

Iwo Hryniewicz  
*National Library of Poland*  
Dawid Machaj  
*University of Warsaw*

## **Students' Innocent Fun Religious Riots and Rites of Passage in 16th Century Cracow**

The whole of human life is marked by change. Men and women are not simply born, nor do they merely procreate and die; they are made what they are through rituals. Most of these changes of status are effected by what a Belgian scholar Arnold van Gennep called rites of passage. Rites of passage are defined as scripted and formalized events, which change social status of a person. Through baptism newborn children become members of the Christian community, through marriage – a maiden becomes a wife and a bachelor a husband, during funerals corpses are properly removed from the community of the living and prepared for eternal life.<sup>1</sup> It was as true for Polish Protestants as for students of the University of Cracow (in the period when it was referred to as Academy of Cracow) – for both warring parties which we would like to make the main focus of our paper.

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is generally perceived as one of the most tolerant states of the early modern period.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, in comparison with most European countries, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth persecution based on one's confession did not occur often.

1. The literature on the subject of rites of passage is already vast and constantly growing. As stated, the term was coined by Arnold van Gennep in his classic *Les rites de passage* (1909; in 1960 translated into English) and subsequently developed by V. Turner in *The Ritual Process* (1969) and others. See also *Rites of Passage*, ed. by J. Holm, J. Bowker, New York 1994 and articles on the subject in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. by L. Jones, Vol. 12, pp. 7795–7804.
2. Cf. J. Tazbir, *A State without Stakes: Polish Religious Toleration in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, A. T. Jordan, New York 1973.

Developing a principle of peaceful coexistence of “those divided by faith”<sup>3</sup> during the 16th century was a great achievement of both Catholic and Protestant Polish-Lithuanian nobility. This principle was codified in the Warsaw Confederation of 1573.<sup>4</sup> In this act the nobility pledged to do their best to prevent any form of sedition, to uphold peace among Christians of different faiths, to refrain from shedding blood of those holding other beliefs, or from harming them in any other way. This (at least in theory, for in the Act of Confederation no means of executing its resolutions were proposed) has tied hands of anybody holding an office and striving to undermine Polish-Lithuanian tolerance.

Indeed, Cardinal Stanisław Hosius concluded that Poland had become a shelter for heretics (*asylum haereticorum*) from all over Europe — a true heretics' paradise.<sup>5</sup> This forced the proponents of the Counter-Reformation to work from the bottom up — not only by preaching, works of charity and other forms of proselytizing, but also by inciting Catholic mobs (students in particular) against Protestants. Before we look into how Catholic mobs were disrupting Protestant rites of passage in 16th century Cracow, it is necessary to outline the context of the events.

### 1. Context

While it is fully justified to speak about the 15th century as of the heyday of the University of Cracow, in the next hundred years this university went into the period of visible decline. More and more often it was spoken of not as “a pearl of the inestimable sciences,” but rather as the root of all kinds of problems. During the Sejm session in 1563 one of the leaders of the Executionist Movement,<sup>6</sup> Jerzy Ossoliński, wondered if the University hasn't

3. The term *dissidentes de religione* or *dissidentes in religione* at the beginning referred to all Christian confessions including Catholicism, but as the time passed, its usage was restricted to Protestants, who in the opinion of Catholics were differing in matters of faith from (their) faith considered as the only true one.
4. *Confoederatio Generalis Varsoviae*, in: M. Korolko, *Klejnot swobodnego sumienia*, Warszawa 1974, pp. 173–175.
5. Stanislaus Hosius, *De iudicio et censura ministrorum Tigurinatorum et Heidelbergensium, de dogmate contra adorandam Trinitatem in Polonia nuper sparso*, in: S. Hosius, *Opera Omnia*, ed. S. Reszka, vol. 2, Cologne 1584, p. 696.
6. The Executionist Movement was a political movement of Polish nobility, whose aim was to enforce execution of laws, reform the judiciary, military and treasury, as well as limit the power of magnates and clergy.

become a “den of thieves” rather than “a nourishing mother.”<sup>7</sup> Because of its legal autonomy, strong group identity and community of interests, the university was extremely difficult to keep under control. Certain intellectual stagnation may have contributed to the decline of the university,<sup>8</sup> but the real culprits were to be found among its students.

In the second half of the 16th century about 20 thousand people lived in Cracow, including between 320 and 400 of those who studied at the University.<sup>9</sup> Apart from students, pupils from parish schools – their constant companions (and often partners in crime) deserve to be mentioned. Both groups shared many similarities; they were subjected to rectors' jurisdiction and dwelled in the same places.<sup>10</sup>

7. *Diariusz sejmu walnego koronnego piotrkowskiego 1562/3*, in: *Źródło pisma do dziejów Unii Korony Polskiej i Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, red. A. T. Działyński, t. 2, Poznań 1856, p. 121. Cf. H. Barycz, *Historia Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w epoce humanizmu*, Kraków 1935, p. 338.
8. “The period between 1519–1549 was marked neither by great reforms, nor by any noticeable advancements in the matters of teaching and scholarship at the university. Neither were there any great individuals among its professors. However, the intellectual conditions, not only in Cracow, but in the rest of Europe as well, were changed, yet the university did not manage to catch up with the new situation.” A. Wyczański, *Uniwersytet Krakowski w czasach złotego wieku*, in: *Dzieje Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w latach 1364–1764*, red. K. Lepszy, t. 2, Kraków 1964, p. 221.
9. Calculations based on H. Barycz, *Historia Uniwersytetu...*, op. cit., p. 320 and I. Kaniewska, *Młodzież Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego w latach 1510–1560*, in: *Studia z dziejów młodzieży Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego w dobie Renesansu*, red. K. Lepszy, Kraków 1964, p. 33. In the first half of the 16th century the bachelor's degree was earned by only 15 percent of the matriculated, while the master's degree by no more than 4 percent. In the period in question the number of matriculated students fluctuated between 136 and 170. Assuming that the students' perseverance at the university remained relatively constant throughout the whole century and that students were gradually leaving the University, 100 to 125 continued studying after their first year at university, it can be assessed that between 280 and 350 students studied at the Faculty of Arts at the same time. Taking into consideration that higher faculties were much more elitist, it seems that the whole community of students comprised of 320–400 youths. The number of students in the higher faculties does not seem particularly important, as it were predominantly the students from the Faculty of Arts who were responsible for most of the riots and it was their number which was decisive in establishing the power structure of 16th century Cracow.
10. About rectors' jurisdiction see D. Machaj, *Sądownictwo rektorów krakowskich w XVI wieku*, “Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne” 66 (2014) z. 1, pp. 41–76, see also older works S. Estreicher, *Sądownictwo rektora krakowskiego w wiekach średnich*, “Rocznik Krakowski” 4 (1900), s. 249–267; A. Winiarz, *Sądownictwo rektora Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego w wiekach średnich*, in: *Księga pamiątkowa Uniwersytetu Lwowskiego ku uczczeniu pięćsetnej rocznicy fundacji Jagiellońskiej Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego*, Lwów 1900, pp. 2–26. About Protestant presence at the University

