wish to imply that Polish Jewry, in its totality, formed the kingdom's original, native Calvinist community, by virtue of not believing in the Real Presence. He thus reinvents the widow Catherine as a reformed Christian, and not at all a Jew:

Katherine Zalassowska, wife of the senator of Cracow Melchior, for denying the divinity of Christ present in the bread of the Eucharist, as the Roman Church believes, was condemned by the bishop of Kraków... and burnt rejoicing in the city square. But it is a calumny spread by the malicious, from pure hatred, to say that she had repudiated Christian doctrine and embraced the delirium of Judaism.⁴⁴

Clearly, an actual Polish Jew could not serve as the archetypal Polish Calvinist martyr, but Catherine can play this part in Węgierski's history because she is a Christian – by belief, he asserts, though we might also note by name and blood. It is these which apparently make her safe, just about, as the protomartyr for reformed Protestantism in this account. Węgierski's later Dutch editor Gisbertus Voetius also saw Catherine's story as particularly significant, because his 1679 version of the text boasted, on its very frontispiece, that it included 'the history of Catherine Zalassovia'.⁴⁵

Our fifth chronicle is the *Historia Reformationis Polonicae* by the anti-Trinitarian Stanisław Lubieniecki (1623-75), published posthumously in Freistadt in 1685. Lubieniecki's life story epitomises the dying days of the Polish Reformation. He was born into the celebrated Anti-Trinitarian community of Raków, educated at Saumur in France, and ended his life in exile in Hamburg following the expulsion decree of 1658.⁴⁶ Paul Knoll has described this work as the 'first history of European Unitarianism and a major monument of Polish historiography'.⁴⁷ The *Historia Reformationis* is an anti-Trinitarian mirror image of Węgierski's Calvinist chronicle, equating the Polish Reformation almost entirely with anti-Trinitarians, as its subtitle shows: 'in which is told the origin and progress of anti-Trinitarians in Poland and surrounding provinces'. Lubieniecki too reduces the Reformation in Poland before 1548 to just three chaotic pages, mentioning for example the 1525 including the Danzig rebels and Jan Łaski the younger. He explicitly labels this as still a pre-Reformation period, giving this chapter the title: 'How preparations for the Reformation began... in Poland

⁴³ Węgierski, *Libri Quatuor*, for example, pp. 218, 227.

⁴⁴ Węgierski, *Libri Quatuor*, p. 207: 'Catharina, Melchioris Zalassovii, Senatoris Cracoviensis uxor, ob religionem, quod de divinitate Christi in hostia panis Eucharistici, secundum fidem Romanae Ecclesiae, nihil crederet, ab Episcopo Cracoviensi Petro Gamrato ad rogam damnatur... inque medio fori Cracoviensis laetabunda ignibus exusta est. Quod vero fertur, eam repudiam Christianae doctrinae misisse, & Judaica deliria amplexam fuisse, malevolorum est calumnia, ex puro puto odio, per audax mendacium...'

⁴⁵ Węgierski, *Libri Quatuor*: an appendix on pp. 527-8 gave further details of the case, taken from taken from Łukasz Górnicki's unpublished account.

⁴⁶ Janusz Tazbir, 'Stanisław Lubieniecki młodszy', *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* 17 (1972): 603-7.

⁴⁷ Paul Knoll, review of 'History of the Reformation', p. 568.

from 1546 to 1550'.⁴⁸ With book two – which starts with an account of 'How the seeds of divine truth came from Italy to Poland with Socinius in 1551' – Lubieniecki reaches his true subject, the story of Polish anti-Trinitarians, to which he devotes over 250 pages. In this chronicle, then, both Lutherans and Calvinists alike are rhetorically manoeuvred out of the picture, and a different story of the true church offered.

