

Natalia Nowakowska, *King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther: The Reformation before Confessionalization*, London: Oxford University Press, 2018, 279 pp.

The book under review, authored by Natalia Nowakowska, is the next of her writings devoted to the Polish Jagiellonian dynasty. It was preceded by a work based on the doctoral dissertation entitled *Church, State and Dynasty in Renaissance Poland: The Career of Cardinal Fryderyk Jagiellon (1468–1503)* (Ashgate, 2007); this was published in Polish as *Królewski kardynał: Studium kariery Fryderyka Ja-*

giellończyka (1468–1503), Cracow, 2011). It received favourable reviews in British, American, Italian, French and Polish historical journals. Apart from appraisals of this book authored by Zofia Wilk-Wośk and printed in *Piotrkowskie Zeszyty Naukowe* (vol. 13, 2012, pp. 265–71), and by Janusz Małek, published in *Gdański Rocznik Ewangelicki* (vol. 2, 2008, pp. 155–56), of considerable interest is the in-depth review written by Father Szymon Tracz for *Folia Historica Cracoviensia* (vol. 18, 2012, pp. 287–307), which also contains a number of critical notes and observations. Nowakowska's book won the Kulczycki Prize in the USA.

Let us commence by introducing the author of the reviewed work. Natalia Nowakowska works at the Faculty of History, Somerville College University of Oxford. She is the Principal Investigator of a five-year (2013–18) research grant financed by the European Research Council (€ 1.4 million), entitled *The Jagiellonians: Dynasty, Memory and Identity in Central Europe* (cf. www.jagiellonians.com). Six historians participate in the project. They write about the countries in which the Jagiellonians ruled, that is Poland, Lithuania, Bohemia and Hungary, as well as in of the Holy Roman Empire, where women from the Jagiellonian dynasty were electresses and duchesses, and also about Sweden, of which Catherine Jagiellon, initially Duchess of Finland, became queen. And thus Giedrė Mickūnaitė from Vilnius focuses on the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Slovakian Stanislava Kuzmová on Hungary, while Dušan Zupka writes about the women of the Jagiellonian dynasty who became the wives of various electors and dukes (previously mentioned) in the Holy Roman Empire, Susanna Niiranen from Finland — about Catherine Jagiellon, Queen of Sweden, and the Russian Ilya Afanasyev about Bohemia. Nowakowska, the Principal Investigator of the project, focuses on Poland.

While discussing the contents of the book under review, we should make an attempt at answering the following questions: 1. What is the place of the history of Poland — and perforce that of the reviewed work — in British historiography? 2. Is the structure of the book and the method of presentation used optimal? 3. Has the author's fundamental thesis, namely that Sigismund I the Old employed a 'soft' form of combating Lutheranism in Poland in spite of his 'hard' declarations (anti-Lutheran edicts), been proven in the text? 4. Does the factual material gathered in the book require supplementation? 5. Was not Sigismund I the Old's 'soft' policy towards Lutheranism due to the fact that the development of the Reformation in the Crown proceeded with a delay of nearly twenty years?

When giving an interview to the Catholic *Tygodnik Powszechny* weekly ('Jagiellonowie to była marka', 7 August 2017), Natalia Nowakowska explained the reasons for her interest in the history of Central Europe, including that of Poland, thus: 'I was born in London in a family that had emigrated to the British Isles. As a child I went to Polish school every Saturday. My parents sent me to an English school, however they wanted me to remain in touch with Polish language and culture. Our history classes were based on textbooks published by the expatriate community. Already then it struck me that the history of

Europe presented in British and Polish books was completely different. English children learnt about Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany, while further east there was a void. It was the same at university — we were taught that the history of Europe was the history of Western Europe. It was probably at that time that I started thinking about how to connect these two different visions'.¹ This opinion may be extended to practically the whole of British and American historiography. If we were to limit ourselves to the history of Poland, then we would find only a few English-language books on the subject, both syntheses and monographs.