In accordance with internal regulations, students were obliged to live in dormitories known as *bursae*, parish schools and colleges, only exceptionally were they allowed, with the rector's consent, to live at home or in a rented room.<sup>11</sup>

Main *bursae* and colleges were located south-west of the city hall, in relative proximity to one another, creating a sort of informal university district in the area outlined by St Anne, Bracka and Szeroka streets and the walls of Cracow in the west.<sup>12</sup> *Bursae* offered accommodation for ca 270–300 students, which was hardly enough for the students of the Faculty of Arts. The only *bursa* located outside the "students' quarter" was the so called Bursa Juristarum – meant for jurists only, which spelt that the number of lodgings for the most numerous Faculty of Arts was further limited. Of course, parochial schools and colleges also provided accommodation to a certain, albeit limited, measure.

Such places of common residence fostered the emergence of close bonds among students, further enhanced by the fact that some of them stemmed from smaller groups, joint by bonds of blood or friendship dating to the period prior to their matriculation. We may suppose that by the time of matriculation (smaller or larger) fellowships were already formed, which were a basis for later, larger student groups. It can be inferred from the fact that in the Matriculation Register (*Album studiosorum*) brothers, cousins, students originating from the same (sometimes distant) places or members of the same religious orders signed up together.<sup>13</sup> Students-this

(also among students) see D. Machaj, *Zawsze wierny? Sytuacja wyznaniowa w Uniwersytecie Krakowskim w XVI i XVII w.*, "Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce" 59 (2015), pp. 95–135.

11. H. Barycz, *Historia Uniwersytetu...*, op. cit., pp. 644–645, see also M. Baster, *Students' Everyday Lives in the Colleges of the University of Cracow in the Sixteenth Century*, in: *Frühneuzeitliche Universitätskulturen Kulturhistorische Perspektiven auf die Hochschulen in Europa*, hrsg. von B. Krug-Richter, R.-E. Mohrmann, Köln–Weimar–Wien 2009, pp. 109–118. About religious side of living in dormitories see D. Wójcik-Zega, M. Baster, *Die Frömmigkeit der Professoren und Studenten in den korporativen Gemeinschaften der Krakauer Universität*, in: *Probleme der spätmittelalterlichen Frömmigkeit in Stadt und Universität. Zum Forschungsstand aus deutscher, polnischer und tschechischer Sicht*, Hrsg. von S. Flemmig, H.G. Walther, U. Schirmer, Leipzig 2016 (Abhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig. Philologisch-Historische Klasse, 84, h. 2), pp. 134–149.
12. For the location of the dormitories see Plan 2 in: K. Boroda, *Studenci Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego w późnym średniowieczu*, Kraków 2010, s. 375.
13. We have checked the summer semester of 1573: two youths from Pisarzowice were signed up at the same time: Martin, son of John and Bartholomew, son of Martin,

numerous and close-knit community — were the principal cause of many disturbances of public peace. Students in the second half of the 16th century mocked any form of authority — starting from municipal, through ecclesiastical, magisterial, up to the royal.<sup>14</sup> Several times they attacked the city hall (which was considered a humiliation for both the magistrate and the king),<sup>15</sup> got into fights with *substarosta*<sup>16</sup> and municipal services, assaulted city councillors and raked their houses with firearms. These “incidents” were not confined within the city walls. In July of 1577, students invaded a tenement in nearby Clepardia (Polish: Kleparz; currently a quarter of Cracow). The following February some unidentified perpetrators set fire to the

two sons of Raphael of Regulice (Riglicz) — Martin and Raphael, three sons of Stanislaus Potocki of Charlupia — Albert, Maximilian and Eustace, Jagiellonian Library (later BJ) MS 260, (later *Album studiosorum 1551–1606*) fol. 57. Later two brothers — Albert and Stanislaus Wolskis were signed up, as well as unrelated Seraphin and Adam of Sandomierz, besides Stanislaus and Albert of Skierniewicz fol. no. 58. The next folium contains the names of two Ridzińskis, Andrew, son of Albert and Luke, son of Luke, who were probably loosely related, and two youths from Przeworsk — Luke Szar and Martin Rozborski. The folium no. 57a contains the names of two brothers (signed up twice) — Adam and Nicolaus Komońskis as well as John and Jacob Skrzysowskis, but between them there are enrolled two or three students originating from other places, which somewhat distorts the picture, though it may be explained by the facts that the brothers probably split up during the last stage of their journey (which must have lasted several days). In the following semester two Cistercians were signed up — Mathew Janikowski and Luke Komorowski — both from the Gniezno diocese fol. 59. Family ties can be traced throughout the book — on the 3rd of October 1571 Stanislaus et Valentine, son of John Tarnowski together with their cousin John, son of Stanislaus Tarnowski were matriculated, all three of them originated from the Gniezno diocese, fol. 53a–54. On the 27th of October 1570 three unrelated residents of Poznań (Francis, Luke and Albert) were matriculated, fol. 52a.

14. K. Stopka, *De disordine et disoboedientia. Nieobyczajność studencka na Uniwersytecie Krakowskim w dawnych wiekach*, “Alma Mater” 2007 nr 95, s. 14–19.
15. According to the testimony of a land runner, shortly after master Francis Wolski had been executed by the court of councillors, with full support of the borough, “students having forsaken all the fear of God and violating the common law, with contempt and disgrace of His Royal Majesty and public peace fully armed assaulted the Cracow city hall [...] after their violent and willful attack, they chased out the guards and took and recovered the body of some Francis Wolski, who had been in accordance do God’s and earthly law rightfully punished with a sword *potestate officii*, for he was guilty of many misdeeds and a murder. National Archive in Cracow (ANK), Castr. Crac. 93, p. 497–503, Archive of Jagiellonian University (later AUJ), fasc. 492, no. 17125.
16. *Substarosta* was an important municipal official. He was a deputy to *starosta* — responsible for managing courts, keeping peace in towns and executing verdicts.

aforesaid tenement,<sup>17</sup> perhaps not without some connection to the ongoing investigation into the first crime.

Some perceived students' insolence and impunity as major threats for public peace, while others saw them as a useful tool, a weapon, which could have been used to restore order.

