BUILDING A COSMOPOLITAN EPISCOPACY IN
REFORMATIONS CENTRAL EUROPE:
JOHANNES DANTISCUS’S PURSUIT OF REFORM ACROSS
LATIN CHRISTENDOM, 1518-1548

By

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To Em, Dave, Pat, and Kev – my pillars of stone
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Johannes Dantiscus (1485-1548) led one of the most intriguing and compelling lives of any historical figure in early modern Europe, and yet his career and historical impact remain almost entirely unknown other than to a handful of specialists. He was the first man to represent the Crown of Poland abroad as a resident diplomat. During his diplomatic travels (1515-1532), he met the likes of Emperor Maximilian I, Emperor Charles V, King Henry VIII of England, King Christian II of Denmark, Archduchess Margaret of Austria, Thomas Wolsey, Thomas More, Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon, Hernando Cortés, Thomas Cranmer, and Pope Clement VII. He also observed pivotal moments in the European Reformations and became an informal authority on evangelical reform at European courts. After being elected to a bishopric in Royal Prussia in 1530, he devoted the second half of his career (1530-1548) to combating Protestant reform in Prussia and across Central Europe. He used polemical literature, practical institutional reform, persecutions, and knowledge from his diverse prior experiences to attempt to suppress Protestantism and restore the primacy of the Catholic Church in his episcopal jurisdiction and beyond. Meanwhile, he engaged a vast
network of correspondents in Poland-Lithuania and abroad, including numerous humanist colleagues and even Erasmus of Rotterdam. They kept him informed of wider developments in the Reformations and proliferated reports of his own reform efforts.

Using novel analytical approaches to examining Dantiscus’s large extant corpus of materials, this dissertation introduces significant new evidence to the historiography of the Reformations and early modern Central Europe. It reveals that Catholic reform prior to the Council of Trent could be informed, concerted, systematic, and intricate in the face of early evangelical reform. It illustrates how an individual could use cosmopolitanism to implement Catholic reform in both urban and rural settings. Most importantly, it demonstrates that scholars must define early modern Central Europe more broadly and more easterly based on the diversity, fluidity, and interconnectedness of its peoples, cultures, and polities. Dantiscus’s career highlights this vibrant heterogeneity and provides an accessible, expedient lens into the development of the Reformations transnationally across the region.
What is Central Europe?

Central Europe historically has been one of the world's most diverse, fluid, and interconnected regions. Looking at a modern snapshot, one might not be able to imagine it so. During the last century, this region—nowadays typically comprising Switzerland, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and sometimes Slovenia—has undergone tremendous upheaval, fracturing, and re-identification due to imperialism, nationalism, communism, fascism, xenophobia, two world wars, the Holocaust, the Cold War, and more recently migration and identity politics. As a result, much of the pervasive historical heterogeneity of ethnicity, language, culture, religion, economic innovation, and political organization throughout Central Europe has been eradicated or overshadowed, and its value to societies often has been forgotten. The region’s premodern history, though, still offers invaluable lessons about diversity, fluidity, and interconnectivity both to its contemporary self and to the wider modern world. The early modern period—generally the 15th through 18th centuries—in particular is essential to understanding what Central Europe has been historically. Indeed it can inform and instruct modern viewers both within the region and around the globe about acknowledging, encountering, and managing diversity. Utilizing that history truthfully and effectively, though, is accomplished best with a proper, common definition of Central Europe, an insight that remains elusive.

Scholars and politicians have tussled over the definition of “Central Europe” (Mitteleuropa) for more than a century. Much of the disagreement has been a longstanding consequence of nationalism. In academia, the most persistent point of
contention has been the propensity to segregate Central Europe’s easterly lands and peoples—Slavic, Magyar, Baltic, etc.—from Germanic ones. This trend began in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries during the political ascendancy of Prussia and Germany. Scholars researching the German influence on and assumed dominion over more easterly territories developed a field called Ostforschung (research on the East), which often marginalized or denigrated Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, and Hungarians in its purview. During the Cold War, a well-meaning cadre of scholars instead began to use “East Central Europe” (or Ostmitteleuropa)—a problematic but nonetheless resilient term—to refer to Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland.¹ Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc, and with the stigmatization of the term “Eastern Europe” and other “eastern” qualifiers, more recently scholars have striven to re-conceptualize Central Europe in order to incorporate easterly lands and peoples less stigmatically. Differences between premodern, pre-Soviet, and modern historical circumstances have complicated the issue, though, and forced historians to consider a range of definitions. But the impetus to do so has not been universal. Some publications, such as the journal Central European History, still focus overwhelmingly on Germanic lands, and even recent efforts to evaluate historiographical trends have overlooked the role of easterly lands and peoples.² Their historical significance to Central Europe, though, is increasingly undeniable.

¹ Eduard Mühle, “East Central Europe in historiographic concepts of German historical studies,” in East Central Europe in European History. Themes and Debates, eds. Jerzy Kłoczowski and Hubert Łaszkiewicz (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2009), 55-72.

Complex and unfamiliar premodern contexts in particular have posed challenges to modern historians attempting to incorporate unequivocally the easterly parts of Central Europe. From the beginning, they have had to contend with the characterization of these lands and peoples in the premodern period as the periphery of Europe proper, as reflected most notably in some of the early work of Robert Bartlett.\(^3\) Even when eschewing the concept of periphery, though, Anglophone scholars initially denigrated these areas still. In his 1996 monograph *Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends*, Lonnie R. Johnson surveyed the region’s history from c.400-1989 and expanded “Central Europe” far east of its traditional base in German lands. His five criteria for inclusion, however—converting to Latin Christianity late; existing within medieval imperial frontiers; forming components of multinational empires; serving as a bulwark against the Ottoman Empire; and that “retarded development or ‘backwardness’ became one of the structural characteristics”—all privileged western models of the nation-state as more “developed” or “advanced” rather than evaluating the nature of more easterly lands and peoples on their own terms. His analysis assumed that these lands and peoples lagged behind rather than that they developed according to their own merits, circumstances, and preferences. It thus merely changed the label applied to the stigmatized Slavic, Magyar, and Balkan lands and peoples. It nonetheless provided a novel approach for historians to test.\(^4\) From the mid-1990s into the 2000s, scholars across Europe and the U.S. vigorously debated the meaning and usefulness of terms


like East Central Europe and Central Eastern Europe. The University of Washington publication series “A History of East Central Europe” included several monographs devoted to illuminating, defining, and integrating the region in a variety of historical contexts. In one approach, and marking an important categorical turning point, in 2002 Paul Magocsi revised and reprinted his 1995 *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe* as the *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*. He posited that, in purely geographical or cartographical terms, the lands of the Western Slavs, Magyars, and the Balkans actually were Central Europe proper. He referred to them as such, even excluding most of Germany and Switzerland. Thereafter came dozens of attempts to re-conceptualize Central Europe by repudiating the qualifiers “East” or “Eastern” as pejorative.