Yet Lubieniecki too finds a special place for the story of Catherine of Krakow, who is a key figure in his very brief account of Polish reform under King Sigismund I. In the *Historia Reformationis*, Catherine is again Poland's first martyr of the true faith - executed here not as a Jew, or sacramentarian, but as an anti-Trinitarian, because she had insisted on the indivisible nature of the one God. He wrote that there was much 'terror in the kingdom at the sad case of Catherine wife of Melchior Vogel a consul of Kraków,' who had regarded the Roman church's adoration of the Host as 'idolatry'.⁴⁹ 'She was suspected', Lubieniecki wrote, 'of being a Jew, because she denied that the Son of God could be eternally begotten of the essence of the Father'.⁵⁰ Lubieniecki noted that she was executed in the very same year that Faustus Socinius was born in Italy. Anti-Trinitarians, who denied the divinity of Christ and saw veneration of the Trinity as potential idol-worship, were often denounced by their early modern critics as simply outright converts to Judaism. In spite of this, Lubieniecki is willing to make the risky rhetorical move of claiming Catherine as one of his own community, in Polish anti-Trinitarianism's quest for origins, history and an authentic local past. This 1539 Christian-Jewish affair in Kraków diocese, of the type which Miechowita or Bielski had found bemusing and scandalous, thus in the seventeenth century becomes the main narrative hinge for Protestant history writing in Poland. Catherine, the aged burgher's widow who consorted with local Jews, becomes the historic, legitimising, female point of origin of the Polish Reformation.

As it happens, it was these two Protestant histories, by the Calvinist Węgiński and anti-Trinitarian Lubieniecki, which would later form the bedrock of the first history of the Polish Reformation composed in English. In 1838, the Polish count Walerian Krasiński was in London, drumming up British support for the Polish national cause and armed struggle during the Partitions. To win sympathy from a British-American Protestant public, Krasiński published his *Historical Sketch of the Rise, Progress and Decline of the Reformation in Poland*. Depicting Poland as a historically Protestant state, his work was based closely on the narratives of Lubieniecki and Węgiński – one lost cause (the Polish Reformation) here invoked in the service of another (Polish nineteenth-century independence).⁵¹

In the face of these weighty, bold Protestant histories, how did the Catholic church in the Polish monarchy respond? Counter/Catholic Reformation clergy in Poland chose as their vehicle not national chronicles, but panoramic histories of the universal Catholic church. Janusz Tazbir has showed how intensely Poland's high clergy followed and supported the labours of Cardinal Cesare Baronio (1538-1607) in Rome, author of the monumental, 12-volume *Annales Ecclesiastici*, a defining, erudite Catholic history for the confessional age.⁵²

⁴⁸ Stanisław Lubieniecki, *Historia Reformationis Poloniae* (Freistadt, 1658), p. 14.

⁴⁹ Lubieniecki, *Historia*, p. 17: 'Injecerat enim multis in regno terrorem triste Catharinae Melchioris Vogelii Consulis Cracoviensis uxoris...'.
⁵⁰ Lubieniecki, *Historia*, p. 17: 'suspectam eam Judaismi fuisse, quod Filium Dei, credo, ex essentia Patris ab aeterno genitum, negarit.'

⁵¹ Walerian Krasiński, *Historical Sketch of the Rise, Progress and Decline of the Reformation in Poland*, 2 vols, (London, 1838 & 1840).

⁵² Janusz Tazbir, 'Baronius a Skarga', *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 26 (1981): 19-33.

The Polish court preacher Piotr Skarga organised production of an abridged Polish translation of the *Annales* in 1603, for example, and it was a Polish Dominican, Abraham Bzowski (d.1637), who was appointed by Pius V to continue Baronius' magnum opus after his death (the venerable cardinal's account having reached only the year 1193).

