

## The Catholic Church and the Jews in the Kraków Diocese during the Sixteenth Century

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The question of the Catholic Church's attitude towards the Jews has been studied by numerous historians. This does not mean, however, that the subject is now sufficiently understood. Most researchers have concentrated on the persecutions of Jews by the Catholic Church and its clergy. Other aspects of their relationship have been studied less frequently, and when they have, the focus has been on its economic aspects. Most of the research has been done on the Middle Ages and the eighteenth century, whereas the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have only been studied occasionally.<sup>1</sup> Thus, insufficient attention has been paid to how the Church's policies towards the Jews have changed, and to the motivations behind these changes. Such gaps in the scholarship prevent us from fully understanding the various aspects of the relationship between the Jews and the Catholic Church until the partitions of Poland in the 1790's.

Here, I would like to consider the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jews in the Kraków diocese during the sixteenth century. Several research issues will be touched upon, including: Jewish settlement in the Church's land holdings; synodal legislation regarding the Jews; the role played by the clergy in formulating accusations of ritual murder and profanation of the Host; and the missionary activities of the Church in terms of their interaction with the Jews, and everyday contact.

The Kraków diocese played a special role within the state. It was one of the oldest, having been created in the year 1000, and was one of the bishoprics that fell under the jurisdiction of the metropolitan see of Gniezno that was called at that time. It encompassed a vast territory – the lands of Kraków, Sandomierz and Lublin, which is just almost geographically equivalent to Małopolska. The area was well developed both demographically and economically. Most importantly, Kraków, as the bishop's seat, mainly served as the seat of temporal power. Until the late sixteenth century, the royal residence and court was located in Kraków. The Kraków bishops were es-

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<sup>1</sup> Books and articles written by: Zenon Guldon and Jacek Wijaczka, Judith Kalik, Magda Teter, Hanna Węgrzynek.

pecially important: this was shown in the Senate, for example, where they sat first among the bishops, immediately next to the archbishops of Gniezno and Lwów. In fact, their own careers were later often crowned by the position of the archbishop of Gniezno. They were also entrusted with some of the most important state offices, such as that of chancellor or vice chancellor. Thus, not only did the bishops of Kraków play an important role in the religious life of the country, they also wielded significant influence on state policy.

In the early sixteenth century, the Jews lived in sixteen cities in the Kraków diocese (area of so called Małopolska): Kazimierz Lubelski (Dolny), Kazimierz (near Kraków), Lublin, Sandomierz, Tarnów,<sup>2</sup> Zator, Bochnia, Jasło, Nowy Sącz, Proszowice,<sup>3</sup> Szydłów, Opoczno, Wiślica, Olkusz, Bełżyce and Budzyń.<sup>4</sup> Jews lived in fewer cities in Małopolska than in other provinces of the Kingdom of Poland, such as in Wielkopolska. Nevertheless, it should be stressed that there were several large, important Jewish communities in Małopolska, such as Kazimierz (near Kraków), Sandomierz and Lublin. Both the amount of taxes these cities had to pay, and the presence of famous scholars and well-known Talmudic schools attest to their importance.

In the early sixteenth century, the Polish lands saw a large number of immigrants who were fleeing the persecutions in Western Europe. This was accompanied by demographic growth in the Jewish communities, prompted by a high birth rate. The Jewish community in Kazimierz, outside of Kraków, grew quickly. In the sixteenth century, the borders of the Jewish city were expanded twice, in 1553 and 1583, two new synagogues were built, Remuh and Wysoka (“High”).<sup>5</sup>

While no surviving records indicate that Jews had a constant presence in the bishop’s or clergy’s holdings in early sixteenth-century Małopolska, it is nonetheless known that they did have such a presence in other dioceses. At that time, Jews lived in Łowicz, for example, which belonged to the Gniezno archbishops,<sup>6</sup> or in Pułtusk, which belonged to the Płock bishops.<sup>7</sup> In the second half of the sixteenth century, on

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<sup>2</sup> M. Horn, „Najstarszy rejestr osiedli żydowskich w Polsce z 1507 r.” [The Oldest Register of Jewish Settlements in Poland from the Year 1507], *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, no. 3 (1974): 11-15.

