

Introduction

Parallel Lives

Kraków's fourteenth-century cathedral is a small gothic construction of red-brick towers, copper roofing and one golden dome which sits on the Wawel hill overlooking a sweeping curve of the Vistula river. In the dark central spaces of the church, cluttered with kingly tombs and baroque altarpieces, armies of pilgrims and tourists pass the graves of two of Poland's earliest cardinals. The older of the two resting places is unmarked and all but lost: somewhere beneath the flagstones of the cathedral choir, the body of Cardinal Zbigniew Oleśnicki, one of medieval Poland's most formidable politicians, lies in a bronze casket which was first lowered into the ground in spring 1455. His secretary, Jan Długosz, lauded him as 'the parent, liberator and defender of our homeland ... the father of the fatherland'.¹

The second cardinal's tomb is just a few feet away: a huge, blackened sarcophagus wedged right into the steps of the cathedral's high altar, partially obliterating them with its bulk. This elaborate metal casket, produced by the Vischer workshop of Nuremberg, is covered with images. The vertical relief, facing the choir nave, shows a man in full cardinal's regalia with broad hat, accompanied by a saint with buckling knees and a walking cadaver; all three figures venerate a Virgin and Child, who are shown seated on a giant cushion. The tomb's side panels boast angels ringing handbells and cherubs riding dolphins. The main horizontal relief is obscured by a spare piece of carpet and a flowerpot, which hide the engraved face of the tomb's occupant (Figure 2). Roman lettering across the rim of the sarcophagus records that the object was commissioned in 1510 by King Zygmunt of Poland, 'for his dearest brother Cardinal Fryderyk, son of Kazimierz, who died on 14 March 1503 at the age of thirty-five'.² This artistically eclectic funerary monument marks the final resting place of Fryderyk Jagiellon, arguably the most powerful churchman seen in Renaissance Central Europe.

Although these two princes of the church never met, they were formidable political rivals and their ascendancies, while separated by three decades, are linked with delicate symmetries. Zbigniew Oleśnicki and Fryderyk Jagiellon, now

¹ Jan Długosz, *Annales Regni Poloniae* (2 vols, Leipzig, 1711–12), vol. 2, p. 167; 'parentem et liberatorem patriae et defensorem ... pater patriae.' A new scholarly, multi-volume edition of Długosz was in preparation in Poland at the time of writing: J. Długosz, *Annales seu Cronicae Incliti Regni Poloniae*, ed. J. Wyrozumski, K. Ożóg, K. Baczkowski & D. Turkowska (Warsaw, 1998–2006).

² 'Hoc opus Federico Cardinali Cazimiri filio (qui quinque et triginta annis exactis MDIII Marcii XIII obiit) fratri carissimo divuus Sigismundus Rex Poloniae pientissimus posuit ab incarnatione domini MCX'. Fryderyk Jagiellon's tomb is discussed by Adam Bochnak, 'Mecnat Zygmunta Starego w zakresie rzemiosła artystycznego', *Studia do dziejów Wawelu* 2 (1961): 131–301.

neighbours on the Wawel, were on opposing sides of a fierce battle over the character of the Polish monarchy waged throughout a turbulent fifteenth century. Zbigniew Oleśnicki was born into a minor noble family in 1389, but rose rapidly through the ranks of the Polish royal chancellery, becoming bishop of Kraków in 1423 at the age of 34. He immediately forged a powerful noble faction, rallying magnates such as the Tarnowski, Tęczyński and Koniecpolski around his episcopal throne. From 1423 to 1434, Oleśnicki was the king's principal political opponent, and the succession of an infant king in 1434 enabled the bishop to emerge as *de facto* ruler of Poland for over a decade. During the schisms which plagued the fifteenth-century church, Oleśnicki was named cardinal by no fewer than three popes and anti-popes, thereby consolidating his national and international authority. Zbigniew Oleśnicki was by far the most successful and ambitious leader of what we might term the 'magnate party' in fifteenth-century Poland: that is the section of the kingdom's high nobility who wished to see an elective monarchy with highly circumscribed powers, where effective political authority rested in the hands of the royal council – the 'prelates et barones regni Poloniae' – as a small self-governing elite possessed of carefully enshrined rights.³