Recent efforts to redefine Central Europe in premodern contexts typically have followed either medievalist tracks or early modernist tracks. Medievalist scholars from Central Europe itself have made some of the best arguments for either eliminating “eastern” qualifiers altogether or using them for constructive analytical purposes. Gábor Klaniczay has encouraged acknowledging “the birth of a new Europe” to the East during the high middle ages. Eduard Mühle has argued that “East Central Europe” is now

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useful predominantly as a heuristic tool rather than a definitive characterization. Henryk Samsonowicz has discussed viewing the societies of East Central Europe as “younger” or more “youthful” than their western or southern neighbors, but certainly not colonized or peripheral, an approach influenced by the earlier work of Jerzy Kłoczowski. Piotr Górecki and Nancy van Deusen have suggested using new cultural historical approaches in order to break the stigma or distance that typically accompanies the designation “East Central Europe.” Martin Wihoda has emphasized the need to appreciate “Central Eastern Europe” for its own historical trajectory rather than measuring influences from “the West.” Jan Klápště acknowledged numerous westward influences during the middle ages but lamented that the qualification “East Central” keeps Czech, Slovakian, Hungarian, and Polish lands peoples from being fully part of Europe even today. Writing to inform Anglophone medievalists, Nora Berend, Przemysław Urbańczyk, and Przemysław Wiszewski recently summarized the countless efforts of medievalists to come to terms with Central Europe as it existed beginning

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12 Jan Klápště, “The medieval "Europeanization" of the East Central Europe: consensus or violence?” in *Consensus or Violence? Cohesive Forces in Early and High Medieval Societies (9th-14th c.),* eds. Sławomir Możdżioch and Przemysław Wiszewski (Wrocław: Institute of History at the University of Wrocław, 2013), 13-26.
around one thousand years ago. They also systematically identified, questioned, tested, and reevaluated different variations and uses of “Central Europe” and “East Central Europe,” especially looking for anachronisms.\textsuperscript{13}

Historians of the early modern period have spent less time attempting explicitly to redefine Central Europe or to repudiate “eastern” qualifiers, but they have pushed for further incorporation and analysis of easterly lands and peoples. This seems to have occurred somewhat organically. Those few scholars leading the way have been relentless, and progress has been steady. In the 1991 collection of essays \textit{Crown, Church and Estates: Central European Politics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries}, a few authors made efforts to integrate easterly lands and peoples less stigmatically, but nonetheless Evans’ and Thomas’ “Central Europe” comprised predominantly Habsburg and especially German-speaking territories.\textsuperscript{14} In the mid-90s, Karin Maag and Andrew Pettegree cursorily discussed similarities of the Reformations across an ill-defined and overlapping Central, Eastern, and East-Central Europe. They argued that easterly lands needed to be a more substantial focus of scholarly treatments of early modern religious reform but did not eschew “eastern” qualifiers.\textsuperscript{15} Soon after, Karin Friedrich referred to Prussia as “North-East Central Europe,” but her acknowledgement of the area as Germanic-Slavonic borderlands served to break some

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\textsuperscript{13} Berend, Urbańczyk, and Wiszewski, \textit{Central Europe in the High Middle Ages}.
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lingering categorical barriers.¹⁶ Regina Pörtner then stretched Central Europe southward by examining the Counter-Reformation throughout Styria in relation to broader Habsburg contexts.¹⁷ Howard Louthan made a welcome eastward expansion to Central Europe—sans qualifier—in his 2004 essay, “From Rudolfine Prague to Vasa Poland: Valerian Magni and the Twilight of Irenicism in Central Europe.”¹⁸ He later analyzed Catholic reform in Bohemia as a vehicle for integrating the “decentralized polities” of “east central Europe” into broader narratives of the Reformations that covered territory “from England to Poland.”¹⁹ All of this progress culminated in 2015 with the publication of A Companion to the Reformation in Central Europe, a remarkable collection of essays that contained one of the most intentional and analytical approaches to defining Central Europe to date. Its editors and contributors unabashedly focused on Central Europe’s overlooked easterly territories but stretched its analysis across the continent from the Low Countries through the eastern reaches of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and from the Baltic Sea to the Adriatic Sea.²⁰ By this point it appeared that early modern Central Europe, at least among historians focusing on the

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region, unequivocally and productively contained the lands and peoples of the former “East Central Europe” and beyond.

Consensus on a definition of premodern Central Europe proved to be elusive for so long because common analytical obstacles confronted both medievalist and early modernist scholars. For example, a definition based strictly on polities, the boundaries or even existence of which in premodern times often changed year-to-year let alone century-to-century, is almost useless without copious yet narrowly-applicable context. Similarly, any definition based on large, general population groups—Saxons, Czechs, Hungarians, etc.—is undermined by questions about how people differed in identifying themselves and others according to ethnicity, religion, language, etc. and where such population groups began and ended—both vague moving targets. Such obstacles have led some scholars to look for cultural elements common across the region. Howard Louthan and Graeme Murdock examined the region from a religious perspective and identified diversity as the key characteristic.21 Rather than basing a definition of Central Europe on random geographical features, arbitrary political boundaries, vague population groups, or an imagined common culture, I support a definition of such a complex and contested region that rises above particular human constructions—polities, ethnic groups, cultures, etc.—and consider macroscopic characteristics common across the region. The extent of those characteristics geographically, if reasonably consistent and limited, could then inform the geographical inclusivity of Central Europe. Obviously, such characteristics also would change over time, and so the “Central Europe” of the high middle ages would not be the same as the “Central Europe” of the modern period, 21 Louthan and Murdock, *Companion to the Reformation*, 1-8.
the early modern period, or even the later middle ages. Within a certain range of time, though, such an approach to defining Central Europe could be quite useful for understanding the history of that particular era, if not all other eras.

With just a cursory examination of the central part of the European continent during the early modern period, some common and consistent characteristics as well as their geographical extent appear quite readily. Chief among them are diversity, fluidity, and interconnectivity, certainly of religion, as demonstrated by Louthan and Murdock, but also of many other elements. Ethnically and linguistically, the region’s heterogeneity was astounding. There were the various groups that still dominate modern Central Europe—German, Austrian, Slovenian, Czech, Slovak, Polish, Hungarian, etc.—but there were also myriad smaller groups both among these dominant ones and spread farther afield—Tyrolean, Bavarian, Carniolan, Croatian, Wallachian, Transylvanian, Moldavian, Cossack, Ruthenian, Lithuanian, Livonian, Prussian, Kashubian, Pomeranian, Moravian, Bohemian, Jewish peoples, and dozens of others. These ethnic and linguistic groups maintained numerous local and regional cultures that overlapped and could be difficult to distinguish except by their own adherents. Above these overlaid ethnic, linguistic, and cultural patchworks lay a complex and constantly-shifting arrangement of political units. There were independent cities, tiny principalities, republics, duchies, fiefdoms, kingdoms, personal unions, and empires, most famous of which was the notoriously intricate and indefinable Holy Roman Empire. Most of these units continually changed their jurisdictions and interrelations. Above, below, among, and within these polities were contested ecclesiastical jurisdictions—parishes, monasteries, communes, bishoprics, archbishoprics, prince-bishoprics, and
patriarchates. Quite regularly, new territorial claims were made by the Holy Roman Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire, the Swedish Empire, the Prussian Empire, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, not to mention the massive and heterogeneous Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The region hosted the continuous, shifting, and occasionally contentious meeting of adherents of not a few ancient religions, including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and “paganism.” It also contained the near-full extent of the Catholic-Orthodox borderlands. These constituent parts together fostered great migrations of peoples, complex societies, critical trade routes and markets, the Hanseatic League, great advances in hydro-engineering, expansive easterly grain production, a resurgence of serfdom, and overseas colonial enterprises sponsored by the Habsburgs, Denmark, Sweden, and even Poland-Lithuania. Finally, Central Europe became the main site of the Reformations, one of the most diversifying early modern historical developments and a series of movements that exacerbated all of these common characteristics throughout and beyond the region.