## 2. Protestants in Cracow

"If there had been no Rome, Cracow would have been Rome" wrote nuncio Erico Caetani's secretary, Giovanni Paolo Mucante in his itinerary from 1596–1597.<sup>18</sup> Although such praises for Cracow's attachment to Catholicism were not scarce, Cracow was to become one of the major sites of Polish Reformation. Early evidence of interest in the teachings arriving from Wittenberg can be found in Andreas Fricius Modrzewski's letter to Paweł Głogowski: "In the midst of tranquillity, Luther arose and put the foundations of Christian teaching into doubt. His books were brought to us from Germany, and even in the Academy they were publicly sold. Many amateurs of all new things delighted in them, nodded to everything they contained and praised them immensely; even theologians did not find them anathema."<sup>19</sup>

These circumstances, favourable to the Reformation, did not last long. In 1520 Leo X issued his bull *Exsurge Domine* condemning Luther's writings to flames. As commented by Modrzewski: "Masters, struck with terror, not only ceased to study forbidden books, but fearing to keep them, cast them

17. BJ cim. 8420 (later quoted as Glicki's Diary), Martin Glicki continued the diary of Nicolaus of Szadek (d. 22 XII 1564) after his death. Because of the lack of pagination, we refer to the dates, under which notes were added: 11 VII 1577 and 22 II 1578.
18. G. P. Mucante, *Itinerario in Polonia del 1596 di Giovanni Paolo Mucante Cerimoniere Pontificio*, ed. J. W. Woś, Rome 1981, p. 39. It is a curious fact that in the literature on the subject of the history of Cracow Mucante is quoted as the author of this saying, yet he himself quotes it in Polish as an old Cracow adage and then provides Italian translation: "onde per proverbio sogliono dire Kiedyby Rzym nie byl Rzymem, tedyby Krakow byl Rzymem, cioè se Roma non fusse Roma, Cracovia saria Roma."
19. A. F. Modrevius (Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski), *De ecclesia liber secundus*, ed. K. Kumaniecki, Warszawa 1955, p. 352: "Ecce autem in summa tranquillitate, Lutherus in dubium vocans capita doctrinae Christianae. Afferebantur libri eius ex Germania ad nos: ac in ipsa academia Cracoviensi publice vendebantur. Legebantur a multis rerum novarum cupidis, cum assensu et approbatione: nec a Theologis nostris improbabantur". Basel edition of 1559 is easily available online: A. F. Modrevius, *De republica emendanda libri quinque*, Basel 1559, p. 661: "Ecce autem in summa tranquillitate, Lutherus in dubium vocans capita doctrinae Christianae. Afferebantur libri eius ex Germania ad nos: ac in ipsa academia Cracoviensi publice vendebantur. Legebantur a multis rerum novarum cupidis, cum assensu et approbatione: nec a Theologis nostris improbabantur."

into fire."<sup>20</sup> To what extent these words were true — we will see soon enough, for now it is clear that Lutheranism, followed by other post-reformation confessions rose in power in the capital city. In Cracow Reformation's road to prominence two figures played exceptionally important roles — Jan Boner<sup>21</sup> and Krzysztof Treacy.<sup>22</sup> The former, acting as Cracow's *procurator magnus* (burgrave of the castle), in every possible way tried to introduce Protestants into the City Council. He actively supported anti-Catholic disturbances, and, more importantly, presented the Protestant community with a garden located outside Nicolas Gate (Polish: Brama Mikołajska), which was soon to become their cemetery.

Achievements of the latter — a theologian and a humanist Krzysztof Treacy, were not of lesser importance. In 1564 he founded a Protestant school, but for us more important is his role in acquiring a tenement at St John Street, which was transformed in 1572 into the greatest Protestant church in Poland. This vast building with a characteristic pointed roof, known as "Bróg" (Polish word for a heap of straw)<sup>23</sup> was safeguarded by a royal privilege. That was the heyday of Protestantism in Poland. Adherents of Luther, Calvin and Polish Brethren could be found in all estates and walks of life; members of the University of Cracow were no exception.

### 3. University and Protestantism

The University of Cracow was considered to be the pillar of Catholic orthodoxy. But even here we can encounter some exceptions. Apart from Jakub of Ilża,<sup>24</sup> Francesco Stancaro<sup>25</sup> or Francesco Lismanini,<sup>26</sup> there were

20. A. F. Modrevius, *De ecclesia*, p. 253. "Hoc timore percusi magistri nostri, natum abest ut libros vetitos lerent, ut etiam igni eos cremarent".
21. K. Pieradzka, *Boner Jan*, in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, t. 2, pp. 299–300.
22. Two most important studies considering Christopher Treacy are: T. Wotschke, *Christoph Thretius. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Kampfes der reformierten Kirche gegen den Antitrinitarismus in Polen*, "Altpreußische Monatsschrift" 44 (1907), pp. 1–42, 151–210 and J. Czubek, *Krzysztof Treacy. Przywódca kalwinów małopolskich*, "Reformacja w Polsce" 1 (1921), pp. 35–42, see also: J. Bieniarzówna, K. Kubisz, *400 lat reformacji pod Wawelem*, Warszawa 1958, pp. 14–17.
23. In the literature on the subject it is often assumed that the name "Bróg" was derivative and as such was used by Catholics to mock Protestants, which is not entirely true. The name "Bróg" was used to refer to this tenement long before it was turned into a Protestant temple cf. A. Chmiel, *Domy krakowskie: ulica św. Jana*, cz. 1, Kraków 1917, p. 127.
24. H. Barycz, *Jakub z Ilży młodszy*, in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, t. 10, pp. 354–355.
25. H. Gmiterek, *Stankar Franciszek*, in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, t. 42, pp. 158–163.
26. H. Barycz, *Lismanin Franciszek*, in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, t. 17, pp. 465–470.

also some less known Reformation activists who taught at the University, including future rectors such as Stanisław Stalek of Pińczów, Jan of Turobin or Stanisław Pik Zawadzki. According to members of the cathedral chapter, during the Lent of 1554 Stanisław Stalek of Pińczów delivered a sermon in the Church of All Saints, which "contained many fatal and new dogmas [...] which stank of heresy and sedition."<sup>27</sup> During the octave of Corpus Christi in 1557, Jan of Turobin, "uttered many heresies on the topic of the Eucharist causing a great scandal."<sup>28</sup>

On the 14th of December 1578 Stanisław of Pińczów, an experienced member and the dean of the Faculty of Theology dared to give a sermon in Bróg, in which he urged to administer Eucharist *sub utraque specie* and preached against invoking saints' assistance.<sup>29</sup> Five days after the event (and probably as a result of it) nuncio Andrea Caligari made the members of the university firmly and univocally support Rome in the confessional struggle.<sup>30</sup>

Although since the proclamation of Pius IV's bull in 1564 profession of faith had been a requirement to obtain a degree and assume professorship, it was only on the 19th of December 1578 when all corporate professors (excluding those giving lectures, but not belonging to colleges) professed their faith in accordance with the Tridentine formula, which subsequently became a norm. In spite of the late date of professors' pledge of allegiance to Catholicism, students were obliged to disavow heresy much earlier – that is, during their matriculation. During the ceremony, a newly accepted student had to swear an oath comprising of five points (I. Obedientia, II. Promotio, III. Praeceptum, IV. Vindicta, V. Haereticus) in presence of the rector. During the last stage of the ceremony a new student promised not to embrace John Huss's heresy, beliefs of his successors and of those who revive *antiquas haereses*. This precept was not a dead letter, which is proven by the fact that an addition was made to *Album Studiosorum* (1509–1551),

27. Archive of the Cathedral Chapter in Cracow, *Acta actorum capituli ecclesiae cathedralis Cracoviensis*, vol. V, fol. 148b–149a.