Fryderyk Jagiellon, by contrast, was of impeccably royal pedigree and outlook. He was born in the Wawel palace in April 1468, in the immediate vicinity of the cathedral where he would be baptized, enthroned as bishop and later buried. He was the sixth and youngest son of Kazimierz IV (1447–92), the third Jagiellonian king of Poland, and his queen, Elizabeth Habsburg (see Figure 1). Fryderyk's five sisters were married to the electors and princes of the Holy Roman Empire, while his brothers became sovereigns: Władysław in Bohemia (1471–1516) and Hungary (1490–1516), Jan Olbracht in Poland (1492–1501), Aleksander in Lithuania (1492–1506) and Poland (1501–6), and Zygmunt too in Poland (1506–48). In 1488, at the age of 20, Fryderyk was elected bishop of Kraków, and in 1493 he became archbishop of Gniezno and thus primate of Poland. Later that same year, the Borgia pope Alexander VI elevated him to the cardinalate, with the title of cardinal-presbyter of Santa Lucia in Septem Soliis, making Fryderyk the only legitimate son of a European king to wear the red hat in the fifteenth century. Fryderyk became a senior member of the royal council and a leading dynastic politician, presiding over the elections of the new kings in 1492 and 1501. In those years he also enjoyed brief spells as 'interrex', culminating in his final twelve-month governorship of Poland in 1502–3.

Throughout his short life, Fryderyk Jagiellon was an aggressive proponent of the regalist programmes espoused by his grandfather King Władysław-Jogaila (1386–1434), father Kazimierz IV (1447–92), brother Jan Olbracht (1492–1501) and their

³ For scholarship on Oleśnicki, see M. Dzieduszycki, *Zbigniew Oleśnicki*, 2 vols, (Kraków, 1853–4); Maria Koczerska, 'Zbigniew Oleśnicki', *PSB* 23 (1978): 776–84 and *Zbigniew Oleśnicki i kościół krakowski w czasach jego pontyfikatu (1423–1455)* (Warsaw, 2004); Zbyszko Górczak, *Podstawy gospodarczej działalności Zbigniewa Oleśnickiego biskupa krakowskiego* (Kraków, 1999); Tomasz Graff, 'Wokół sprawy kardynałatu biskupa krakowskiego Zbigniewa Oleśnickiego', *Zeszyty naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Prace Historyczne* 129 (2002): 19–50 and 'Katolicki episkopat gnieźnieński i lwowski wobec pseudo-papieża Feliksa V przez sobór bazylejski', *Nasza Przeszość* 99 (2003): 55–129.

noble allies. In opposition to the magnate party, this Jagiellonian faction sought to forge a more centralized royal government, enhance the legal powers of the king, introduce an increasingly autocratic style of rule and assert the hereditary nature of Jagiellonian sovereignty in Poland. Cardinal Fryderyk Jagiellon's singular career can best be understood as a studied reprise of Zbigniew Oleśnicki's own ecclesiastical-political life; it was intended to ensure that the Roman Catholic church in Poland would be an instrument of increasingly centralized Jagiellonian monarchist rule, rather than a vehicle for magnate government and opposition. His brief spell in public life from 1488 to 1503 thus represented a major opportunity for the Polish regal party at the dawn of the early modern period.