The structure of the work and the research methods employed by Natalia Nowakowska are somewhat surprising, but nevertheless most interesting. The book has been divided into four parts: 1. 'Hypothesis', 2. 'Contexts', 3. 'Episodes', 4. 'Language analysis'. It also has two attachments. The first contains a list of fifty-nine trials conducted in Poland in the years 1517–35 against persons suspected of Lutheranism. The second is a list of texts (letters printed in the *Acta Tomicianae* collection, manuscripts and prints) which were used by contemporary Polish religious polemicists to define Lutheranism and Catholicism. Of note is the very thorough personal, topographical and subject index.

In her work, the author has adopted an issue-based arrangement, which in light of the quantity, quality and nature of sources was — in my opinion — the correct approach. For British historians, as the author aptly writes, the early Reformation in Poland is a *terra incognita*. I am afraid that the same problem, albeit naturally to a lesser degree, applies to Polish historiography. To a considerable extent this is due to the paucity of sources for the period of rule of Sigismund I the Old in Poland (1506–48). The situation changed utterly during the reign of Sigismund II Augustus (1548–72), and this explains the large number of works devoted to the rise of the Reformation in Poland. When recreating the beginnings of the Reformation in Poland, the above-mentioned small number and brevity of sources makes it necessary to apply methods used by mediaevalists. Nowakowska was well aware of this fact and found an optimal solution.

She commenced the first part of her book with a presentation of the trial of a townsman, one Maciej Gutfort, who had been accused of non-observance of fasts and participation in Lutheran conventicles. Proceedings were conducted before the bishop's court in Cracow in December 1532 and ended with just an admonishment. A total of fifty-nine trials held in the Crown in the years 1522–35

¹ 'Urodziłam się w Londynie, ale moja rodzina przyjechała na Wyspy. Jako dziecko co sobotę chodziłam do polskiej szkoły. Rodzice chcieli, abym poza szkołą angielską miała też kontakt z językiem i kulturą polską. Na historii nauczyliśmy się z podręczników wydanych przez emigrację. Już wtedy uderzyło mnie, że historia Europy w książkach brytyjskich i polskich jest zupełnie inna. Angielskie dzieci uczyły się o Wielkiej Brytanii, Francji, Włoszech, Niemczech, dalej na Wschód była pustka. Na studiach było podobnie, uczono nas, że historia Europy to historia Zachodu. Chyba już wtedy zaczęłam myśleć, jak połączyć te dwie różne wizje'.