28. *Acta actorum capituli ecclesiae cathedralis Cracoviensis*, vol. 5, fol. 233a.

29. I. A. Caligarii nuntii apostolici in Poloniae epistolae et acta 1578–1581, ed. L. Bora-tyński, Kraków 1915, p. 103.

30. I. A. Caligarii nuntii apostolici..., op. cit., pp. 101–102. About confessional situation in the University of Cracow see D. Machaj, *Sytuacja wyznaniowa w Uniwersytecie Krakowskim w XVI i XVII w.* "Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce" 54 (2015), pp. 95–135, about aforementioned events, especially pp. 111–114.



which reads as follows: *similiter Luteri et sequatium eius*.<sup>31</sup> This oath, which (with some exceptions)<sup>32</sup> was in use at least until 1642, was to prevent any heretics<sup>33</sup> from entering the university. No wonder that the relations of the University with the Protestant community in Cracow were becoming more and more strained. Yet, there were few incidents which contributed more to this fact than the eruption of a great tumult in 1574.

#### 4. The Tumult of 1574

Protestants had been enjoying their church for only two years before a great riot erupted.<sup>34</sup> During the interregnum, on the 10th of October 1574, at the time when nobility from the Cracow Voivodeship was taking part in a display,<sup>35</sup> a wedding ceremony was in progress in Bróg. As the minister was blessing the couple with words: "In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit..." — "But where's the Blessed Virgin?!"<sup>36</sup> — exclaimed a newly admitted student Jerome Orzechowski. A fight ensued — both with words and with fists. Students, being in the minority, withdrew from the church, but as soon as the ceremony was over, and only the minister and a guard were left in Bróg, they returned in great numbers. Stones and everything at hand went airborne.

Students were extremely well-organized; they split into two groups. One group was watching out for any support oncoming for the besieged church and the other one focused on the work of destruction. Soon, all sorts

31. *Album studiosorum 1509–1551*, p. 5.

32. In accordance with King Stephen Bathory's regulations of 1578, which (among many others things) obliged the university not to prevent anybody from hearing lectures because of faith, seven youths were *sine Juramento suscepti et ideo Calviniste sunt* in spring semester of 1579. *Album studiosorum 1551–1606*, fol. 74a.

33. Each time we use the name "heretic" we do not apply any value judgment, but refer to those who were perceived as heretics by the Catholic Church.

34. We have gone through the original sources (provided they still exist), but most of them were printed in a selection of sources prepared by R. Żelewski, (*Materiały do dziejów reformacji w Krakowie. Zaburzenia wyznaniowe 1551–1598*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1962). Some of the sources printed in this editions are available only in copies made by modern scholars.

35. A display (Polish: popis, okazowanie) was a regular survey of the *levée en masse* of a given land or *powiat*.

36. Information about this verbal exchange is provided by independent (both Catholic and Protestant) sources: Christopher Treacy's letter to the Calvinists in Zurich (R. Żelewski, *Materiały...*, op. cit., pp. 46–53) and anonymous Catholic account (R. Żelewski, *Materiały...*, op. cit., p. 66; Professor Martin Fox's diary (BJ cim. 5531 — under 10 X 1574).

of low-lives craving loot joined the students and pupils from parish schools. Ten guards sent from the castle did not manage to help a lot, they were easily dispersed by well-armed youths. During the investigation, which followed the demolition of Bróg, one of the guards *ostendit vulnus cruentum in capite ex sagitta*<sup>37</sup> — showed a severe wound in his head inflicted by an arrow. Even *substarosta*, Zygmunt Palczowski was unable to quell the riot.

The following day, students aided by artisans and common rabble resumed the siege. Having broken the church door, they rushed inside. Looting began. As soon as looting and demolishing was over, students, visibly pleased, sang *Te Deum* and *Conterre, Domine, inimicos nostros* warming themselves by a bonfire made of Protestant books.<sup>38</sup> The riot lasted three days and resulted in serious losses, estimated at about 30 thousand florins. Several defenders were severely injured, two of them even died of wounds.<sup>39</sup>

Numerous protests from nobility fell on deaf ears. Even though five men "of mean condition" were beheaded<sup>40</sup> after they had been caught carrying a coat, three locks, two iron beams and a pot of butter,<sup>41</sup> stolen at the destroyed church, students, undoubtedly the main perpetrators, remained unpunished. The University could not be harmed even when a privilege stolen in Bróg was later found in Collegium Maius.<sup>42</sup> Many rumours circulated about the causes of the assault on the Protestant church. Apart from obvious confessional enmity there were economic and political reasons as well as various causes of anthropological nature. It's a high time to inquire deeper into the event we have just described.

A wedding as a rite of passage aims at transforming one's social status and thus should take place in public in order to be fully recognized. The aforementioned wedding procession set off from Cerdonia (Polish: Garbary), where many Protestants used to live. On their way to Bróg they had to pass through the university quarter, densely populated by students, or

37. Protocol of forensic examination of Adalbert, servant of Martin Stokłosa. ANK Kr. Castr. Crac. Rel. vol. 2, p. 607 (quoted after R. Żelewski, *Materiały...*, op. cit., p. 26).

38. A letter of the nobility of Little Poland (R. Żelewski, *Materiały...*, op. cit., pp. 35–39).

39. Testimony of a land runner (R. Żelewski, *Materiały...*, op. cit., pp. 43–44).

40. ANK MS 864 (*Acta damnatorum seu maleficorum alias smoła*), pp. 206–207.

41. A protocol of examination of five participants of the riot, who were condemned to death (R. Żelewski, *Materiały...*, op. cit., p. 40).