Church and State

Fryderyk Jagiellon not only illuminates the vagaries of Poland's rich factional and constitutional politics in the Renaissance period, but is also a figure of general European significance.⁴ Historians have long argued that a key feature of European political history in the fifteenth century was a gradual metamorphosis in relations between the two pillars of medieval society – church and state. It is argued that the titanic struggles waged between emperors and popes in the Middle Ages over the relative rights of secular and clerical authorities – culminating in the fiery pontificate of Gregory VII (1073–85) and the investiture contest – were in later centuries inherited by local princely rulers.⁵ This struggle was increasingly played out not at a universal level, but on a local stage by national rulers such as King Philip IV of France (1285–1314). The fifteenth century has traditionally been seen as the moment when these medieval trends accelerated, to the point at which 'national churches' became discernible – meaning that princes substantially increased their own powers (of taxation, jurisdiction and appointment) over the Catholic church in their realms, striking a blow against ecclesiastical autonomy. As Francis Oakley argued in 1979, this period witnessed 'the disintegration of what had been under papal leadership and government a genuinely international church into a series of what were, *de facto* if not *de jure*, national and territorial churches dominated by kings and princes'.⁶

Major studies of the late medieval church written in the 1980s and 1990s took as their theme this narrative of creeping ecclesiastical 'nationalization'. John Thomson's general study *Popes and Princes, 1417–1517: Politics and Polity in the Late Medieval Church* (1980) explained how Catholic princes across Europe had steadily consolidated their control of local churches, through taxation and

⁴ The term 'Renaissance' is used in this book as a shorthand for a historical period, and also in reference to debates on the political history of late fifteenth-century Europe which have taken place in 'western' scholarship. In Polish historiography, however, the term Renaissance is understood primarily in artistic terms and is not routinely applied to Poland before 1506.

⁵ B. Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State, 1050–1300* (Toronto, 1988).

⁶ Francis Oakley, *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca, Mich., 1979), p. 72.

appointments.⁷ In 1988, Peter Heath published his account of relations between ‘church and realm’ in the English kingdom between 1272 and 1461. In this reign-by-reign analysis, Heath, too, flagged up the Crown’s growing powers of taxation and appointment over the clergy, arguing that this story had to be told in order to reassert the political importance of the church in medieval England for an increasingly secularized twentieth-century readership.⁸ A very different treatment of the topic can be found in Bernard Guenée’s 1991 book *Between Church and State*, which seeks to explore the church–state interface in France in the era ‘between the universal and the national church’ through a biographical approach, offering stretches of the lives of Bernard Gui (d. 1331), Gillies de Muisset (d. 1353), Pierre d’Ailly (d. 1420) and Thomas Basin (d. 1490).⁹

In recent years, the dusty, high-political world of church–state relations has become distinctly unfashionable. The great majority of recent research on the late medieval church has abjured the study of bishops, kings and cardinals, focusing instead on ‘grass-roots’ phenomena such as lay piety, confraternities, preaching, literacy, pilgrimage and religious theatre.¹⁰ This neglect is unfortunate, because the emergence of more ‘national’ churches has implications which reach far beyond the sphere of the ecclesiastical historian. These processes slot directly into another major trend of the fifteenth century, the appearance of a different kind of monarchy, which laid the foundations of the early modern – and, by implication, the modern – state. Across Christendom, the middle and later decades of the fifteenth century had seen a rash of prolonged civil wars in which local magnates had undermined local monarchies – in the Trastámara dynasty’s war of succession in Castile (1468–79), the leagues formed against the French Crown (such as the League of the Public Weal, 1465), or England’s Wars of the Roses (1453–85). Since the nineteenth century, historians have pointed to the generation of rulers who emerged from these conflicts, such as Isabella of Castile, Henry VII of England and Louis XI of France, as the architects of so-called ‘new monarchy’ or ‘Renaissance monarchy’ – a new model of secular government, with new ambitions. Crudely speaking, the features of these burgeoning Renaissance states are held to be a centralization of power around the monarch, the expansion of governmental bureaucracy, increasingly regular taxation (replacing the Crown’s reliance on income from its private estates), use

⁷ John Thomson, *Popes and Princes, 1417–1517: Politics and Polity in the Late Medieval Church* (London, 1980).

⁸ Peter Heath, *Church and Realm, 1272–1461: Conflict and Collaboration in an Age of Crises* (London, 1988); see also Denis Hay, ‘The church of England in the later middle ages’, in D. Hay (ed.), *Renaissance Essays* (London, 1988), pp. 233–48.