In retrospect, the diversity, fluidity, and interconnectivity of ethnicity, language, culture, political affiliation, ecclesiastical affiliation, religious expression, social organization, and economic innovation emerge as blatant characteristics common across the central part of the European continent during the early modern period. Any definition of “Central Europe” that will inform its users about more than merely a vague geographical “centrality” ought to be based on these characteristics. And it so happens that the geographical limits of these characteristics were also agreeable. As a baseline, they extended from the territories of the modern Baltic states, Belarus, central Ukraine, and the northwestern shores of the Black Sea westward across the continent to Lower
Saxony, the Rhineland, and the Swiss cantons. This vast region is contiguous and geographically consistent with the designation “central.” Most importantly, though, such wide-ranging diversity, fluidity, and interconnectivity were prevalent throughout the region during the early modern period. Upon further examination, however, these characteristics also extended into the Low Countries to the northwest and the Balkans to the southeast, both of which also are contiguous and relatively “central.” Any definition of early modern Central Europe that is at all useful analytically should include all of these territories based on their common diversity, fluidity, and interconnectivity. Completing a comprehensive study of this region would be difficult, of course, and narrower studies will likely predominate. Such a definition, however, will productively inform its users about the region and should reintroduce to modern viewers what Central Europe has been historically.

If scholars are to use this definition effectively, they still must acknowledge that past treatments of early modern Central Europe in general have underrepresented drastically its easterly lands and peoples. Not least of these underrepresented entities has been Poland-Lithuania, which was one of the largest polities in early modern Christendom and was known for its diversity, fluidity, and interconnectivity. Ironically, Poland-Lithuania is an exemplar of the Central European heterogeneity of premodern periods, and its relative obscurity in turn has obscured the historical nature of Central Europe. Integrating Poland-Lithuania in particular can help scholars to reimagine this broad early modern region properly. This is no small task, but one expedient vehicle is an analysis of the development of early modern religious reform in Poland-Lithuania and across the region, as promoted in A Companions to the Reformations in Central
Europe. The Anglophone historical community has been mobilized somewhat in this direction, but there is much work yet to do, especially in illustrating the region’s vibrant transnational connections through both Protestant and Catholic reformers.²²

The Reformations in Poland-Lithuania

This dissertation explores the early Reformations transnationally and transculturally across much of this redefined early modern Central Europe, but Poland-Lithuania is its most substantial setting. As that likely is a setting unfamiliar to many readers, some introduction to the state’s histories, structures, populations, and geography is necessary. The late medieval Kingdom of Poland (roughly modern western and southern Poland, western Ukraine) and Grand Duchy of Lithuania (roughly modern Lithuania, northeastern Poland, Belarus, central Ukraine) entered a personal union in 1386, and for the next two centuries they were ruled jointly by members of the Jagiellonian Dynasty, named for the first joint monarch Jogaila. The two polities combined formally in 1569 as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Rzeczpospolita),

which at times was the largest state in early modern Europe. These polities were, in the words of J.H. Elliot, “composite monarchies” made up of a numerous individual territories, lands, and peoples that had come under common rulership in various and occasionally conflicting ways. The three territories that were most consistently part of the Kingdom of Poland were Great Poland (Wielkopolska) centered on Poznań and Gniezno in the northwest, Little Poland (Małopolska) centered on Cracow in the south, and Red Ruthenia centered on Lwów and Przemyśl in the southeast, which were the territories united by King Casimir the Great in the fourteenth century. At times there were numerous other territories as well. In 1466, the Crown of Poland obtained the Baltic territory of Royal Prussia with its vital Hanseatic towns Gdańsk, Elbląg, and Toruń. In 1525, it acquired as a vassal its northeasterly Baltic neighbor Ducal Prussia (formerly Teutonic Prussia), centered on Königsberg. By 1529, the central Duchy of Mazovia and its capital Warsaw also became a part of Crown lands, completing what would constitute the Kingdom of Poland for much of the early modern period. Meanwhile, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania at its height extended from modern Lithuania, eastward past Smolensk and well into modern Russia, and southward to the Black Sea covering most of modern Ukraine. These expanses appear in the map in Figure 1-1.

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23 Davies, God’s Playground, 93-122.
25 Davies, God’s Playground, 23-31. Davies goes through each of the different territories that at one point or another were a part of Poland, particularly at its greatest extent as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.
27 Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther, 97-118.
28 Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther, 40.
The inhabitants of the Polish-Lithuanian union were Polish, German, Prussian, Lithuanian, Livonian, Ukrainian, Russian, Cossack, Dutch, Armenian, Jewish, and various other identities. They were Latin Christians, Orthodox Christians, Jews, Muslims, and pagans. Crown lands also drew robust international economic investment and countless travelers from abroad. In general for many inhabitants of and travelers to Poland-Lithuania, the great diversity of the population made toleration necessary for a peaceful everyday existence. The Jagiellonian kings were elected by the Polish diet (Sejm), which contained two houses: the upper senate (senat), made up of bishops and high-ranking royal officials; and the lower chamber of deputies (izba poselska), made up of lesser officials and representatives of the nobility. Throughout the sixteenth century, the Sejm increasingly established formal checks on the king’s power, fostering what historians have called a “republic of nobles,” distributing power rather widely among the nobility. Each of these characteristics of the Kingdom of Poland in some way would foster religious reform in the sixteenth century.

Traditionally in Polish, German, English, and American literature, the historiography of the Reformations in Poland-Lithuania has been dominated and driven by a few broad-stroke narratives. First among them, evangelical reform entered Poland-Lithuania through the German-speaking populations of the commercial towns of

29 Davies, God’s Playground, 93-122.

Prussia, especially Gdańsk, and then with limited resistance spread primarily to German-speaking urbanites in Poland’s larger towns and cities. Second, the 1540s were a turning point, after which Reformed Christianity proliferated moderately throughout Poland-Lithuania, especially among the lesser nobility, who used evangelical ideas and religious distinctions to empower themselves. Third, and in fact more of an assumption than a result of deep historical analysis, Poland-Lithuania was an inherently religiously tolerant state, evidenced by the growth and diversification of reform groups as well as the legislative accommodations made for religious minorities. Fourth, it was not until the late sixteenth century that Catholic authorities began to ramp up counter-reform measures, and thereafter the Church steadily reconverted the population throughout the seventeenth century, aided by the religious disillusionment of the nobility. Only recently, though, have scholars begun systematically to deconstruct these narratives and identify their nuances or flaws.