42. A testimony of a land runner on discovering a stolen privilege of Raphael Leszczyński in Collegium Maius (R. Żelewski, *Materiały...*, op. cit., p. 42); A letter of starosta of Radziejów, Raphael Leszczyński to Cracow Voivode, Peter Zborowski (R. Żelewski, *Materiały...*, op. cit., pp. 54–55).

its nearest vicinity. As soon as the loud and cheerful procession was spotted, students seemed to have sent a scout in the person of young Jerome Orzechowski. The moment he interrupted the wedding was well chosen, because by preventing the minister from blessing the newly-weds-to-be and by starting the fight he intended to suspend the couple in a state of liminality — they were no longer single, but have not yet achieved a new status. Interruption of rites of passage is always harmful, as the main actors and those who surround them are more vulnerable due to strong emotions expressed during such ceremonies. As we will show later, however, it was even more harmful in case of funeral riots, when the victim's body was destroyed. After all, an interrupted wedding can be resumed.

But let us return to the wedding. Although at first glance the time of the assault may seem random, it was not. After Henry de Valois's escape from the throne, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was left headless, with various powers including Habsburg pretender and church officials contending for domination. At the time when the riot erupted, the nobility from the Cracow Voivodeship were taking part in a display and were unable to prevent any disturbances. The situation was even more volatile as we are writing about a period shortly before a new rector assumed his office (which customarily happened on the 16th of October),<sup>43</sup> when first freshmen began to arrive in Cracow. The fact that the boy who started the tumult was a thirteen-year-old freshman was no accident either. The described event was neither the first, nor the last instance when students interrupted Protestant rites of passage. Indeed, in 1577 a priest from St Stephen's church, Thomas Płaza, wrote about Protestants: "Not only the quick, but also the dead cannot find any peace. Students dig out their corpses and hack them into pieces."<sup>44</sup>

## 5. Funerals

Protestant cemetery founded in 1569 was one of the favourite targets of students' aggression, but even more tempting, from their perspective, was to attack a funeral procession. In 1557 two students — a thirteen-year-old boy

43. Z. Pietrzyk, *Poczet rektorów Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego 1400–2000*, Kraków 2000, p. 14.

44. A letter of a parish priest of St. Stephen's church, Thomas Płaza to a coadjutor bishop of Warmia, Martin Kromer (R. Żelewski, *Materiały...*, op. cit., p. 83).

and his older protector<sup>45</sup> — tried to disturb Regina Filipowska's funeral ceremonies, which were taking place in a tenement at the corner of Wiślina and St Anne streets. The younger of the students, Vaclav Uhrowiecki<sup>46</sup> tried to provoke Jerome Filipowski — husband of the deceased,<sup>47</sup> which resulted in a fight.<sup>48</sup>

Students alongside their companions threw stones and insults at the corpse, the minister and the mourners. Although Filipowski managed to appease tempers of the gathered, procession was not frustrated, thanks to its noble (and armed!) participants. The mourners, who were attacked in 1578, however, were much less fortunate.

On the 1st of June 1578 a funeral procession of a relatively poor Protestant woman was passing through Grodzka street. Suddenly a group of students and pupils from nearby All Saints' School threw stones at mourners forcing them and the carriage driver to flee. Then, attackers grabbed the corpse, stripped it naked and cruelly mutilated it with stones, clubs and axes.<sup>49</sup> An anti-funeral began. The "ceremony" that followed resembled charivari to some extent, mainly because of its noisiness and derogatory nature.

45. His name was Martin Piątkowski, matriculated in 1556.

46. As a side note it can be added that Venceslaus Uhrowiecki used to dwell in one of John Ull's tenements. Ull himself was a zealous Calvinist, whose wife is later reported to let her flat to be used by Polish Brethren as a place of gathering. Indeed, a strange place to live in for a Catholic student and a person who ignited a religious riot.

47. A protestation made by the nobility against students (R. Żelewski, *Materiały...*, op. cit., pp. 7–9).

48. Students, on their part, presented a very different account of the event. According to their retestation (R. Żelewski, *Materiały...*, op. cit., pp. 9–10), Venceslaus was returning from the nearby of St Anne Church to his place of residence in one of the town councillor's, John Ull's tenements, located very close to the place where Filipowska's funeral ceremony was taking place (Filipowski resided at no. 2, while the town councillor owned a house no. 6A — cf. *Województwo krakowskie w drugiej połowie XVI wieku*, cz. 2, red. H. Rutkowski, Warszawa 2008, p. 170; see also the map of Cracow — *Kraków w 1598 r.*, in: *Województwo krakowskie...*, op. cit., cz. 1, map no. 7). Uhrowiecki saw a large gathering, so decided to come nearer and stood there peacefully (*ibidemque pacificus stetit*). Then, without any reason Filipowski approached him, slapped him across the face and tried to do him much more harm (*aliisque verberibus afficere eum conatus est*), but the youth was saved by other noble students (*ab aliis studiosis nobilibus*).

49. A protestation made by the Protestant community against the students of the University (R. Żelewski, *Materiały...*, op. cit., pp. 104–105) or ANK, *Castr. Crac. Rel.* vol. 5, pp. 1104–1106.

Students called for their companions from other dormitories and started a derisive procession.

As we can read in a protestation submitted by the local nobility: "Students shamefully, with hue and cry circled around the City Square"<sup>50</sup> – making their "procession" even more visible and painful for Protestants. While driving a carriage with the stripped and mutilated body they sang and cried as loudly as they could. In the end they threw the body into the Vistula. In this case it is difficult to differentiate conscious action from sheer malice. Some of our sources indicate that the whole action was provoked by the clergy.<sup>51</sup> By treating the body in such a humiliating manner students and their accomplices tried, perhaps, to show that God had abandoned "the heretics" and let them suffer any disgrace.

As mentioned above, similarly as in the case of weddings, interruption of funerals was intended to shatter the rite of passage. It was especially harmful if bodies were destroyed or removed from the community which made it impossible to transfer the deceased into the status of ancestors, to pay them proper honours by their graves and create Protestant sites of memory. It should be stressed that until the 20th century, for both Catholics and Protestants, inhumation was the only accepted way of separating the dead from the living in an honourable manner. Preventing the bodies from being buried resulted in their permanent suspension in the state of liminality and might have even threatened their salvation.<sup>52</sup> Destroying bodies or throwing them into the Vistula may be also interpreted as rites of purification of the community from pollution caused by heretics' presence.<sup>53</sup> It was

50. A protestation made by the Protestant community against the students of the University and its rector, Martin Glicki (R. Żelewski, *Materiały...*, op. cit., p. 100).

51. Cf. *Acta actorum capituli ecclesiae cathedralis Cracoviensis*, vol. 7, fol. 74b: *Super quibusdam turbis et comminationibus haereticorum consultatio*.