Our final chronicle, part of this constellation of Polish scholarly activity inspired by Baronius, is thus the *Roczne dzieje kościelne od roku pańskiego 1198 aż do lat naszych* ('The Annals of the Church from the Year of Our Lord 1198 to our own day'), produced by the Polish Jesuit Jan Kwiatkiewicz in 1695.⁵³ While Baronius and Bzowski had written on the medieval church only, Kwiatkiewicz with a leap synthesised numerous national chronicles and church histories in order to narrate a universal Catholic history of the sixteenth century, in Polish. Rejecting those who 'contented themselves with writing about their own kingdoms, kings, or bishops', Kwiatkiewicz's was a one-volume history of the church across the world, albeit with a strong Polish twist.⁵⁴ For each year of his annals, Kwiatkiewicz runs in turn through events in western Europe, Poland and Hungary, and the global missions. However, whereas Reformation events in Germany, the Netherlands, Low Countries and especially England are dealt with blow by blow from 1517 onwards, Poland's sixteenth-century religious history is (through silence) made to appear entirely pacific. The Polish events Kwiatkiewicz includes are chiefly high political in nature: royal marriages, successions and deaths. In his lengthy work, the Jesuit has very little say about religious affairs in his native kingdom – just a few lines on legislation against Orthodox Christians, on the Danzig revolt, or on the preaching of Utraquism in Vilnius in 1557.⁵⁵ Only when it reaches the 1590s does his story acquire hints of a sharper edge, describing Sigismund III's crackdown on Lutheranism in Prussian cities, and Skarga's conversion of a prominent Protestant senator, Prokop of Granowo.⁵⁶ Thus Kwiatkiewicz's 1695 work, within the grander framework of a Eusebian-style church history, also offered a local vision of a Poland essentially unruffled by the Reformation, which by the 1590s in the capable hands of Sigismund III Vasa was securely, loyally Roman Catholic. We are a world away from Bielski's oblique anecdotes about Jews and Christians in sixteenth-century Poland, from Węgierski's Calvinist tome, and Lubieniecki's Raków.

Under Jagiellonian and Vasa kings, the Polish monarchy produced no equivalent of Andras Farkas' *Chronicle on the Introduction of the Scythians into Hungary and Jews out of Israel* (1538), Foxe's English *Actes and Monuments* (1563) or John Knox's (d.1572) *History of the Reformation of Religion within the Realm of Scotland*, and no state-led Reformation sponsored a new national history-writing project.⁵⁷ No early modern Polish historian fused national history, as those texts did, with that of Protestantism to offer a master-narrative of a covenanted people which commanded official or widespread support; nor did a Catholic version of such a vision clearly arise in

⁵³ Jan Kwiatkiewicz, *Roczne dzieje kościelne od roku pańskiego 1198 aż do lat naszych* (Kalisz, 1695).

⁵⁴ Kwiatkiewicz, *Roczne dzieje*, dedicatory letter: 'się kontentowali, abo opisaniem swoich Krolestw i Krolow, abo też Biskupów'.

⁵⁵ Kwiatkiewicz, *Roczne dzieje*, pp. 631, 641, 694.

⁵⁶ Kwiatkiewicz, *Roczne dzieje*, pp. 796-7.

⁵⁷ On Farkas' *Cronica de introduction Scyttarum in Ungariam*, see Graeme Murdock, 'Magyar Judah: Constructing a new Canaan in eastern Europe' in, Robert Swanson (ed.), *Studies in Church History* 36 (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 263-74; see also Kerksen, 'Reformation', p. 62

chronicle form.⁵⁸ On the one hand, the European Reformation was a complex, epochal, slow-burn event, its outcomes not visible or legible to contemporaries for many decades, and perhaps the chaos of Polish chronicles reflects simply this. Norbert Kerksen reminds us, too, that early modern history was, as a genre, surprisingly heterogeneous.⁵⁹ Perhaps it is anachronistic to bring to this body of writing the expectation of a crisp, single, national master-narrative of the Reformation. We should consider how far the desire to find, or tell, a single national-confessional story was reinforced by nineteenth-century nationalist scholarship, which was so keen to write normalising, homogenous national stories.