<sup>3</sup> I. Schipper, *Studia nad stosunkami gospodarczymi Żydów w Polsce podczas średniowiecza* [A Study of the Economic Relations of Jews in Poland during the Middle Ages], (Lwów, 1911), 153.

<sup>4</sup> Z. Guldon, „Żydzi wśród chrześcijan w miastach małopolskich w XVI - XVIII wieku” [Jews among the Christians in the Towns of Małopolska during the Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries], *Nasza Przyszłość*, vol. 78 (1992): 194, 196 and 198.

<sup>5</sup> M. Bałaban, *Dzieje Żydów w Krakowie i na Kazimierzu* [The History of Jews in Kraków and Kazimierz], vol. 1, 190, 196 and 208.

<sup>6</sup> Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Archivio Arcis, 4352.

<sup>7</sup> E. Ringelblum, *Żydzi w Warszawie* [Jews in Warsaw], (Warsaw, 1932), 23.

the other hand, Jews were living in the Małopolska town of Opatowiec, whose name comes from the word *opat* (abbacy), which was among the holdings of the Benedictine monks of Tyniec. In 1578, those Jews contributed six złoties in poll tax, which would indicate that this was not one single Jewish family that lived there, but rather a small community of several dozen people or so.<sup>8</sup> It is not known when Jews first appeared in Opatowiec, but the size of this group would suggest that it was probably already in the fifteenth century.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, Jews were removed from the clergy's holdings, although the edict known as "de non tolerandis Judaeis" [on the non-tolerance of Jews] was not applied to any of the towns belonging to the Catholic Church. During that period, this right was granted to numerous royal towns and cities. It should be emphasized that Jews were allowed to be in towns belonging to the clergy during markets and fairs. It was only in the second half of the seventeenth century that they began living permanently in some of the holdings belonging to the bishops of Kraków. At that time, they settled in the town of Biskupice in the Lublin voivodship, whose name comes from the Polish word for "bishop" (*biskup*).<sup>9</sup> Towns belonging to the clergy saw a large-scale influx of Jews only after the partitions of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century, when their legal status in those places changed.

As mentioned above, in the early sixteenth century there were sixteen Jewish communities in the Kraków diocese; by the end of that century, this number had risen to approximately 56.<sup>10</sup> This means Jews resided in one out of four towns in this region.<sup>11</sup> The influx of Jewish settlers and the demographic growth of already existing communities must have been a matter of some concern for the clergy. Nevertheless, there was no mention of this issue in the synodal legislation.

Although fourteen synods probably took place in the Kraków diocese during the sixteenth century,<sup>12</sup> we do not have information about the decisions from all of them. From the contents of the surviving statutes, the Małopolska clergy appears clearly to have been principally interested in the question of Church reform and preventing the spread of Protestant influences. They were also concerned with Catholic-Orthodox relations, and attempted to limit contacts between adherents of the two faiths.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> J. Muszyńska, *Żydzi w miastach województwa sandomierskiego i lubelskiego w XVIII wieku* [Jews in the Cities of the Sandomierz and Lublin Voivodships in the Eighteenth Century] (Kielce, 1998), 25 and 149.

<sup>9</sup> Z. Guldon, „Żydzi wśród chrześcijan ...”, 219.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>12</sup> B. Kumor, *Dzieje diecezji krakowskiej do roku 1795* [The History of the Kraków Diocese to 1795], vol. II (Kraków, 1998), 136 ff.

<sup>13</sup> Resolutions of the synods of 1509, 1524 and 1589 - J. Sawicki, *Statuty synodu krakowskiego biskupa Jana Konarskiego z 1509 roku* [The Statutes of the Kraków Synod of

The legislation of the Kraków diocese, on the other hand, did not touch upon the question of the growing Jewish presence among Christians, and no limitations were announced regarding contacts between the two groups. These issues might have been discussed during the course of the chapter (*capitulum*) meetings, as was the case in the Płock diocese, where the question of the hiring of Christians by Jewish merchants had been discussed as early as 1539, and concubinage was condemned, as was the birth of children resulting from these relationships.<sup>14</sup>

It was the early seventeenth century before the synod of the Kraków diocese handed down the first decision regarding the Jewish population. Limited regulations were included in the statutes that were passed in 1601, which were significantly expanded in the decisions of 1620.<sup>15</sup>

The sixteenth century Gniezno province synods did, however, deal with the question of the increase in the Jewish population and the necessity of normalizing their relationship and contacts with Christians. That legislation was later adopted by the dioceses. Regulations regarding Jews were included in the resolutions of the provincial synods of 1539, 1542, 1557, 1561, 1577 and 1589.<sup>16</sup> Most important for Małopolska were those passed by the Piotrków synod in 1542. It had been convened by the archbishop of Gniezno, who was at the same time bishop of Kraków—Piotr Gamrat. We can assume that the bishop himself and the clergy of Małopolska had initiated the discussion that eventually led to the resolutions passed there, which it should be noted were later confirmed by the Kraków diocese.