52. D. Davies, *Christianity*, in: *Rites of Passage*, op. cit., pp. 54–56.

53. The debate on pollution and purification was spurred by Mary Douglas's famous book *Purity and Danger* (New York 1966), which we find very inspiring for our research. The concept of heresy as pollution can be traced all over Europe – see: R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, Oxford 2007 (especially pp. 94–116), see also an article on the subject of purification in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, op. cit., vol. 11, pp. 7503–7511. The notion of heresy as "pollution," "disease" and "venom" is prevalent in Polish Catholic literature of the early modern period – to mention the most famous example see P. Skarga, *Kazanie czwarte. O trzeciej chorobie Rzeczypospolitej, która jest naruszenie religiej katolickiej przez zarazę heretycką* [Sermon Four. On the Third Disease of the Commonwealth that is on Violating the Catholic Religion by Heretical Pestilence], in: P. Skarga,

also achieved by burning Protestant books and equipment from Bróg, as was the case during the tumult of 1574.

Attacking a funeral of a poor Protestant woman was one thing, but disturbing Voivode and *starosta* Piotr Zborowski during his obsequies was something quite different. Nevertheless, a newly admitted student Jakub de Kufflow did not hesitate to do so. He stood firmly in front of the funeral conduct, shouting at the minister: "taces ut scropha, quare non canis aliquid"<sup>54</sup> and then adding "cur non est crux in ista processione, łotrze lutrze, times crucem sicut sathan."<sup>55</sup> We should explain that "Łotrze lutrze" is in Polish a play on words, which can be translated as "you Lutheran scum." This is another example of stripping Protestants of their dignity, rendering solemn events a farce. Perhaps even more humiliating is the fact that the student who interrupted the ceremony was left almost unpunished – he was put in solitary confinement in Collegium Maius for three days – according to rector's sentence; not because of the act itself, but for creating an opportunity for a tumult.<sup>56</sup>

## 6. Rites of passage/rites of violence

It is high time to draw some general conclusions from the described events and inquire deeper into the nature of religious violence in early modern Cracow. According to the well-known definition, coined by Natalie Zemon Davis, a religious riot is "any violent action, with words or weapons, undertaken against religious targets by people, who are not acting officially and formally as agents of political and ecclesiastical authority."<sup>57</sup> In our opinion, what should be added to this definition is the performative aspect of religious (and to some extent secular) riots. Tumults were spectacles, performed in such a way as to make the greatest impression possible. Even if they were carried out silently under the cloak of night, their results (dug out corpses set up in outrageous positions, smashed graves) were to be spectacular, loud and flashy. This performative aspect had many purposes:

*Kazania sejmowe*, red. J. Tazbir, M. Korolko, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 2003, pp. 73–92.

54. Protocol of a trial in rector's court against Jacob Szado (R. Żelewski, *Materiały...*, op. cit., p. 123). MS: AUJ MS 18 (later *Acta rectoralia 1580–1618*), pp. 16–18; *Seniores evangelicorum, Jacobus de Kufflow*.

55. *Seniores evangelicorum, Jacobus de Kufflow*.

56. *Seniores evangelicorum, Jacobus de Kufflow*.

57. N. Z. Davis, *The Rites of Violence*, "Past and Present" 59 (1973), pp. 58.

demonstrating the power of perpetrators, terrifying their opponents and, perhaps, “encouraging” them to change their confession.

Religious riots in Polish-Lithuanian context shared many common features with those from Western Europe,<sup>58</sup> although they had also some unique characteristics. Outburst of collective violence against religious dissenters usually occurred in periods of weakened state authority; during interregna, changes of major officials, or when Protestants' noble patrons for one reason or another were away from the city. Holidays such as Ascension or Corpus Christi, as moments when the confessional identity was constructed, were particularly prone to engender riots. It was on Ascension Day when the final demolition of Bróg in 1591 took place.

Invariably, students and pupils from parish schools were main perpetrators of violence, although they were often aided by low-lives, petty artisans and, what is important, clergymen. But what made these people besiege Protestant churches, attack funeral conducts, dig out their corpses or plunder their shops?

For the people living in the 16th century, the nature of a city as a community was at least to the same extent sacred as secular.<sup>59</sup> Cities, parishes, guilds were all parts of *Corpus Christianum* – community of the altar. Latin word *salus* meant health, prosperity as well as salvation. The fact that one word is used to refer to phenomena from both material and spiritual realms is telling. These meanings cannot in practice be separated. God blessed his adherents in their earthly lives and offered them a prospect of eternal beatitude after their death.<sup>60</sup>

Fate of the whole communities depended on God's favour, thus gaining and preserving it was a shared responsibility. If Catholics were passive to Protestants' blasphemies, it could bring Creator's wrath on the whole community. Still, to make it possible for a tumult to happen, several basic boundaries had to be breached. To achieve it, various dehumanizing practices were employed. Starting from basic insults such as *Kätzer*, Lutheran scum, *fili Belial*, and ending with such statements as “to kill a heretic is as

58. N. Z. Davis, *The Rites of Violence*, op. cit., pp. 51–91; B. J. Kaplan, *Divided By Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe*, London 2007, pp. 73–98.

59. J. Bossy, *The Mass as a social institution*, “Past and Present” 100 (1983), pp. 29–61.

60. B. J. Kaplan, *Divided By Faith...*, op. cit., pp. 60–61.

sinful as to kill a dog,"<sup>61</sup> or "a dead Protestant should not be called a corpse, but carrion"<sup>62</sup> and identifying Protestantism with the plague and Protestants with its carriers.<sup>63</sup> It should be noted that in the eyes of the recipients of these words boundaries between metaphor and reality were becoming more and more blurred.

No wonder that when the plague erupted it were Protestants who were first to be blamed.<sup>64</sup> Sigismundus III's court preacher, Piotr Skarga, in one of his sermons stated that heretics were the sixth finger in the body politic and thus, as an anomaly, should be cut off.<sup>65</sup> They were pictured as potential or even actual traitors.<sup>66</sup> These practices were aimed at convincing potential tumultants that by attacking heretics they were purifying the community of pollution. It removed negative value judgements from beating and killing neighbours of different faith and turned the perpetrators into – as Cardinal Stanisław Hosius put it in 1574 – *milites Christi* – potential martyrs, who sanctified their hands by the blows."<sup>67</sup>

Apart from the aura of being "the soldiers of Christ" it should be added that taking part in religious riots was generally safer and usually more profitable than attacking secular targets. After religious riots students could count on protection on part of the members of the cathedral chapter or clergy in general.<sup>68</sup>