Some of these narratives have persisted from early on in professional historical studies, indeed from the late nineteenth century. The earliest major works on the Reformations in Poland-Lithuania (Zakrzewski, 1870; Bukowski, 1883; Wotschke, 1911) propagated some or all of them. As Natalia Nowakowska recently has surveyed in her article “Forgetting Lutheranism: Historians and the Early Reformation in Poland” and her monograph *King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther*, which is a long-awaited contribution to the field and will be discussed further below, these early works also were colored by blatant nationalist and confessional interpretations at a time when neither

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Poland nor Lithuania existed as independent states. For example, they either argued or suggested that: the presence of active religious reform indicated Poland’s significant standing in early modern Europe; that religious toleration indicated an enlightened and free state; that the proliferation of Lutheranism indicated strong German influences across the region; that the eventual failure of Lutheranism indicated the primacy of the Catholic Church; and that such an interesting history merited a modern restoration of the Polish state. There were other polemical arguments as well. These three works remained the only major comprehensive studies on the Polish-Lithuanian Reformations for decades. They inspired numerous narrower studies throughout the first half of the twentieth century, during which polemical nationalist and confessional arguments continued to influence both Polish and German histories.\(^{32}\) After World War II, arguments about German influences became less popular throughout Europe for obvious reasons. Therefore, during the Cold War historians began to focus on later currents in the Polish-Lithuanian Reformations, in particular the narratives about Reformed Christianity and the Counter-Reformation, in which communist leaders found some attractive qualities.\(^{33}\)

Throughout the mid and late twentieth century, a handful of historians from Central Europe dominated discussions about the Reformations in Poland-Lithuania, [32] Nowakowska, “Forgetting Lutheranism,” 281-303; Nowakowska, *King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther*, 2-6, 47-48. Writing in the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Prussian Empires respectively, Zakrzewski was a Polish nationalist, Bukowski was a Catholic priest, and Wotschke was a Lutheran pastor and German nationalist. Each tailored their narrative of the Reformations to privilege their own political perspective. They treated the provinces of Poland-Lithuania inconsistently and produced widely varying conclusions about the sources, processes, and results of the reform. Subsequent works were more thorough in their treatments of particular places and times, but still succumbed to many of the same nationalist or confessional tendencies in their argumentation.

\(^{33}\) Nowakowska, "Forgetting Lutheranism," 281-303; Nowakowska, *King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther*, 4-6.
while many more addressed niche topics. Janusz Tazbir published some of the broadest and most resonant treatments of early modern religious reform.\(^{34}\) His monograph, *A State Without Stakes: Polish Religious Toleration in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, translated into English in 1973, had a widespread impact on how historians viewed early modern Poland-Lithuania. Its exposition of Polish religious toleration continues to inform scholars and the public.\(^{35}\) Maria Bogucka addressed religious reform in particular contexts, but most often through Marxist economic interpretations.\(^{36}\) Halina Kowalska and Stanisław Tworek produced some of the earlier major studies of Reformed Christianity.\(^{37}\) More current scholars of later reform movements, on whom Kowalska and Tworek had some influence and who especially emphasize the growth of reform beginning in the 1540s, include Piotr Wilczek and Wojciech Kriegseisen.\(^{38}\) Czapliński and Stasiewski advanced research on the


revitalization of the Catholic Church following the Council of Trent. A still more focused group concentrated on early evangelical reform in Prussia. In the mid-century, Henryk Zins addressed in detail some of the reform and counter-reform efforts there, including especially the development of violent urban revolts. His contemporaries Walther Hubatsch, Oskar Bartel, and Udo Arnold all succinctly portrayed the means by which evangelical ideas, beliefs, and practices entered and proliferated throughout Prussia, including locals’ strong ties to Wittenberg and German lands. More recently, Janusz Małłek, Marian Pawlak, and Marian Biskup have dug even deeper into the political, social, and religious manifestations of reform in sixteenth-century Prussia.


As German and Polish scholars of the late twentieth century were focusing more narrowly and researching more deeply, albeit generally still supporting traditional narratives, there were also published several broader surveys of the Polish-Lithuanian Reformations for Anglophone and Francophone readers. The most substantial at first was Paul Fox’s “The Reformation in Poland” in *The Cambridge History of Poland*.43 Other notable surveys came from Janusz Tazbir in Stefan Kieniewicz’s sizeable *History of Poland*, Ambroise Jobert, and Jerzy Kloczowski.44 Kloczowski published an influential English-language article about Catholic reform in Poland-Lithuania that served to reinvigorate research in that area among western scholars.45 These surveys in particular strengthened traditional historiographical narratives in the minds of American, English, French, German, and even Polish readers. The culmination of much of this broad research for many readers is contained in Norman Davies’ *God’s Playground*, first published in 1981 and revised and republished as recently as 2005.46 Davies’ text

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46 Davies, *God’s Playground*. 
remains the most visible English-language source for casual researchers of Polish
history, including the Reformations.

Within the last two decades, early modern Poland-Lithuania has drawn
increasing attention from Anglophone historians. They have recognized the many
promising research angles that its history still offers, especially when expanding into
transnational contexts, both in religious and other fields. Davies’ 2005 reprint bears
some responsibility for this attention. A handful of scholars have begun to reevaluate
traditional narratives and reintegrate Poland-Lithuania into broader narratives of early
modern Europe, in the history of the Reformations as well as other topics. Karin
Friedrich has studied the construction of complex early modern identities in Royal
Prussia, which she called a borderland between Slavic and Germanic societies that had
its own compelling history well before the rise of the Kingdom of Prussia.47 Peter
Klassen has examined how Mennonites and other minority religious reform groups
thrived in Prussia and Poland after fleeing persecution in Western Europe.48 Howard
Louthan has argued that Poland was integral in Christendom-wide Erasmian humanist
debates in the early sixteenth century, not merely hosting consumers of Erasmian
thought but rather providing an arena for discussing and testing humanist principles.49
Maciej Ptaszyński has demonstrated that Polish scholars are engaging productively with
broader trends in Reformations studies and attempting to find creative new angles for

47 Friedrich, The Other Prussia.
48 Klassen, Mennonites.
Natalia Nowakowska has revealed that polemical literary activity acknowledged to be common in more westerly geographical contexts also attracted several generations of Polish scholars. Furthermore, Nowakowska has argued convincingly that the early Reformations (for her purposes 1517-c.1540) across Poland-Lithuania hold special potential for early modern historians. In her recent monograph, she argued that a reinterpretation of this period could be the basis for transforming how scholars conceive of orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Lutheranism in all of pre-Tridentine Latin Christendom. At the very least, she has illustrated how the complexity and nuance of the early Polish-Lithuanian Reformations are extraordinarily compelling and revealing, yet they have been overlooked for both intentional and accidental reasons. This dissertation examines some ignored facets of these early Reformations in Poland-Lithuania, connected deeply and influentially to religious developments across a broad and heterogeneous Central Europe.