⁹ F. Guenée, *Between Church and State: The Lives of Four French Prelates in the Later Middle Ages* (Chicago, Ill., 1991).

¹⁰ See, for example, C. Trinkaus and H. Oberman (eds), *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion* (Leiden, 1974); John Henderson, *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence: Religious Confraternities from the Middle of the Thirteenth to the Late Fifteenth Century* (London, 1983); Susan Morrison, *Women Pilgrims in Late Medieval England: Private Piety as Public Performance* (London, 2000); Christine Peters, *Patterns of Piety: Women, Gender and Religion in Late Medieval and Reformation England* (Cambridge, 2002).

of mercenaries rather than noble muster armies, and the employment of a classical, imperial language of national sovereignty.¹¹

The international structure of the Latin church was arguably the primary obstacle in the path of this evolving governmental system. With its separate hierarchies, jurisdictions, taxation, legal system and clerical populations who owed allegiance to a foreign overlord in Italy, the church was medieval Europe's definitive state within a state. The extent to which these new regimes could impose their own will and authority on local clergy and religious institutions would be a basic test of their power.

Fryderyk Jagiellon's career in Poland is not just another case study in the rise of local churches, to set alongside Guenée's work on France and Heath's on England, and to reinforce their conclusions. Rather than providing a narrative of trends over one or more centuries, this book instead offers an in-depth study of the policies of one regime over a relatively short time span, in order to pin down precisely what the much used and abused term 'national church' might mean in practice, and to look again at who the real losers and winners were. Secondly, Fryderyk can help us to recover the significance of the dynastic bishop, the prince-priests who pop up across the Latin church in growing numbers from the 1450s, and who have traditionally been ignored as isolated hybrids or picturesque anomalies. This book will argue that the placing of a prince's immediate male relatives in senior ecclesiastical posts within their realms was an important and overlooked tactic of Renaissance monarchies, developed not to pension off surplus sons, but adopted specifically to subjugate local churches to royal authority. The careers of Alfonso (1470–1525), son of King Ferdinand II of Aragon and holder of five Iberian bishoprics, or Albrecht of Brandenburg (d. 1545), episcopal pluralist and Imperial Elector, have many parallels with that of Fryderyk. Fryderyk is the ideal subject for a study of dynastic bishops and state-building circa 1500, precisely because he represents an apotheosis of the phenomenon, as the most highly titled prince-priest of them all.

East and West

The introductory sketch of Renaissance monarchy given above was, in common with existing scholarship, constructed exclusively from West European examples – its archetypes are the Tudors, Trastámara and Valois. A study which proposes to treat a Central European kingdom on the same terms might therefore require a few additional words of introduction. Cardinal Fryderyk Jagiellon was a leading actor

¹¹ See J.R. Green, *History of the English People*, vol. 2 (London, 1878), pp. 5–23, 27–8; Fernando Chabos, 'Was there a Renaissance state?', in H. Lubasz (ed.), *Development of the Modern State* (New York, 1964), pp. 26–42; John Watts, 'Introduction: history, the fifteenth century and the Renaissance', in John Watts (ed.), *The End of the Middle Ages? England in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Stroud, 1998), pp. 1–23; Janos Bak, 'The Hungary of Matthias Corvinus: a state in "Central Europe" on the threshold of modernity', in *Bohemia: A Journal of History and Civilisation in East-Central Europe* 31 (1990): 339–49; J. Russell-Major, *From Renaissance Monarchy to Absolute Monarchy: French Kings, Nobles and Estates* (Baltimore, Md., 1994).

in a period of Polish history which has so far been almost completely invisible in ‘western’ scholarship.¹² Linguistic barriers (real or perceived) and the vicissitudes of twentieth-century political history have ensured that western debates on Renaissance government and the late medieval church have so far been conducted almost entirely without reference to the kingdoms and peoples of Central (or, in less fashionable parlance, Eastern) Europe. Where our models are built from examples garnered from only half the continent, we risk operating with only a half (or even a half-accurate) picture of Renaissance European society. The absence of Central Europe in English-language scholarship on the period can carry, and perpetuate, an implicit assumption that these kingdoms were backward and removed from cutting-edge processes of change. The premise of this study is that Poland – although, like all kingdoms, distinctive in certain respects – was firmly in the mainstream of political development until 1500 and therefore has much to tell us about the construction of the Renaissance state.¹³ Fryderyk Jagiellon can show us what Poland contributes to the general European picture and how Renaissance monarchy might flourish, and also falter, in Central Europe.