Two relatively extensive articles (12 and 13) in the legislation passed by the Piotrków synod of 1542 dealt with relations with Jews.<sup>17</sup> They stated that a large number of Jews had come to the Polish Kingdom from neighboring countries. Because of this influx, the Christian population had suffered. It was feared that the consequences of the presence of such a large number of Jews could prove to be even worse. As a result, the clergy asked the king to intervene. According to the synod, it was the Gniezno province and in the city of Kraków that had seen a particularly large increase in the Jewish population. For this reason, their numbers had to be limited to such an ex-

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Bishop Jan Konarski from the Year 1509] (Kraków, 1945), 48; B. Kumor, *Dzieje...*, 138.

<sup>14</sup> B. Ulanowski, *Acta capituli plocensis ab an. 1514 ad an. 1577* (Kraków, 1915), 187, paragraph 149.

<sup>15</sup> *Constitutiones Dioecesiaria Cracoviense...* (Kraków, 1601); *Constitutiones Dioecesiaria Cracovienses: In diversis Synodi* (Kraków, 1608); *Reformationes Generale ad Clerum et populum Dioecesis Cracovien: Pertine...* (Kraków, 1621).

<sup>16</sup> I. Subera, *Synody prowincjonalne arcybiskupów gnieźnieńskich* [The Provincial Synods of the Gniezno Archbishops] (Warsaw, 1981), 87; B. Ulanowski, *Materiały do historii ustawodawstwa synodalnego w Polsce w XVI wieku* [Materials on the History of Synodal Legislation in Poland during the Sixteenth Century] (Kraków, 1895), 115, 132 and 169; M. Morawski, *Synod piotrkowski...*, 33-34.

<sup>17</sup> B. Ulanowski, *Materiały...*, 67-68.

tent that they could manage to fit in the areas that had been allotted to them earlier. The synod pointed out that Jews had begun to appear in many areas where they had not been living previously. According to the synod, they should be banned from living there and should not buy houses from Christians; those houses purchased earlier would be confiscated unless sold by a certain deadline.

The clergy wanted to limit further Jewish settlement, but their demands nevertheless were quite realistic. Being accustomed to the presence of Jews did not necessarily mean they approved of it, but rather that they recognized it.

The clergy did not agree to allow new Jewish centers to grow, though they did, however, let the Jewish population remain at the same level. This attitude towards the Jews is confirmed by the statement that “it is fitting that Jews be tolerated by the Church as a reminder of the Passion of Christ the Savior, but their numbers should grow as little as possible.”<sup>18</sup>

Much attention was devoted to the matter of synagogues. The clergy was disturbed by the construction of stone or brick synagogues. It was believed that as few as possible of the new sturdier buildings should be built. There were demands that the king should order the newly built Kraków synagogues to be demolished. At that same time, it was recommended that the old buildings be renovated. Although the clergy saw the need for Jewish synagogues to exist, they did not want those buildings to be sturdy and impressive.

Much space in the Piotrków synod legislation was also devoted to the subject of Christians employed in Jewish households. It was demanded that the king prohibit the hiring of Christian mothers as wet nurses. This regulation stems from thirteenth-century papal legislation. It was believed that if a female communicant nursed Jewish children, this could constitute a profanation, since her milk would then also contain the body and blood of Christ.<sup>19</sup>

The Piotrkowski synod also recommended that Jews also be banned from hiring Christian servants, and that those already employed be dismissed. The decisions regarding these matters are somewhat unclear, because in them the expression “*mancipia christiana*” (i.e., “female Christian slave”) is used, and later “*liberatate donare*” appears, which means “freedom should be returned”, suggesting that Jews did in fact have Christian slaves. This question requires further study. The regulations contained in the Lithuanian Statutes, the law code in force in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, attest to the fact that Jews in Lithuania did have Christian slaves. It is certain, however, that by the sixteenth century this phenomenon no longer existed within the lands of the Polish Crown.