concluded with the accused being admonished or fined; only in Danzig (Gdańsk) were thirteen people executed, however these sentences were passed against the leaders of a social revolt, while the preachers were punished with banishment. In the Holy Roman Empire there were 380 such executions in the 1520s (p. 17). The conclusion seems obvious. Sigismund I the Old preferred to use persuasion instead of oppression, although his severe Lutheran edicts might appear to belie this. The King's statement in his letter to Johann Eck may be viewed as characteristic: 'allow me to remain the king of sheep' (cf. Kazimierz Hartleb, *Ostatni Jagiellonowie*, Lwów, 1938, p. 31), while in the letter to the Archbishop of Lwów, who strove to limit the religious freedoms of 'schismatics' (the Orthodox), he wrote that he desired to ensure that each of his subjects enjoyed freedom of confession and religious practice (ibidem, p. 32). In the chapters entitled 'Drama in Danzig: The Crown and Reformation in Royal Prussia' (pp. 77–96) and 'A Difficult Nephew: The Polish Crown and Lutheran Ducal Prussia' (pp. 97–120) the author conducts an analysis of the policies which this ruler implemented in the northern provinces of the Polish state — in Royal Prussia and Ducal Prussia (a fiefdom since 1525) respectively — and lends support to the thesis that Sigismund I the Old applied his officially restrictive policy towards Lutheranism with a degree of moderation. Following the bloody crackdown carried out in Danzig in 1526, society in Royal Prussia was in a state of shock, and this fact halted the development of Lutheranism in the province for many years. This is attested to by, among others, the minutes of the Royal Prussian general regional council for the years 1526–42 (omitted by the author), which contain practically no mention of the Reformation or Lutheranism (cf. *Protokoły sejmiku generalnego Prus Królewskich*, 4 vols, ed. Marian Biskup et al., Toruń, 2001–17). Lutheranism continued to develop in secret, however, and already in 1542 the royal burgrave in Danzig, Jan Werden, requested Sigismund I the Old to release him from office, for he was unable to stem the changes taking place in the liturgy of churches in the city (Berta Bockelmann, *Danzigs Politik in der Reformationszeit*, in *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Johann von Werden und Herzog Albrecht*, Kiel, 1968, pp. 194, 196). The situation in Ducal Prussia was altogether different, for on 6 July 1525 Duke Albrecht of Prussia officially introduced Lutheranism in the province — in direct contravention of Article 7 of the Treaty of Cracow of 1525, which made it obligatory to punish clergymen infringing the order and acts of the 'Holy Christian Church' (the Catholic Church). As we can therefore see, the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* was adopted there quite early. Sigismund I the Old admonished his nephew to return to the fold of the 'old Church', however he had to accept the fact of his apostasy. When discussing the policy followed by Sigismund I the Old towards Lutheranism in the Prussian fiefdom it would have been worthwhile to make use of two letters from 1525 that were published in tome 7 of *Acta Tomiciana* (p. 233, letters nos. 33 and 35), well-known to the author. The first was written by the Bishop of Przemyśl, Andrzej Krzycki, to the papal legate to Hungary, Antoni Puglioni, while the second was sent by Sigismund I the Old to Pope Clement VII; both are available in Polish translations (cf. *Władztwo Polski*

w *Prusiech Zakonnych i Książęcych (1454-1657): Wybór źródeł*, ed. Adam Vetulani, Wrocław, 1953, pp. 90–104). Krzycki explained the conclusion of the Treaty of Cracow by the desire for peace, and clarified the secularization of the State of the Teutonic Order thus (ibidem, pp. 94–95): ‘as regards religion, the Pope has already been informed that Lutheranism is inviolable among this Order, while the Church of Rome is cursed. Many so-called Commanders and clergymen marry, altars and paintings are destroyed, ceremonies and rites of the Church are abolished, and all sanctity desecrated’, however adding that ‘under the pious ruler [Duke Albrecht], conjoined with the nation that is pure, they shall come to their senses’,² that is they shall return to the Catholic Church. In turn, Sigismund I excused himself to the Pope as follows: ‘for I strive earnestly, without sparing effort or care, to extinguish and repulse from my Kingdom this heretical pestilence, this dangerous conflagration that has set fire to a close and large wall of my state’.³ In Ducal Prussia, a Lutheran confessionalization based on intolerance towards Catholics was the norm (they could not hold office throughout province or at court, while later it became compulsory for university students to swear an oath to maintain the pure — that is the Lutheran — faith). Similar restrictions, but targeting the Lutherans, were in force in Catholic Warmia, which was ruled by bishops.

Before we proceed to answering the question whether the book under review, in spite of its copious bibliography, requires supplementation as regards factual material, we should take a closer look at its title. Namely, for readers unacquainted with the era the name of the work could suggest that it concerns personal or correspondence contacts between King Sigismund I the Old and the reformer Martin Luther, while such relations never in fact existed. The title *The Stance of King Sigismund I of Poland towards Lutheranism* would have been more apt. The author gave her work the subtitle *The Reformation before Confessionalization*, and this would mean that she is inclined to adopt the paradigm of confessionalization for the Polish-Lithuanian state. Although I personally supported the usefulness of this model, Polish historians are divided on the issue (cf. Jacek Wijaczka, ‘Czy w państwie polsko-litewskim w czasach wczesnonowożytnych nastąpiła konfesjonalizacja?’, in *Dysydenci czy decydenci? Protestanci w obydwu częściach Prus i Koronie w XVI-XVIII wieku*, ed. Wojciech Zawadzki, Elbląg, 2018, pp. 13–29). I think that the inclusion of a few additional works — both publications of sources and studies — would have supplemented the factual material gathered in the book without impacting the conclusions set forward therein. As regards published sources, the author has lim-