The Invisible Cardinal: The Historiography of Fryderyk Jagiellon

Although his impressive curriculum vitae should characterize him as a kind of Polish Thomas Wolsey or Henry Beaufort, Fryderyk Jagiellon has lost out twice over in historiographical terms. If Fryderyk has been completely overlooked in English-language and West European historiography, he is a distinctly shadowy presence in Polish scholarship too. Polish writers have traditionally treated Fryderyk Jagiellon as a minor figure, a miscreant and something of an embarrassment; the five hundredth anniversary of his death, in 2003, passed studiously unmarked. The verdict on Fryderyk first recorded in 1555 by Marcin Kromer, a leading bishop of the Polish Counter-Reformation, reflects sentiments which have prevailed among Central European historians ever since their first publication: ‘[Fryderyk was] quite without talent, an indolent, slothful inebriate who presided over a continual round of drinking parties, and who wasted away in vile living with his companions. And in the end he was finished off by syphilis.’¹⁴

¹² The main studies of late medieval Poland in English are Paul Knoll, *The Rise of the Piast Monarchy: Piast Poland in East-Central Europe* (Chicago, Ill., 1972) and Oskar Halecki’s posthumous publication *Jadwiga of Anjou and the Rise of East Central Europe* (Boulder, Colo., 1991). For a recent general survey of Polish history, see J. Lukowski and H. Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland* (Cambridge, 2001).

¹³ For debates about the relative economic development of Western and East-Central Europe in the Middle Ages, see T. Ashton & C. Philpin (eds), *The Brenner Debate: Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe* (Cambridge, 1985) and Piotr Górecki, *Economy, Society and Lordship in Medieval Poland, 1100–1250* (New York & London, 1992).

¹⁴ Marcin Kromer, *De Origine et Rebus Gestis Polonorum Libri XXX* (Basel, 1558), p. 678: ‘ingenio nullo, iners, ignavo ocio crapulae, & assiduis comotationibus in sumo &

To this day, the standard historical accounts of late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Poland take Kromer's characterization at face value, typically affording Cardinal Fryderyk little more than a passing, and usually dismissive, mention. The Kraków professor Fryderyk Papée (d. 1940), a leading interwar political historian, made only a handful of references to the royal cardinal in his three landmark monographs on the Jagiellonian regimes of Kings Kazimierz IV, Jan Olbracht and Aleksander, labelling him an overly ambitious prelate of very questionable personal morality.¹⁵ Oskar Halecki, another prominent twentieth-century scholar, accused Fryderyk of sabotaging royal government and being 'scarcely worthy of a cardinal's hat'.¹⁶ These criticisms of Fryderyk as an overweening, self-interested bishop, in the grip of insatiable political ambition, have been echoed in more recent works on Jagiellonian government by Jacek Wiesiołowski (1976) and Wojciech Fałkowski (1990).¹⁷ The mainstream view among ecclesiastical historians, meanwhile, was summed up in the 1974 multi-volume history of the Polish church edited by Bolesław Kumor, which referred to Fryderyk Jagiellon only once, stating that his impact on the church had been negligible.¹⁸ The cardinal did, nonetheless, find a twentieth-century apologist and advocate in the Catholic priest and historian Henryk Rybus, whose 1935 monograph on Fryderyk's episcopal administration cast the cardinal as a pious Tridentine bishop *avant la lettre*.¹⁹ Rybus was, however, a lone and largely ignored voice, and it is only very recently that a tentative reappraisal of Fryderyk's career has put up its first shoots in current Polish scholarship in the form of two articles – Dariusz Jach's survey of Fryderyk's place in Kazimierz IV's wider ecclesiastical policy and Zbigniew Dalewski's exploration of the cardinal's manipulation of royal spectacle.²⁰ The present study is the first attempt at a comprehensive analysis of Fryderyk Jagiellon's career, drawing on evidence from all spheres of his life, and locating it in its wider Polish and European context. It will argue that the cardinal-

sordibus cum gregalibus suis quibusdam marcsecens [sic]: & ad extremum morbo Gallico confectus est'.