The Early Reformations in Poland-Lithuania

The modern historiography of the early Reformations in Poland-Lithuania prior to this last decade was quite thin and based on a few rather large assumptions. Nowakowska exhaustively examined much of it in "Forgetting Lutheranism" and King Sigismund and Martin Luther. There was, of course, the heavily polemical and nationalist material from the early twentieth century, discussed in the section above. But then during the Cold War and indeed through the first decade of this millennium, there

52 Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther, 3-38.
were only a handful of works published about early evangelical reform in the Kingdom of Poland, and those few had very narrow focuses, for example the direct contacts between Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon, and Polish evangelical leaders. Historians in Poland and abroad assumed that early Lutheran reform in Poland-Lithuania was light, relatively inconsequential, and explicitly non-Polish. Instead, they focused on later reform movements that could be construed as affecting native Poles, such as the growth of Calvinism, Socinianism, and Catholic reform. The main exception to this trend concerned Prussia, where evangelical reform first entered Poland-Lithuania and grew stronger and more permanent than anywhere else in the polity. Historians consistently paid significant attention to the events and developments there in the period 1518-1548. Maria Bogucka, Henryk Zins, Walther Hubatsch, Oskar Bartel, Udo Arnold, Janusz Małłek, Marian Pawlak, and Marian Biskup all demonstrated this from the 1950s through the 2000s. Their collective works have revealed how in Prussia: early evangelical reform brought class tensions to the surface; long-simmering anticlericalism found an outlet in Protestant reform; urban social and political issues could be distinct from rural ones; popular violence was a frequent result of the somewhat subversive introduction of evangelical ideas; varying political structures and relations fostered evangelical reform in different ways; and political relations with the

53 Nowakowska, "Forgetting Lutheranism," 281-303; Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther, 2-6.


55 Nowakowska, "Forgetting Lutheranism," 281-303; Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther, 2-6.
Crown of Poland could have an enormous effect on popular or elite support for evangelical reform efforts.\textsuperscript{56}

For the most part, Natalia Nowakowska has dominated recent scholarship on the early Reformations in Poland-Lithuania, with the advantage of an international perspective.\textsuperscript{57} In addition to demonstrating how little recent attention this period has received historiographically, she has posited that the traditional narratives of the period are drastically and polemically flawed, and in some part limited by nationalistic interpretations.\textsuperscript{58} Much of her latest research is based on a far-reaching effort to collect and reinterpret primary sources that she claims generations of historians have either misunderstood or ignored with regards to early evangelical reform in the polity. She has argued that during the early Reformations (1518-c.1540), Lutheranism was far more prevalent throughout Crown lands—beyond Prussia—than many historians previously have recognized. She also has argued that despite strong polemical rhetoric and seemingly harsh efforts to oppress Lutherans, royal officials in Cracow generally overlooked evangelical reform in Crown lands so long as it did not cause violent or society-shaking revolts. Royal initiatives that appeared intended to quell reform instead were akin to mere propaganda implemented for political and diplomatic purposes.\textsuperscript{59} My own research is consistent with this notion.

\textsuperscript{56} See footnotes 35, 39, 40, 41 for lists of essays, articles, and monographs. Each of these topics merits further discussion in later chapters of this dissertation, in particular as they reflect the reforming activity of Johannes Dantiscus.

\textsuperscript{57} Nowakowska, “Forgetting Lutheranism,” 281-303; Nowakowska, “High Clergy and Printers,” 43-64; Nowakowska, “Lamenting the Church?” 223-36; Nowakowska, \textit{King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther}.

\textsuperscript{58} Nowakowska, “Forgetting Lutheranism,” 281-303.

\textsuperscript{59} Nowakowska, \textit{King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther}. 
Nowakowska also argues, however, that this lenient practical response was because King Sigismund I “the Old” (r. 1506-1548) and some of his councilors believed Lutherans to be solidly within a Christian orthodoxy that was defined not by settled doctrine but rather general Christian unity. She writes, “Lutheranism was not actively persecuted in Sigismund I’s Poland, then, because to most catholic elites it was not yet seen as extrinsic to the church, in an already variegated catholic/Christian society, and this did not require the urgent persecution of subjects, allies, and neighbours.” She extrapolates this position to propose new, more open definitions of Lutheranism, Catholicism, and Christian orthodoxy prior to the Council of Trent. This was all despite Sigismund’s well-established Catholic piety and overt support for the Church, as well as his public and private condemnation of “Lutherans” to royal and ecclesiastical officials as explicitly heretical and in error, however irregularly appearing in the extant evidence. Her argument makes a significant leap, though, from demonstrating Sigismund’s substantial political toleration to positing his broad, seemingly undelineated conception of orthodoxy based upon a vague, undiscriminating Christian unity. It overstates his openness to a “Lutheran” division within Christian orthodoxy rather than acknowledging the complex religious dimensions of his political environment and the benefits of patient, pragmatic politics. Polish historian Paweł Kras provides a more convincing and demonstrable conclusion. He emphasizes the necessary pragmatism of Sigismund’s policies toward Lutherans and other Protestant groups, despite his narrower, clearly-delineated concept of Catholic orthodoxy. Acknowledging the king’s extreme piety, professed loyalty to the Catholic Church, and sustained vitriol

60 Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther. Quotation from pp. 12.
toward Christian dissenters, especially those who supposedly caused violence and disruptions of the established social and political order, Kras argues that Sigismund recognized the limitations of his own power to restrict religious pluralism within Crown lands, as well as the potentially catastrophic possible effects of doing so. The king also recognized that a draconian enforcement of his own anti-heresy policies would cause significant turmoil among the nobility, who maintained a strong hand in the governance of the kingdom. Nonetheless, the king believed “Lutheranism” and other Protestant sects to be heretical and worthy of eradication, should it become politically pragmatic and possible. He resorted to tolerance due to political pragmatism, even in the face of immense pressure from other Catholic princes, meaning that he likely considered his options quite thoroughly and carefully with the consultation of his advisors at court and in the Church.⁶¹

Even in light of the recent work by Nowakowska, Kras, and others, several aspects of the early Reformations in Poland-Lithuania remain unclear. There still is very little reconstruction of what the early spread and implementation of evangelical reform looked like on the ground. This is due largely to the fact that extant sources overwhelmingly display the perspective of the highest intellectual, ecclesiastical, and political elites, most of whom publicly espoused anti-evangelical views. Nowakowska addressed localized experiences to a minor extent, perhaps as far as the sources allow. The question lingers, though: how did commoners across Poland-Lithuania experience the early surge of evangelical reform, and what exactly were concerned ecclesiastical

and royal officials observing in their jurisdictions? An even more substantial persistent gap in the historiography concerns the Catholic Church’s early opposition and practical responses to evangelical reform, at both the episcopal (political, judicial, etc.) and parochial (local, social, communal, etc.) level. As discussed previously, most treatments of counter-reform or Catholic reform in Poland-Lithuania have begun their analysis only well into the second half of the sixteenth century. Thus in the historiography, the Church hazily appears to be crippling passive or disinterestedly accepting in the face of early evangelical reform. In *King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther*, Nowakowska sporadically mentions a few ecclesiastical efforts to limit, discourage, or eradicate early Lutheranism, but without much detail she reduces their proponents to “a handful of Catholics, such as Bishop Andrzej Krzycki, [who] anticipated the Counter/catholic Reformation by angrily starting to characterize Lutherans as entirely Other and in need of suppression.”⁶² Could it be that only a few inconsequential clergymen opposed evangelical reform and urged action in response, especially given the vicious polemical texts that Nowakowska attributes to many Church officials?⁶³ The best setting in which to begin to answer this question is Prussia, where evangelical reform was strong and pervasive, where the Catholic Church in Poland-Lithuania faced its greatest loss of control, and from where there actually is substantial evidence with which to examine the Church’s opposition and responses. Furthermore, Prussian towns were linked integrally in various ways to other lands and peoples of Central, Northern, and Western Europe. The region’s early evangelical and Catholic reform thus speaks invaluably to religious

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⁶² Nowakowska, *King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther*, 13.