² ‘co się tyczy religii, już poprzednio powiadomiono papieża, że luteranizm jest wśród tego Zakonu nietykalny, zaś Kościół rzymski przeklinany. Wielu tak zwanych komturów i duchownych żeni się, ołtarze i obrazy są niszczone, ceremonie i obrzędy kościelne znoszone, wszystkie świętości zbezczeszczone’, ‘pod nabożnym władcą, [ks. Albrechtem] złączeni z narodem niczym nie skalanym powrócą do rozsądku’.

³ ‘staram się bowiem usilnie, nie żałując wysiłku i troski, ugasić i odeprzeć od Królestwa mego tę zarazę heretycką, niebezpieczny pożar, od którego płonie bliska i wielka ściana mojego państwa’.

ited herself to volume 30 of *Elementa ad fontium editiones*, which contains the letters sent by Sigismund I the Old to Duke Albrecht; unfortunately, no reference is made to volume 51 of the series with Duke Albrecht's replies to these letters. Further, no mention is made of volume 45 of *Elementa*, which contains a letter written by Liborius Schadilka to Duke Albrecht regarding the translation into Polish of Luther's catechism, or of volume 46 of *Elementa* with the published letters of Justus Ludwik Decjusz and Mikołaj Nipszyc to Duke Albrecht, dated mainly to the years 1525–35 in Cracow. It would have also been beneficial to make use of Carl Peter P. Woelky's *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Culm* (vol. 2, Danzig, 1887), which notes the first mentions of Lutheranism in this diocese, as well as of the newer edition of the Treaty of Cracow of 1525 (cf. *Die Staatsverträge des Herzogtums Preussen*, vol. 1: *Polen und Litauen: Verträge und Belehnungsurkunde 1525–1657/58*, ed. Stephan and Heidrun Dolezel, Berlin, 1971). Furthermore, the author has omitted *Volumina Constitutionum*, part 1, vol. 1 1493–1526 and vol. 2 1527–1549 (ed. Stanisław Grodziski, Irena Dwornicka and Waław Uruszczak, Warsaw, 1996). An oversight in the bibliography is the lack of two biographies: Zygmunt Wojciechowski's *Zygmunt Stary (1506–1548)* (1st edn, Warsaw, 1946, 2nd edn, Warsaw 1979) and Kazimierz Hartleb's *Jan Zambocki, dworzanin i sekretarz JKM* (Warsaw, 1937). As regards German authors, the following works have been omitted: Gottfried Lengnich, *Geschichte der preussischen Lande, Königlich-Polnischen Antheils* (vol. 1, [Danzig], 1722); Heinz Neumeyer, *Kirchengeschichte von Danzig und Westpreussen in evangelischer Sicht* (vol. 1, Leer, 1971); August Borrmann, *Ermland und die Reformation (1523–1772)* (Königsberg, 1912); Richard Fischer, *Achatius von Zehmen, Woywode von Marienburg* (Danzig, 1897); Arthur Rhod, *Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche im Posener Lande* (Würzburg, 1956) and Christoph Wollek, *Das Domkapitel von Plock 1524–1564* (Cologne, 1972).