¹⁵ Fryderyk Papée, *Polska i Litwa na przelomie wieków średnich* (2 vols, Kraków, 1904); *Studia i szkice z czasów Kazimierza Jagiellończyka* (Warsaw, 1907); *Jan Olbracht* (Kraków, 1936); *Aleksander Jagiellończyk* (Kraków, 1949; 2nd edn, Kraków, 1999).

¹⁶ Oskar Halecki, 'Jan Olbracht i Aleksander', in Stanisław Lam (ed.), *Polska jej dzieje i kultura* (3 vols, Warsaw, 1937), vol. 1, pp. 283–95; p. 292.

¹⁷ Wojciech Fałkowski, *Elita władzy w Polsce za panowania Kazimierza Jagiellończyka, 1447–92* (Warsaw, 1992), pp. 175–9; J. Wiesiołowski, *Ambroży Pampowski – starosta Jagiellonów. Z dziejów awansu społecznego na przelomie średniowiecza i odrodzenia* (Warsaw & Wrocław, 1976).

¹⁸ Tadeusz Silnicki, 'Od Bazylei do śmierci Aleksandra Jagiellończyka', in Bolesław Kumor & Zbigniew Obertyński (eds), *Historia Kościoła w Polsce* (2 vols, Poznań & Warsaw, 1974), vol. 1, pp. 340–56.

¹⁹ Henryk Rybus, *Kardynał-Królewicz: Fryderyk Jagiellończyk jako biskup krakowski i arcybiskup gnieźnieński* (Warsaw, 1935).

²⁰ Dariusz Jach, 'Zarys kariery kościelnej i wstępna próba ustalenia itinerarium królewicza kardynała Fryderyka Jagiellończyka', *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Prace Historyczne* 129 (2002): 51–74; Zbigniew Dalewski, 'Ceremoniał koronacyjny królów polskich w XV i początkach XVI wieku', *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 3–4/102 (1995): 37–60.

prince – far from being a curious footnote in late medieval Polish history – represents one of the boldest royal assaults against the Catholic church's liberties seen in late fifteenth-century Europe.

The book starts by considering the political background to Fryderyk's career. Given the paucity of English-language publications on late medieval Poland, Chapter 1 aims to provide an introduction to the kingdom's politics since the fourteenth century, charting how the Polish monarchy became an increasingly ailing institution at the hands of the magnate party, before undergoing a sudden recovery under Kazimierz IV (1447–92). We will then examine the three principal ways in which Fryderyk Jagiellon exploited his ecclesiastical authority to make the Polish church (albeit briefly) an instrument of strong regal rule and state-building in Poland. As a leading figure in national government (Chapter 2), Fryderyk used the political and financial resources of his bishoprics to further his father's Renaissance monarchy project, raising taxes from his clergy, controlling church estates and castles for the Crown, dominating the royal council, presiding over Poland's royal elections and tentatively linking church and state. Within the church itself (Chapter 3), Cardinal Fryderyk proved an interventionist governor, launching a major reform programme which, whatever its spiritual motivations, provided him with a pretext for attacking problematic independent bodies (such as cathedral chapters), while also giving the Crown closer control of the lives of clergy and laity at the grass-roots. Operating in a persistently hostile political climate, Fryderyk Jagiellon became a leading and canny propagandist for the Polish Crown. Chapter 4 probes his deployment of the church's visual resources and the ways in which religious iconography and spectacle were used as a platform for carefully crafted royal propaganda.