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> H. Węgrzynek, “*Czarna legenda*” *Żydów: Procesy o rzekome mordy rytualne w dawnej Polsce* [“The Black Legend” of the Jews: Trials of Alleged Ritual Murders in Early Polish History] (Warsaw, 1995), 28.

Wanting to isolate the Jews, the Piotrków synod also took up the question of attire. Jews, it was asserted, should wear clothing that would distinguish them from Christians, as had been the case at one time and as it continued to be in all the other “provinces”, which probably should be understood as “other countries”. There are no sources that would suggest Jews in Poland ever had to wear a sign of shame.

Jewish trade was the next issue taken up at the Piotrków synod. It was recommended that Jews not be allowed to sell goods on squares and bridges, or in shops, but rather only in their own buildings. This measure was meant to eliminate Jewish traders from public places. The question of trade in Kraków was handled separately. There, it was stated, Jews could only have six warehouses, and should not store their goods with Christians.

All the decisions outlined here are typical for Church legislation involving Jews both in Poland and elsewhere, as well as those originating with the Pope and councils. The main goal of that legislation was to isolate Jews from Christians, though the Church tolerated their presence.

Among the Piotrków synod’s legislation, especially significant was the paragraph on the abuses related to the religious practices of Jews and schismatics. That the complaints against Orthodox Christians and Jews should be grouped together in this way is astounding, as is the fact that they are treated equally – all the more so, as the decisions regarding the Orthodox are reminiscent of those about Jews discussed here earlier. It was stressed that the number of Orthodox was increasing. They were accused of practicing their religion in public places. Attempts were made to convince the king he should prohibit the construction of new Orthodox churches.<sup>20</sup> The rivalry between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches was especially apparent in the legislation passed by the diocesan and provincial synods in the sixteenth century, and came up much more frequently than the question of serious non-Christian threats to the Catholic Church.<sup>21</sup>

Sixteenth-century legislation in the Polish Church passed over the matter of Hebrew books. Among the later synods, it was only the Kraków synod in 1621 that addressed this problem. In the statutes adopted at that time, it was decided that Jews would face a fine of one hundred złoties if they printed books without the written approval of Church censors.<sup>22</sup>

This does not mean that in the 16<sup>th</sup> century the clergy was not interested in the activities of publishers and in the materials printed by them. Nevertheless, the

<sup>20</sup> B. Ulanowski, *Materiały...*, 67 ff.; I. Subera, *Statuty...*, 91–93.

<sup>21</sup> I. Subera, *Statuty...*, 89, 91 and 93; M. Morawski, *Synod piotrkowski w roku 1589* [The Piotrków Synod in the Year 1589] (Włocławek, 1937), 34 ff.

<sup>22</sup> *Reformationes generale ad Clerum et populum Dioecesis Cracovien. pertinentes Ab Illustrimo et Reverendi Dmo D. Martino Szyszkowski Dei et Apostolicæ Sedis Gratia Episcopo Crac. Duce Sever. In Synodo Dioecæsana Sancitæ et promulgatæ* (Kraków, 1621), 174-175.

Church's attention was focused on Protestant books; the matter of Jewish publications was only of secondary importance. This was reflected in Polish legislation, which, with considerable delay, repeated the regulations adopted by the universal Church. The first indexes of banned books appeared in the early seventeenth century (in 1603 in Kraków, a year later in Zamość and once again in 1617 in Kraków).<sup>23</sup>

The Church's tardiness does not, however, mean that Hebrew books were not subject to censorship in Poland. Censorship was introduced on the force of royal decrees of the early sixteenth century. This is confirmed by records related to the activities of the first Jewish printing shop, owned by the Halicz brothers. Around 1530, they founded a Hebrew printing shop in Kraków, the first Jewish publishing house in Poland. Though it functioned only a few years, after it closed, other printing shops opened in Kraków and Lublin. The competition from books imported from abroad meant that none of them survived for long.<sup>24</sup> In a royal decree of 1539 on the Halicz brothers' activities, there were also resolutions regarding the censorship of Hebrew books. It states that they should be monitored, and that the bishop and voivod would be responsible for that activity.<sup>25</sup> It is not known which tasks related to the censorship of Hebrew books were assigned to the ecclesiastical officials, and which to their lay counterparts. The division of roles was probably not clearly defined, evidenced by the disputes that later arose.<sup>26</sup>