⁶³ Nowakowska, *King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther*, 151-69.
connections across Latin Christendom, but especially to the diversity, fluidity, and interconnectivity of early modern Poland-Lithuania and Central Europe in the context of the Reformations.

**Prussia on the Eve of the Protestant Reformations**

Like Poland-Lithuania more generally, the characteristics of early modern Prussia probably are quite unfamiliar to many western readers. Therefore, any analysis using Prussia as a significant setting requires an introduction to its histories, structures, populations, and geography. Prussia is a land of undulating low hills, placid serpentine rivers, thousands of lakes, and fertile delta lowlands, bisected roughly by the wide floodplain of the great Vistula River. In the thirteenth century, the area became the dominion of the Order of Brothers of the German House of Saint Mary in Jerusalem, more commonly known as the Teutonic Order, which arrived at the invitation of Polish lords in order to convert the pagan Prussian peoples to Christianity. Migrants from northwest Germany seeking economic opportunity soon followed. Teutonic castles and estates came to dominate the inlands, so many German migrants settled in riverside towns such as Gdańsk (Danzig), Grudziądz (Graudenz), Chełmno (Kulm or Culm), Toruń (Thorn), Elbląg (Elbing), Braniewo (Braunsberg), and Königsberg (Królewiec, now Kaliningrad). These towns developed robust commercial activity, a few enough to join the Hanseatic League and exercise some economic and political independence. Their societies fostered a German urban elite, whose interests and activities often were quite distinct from the German, Prussian, and Polish populations of the surrounding villages and countryside. In the early fifteenth century, some of these elites led Prussian estates and towns to form the Prussian League to counteract the political authority of the Teutonic Order, from which they felt increasingly removed. By the 1440s, they formed in
secret a Prussian Assembly, a diet modeled on the Polish Sejm, and in 1454 they coordinated with King Casimir Jagiellończyk of Poland to throw off Teutonic control and accept Crown rule. This sparked the Thirteen Years’ War, the greatest of a number of violent conflicts between the Kingdom of Poland and the Teutonic Order during the fifteenth century. When the war ended in 1466, the western part of Prussia came under Crown rule as Royal Prussia while the eastern part returned to the Order and seventy years later would become Ducal Prussia.64

The reordered administrative structures and political divisions of this severed Prussia, which appear in black on the map in Figure 1-2, had significant long-term effects, especially during the early Reformations. After the Thirteen Years’ War, Royal (or Polish) Prussia comprised three new royal palatinates: Pomerania (Pomorze, Pommern), the largest, containing all of Prussian territory west of the Vistula River; Malbork (Marienburg), the smallest, occupying the eastern half of the Vistula Delta; and Chełmno Land (Kulmerland), the southernmost, located inside the Vistula’s great northeastward bend. One of Prussia’s three leading towns was located in each palatinate: Gdańsk in Pomerania; Elbąg in Malbork; Toruń in Chełmno Land. Pomerania and Malbork, along with the towns of Grudziądz and Chelmno in western Chełmno Land, soon also became some of the most important commercial locations in Christendom as they increasingly exported massive amounts of grain to Western Europe via Baltic trade routes. In 1466, the Prussian Assembly reorganized to reflect these administrative changes and to privilege the territory’s larger towns and estates. The new circumstances and organization simultaneously convinced Polish royal officials

64 Friedrich, The Other Prussia, 20-3.
that they would be able to exercise some control over the region and empowered a small group of elite German families that highly valued and defended Prussia’s traditional urban political and economic self-determination.65

More loosely associated with Royal Prussia and the Crown but playing a critical role in this transition was the neighboring Prince-Bishopric of Warmia (Ermland). Warmia was another territory ceded by the Teutonic Order to the Crown of Poland in 1466, but unlike Royal Prussia to the west, it was a near-enclave still surrounded by Teutonic lands. Nonetheless, it became the only prince-bishopric in all of Poland-Lithuania and maintained much of its own political jurisdiction. In 1508, the Prince-Bishop of Warmia also became the official head of the Prussian Assembly. Thereafter, he would be a vital political intermediary for the Crown, but he also would be forced to monitor and accommodate the political positions of the Royal Prussian towns, estates, and local assemblies. Warmia itself had a few mid-sized towns, including Hansa-linked Braniewo and the episcopal capital Lidzbark Warmiński (Heilsberg), but it comprised mostly rural estates owned by the prince-bishopric, and so the Church and clergy had dominant political power there. All of these characteristics have led Central European historians to debate ceaselessly what kind of polity the prince-bishopric actually was. Regardless, it would play a major role in the development of Prussian relations after 1466.66


One characteristic of post-1466 Prussia that would complicate its administration, especially during the Reformations, was the arrangement of its six episcopal jurisdictions, which appear in red in Figure 1-2. Most of the territory west of the Vistula, including Gdańsk, was part of the Diocese of Włocławek, a Polish cathedral-town located far south of Prussian lands in Great Poland. The southwestern chunk of Pomerania, though, was under direct oversight of the Polish Archdiocese of Gniezno. Chełmno Land essentially constituted its own Diocese of Chełmno, the seat of which was the small, central town of Chełmża (Kulmsee). As of the fourteenth century, these three jurisdictions all were suffragan to Gniezno, meaning that their ecclesiastical authority was oriented toward Poland. Their administration was rather straightforward.