61. *Dyariusz zjazdu protestantów w Radomiu 1591 roku*, red. W. Zakrzewski, Kraków 1903, p. 24.
62. *Dyariusz zjazdu protestantów...*, op. cit., p. 28.
63. Cf. Footnote 48.
64. H. Powodowski, *Recepta duszna i cielesna przeciw powietrzu morowemu*, Poznań 1589, BOss. XVI.O.557, (Biblioteka Ossolineum we Wrocławiu), fol. Biiiiv.
65. P. Skarga, *Kazanie czwarte...*, op. cit., p. 89. On the concept of anomaly and means of dealing with it see; M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, op. cit., pp. 40–41.
66. U. Augustyniak, *Potworne konspiracje, czyli problem zdrady w Rzeczypospolitej w czasach Wazów*, "Barok, Historia—Literatura—Sztuka" 1 (1994) nr 1, pp. 101–102.
67. A letter of Cardinal Stanislaus Hosius to Bishop Peter Myszkowski written shortly after students of the University managed to destroy a Protestant printing press on the 24th of March 1578 (R. Żelewski, *Materiały...*, op. cit., p. 96). "Sanctifying their hands by the blows" is a reference to John Chrysostom's words "sanctify thy hands by the blow" (John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Statues* 1.32, trans. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers), cf. M. Gaddis, *There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ*, Berkeley—Los Angeles—London 2005, p. 258.
68. In a letter (14 V 1617) written by Coadjutor Bishop Thomas Oborski to Rector Walenty Fontantus we can read the following: "The students asked me to intervene on their behalf and to plead with Your Magnificence not to exercise severity *in hoc facto*, that when the laws do not punish the blasphemers of Christ, they zelo, but *non secundum scientiam* convert them. It is thanks to them that we got rid



Apart from reasons of religious nature it is important to mention the role of violence in creating group identity. As we have seen in the above-mentioned examples almost each riot was started by a student who had been slightly earlier admitted to the university. Until the first half of the 16th century each student after being formally admitted to the university had to undergo a rite of passage known as *depositio beanorum* or *depositio cornuum*. A student who was added to the university register, was not considered "a real student" by his peers until the ceremony of deposition has been completed. During this rite a new student, who was given the name of *beanus* was subjected to various humiliating practices, which were to polish his "savage and animal-like" nature. *Beanus est animal nesciens vitam studiosorum*<sup>69</sup> – students used to say.

Besides physical humiliation, deposition required new students to pay considerable fees to their senior companions and give a feast in their honour.<sup>70</sup> At the beginning of the 16th century this semi-official rite of passage met with serious opposition and rector Adam of Bochnia formally abolished it in 1511.<sup>71</sup> Although we can find proofs of deposition being practiced until the middle of the 16th century, after this time it seems to have completely disappeared. Would it not mean that newly admitted students lacked a transition rite? Would they not be stuck in "betwixt and between"<sup>72</sup>

of Protestant churches (Polish: *zbory*), and there are fewer heretics in this capital city now. The officials have never undertaken anything in these matters, both the Voivode and others, it is true that they were happy about it [i.e. students' violence against the Protestants – IH and DM], but they ortenus showed otherwise. God *ex his malis meliora elicit* [...]. I urgently commend myself to Your Magnificence, and I commend the students and alumni to Your Magnificence *melius est reddere rationem Misericordiam quam severitatis* and soon we will have more Catholics than heretics-blasphemers." *Acta rectoralia 1580–1618*, pp. 604–605. As expected, the intervention was successful and the rector changed his sentence from expulsion from the university (which was disgraceful) to much more acceptable confinement in the university prison.

69. J. Ptaśnik, *Obrazki z życia żaków krakowskich w XV i XVI wieku*, Kraków 1900, pp. 20–31. Little is known about *depositio beanorum* in Cracow. The ritual sequence has to be reconstructed with the help of German and Czech examples. Cf. M. Füssel, *Riten der Gewalt. Zur Geschichte der akademischen Deposition und des Pennalismus in der frühen Neuzeit*, "Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung" 32/4 (2005), pp. 605–648.
70. J. Ptaśnik, *Obrazki z życia...*, op. cit., p. 27.
71. H. Barycz, *Historia Uniwersytetu...*, op. cit., p. 655.
72. V. Turner, *Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage*, in: V. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, New York 1967, pp. 93–111.

status? We do not think so. Although a direct connection between deposition and acts of violence cannot be established,<sup>73</sup> it is arguable that taking parts in violent acts was itself a rite of passage for students and schoolboys.<sup>74</sup>

We can easily notice that in each instance in order to prove his courage, valour, commitment and strength a young student under supervision of more experienced ones was sent on a dangerous mission, which usually involved being subjected to physical violence. The young student or schoolboy had to behave as provocatively as possible. The choice of words he uttered at each occasion was deliberate.<sup>75</sup> As soon as the situation was getting dire he was aided by his fellows and incorporated into their community. Although right after matriculation students could rely on university's legal protection, only after their rite of passage did they become respected members of student community and could count on their fellows in times of trouble. Without legal protection they would most likely end up like those five unfortunate low-lives beheaded for their part in the tumult or get killed during a riot without the support of their companions.<sup>76</sup>

73. The rite of deposition is very rarely mentioned in Polish and Lithuanian sources and seems to be limited to Cracow only. Yet, it is possible to apply the model of rites of initiation, laid down below, to students and schoolboys of Jesuit colleges in other towns, where deposition was not practiced.
74. Although a connection between students' rites of passage and riots has not been established before, we should mention that other acts of violence were used by students and other youth groups in the early modern period. Cf. E. Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge 2005, pp. 33–37, 112–121; J. Davies, *Culture and Power. Tuscany and Its Universities 1537–1609*, Leiden–Boston 2009, pp. 142–145.
75. From the abovementioned examples we can easily infer that the students and schoolboys tried to use as incendiary themes as possible. By admonishing the Protestants to invoke the name of the Blessed Virgin and saints or by telling them to bow to the passing Jesuits or to the Eucharistic procession, they were not counting on Protestants' "repentance," but were willing to provoke a conflict.
76. It is worth noting that taking part in violent actions as a rite of passage was not limited to Cracow. In 1627 schoolboys from a Jesuit college in Lublin got into a fight with Lutheran soldiers of Raphael Leszczyński. The fight started when one of the schoolboys, George Bugajowicz, told the soldiers to bow to the passing Jesuits, which was an obvious provocation. In the fight Bugajowicz was killed by one of the soldiers and other students began shouting "To arms! To arms! Go for Protestant churches! Luthers are killing Catholics!" As a result of the tumult that ensued churches of the Calvinists and Polish Brethren in Lublin were destroyed. See S. Lubieniecki, *Historia Reformationis Polonicae*, Amsterdam 1685, pp. 260–261; A. Kossowski, *Protestantyzm w Lublinie i w Lubelskiem w XV–XVIII wieku*, Lublin 1933, p. 145 (the author of this book used acts of the Crown Tribunal, which do not exist anymore).