Church legislation on Hebrew books focused on Talmud censorship. Censors searched for anti-Christian content in the Talmud. In Rome, fears of its influence led to a decision to burn the Talmud publicly in 1553. In the sixteenth century, two editions of the Talmud were published in Poland. One was published during the years 1559 to 1576 in Lublin, by the printers Chaim ben Iechak and Hana bat Josef,<sup>27</sup> and the other in Kraków from 1578 to 1599 by the publishing house belonging to Iechak ben Aron of Prosciejów.<sup>28</sup> As it turned out, the activities of the Roman Inquisition and the restrictive legislation of the Universal Church did not have a significant effect on the situation of Jewish printers in Poland.

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<sup>23</sup> *Index Librorum Prohibitorum cum Regulis Confectis per Patres a Tridentina Synodo delecto...* (Kraków, 1603); Zamość, 1604; Kraków, 1617.

<sup>24</sup> *Historia i kultura Żydów polskich: Słownik* [The History and Culture of the Polish Jews: A Dictionary] (Warsaw, 2000), 111.

<sup>25</sup> K. Pilarczyk, *Talmud i jego drukarze w pierwszej Rzeczypospolitej: Z dziejów przekazu religijnego w judaizmie* [The Talmud and Its Printers in the First Commonwealth: From the History of Jewish Religious Publishing] (Kraków, 1998), 147.

<sup>26</sup> K. Pilarczyk, *Talmud...*, 155.; Hanna Węgrzynek, "The Catholic Church and Jewish Books in the Polish – Lithuanian Commonwealth from the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century", in: *The Roman Inquisition, the Index and the Jews. Contexts, Sources and perspectives*, ed. S. Wendrhorst (Leiden – Boston, 2004), 59 ff.

<sup>27</sup> K. Pilarczyk, *Talmud...*, 75 ff.

<sup>28</sup> K. Pilarczyk, *Talmud...*, 177 ff.

In discussing the attitude of the Church towards the Jews in the Kraków diocese, one other document should be taken into consideration. In 1540, the first Papal privilege was granted to the Polish Jews. This document was intended to protect them against persecution and unfounded charges of ritual murder and profanation of the Holy Host.<sup>29</sup> It is difficult to determine what events prompted the Pope to intervene and issue this privilege. On the other hand, we can say with certainty that this privilege was of great importance to the Polish Jews, including those in Małopolska. It was approved in Kraków in 1589.<sup>30</sup> The Jews of Małopolska often invoked the papal legislation in cases involving accusations of ritual murder, for example, and profanation of the Host.

The sixteenth century was a watershed in terms of relations between the Church and the Jews in Poland. That century saw the first accusations of ritual murder and profanation of the Host, and these now actually resulted in legal proceedings, some of which took place in the Kraków diocese. The alleged crimes with which the Jews had been charged were interpreted as direct assaults on Christianity. The conviction that the faith was under threat from unbelievers justified the persecutions of Jews, thus becoming its cause.

In the sixteenth century, the clergy was more concerned about alleged profanations of the Host. This is confirmed by the anti-Jewish literature, which makes no mention of any priests actively participating in the formulation of ritual murder accusations. The best-known case sparked by members of the clergy (the nuncio and the archbishop) regarded an alleged profanation of the Host in Sochaczew, in Mazovia, in 1556.<sup>31</sup> As a result of this case, the provincial synod in Piotrków issued statutes ordering that this type of crime be combated.<sup>32</sup> It is worth noting that sources such as the Płock chapter [capitulum] records and Jesuit accounts, which say that it was in fact the Christians who used the Host for various practices because they believed in its miraculous power. Most often these practices were medical, but the Host was also used for experiments whose aim was merely to satisfy people's curiosity.<sup>33</sup>

In Małopolska in the sixteenth century, there were probably four accusations of profanation of the Host and six of ritual murder of a Christian child. Most of these are insufficiently documented, and the relevant sources are for the most part those found in anti-Jewish literature. Just two of the accusations of profanation of the Host were described in court documents. Those were accusations made against Jews in

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<sup>29</sup> S. Simonsohn, *The Apostolic See and the Jews*, vol. 5: *Documents 1539-1545* (Toronto, 1990), 2174.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> H. Węgrzynek, „Czarna legenda”..., 34 ff.