The early modern Polish kingdom was, nonetheless, particularly unpromising territory for an agreed memory of the Reformation to emerge. As we have seen, our six chronicles tell completely variant stories of early modern Polish religion, with individual or pillarized Lutheran, Catholic, Calvinist and Anti-Trinitarian memories and narratives. Taken together, this clutch of chronicles would seem to limit the potential for the emergence of any shared, functional, widely legible, social or 'cultural' memory of the Polish Reformation in the early modern period – what one scholar calls 'a socially acceptable reference text of national history'.⁶⁰ The thriving co-existence of Catholics, Lutherans (from 1518), Calvinists (from 1540s) and Anti-Trinitarians (from 1550s) in the kingdom, cemented in the 1573 Warsaw Confederation, only formally ended in the 1650s, when the mid-seventeenth-century crisis of the Commonwealth precipitated mass expulsions of radical Protestants. If in political-historical terms Polish Protestantism was ultimately a failed project, it was perhaps the variety and longevity of Poland's Protestant churches, with their avid historians, which prevented the emergence of a coherent collective memory of the country's Reformation, by repeatedly splitting memory. The political reality of Christian pluralism had a profound impact on how early modern historians in this monarchy remembered the Reformation; and on why that society was, in the long term, in some sense unable to do so. In Poland, the narrative chaos of early modern chronicles regarding the Reformation is arguably a reflection of unresolved memories, and indeed unresolved history.

The strange progression of Catherine of Kraków in these chronicles, from juicy scandal, to Calvinist witness, to the anti-Trinitarian martyr whose death lit up Faustus Socinius' birth, well illustrates how historians from different confessions used exactly the same Polish materials or events to radically different ideological ends. The plasticity of Catherine's Jewish story fits with the work of Magda Teter, who shows how in Poland from the 1550s onwards Jews were used rhetorically and physically to perform Reformation conflict – in a slew of executions of Jews for Host-sacrilege, and in printed Protestant-Catholic theological polemics about these trials. This was not the only kingdom where Jews got caught up in the events or literature of the European Reformation.⁶¹ Our chronicles show, however, that Jews, Catholics and Protestants were deeply entangled not just in early modern Polish society and theological conflict, but also in the kingdom's Reformation memories,

⁵⁸ See Mason, 'Usable Pasts'.

⁵⁹ Kerksen, 'Reformation', p. 71.

⁶⁰ Kerksen, 'Reformation', p. 68.

⁶¹ Teter, *Sinners on Trial*. See also Debra Kaplan & Magda Teter, 'Out of the (Historiographic) Ghetto: European Jews and Reformation Narratives', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 40:2 (2009): 365-394, at p. 386; Dean Philip Bell & Stephen G. Burnett (eds), *Jews, Judaism, and the Reformation in sixteenth-century Germany* (Leiden, 2006).

where followers of Judaism (whether acknowledged as such or not) often act as a pivotal narrative device.

The early modern cacophony of Polish Reformation chronicle memories had a long-term impact on knowledge, research and cultural remembering. When nineteenth-century enthusiasts took up their pens to write histories of the Polish Reformation, for example, they would find no ready-made, baseline chronicle narrative to adopt, repeat or build upon. Pioneers such as Teodor Wotschke (d.1939) or Julian Bukowski (d.1904) ended up simply amplifying the early modern Babel of Reformation stories, as factors in the modern world further mitigated against the emergence of a consensus-commanding narrative (or memory) – factors such as the Partitions of Poland, which locked the scholars and archives of the former Commonwealth into three different modern empires; the growth of nationalist historiography, which divided the former monarchy into ethnic nations such as Poland and Germany, writing their Reformation stories separately; and ongoing confessional competition, with Wotschke for example a polemicising Lutheran pastor, and Bukowski a polemicising Catholic priest.⁶² The ideological imperatives of the early modern period, which split memory, met the ideological imperative of later eras, such as ethnic nationalism, which split it further. The absence of a clear story from Poland, in early modern chronicles or in subsequent periods, has had an impact on the kingdom's presence in modern international, especially Anglophone, histories (and memories) of the European Reformation – try as they might, leading historians struggle to find firm narratives of Polish events to hold onto in their own syntheses. The gap in modern international Reformation studies where Europe's largest sixteenth-century polity might be is not caused primarily by the Cold War, or by language barriers; it is deeper, and at heart has sixteenth-century roots.