The three episcopal jurisdictions in northeastern Prussia provided some contrast. The Diocese of Pomesania, with its cathedral in Kwidzyn (Marienwerder), occupied the eastern bank of the Vistula, extending from Gdańsk Bay southward to the border of Chełmno Land and then southeastward to the border of Mazovia. Its neighbor to the northeast was the Diocese of Warmia, with its cathedral in coastal Frombork (Frauenburg). The Diocese of Warmia was the largest diocese in Prussia. It comprised all of the co-named prince-bishopric, the area around Elbląg and the Vistula Lagoon, and extensive rural lands to the southeast and northeast. North of the Diocese of Warmia lay the Diocese of Sambia, stretched from the marshy Baltic coast eastward into Lithuania and having its seat in Königsberg. Pomesania, Warmia, and Sambia were

suffragan to the Archdiocese of Riga, meaning that their ecclesiastical authority was oriented toward Livonia and the Baltic. That was not inherently problematic, though. What eventually did cause problems was the Teutonic Order’s political cession of Royal Prussia and the Prince-Bishopric of Warmia in 1466. Thereafter, Crown and Teutonic rule was divided diagonally across two of these episcopal jurisdictions. Teutonic Prussia continued to rule the southern two-thirds of the Diocese of Pomesania and its seat in Kwidzyn, the eastern two-thirds of the Diocese of Warmia without its seat, and the entirety of the Diocese of Sambia. Poland, meanwhile, would rule the northern third of the Diocese of Pomesania (the palatinate of Malbork) and the western third of the Diocese of Warmia (the prince-bishopric), in addition to Pomerania and Chełmno Land. Initially, this situation was manageable. In the 1520s, however, when the bishops of Pomesania and Samland and all of Teutonic territory in Prussia were converted to Lutheranism and became the Duchy of Prussia under former Grand Master Albrecht, while Polish lands officially remained Catholic, the process of which will be a topic of Chapter 5, the ecclesiastical administration of northeastern Prussia became extremely complicated and contested.

As previously stated, Prussia was the main entry point into Poland-Lithuania for evangelical reform in the late 1510s and the 1520s, the process of which will be a detailed topic of Chapter 2 and Chapter 5. Scholars such as Henryk Zins, Walther Hubatsch, Oskar Bartel, Udo Arnold, Janusz Mallek, Marian Pawlak, Marian Biskup, and most recently Natalia Nowakowska have shaped the historiography of this topic. In

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the case of Prussia, these historians actually have researched the local or popular experience of the spread of evangelical ideas, texts, beliefs, and practices, at least in the larger urban settings.\textsuperscript{68} The question about practical Catholic responses to early evangelical reform, however, remains largely unaddressed in Prussia as well as in Poland-Lithuania more broadly. At best scholars have put the issue on the back burner. Even Nowakowska has dismissed the matter in Prussia, writing merely that “a handful of Prussian bishops (Drzewicki, Ferber, Dantiscus) were keen to see continued action against Lutheran heresy in Royal Prussia.”\textsuperscript{69} Some long-overlooked evidence suggests more, though. There are a variety of approaches one could take to answering this lingering question, but the most expedient approach is to analyze the career of royal secretary, royal diplomat, Bishop of Chełmno (1530-1537), and Prince-Bishop of Warmia (1537-1548) Johannes Dantiscus. One of the best ways to access this world of early Catholic responses to evangelical reform is to examine the roles and activities of bishops. Dantiscus’s career is an ideal lens—for Prussia and Poland-Lithuania, but also for Central Europe as a whole—because of his varied experiences, demonstrable reform initiatives, robust personal connections, applicability to several historiographical themes, and vitally his enormous extant corpus of evidence.

**Johannes Dantiscus (1485-1548)**

Johannes Dantiscus led one of the most intriguing lives of any early modern historical figure, and his experiences reflected or influenced an astounding array of historical developments. The experiences of his youth were not uncommon, but

\textsuperscript{68} See footnotes 35, 39, 40, 41, 54-59.

\textsuperscript{69} Nowakowska, *King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther*, 95.
eventually he would rise to significance in Central Europe. He was born in 1485 in Gdańsk into the burgher family von Höfen, the ancestors of which had immigrated to Prussia from Lower Germany. In the late fifteenth century, his father became a rope maker—sometimes taking the name Flachsbinder—in Gdańsk in the wake of financial troubles. Johannes completed secondary school in Grudziądz, briefly attended the university in Greifswald (in western Pomerania—now Germany), and then enrolled at the university in Cracow, where he received modern humanist training and from which he earned his bachelor’s degree in 1503. Perhaps as early as 1500, Johannes “Dantiscus” (meaning “a man from Gdańsk”) then began working at the royal court in Cracow, most notably as a scribe for Grand Chancellor of the Crown Jan Łaski. This position launched a long career in service of the Polish Crown.70

Within a few years of completing his education, Dantiscus would begin to make a name for himself in various social, intellectual, and diplomatic circles across Latin Christendom. Socializing was the easy part. Almost everywhere he traveled, he earned a reputation for being a great companion, particularly at the pub, with an appetite for beer buoyed by his stocky build and eagerness for easygoing conversation. He was perceptive and shrewd but had a hearty, unassuming appearance. He had a square face with thick jowels, an easy smile, a tall prominent nose, and large, inquisitive eyes protruding from under a heavy brow. His curiosity and wit attracted fellows from high

70 Two biographies form the bulk of the research done on Dantiscus’ life and career. Inge Brigitte Müller-Blessing, Johannes Dantiscus von Höfen, ein Diplomat und Bischof zwischen Humanismus und Reformation (1485-1548) (Osnabrück: A. Fromm, 1968); Zbigniew Nowak, Jan Dantyszek: Portret Renesansowego Humanisty (Wrocław: Ossoliński, 1982). Many new dimensions of his life and career have come to light as a result of the ongoing research project “Registration and Publication of Ioannes Dantiscus’ Correspondence (1485-1548). Particularly helpful has been the ever-growing online catalogue of Dantiscus’ letters and texts, entitled Corpus of Ioannes Dantiscus’ Texts & Correspondence (hereafter abbreviated as “CIDT&C”) found at: http://dantiscus.ibi.uw.edu.pl/.
stations, most of whom he befriended with ease. And he promoted Gdańsk beer incessantly, often making promises to send casks to colleagues abroad. From late 1505 to early 1507, by means of a royal subvention for educational purposes, Dantiscus was privileged to travel widely. He visited Denmark, France, the Holy Roman Empire, Venice, Greece, Crete, Rhodes, Cyprus, Palestine, Sicily, Naples, and Rome before returning to the Polish court, and so accumulated both formal instruction and worldly experience in a variety of settings.\textsuperscript{71}

After returning to Poland in 1507, Dantiscus embarked on his diplomatic career. He served for a decade as an envoy of King Sigismund I to the towns and local assemblies of Royal Prussia. He was a key member of Sigismund’s entourage to the Congress of Vienna in 1515, and then he remained a legate at the court of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I until 1517. Between 1518 and 1532, he went on three separate diplomatic missions as Sigismund’s lead envoy to the courts of Central, Western, and Southern Europe. He traveled throughout Prussia, Austria, Bavaria, the central and western Holy Roman Empire, the Low Countries, southern England, Spain, northern Italy, and the Kingdom of Poland, which can be seen in the map in Figure 1-3. He observed and witnessed complex imperial and royal politics, contentious and intricate diplomacy, large-scale military preparations, novel colonial endeavors, tense Christian-Muslim relations, some of the most volatile and significant moments of the early Reformations, and the development of cutting-edge intellectual debates. He also took a Spanish mistress and had two children during the 1520s. During his diplomatic travels, he met Emperor Maximilian I, Prince-Archbishop Matthäus Lang of Salzburg, Emperor