<sup>32</sup> B. Ulanowski, *Materiały...*, 115.

<sup>33</sup> B. Ulanowski, *Acta capituli...*, 202-210; Archivio Generale Societas Jesu in Rome, PL 50 (Historia 1555 - 1600).



Pilica in 1581 and in Bochnia in 1599, of which the second is much better documented. According to surviving documents, Church authorities were only involved in the Pilica profanation case. In 1581, the bishop of Kraków, Piotr Myszkowski, on behalf of Pilica's clergy, accused the Jews there of having stolen and profaned the Holy Host.<sup>34</sup> The case was heard by the royal court, which cleared the Jews of the accusations that had been leveled against them. The circumstances surrounding these accusations are unknown, as are the causes leading up to them. This case did not become as famous as the one in Bochnia. There, the accusation was the result of economic rivalry and attempts to drive the Jews out of the city, and the clergy's role was actually purely symbolic.<sup>35</sup>

The surviving documents demonstrate that in the sixteenth century the Church in Małopolska was not very interested in anti-Jewish accusations of ritual murder. We know of just one such case in that century. The alleged crime took place in Świniary, in the Podlasie region. The case was heard in Lublin in the Crown Tribunal (the highest appellate court for the nobility). The surviving documents show that it was not the local ecclesiastical hierarchy that was interested in the case, but rather the Lublin Jesuits. The body of a boy who had allegedly been murdered by Jews was eventually laid down in the Jesuit church.<sup>36</sup> It was only after the trial was over, in the early seventeenth century, that the bishop of Kraków, Bernard Maciejowski, tried in vain to have the child canonized.<sup>37</sup>

This trial about the murder of the boy in Świniary and the attempts to canonize him took place in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. At this time, the Church seems to have been growing increasingly interested in Jews' presence among Christians, while at the same time seeing in the Jews an ever greater threat to the Christian faith. During that same period, anti-Jewish printed materials began appearing which contributed to the negative attitude toward Jews. Many of them were written by clergymen.

An important aspect of the relationship between the Jews and the Church, especially in the sixteenth century, was the question of conversion to Judaism.<sup>38</sup> Some of the Protestant groups drew on Jewish rituals, sometimes so much so that they were called "Judaizers". Because they saw the Bible as the sole source of faith, and because of their interest in Hebrew, the Church feared that people might convert to Ju-

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<sup>34</sup> H. Węgrzynek, „Czarna legenda”..., 65.

<sup>35</sup> One of the men who allegedly stole the Host was said to have admitted to his priest during confession that he was guilty, whereupon the priest supposedly convinced him to confess the truth at the municipal court. H. Węgrzynek, „Czarna legenda”..., 69 ff.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>37</sup> *Acta Sanctorum, Aprili*, vol. 2 (Rome, 1866), 833-835.

<sup>38</sup> H. Węgrzynek, “Was the Catholic Church in Poland afraid conversion to Judaism in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century?”, *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów – Jewish History Quarterly*, no. 1 (2005): 5 ff.

daism. The first and best-known accusation of “Judaizing” was the case of Katarzyna Weiglowa, who was burnt on the market square in Kraków in 1538.<sup>39</sup> In that same period, a rumor spread that in Kraków and other cities, large groups of Christians had converted to Judaism; fearing for their safety, they fled to Lithuania.<sup>40</sup> Because this was said to have happened at the same time and in the same place as the Katarzyna Weiglowa trial, these two events are thought to be linked. There are no other known accusations of Judaizing from the Kraków diocese, though they can be found in other parts of the country, such as in the Płock diocese, or in Inflanty (area on Riga gulf, which was incorporated into Poland in 1561).<sup>41</sup>