In the second part of the book, the focus broadens out both geographically and temporally. Chapter 5 asks what role papal Rome had to play in Fryderyk's career, and why it did so little to prevent the apparent usurpation of its authority by a local prince. Given the brevity of Fryderyk's life and the scope of his ambitions, Chapter 6 examines the cardinal's legacy within the Polish kingdom, to the 1530s. Chapter 7 asks what Fryderyk's remarkable career can tell us about the changing patterns of church–state relations and the use of royal clerics more generally in Renaissance Europe, using quantitative data in order to compare his career with those of other dynastic bishops and cardinal-statesmen. This study hopes to show that Jagiellonian Poland between 1488 and 1503 offers a compelling demonstration of the continuity of means and purpose between late medieval monarchy and sixteenth-century kingship, both Protestant and Catholic.

The surviving sources for Fryderyk Jagiellon's life are rich and eclectic. Scattered pieces of the Jagiellonian dynasty's correspondence from the reign of Jan Olbracht (1492–1501) have survived, and the preservation of Cardinal Fryderyk's register (of outgoing and incoming letters) for the period 1501–3 sheds particularly detailed light on his role in King Aleksander's regime.²¹ The principal contemporary commentator

²¹ *Codex Epistolaris Saeculi Decimi Quinti*, ed. A. Lewicki (3 vols, Kraków, 1876–94); *Akta Aleksandra*, ed. Fryderyk Papée (Kraków, 1927); *Materiały do dziejów dyplomacji polskiej z lat 1486–1516 (Kodeks Zagrebski)*, ed. Józef Garbacik (Wrocław, 1986); BK, MSS 207, 208.

on these reigns is the Kraków professor Miechowita (Maciej of Miechów), the author both of a short ‘Life’ of Cardinal Fryderyk (composed in manuscript between 1508 and 1525), and the *Chronica Polonorum*, the first printed history of Poland (1519), censored and reissued in 1521.²² Fryderyk’s ecclesiastical governance is recorded in the detailed minute-books, or ‘acta’, of Polish cathedral chapters, transcripts from his bishop’s court, early printed liturgical works and a handful of episcopal decrees.²³ Documentation pertaining to Fryderyk’s career and dioceses is also to be found in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano. A number of the cardinal’s artistic treasures, including gold liturgical artefacts and illuminated manuscripts, still survive today and sixteenth-century inventories of Polish cathedrals enable us to reconstruct much of his original collections.²⁴ Virtually all of these sources (with the exception of the Vatican materials) have long been known to historians of Jagiellonian Poland, but they have not yet been viewed collectively or in a cross-disciplinary way, and several have been fundamentally misconstrued.

Although the cardinal’s personality remains shadowy and obscured behind his Machiavellian letters and carefully honed public persona, a new reading of this fertile source material will hopefully enable a more nuanced image of Fryderyk Jagiellon to emerge: neither the monstrously corrupt cleric of sixteenth-century chronicles nor the flawed saint of Henryk Rybus’s 1935 apologia, but a highly competent and complex politician living at a time of great upheaval.

²² Miechowita, *Chronica Polonorum* (Kraków, 1519 and 1521). For the censorship of the chronicle, see Ferdynand Bortel, ‘Zakaz Miechowity’, *Przewodnik naukowy i literacki* (Lwów, 1884), pp. 438–51, 637–51.

²³ *Acta Capitulum Nec Non Iudiciorum Ecclesiasticorum*, ed. Bolesław Ulanowski (Kraków 1894), vol. 1; AKM, *Acta Episcopalia*, vol. 4; AKK, MS AA2; AAG, *Acta Cap.* B16.

²⁴ AAK, AA2, fo. 228v; *Acta Capitulum*, nr 2612–13, pp. 580–81; *Inwentarz katedry wawelskiej z roku 1563*, ed. Adam Bochnak, Państwowe Zbiory Sztuki na Wawelu: Źródła do dziejów Wawelu 10 (Kraków, 1979).