Sigismund I the Old's 'soft' policy towards Lutheranism in the years 1517–35 was conditioned by the fact that in Poland the Reformation developed at least two decades later than in the Holy Roman Empire. The king's anti-Lutheran edicts, perforce severe, served to both halt the reading of Reformation books and prints, and discourage potential students from enrolling at the University of Wittenberg, where Luther lectured. Another obstacle was the language in which these publications were written — primarily German. If we compare the number of students from the Crown and Prussia (both Royal and Ducal) who studied at Wittenberg in the years 1521–35, we will be struck by the minimal proportion of those from the former. However, it increased rapidly after 1535. The number of Poles from the Crown who were matriculated at the University of Wittenberg developed as follows: in the years 1516–20 there were 6 students, 5 in the years 1521–25, 3 in the years 1526–30, 10 in the years 1531–35, 39 in the years 1536–40, 54 in the years 1541–45 and 23 in the years 1546–50 (cf. Marian Pawlak, *Studia uniwersyteckie młodzieży z Prus Królewskich w XVI–XVIII w.*, Toruń, 1988, tab. 9). Amongst them was the eminent Polish humanist and irenist Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski. He enrolled in the academic year 1531/32, and for a number of years lived at the house of Philip Melancthon, Martin Luther's closest collaborator. In contrast, considerably more students from Royal Prussia and Ducal Prussia were matriculated at

Wittenberg, the centre of Lutheran thought. In the years 1517–48 there were 40 from Danzig alone, as well as 16 from Elbing (Elbląg), 8 from Thorn (Toruń) and 29 from Königsberg. Later, following the death of Martin Luther in 1546, the number of students from both parts of Prussia enrolling at Wittenberg increased considerably. We are in possession of a list for the years 1518–60, when Philip Melanchthon was a professor at the University. And thus, during this period of 42 years a total of 139 students from the largest cities of Prussian Poland enrolled at Wittenberg: 62 from Danzig, 23 from Elbing and 11 from Thorn, and the following number from smaller cities and townships: Allenstein (Olsztyn) — 1, Braunsberg (Braniewo) — 3, Guttstadt (Dobre Miasto) — 2, Heilsberg (Lidzbark Warmiński) — 2, Hohendorf (Czernin) — 1, Konitz (Chojnice) — 5, Kulm (Chełmno) — 3, Marienburg (Malbork) — 11, Schwetz (Świecie) — 1, Stuhm (Sztum) — 2 and 2 from Wartenburg (Barczewo); only 10 students have been determined as originating from the nobility. A total of 78 citizens of Ducal Prussia were matriculated at the University: 67 came from the cities (of whom 45 were from Königsberg) and 11 from the nobility. The list shows that in Melanchthon's times youths from Royal Prussia studying at Wittenberg were twice more numerous than their counterparts from Ducal Prussia, and that those from Danzig and Königsberg formed the two largest groups (cf. Hermann Freytag, *Die Preussen auf der Universität Wittenberg und die nichtpreussischen Schüler Wittenbergs in Preussen von 1502 bis 1602*, Leipzig, 1903, and Horst Kenkel, *Studenten aus Ost- und Westpreussen an ausserpreussischen Universitäten vor 1815*, Hamburg, 1981, pp. 287–302). These findings explain to a certain degree why the Reformation movement in Ducal and Royal Prussia developed at a considerably faster pace than in Poland.

I have given more attention to this issue because the author failed to conduct prosopographical research. The analysis shows that during the period analysed by the author there were very few followers of Lutheranism in the Crown, and that they did not constitute a threat to the dominance of the Catholic Church. This was still a 'dispute within the family'. Until 1530, when the Augsburg Confession was adopted in Germany, it appeared probable to many that a theological dispute between Protestants and Catholics would be prevented, as had been the case in the fifteenth century. The threat to the 'old Church' in Poland only became real in the 1540s, reaching its climax in 1555, when at the Sejm in Piotrków Trybunalski no less than 113 envoys demanded the adoption of the Augsburg Confession. The book under review touches upon a number of issues that are worthy of more in-depth discussion, for example the tradition and language of religious disputes — both were based on the same notions and terms, however these concepts were interpreted differently by Lutherans and Catholics. It will doubtless be the subject of numerous reviews. Through her valuable study Natalia Nowakowska has broadened our understanding of the early Reformation in Poland.

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