The exact number of Jews who converted to Catholicism in the Kraków diocese during the sixteenth century is difficult to determine. The best known converts are Stefan Fiszal and the Halicz brothers, the well-known printers who were baptized in 1537.<sup>42</sup> In 1539, they published the New Testament in Martin Luther’s German translation in Hebrew script. The bishop of Kraków, Piotr Gamrat, was probably the motivating force behind the publication of this edition; most likely it was he who covered the printing costs. Because the Halicz brothers later had difficulty selling their publication, however, the king required the Jewish communities to buy the entire print run of about 3350 volumes.<sup>43</sup> The fact that the bishop of Kraków, Piotr Gamrat, was involved in the matter suggests there may have been plans to carry out missionary work among the Jews. This would have been in keeping with the policy of the Holy See. In 1542, Pope Paul III issued the Bull entitled “Cupientes Iudaeorum”, in which he encouraged missionary work among the Italian Jews.<sup>44</sup>

The “Letter of Michael the Baptized Jew...” published by Józef Wereszczyński, the abbot of the Sieciechów monastery who was probably also its author, is an example of the attempts being made in Małopolska to convert the Jews during the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>45</sup> Jesuit accounts also attest to missionary activities being carried out among the Jews. In reports sent to Rome from specific religious

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<sup>39</sup> M. Bielski, *Kronika to jest Historia świata...* [Chronicles are the History of the World] (Kraków, 1564), 1080; M. Bałaban, *Dzieje Żydów w Krakowie i na Kazimierzu*, vol. 1, 125; H. Węgrzynek, „Czarna legenda”..., 95.

<sup>40</sup> H. Węgrzynek, „Czarna legenda”..., 95.

<sup>41</sup> B. Ulanowski, *Acta ...*, 171, 187, 191, 196 and 213; Archivio Generale Societas Jesu, PL 50.

<sup>42</sup> *Historia i kultura Żydów polskich: Słownik* (Warsaw, 2000), 111.

<sup>43</sup> H. Szwejkowska, *Książka drukowana XV - XVIII wieku: Zarys historii* [The Printed Book in the Fifteenth through Eighteenth Centuries: A Brief History], 5th ed. (Warsaw, 1987), 138; M. Bałaban, *Dzieje Żydów w Krakowie i na Kazimierzu*, vol. 1 (Kraków, 1931), 132.

<sup>44</sup> J. Goldberg, „Żydowscy konwertyci” [Jewish Converts to Christianity], in A. Izydorczyk and A. Wyczański, eds., *Spółczesność staropolskie* [Old Polish Society], vol. 4 (1986), 223.

<sup>45</sup> Michael Iudaeus, *List Michaela Żyda Okrzczonego w roku pańskim 1583* [The Letter of Michael the Baptized Jew in the Year of Our Lord 1583] (Kraków, 1584).

houses, most probably to an exaggerated extent, the baptism of Jews was praised, including in Małopolska and Kraków, in 1593.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, it seems that the Catholic Church in Poland became interested in missionary activities among Jews only in the seventeenth century, and especially in the eighteenth century, as evidenced by the synodal legislation and activities of some of the bishops.<sup>47</sup>

Most difficult to document are the day-to-day relations between the clergy and the Jews. It is known that despite the official prohibitions, these contacts were very close. Members of the clergy had Jewish doctors.<sup>48</sup> They probably also hired other Jews in the professions as well. In 1535, the bishop of Kraków, Piotr Tomicki, ordered two surplices, which were to be sewn in St. Andrew's convent. The cutting of the material, however, was entrusted to Ester Fiszel, the wife of Moshe Fiszel, a woman who came from one of the most prominent Jewish families in Kraków.<sup>49</sup> This is an example of the special kind of cooperation that existed between the clergy and the Jews. It is worth noting that Bishop Tomicki stayed in quite close contact with the Fiszel family, and often used their services. The relationship was so close that the bishop intervened in the case of Moshe Fiszel and his step-son with Ferdinand I, who later became emperor.<sup>50</sup>

In the sixteenth century, the Polish clergy, including that of the Kraków diocese, was above all interested in issues of internal Church reform and the maintenance of unity within the Catholic Church. The growing Jewish population in Poland was not a matter of primary importance, although it did come up in the clergy's discussions. Jews sometimes lived on Church property and some were employed at the bishops' courts. Events that occurred in approximately 1540 proved a watershed as far as that relationship was concerned. During that period, both the nobility and the clergy adopted a series of resolutions that led to attempts to change – and above all to limit – Jews' rights and freedoms that they had enjoyed up to that time in the Kingdom of Poland. In 1538, the Piotrków sejm adopted the statute known as “De Iudaeis”.<sup>51</sup> Four years later, also in Piotrków at the provincial synod discussed earlier, statutes about the Jewish population were also adopted. The nobility's demands were dominated by economic issues, while the clergy's proposals were of a religious character,

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<sup>46</sup> Archivio Generale Societas Jesu in Rome, PL 125.