Although this essay has focused on early modern mnemonics, it is worth glancing at one twentieth-century curiosity in the light of the chronicles considered here. Here we can return one last time to Catherine of Kraków. The original account of her trials was recorded by the notaries of Kraków's episcopal court in a special manuscript, reserved by the bishop's staff for recording misdemeanours such as clerical misbehaviour and heresy. This manuscript, held for centuries in the episcopal archive in Kraków, went missing in the 1970s or shortly thereafter – the only volume lost from an otherwise complete set of 12 sixteenth-century court books, as Magda Teter has also noted. Today, we know the text of Catherine's trial only because it was copied out by the nineteenth-century scholar Żegota Pauli, and survives among his papers.⁶³ Here, early modern half-remembering has persisted as literal misplacing of the Reformation past.

These early modern Polish chronicles perform for us a complex dance of forgetting. Theoretical literature on cultural memory tends to portray 'remembering' as active, and 'forgetting' as passive. Leaders in the field use active vocabulary to define cultural memory: the 'reconstruction' of the past (Halbwachs), 'the past created and recreated' (Erl), 'a complex process of cultural production' (Kansteiner).⁶⁴ Fiendt et al have stressed the active

⁶² See Nowakowska, 'Forgetting Lutheranism'.

⁶³ Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Kraków, MS 5357 (papers of Żegota Pauli).

⁶⁴ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. and ed. L. A. Coser, (Chicago, 1992), p. 40; Astrid Erl, 'Regional Integration and (Trans)cultural Memory', *Asia Europe Journal* 8 (2010): 305-15, at pp. 305-6; Wulf Kansteiner, 'Finding meaning in memory: a methodological critique of collective memory studies', *History and Theory* 41:2 (2002): 179-197, at p. 179.

way in which memory is remediated, performed again and again.⁶⁵ This instinct is most explicit, and likely partially originates in, Assmann's famous division of social memory into 'functional' (what is actively remembered), and 'latent' or 'storage' memory (what is recorded, but not currently used). For her, stored/forgotten material is by definition passive, because it is not in active cultural use: it is non-usable, deep-frozen.⁶⁶ In these ways, historic forgetting is implicitly presented by theorists as a non-dynamic, static process, like something (accidentally?) dropped down the back of the sofa and left to moulder there for centuries.⁶⁷ However, Polish Reformation chronicles remind us that forgetting was an active, complex and iterative process in the early modern period. These texts forget both individually (deliberately omitting key events), and collectively (inadvertently, they together render the story so incoherent, that it cannot function as a story). The chronicles keep (re)forgetting what the archives might testify to, for different reasons, and in different ways. Wapowski would only include events befitting of Renaissance humanist conventions for reasons of literary prestige; Bielski practised ecumenical discretion; Węgierski forgot Lutherans; Lubieniecki forget Lutherans and Calvinists; the Jesuit Kwiatkiewicz contrived to forget or refuse stage-space to them all. The widow Catherine passes like a spinning top through these stories. These sixteenth and seventeenth-century Polish books show us that there are many different ways to forget, or to fail to tell (which might amount to the same thing) across confessions.

Ultimately, these six chronicles paint a picture of a monarchy which, in its self-memorialisation, practised an early modern form of confessional pillarization – and where the price to pay for religious co-existence was, seemingly, Reformation without a coherent national memory. To paraphrase the political scientist David Ricci, this is not so much 'politics without stories', as toleration without narrative.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ G. Feindt, F. Krawatzek, D. Mehler, F. Pestel and R. Trimçev, 'Entangled Memory: Towards a Third Wave in Memory Studies', *History and Theory* 53 (2014): 24-44. See also Natalia Nowakowska (ed.), *Remembering the Jagiellonians* (Abingdon, 2019). (*This is what the book says, but obviously it was actually published in 2018*).

⁶⁶ Aleida Assman, *Cultural Memory & Western Civilisation: Functions, Media, Archives* (Cambridge, 2011) [*NB, name of translator not given?*]; see also Merike Lang, 'Cultural memory in the museum and its dialogue with collective and individual memory', *Nordisk Museologi* 2 (2007): 62-75.

⁶⁷ With the exception of theories of cultural traumatic amnesia: see the discussion by Uilleam Blacker, 'The Wood Comes to Dunsinane Hill: Representations of the Katyń massacre in Polish literature', *Central Europe* 10:2 (2012): 108-123.

⁶⁸ David Ricci, *Politics Without Stories: the Liberal Predicament* (Cambridge, 2016).