It is beyond any doubt that the number of clashes between students and Protestants was by far lower than the number of students admitted to the university. But it does not mean that only a few students were able to undergo a proper rite of passage. First of all, the collective aspect of riots requires highlighting – students who aided their companions in distress also had a great opportunity to prove their valour and zeal. As a general rule, students and schoolboys who triggered riots were noblemen (Jakub de Kufrow being an exception), which granted them additional protection in legal matters, as due to their principal role in events they were the first to be sued. Perhaps their higher social status was yet another factor inciting them to prove their courage and prowess.<sup>77</sup> Secondly, apart from religious riots there were many similar incidents of secular nature, which also gave students an opportunity to prove themselves, but as we mentioned earlier, perpetrators of these riots were less likely to obtain protection.

We should not forget about material incentives to violence. Protestants gathered large amounts of wealth in their church, which was relatively easy loot. Not without reason, besides Bróg (itself playing the role of some kind of a Protestant treasury) and the cemetery, Protestant goldsmiths and wealthy merchants were often targeted by students. Inaptitude of the government (both local and central) in suppressing riots should also be noted. Someone had to be punished for disturbing public peace, but usually all the blame was thrown upon random low-lives. Nobility gathered in Proszowice expressed their worries that "petty thieves are hanging on the gallows, while the big ones are bowed to."<sup>78</sup>

## Conclusion

In the history of Polish Counter-Reformation the University of Cracow was infamous for their rather insignificant contribution to polemical thought. In spite of the transitory interest in Protestant teachings, the University early on and decisively supported Rome. At the same time, thanks to legal autonomy and unruly nature of student culture, it proved to be a powerful

77. Less grave criminal cases were addressed by rector's court, while more serious ones were dealt with by royal court – or, if the culprit was a clergyman, by bishop's court. In theory the fact that the accused was of noble birth should not matter, but in fact it did matter a great deal. Cf. D. Machaj, *Sądownictwo rektorów krakowskich w XVI w.*, "Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne" 66 (2014), pp. 43–44.

78. A letter of the nobility of Little Poland addressed to all *sejmiks* with a plea for help (R. Żelewski, *Materiały...*, op. cit., pp. 36.

weapon in the war over souls. Because at that time Catholics did not have significant majority in Cracow magistrate and Catholic magnates had their hands tied by Warsaw Confederation, the Counter-Reformation had to turn to other means in order to bring people back unto Roman bosom.

Thus, in Polish-Lithuanian conditions the final shape of confessional relations was to the same extent a result of royal policy and actions of the officials as of the deeds of these, to quote Piotr Skarga, "children, school-boys and other rascals."<sup>79</sup>

79. P. Skarga, *Upominanie do ewangelików i do wszystkich społem niekatolików iż skażenie zborów krakowskich gniewać się i nic nowego i burzliwego zaczynać nie mają*, in: M. Korolko, *Klejnot...*, op. cit., p. 178.

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# Abstract

Iwo Hryniewicz, Dawid Machaj  
*Students' Innocent Fun Religious Riots  
and Rites of Passage in 16th Century Cracow*

The main goal of this articles is to analyse the role of rites of passage in religious conflicts between Catholics and Protestants in early modern Cracow.

In the article, several case studies of religious riots led by students of the Cracow University against Protestant funeral processions, weddings or churches were included.

The key thesis of this article is that disturbing the rites of passage was a means of depriving Protestants of their social identity and – through the process of dehumanization – of their humanity. By interrupting weddings and capturing dead bodies during funerals Catholic perpetrators were trying to leave their opponents in the state of, to use Victor Turner's phrase, "between and betwixt", i.e. no longer having their previous status, but failing to acquire a new one. By disrupting the most holy Protestants ceremonies in such a humiliating manner, Catholics strove to show that their opponents lacked God's support and their faith deserved to be considered nothing but an object of mockery. We would argue that, from perpetrators' point of view, their actions were continuations of ritual activities started during Catholic feasts – transferring the cosmic struggle between Christ and Satan to the streets of early modern Cracow.

The participation of students in these acts of violence didn't just demonstrate their belonging to a confession considered superior to that of their confessional other, but also participated in creating their social group identity. From this perspective, the violence surrounding rites of passage can be read as a transitional ritual for students in itself.

**Keywords:**  
religious riots,  
violence, rites  
of passage,  
students,  
protestants,  
catholics, Cracow  
University

# Abstrakt

Iwo Hryniewicz, Dawid Machaj

*Żacząt igrzyska niewinne. Tumulty religijne i rytuały przejścia w XVI-wiecznym Krakowie*

**Słowa kluczowe:**  
zamieszki religijne,  
przemoc, rytuały  
przejścia, studenci,  
protestanci,  
katolicy,  
Uniwersytet  
Krakowski

Głównym celem artykułu jest analiza roli obrzędów przejścia w konfliktach religijnych między katolikami a protestantami we wczesnonowożytnym Krakowie.

W artykule znalazło się kilka studiów przypadku tumultów religijnych zorganizowanych przez studentów Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego przeciwko protestanckim procesjom pogrzebowym, ślubom lub zborom.

Kluczową tezą artykułu jest to, że zakłócanie rytuałów przejścia było sposobem na pozbawianie protestantów ich tożsamości społecznej i – poprzez proces dehumanizacji – ich człowieczeństwa. Poprzez przerywanie ślubów i przechwytywanie ciał podczas pogrzebów katolicy sprawcy próbowali pozostawić swoich przeciwników w stanie – używając zwrotu Victora Turnera *between and betwixt*, w którym nie posiadali już swojego poprzedniego statusu, ale nie uzyskali jeszcze nowego. Przeszkadzając najważniejszym protestanckim ceremoniom w tak upokarzający sposób, katolicy starali się wykazać, że ich przeciwnikom brakowało Bożego wsparcia, a ich wiara zasługiwała na to, by być obiektem kpin. Uważamy, że z punktu widzenia sprawców ich zachowania były kontynuacją rytualnych działań zapoczątkowanych podczas świąt katolickich – przeniesieniem kosmicznej walki między Chrystusem a szatanem na ulice ówczesnego Krakowa. Uczestnictwo studentów w tych aktach przemocy nie tylko świadczyło o ich przekonaniu o przynależności do wyznania lepszego od wyznania przeciwników, ale także przyczyniało się do tworzenia tożsamości grupowej. Z tej perspektywy przemoc otaczająca rytuały przejścia może być interpretowana jako rytuał przejścia dla samych studentów.