<sup>47</sup> J. Goldberg, “Żydowsky konwertycy”, 200 ff.; H. Węgrzynek, “Deputacje Żydów polskich do Stolicy Apostolskiej w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku” [The Delegations of the Polish Jews to the Apostolic See in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century], *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów – Jewish History Quarterly*, no. 3 (2001): 321 ff.

<sup>48</sup> M. Bałaban, *Historia Żydów w Krakowie i na Kazimierzu*, vol. I (Kraków, 1931), 151; M. Bałaban, „Jüdische Ärzte und Apotheker aus Italien und Spanien im XVI. und XVII. Jahrhundert in Krakau“, in *Heimkehr: Essays Jüdischer Denker* (Czernowitz, 1912), 173 ff.

<sup>49</sup> *Acta Tomiciana* (Wrocław-Kraków-Poznań, 1966), vol. 17, 254, no. 174.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 424, no. 323.

<sup>51</sup> *Volumina legum*, vol. 1 (1347-1547) (Petersburg, 1859), 258.

but both were connected. Granting Jews the right to collect customs and taxes meant they in some sense had a superior role vis-à-vis the Christian population, which could pose a threat to their Christian faith. There was a fear that Jewish employers encouraged Christians to break religious codes, such as not working on Sunday, and even worse, that they might have an influence on conversions to Judaism. It seems that the Catholic Church, weakened in the first half of the sixteenth century by the spread of Protestantism, was afraid that Judaism might also attract new adherents. This is suggested by the dissemination of information about mass conversions at that time, prompting the king to call for investigations into the matter.<sup>52</sup> Further evidence for this is provided by the synodal legislation on heretics and schismatics, i.e., Protestants and Orthodox Christians, and also on Jews.

In the first half of the sixteenth century, the Catholic Church's organizational structure and influence were both weakened, which meant its own struggles for unity and position were most important. The political situation did not allow for radical steps to deal with real or perceived threats. In the second half of the sixteenth century, this situation changed when the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth officially approved the resolutions of the Council of Trent, and the clergy then began to implement them.<sup>53</sup> The strengthening of the position of the Catholic Church resulted in the limiting of other Christian religions in the Polish lands – increasingly, this was being aimed at the Jews. From the early seventeenth century, there was an increase in the amount of synodal legislation that limited Jews' rights and their freedom to practice their religion. The language of those decisions also began to change.

The strengthening of the position and influence of the Catholic Church in the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century are subtly demonstrated by two events that took place in Lublin, seventy years apart. In 1564, the nobleman Erazm Otwinowski grabbed a monstrance out of a priest's hands, and stomped on it – a deed that went unpunished. In 1638, however, when Judge Michał Liniewski of the Crown Tribunal failed to doff his hat before the Holy Sacrament, he was tried and deprived of his function.<sup>54</sup> These events clearly show how much the role of the Church and its possibilities for action grew in the span of just a few decades.

One cannot evaluate the policies of the Catholic Church towards the Jews in the sixteenth century. It depended on various conditions and on many local factors, and

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<sup>52</sup> See footnote 31.

<sup>53</sup> The Gniezno province confirmed the legislation of the Council of Trent only in 1577. The various dioceses comprising the Gniezno province confirmed them at that time, including the Kraków diocese. As a result of these activities, the synods accepted the diocesan resolutions whose aim was to implement the Trident legislation. This was done only in the early seventeenth century, and in the Kraków diocese in 1601 and 1621. See I. Subera, *Synody...*, 107.

<sup>54</sup> M. Bednarz, „Jezuici a religijność polska (1564-1964)” [The Jesuits and Polish Religiosity (1564-1964)], *Nasza Przyszłość*, vol. 20 (1964): 160.

often on the views of those occupying the upper echelons of the Church hierarchy. In order to gain a more complete picture of the situation, however, research in many different areas still remains to be done.