\textsuperscript{71} Müller-Blessing, \textit{Johannes Dantiscus von Höfen}; Nowak, \textit{Jan Dantyszek}; CIDT&C.
Charles V, Imperial Grand Chancellor Mercurino Gattinara, Archduke Ferdinand I of Austria (later King of Bohemia, Hungary, and Croatia and then Emperor), King Henry VIII of England, Lord Chancellors Thomas Wolsey and Thomas More, King Christian II of Denmark, Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon, Hernando Cortés, Pope Clement VII, Archbishop Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury, and dozens of other lords, ladies, diplomats, scholars, reformers, and renowned sixteenth-century figures, not to mention almost everyone of consequence in the royal court and Church hierarchy of Poland-Lithuania. He also developed a strong friendship with Erasmus of Rotterdam via correspondence. Throughout all of this, Dantiscus maintained hundreds of epistolary contacts, wrote bountiful poetry and prose, and became one of the most famous diplomats and humanist scholars in Europe. Most of that came during only the third quarter of his life and the first half of his career of prominence.\textsuperscript{72}

The second half of Dantiscus’s career as a leading figure in Central Europe was ecclesiastical. In 1530, he was nominated and elected to the position of Bishop of Chelmno in Royal Prussia, to which he returned in 1532. Then he acceded to the position of Prince-Bishop of Warmia in 1537. As a bishop, he continued to develop consequential personal contacts, including with Nicolaus Copernicus, Duke Albrecht of Prussia, Stanilaus Hosius, the several archbishops of Gniezno, and Archbishops Johannes and Olaus Magnus of Uppsala. He died in office in Lidzbark Warmiński in 1548, the same year as his beloved monarch, King Sigismund.\textsuperscript{73} During this eighteen-year episcopal tenure, Dantiscus became one of the foremost opponents of Protestant

\textsuperscript{72} Müller-Blessing, Johannes Dantiscus von Höfen; Nowak, Jan Dantyszek; CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{73} Müller-Blessing, Johannes Dantiscus von Höfen; Nowak, Jan Dantyszek; CIDT&C.
reform in Central Europe and made vital contributions to the development of the Reformations across the region. Unfortunately, the story of his episcopal and reforming career remains largely untold. The contextualization and analysis of this career found in this dissertation, however, brings Dantiscus’s significance to Reformations history to light. Through the lens of his engagement with religious reform, it reveals overlooked dimensions of early Protestant and Catholic reform in early modern Prussia and Poland-Lithuania. It also integrally links these facets of the Reformations to much broader religious, intellectual, and political issues across Central Europe. Then it informs crucial interventions in several other historiographical topics.

The primary sources for Dantiscus’s life and career are truly astounding for a relatively unknown figure. His corpus is one of the largest from all of early modern Central Europe. Directly related to him are over six thousand extant letters with over six hundred correspondents across the western world, as well as thousands of other primary texts ranging from official decrees and speeches to rough drafts of short hymns and poems. The manuscript forms of these letters and texts exist in archives spread from Spain to England to Germany to Sweden to Poland, including many other places in between. For almost thirty years now, members of the research project “Registration and Publication of Ioannes Dantiscus’s Correspondence (1485-1548)”, run through the “Wydział Artes Liberales” at the University of Warsaw, have been tracking, collecting, transcribing, publishing, and digitizing these letters and texts in both print publications and a searchable database, http://dantiscus.ibi.uw.edu.pl/. It is an incredible resource for interpreting early modern European history. A few other publications also have

74 CIDT&C.
catalogued large quantities of his correspondence as well, particularly during his episcopacy in Prussia. Yet Dantiscus and his corpus still have been underutilized in analytical historical research.

The historiography of Dantiscus’s life and career is in need of some revision and addition. He has been the subject of a few scholarly works during the last century, but most often he has been placed in narrow contexts beholden to traditional historical narratives. Perhaps more than most other sixteenth-century figures, he has suffered from the lamentable and artificial historiographical divide between studies of the Renaissance and studies of the Reformations in Poland-Lithuania. Scholars overwhelmingly have focused on his contributions to Renaissance humanism and diplomacy, while barely acknowledging his role in the Reformations. An analysis of his career in the context of the Reformations, grounded in the existing historiography, not only reveals its value as a lens to early modern religious reform, but also begins to bridge this divide between Renaissance and Reformations studies. A summary of the existing historiography should demonstrate the possible approaches to such a pursuit.

Dantiscus’s appearances in the historiography of the Renaissance extend quite far, albeit thinly. Exemplifying his long-term significance in the intellectual history of early modern Europe, Dantiscus made a few brief appearances in Marcel Bataillon’s famous text *Erasme et l’Espagne*. Then two mid-century publications catalogued


much of his own humanist literature that he produced during his life. Subsequently, the next three substantial treatments of Dantiscus were largely biographical and drew upon this literary work. Henry de Vocht’s 1961 analysis of Dantiscus’s contacts in the Low Countries highlighted many of his Dutch humanist connections. Inge Brigitte Müller-Blessing’s 1968 German biography developed those and other scholarly connections in more varied international contexts. Zbigniew Nowak’s 1982 Polish biography detailed many of Dantiscus’s major career milestones framed by his literary work and diplomatic connections, especially with other humanist scholars. These monographs emphasized his tremendously important role as a humanist and diplomat, but they introduced only slight analysis of early modern religious reform. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, a number of other works that examined sixteenth-century Royal Prussia, Warmia, and Poland-Lithuania more generally invoked specific examples or generalizations from Dantiscus’s career as anecdotes. Meanwhile, some scattered articles in Polish and German explored a few narrower aspects in more depth. Topics

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79 Müller-Blessing, *Johannes Dantiscus von Höfen*.

80 Nowak, *Jan Dantyszek*.

included his religious poetry, general qualities of his correspondence, his relations with individual contacts, and the nature of his corpus collection, among others. Some of the most interesting work, though, was done by scholars farther afield.

Since the 1950s, a number of English-language articles, essays, and longer pieces have examined particular aspects of Dantiscus’s career in broader contexts. Ervin Brody explored not only Dantiscus’s activities and connections during his tenure in Spain, but also his lasting legacy there, including the lives and careers of his two half-Spanish children. H. Świderska meticulously reconstructed Dantiscus’s diplomatic mission to England in 1522, during which he established crucial scholarly and political relationships that would aid him later in his career. Taking advantage of some new perspectives, Harold Segel devoted an illuminating chapter of his monograph on the Polish Renaissance to reevaluating Dantiscus’s career as a diplomat and poet. Since 1989, in light of the Dantiscus research project at the University of Warsaw, even more work has been produced by and for an international audience. In 1993, Stephen Ryle used Dantiscus’s correspondence as a lens through which to view European

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expansion.\textsuperscript{89} Then in 1996, there was a small international conference devoted to finding new uses for Dantiscus’s corpus, the proceedings of which were published in an edited volume. Topics included his European consciousness, his connections with Ducal Prussia, his relationship with Cortés, his representativeness of royal secretaries, and his attention to conflict with the Ottomans.\textsuperscript{90} Anne Jönsson pushed the wave of revisionism further to include Dantiscus’s historical and historiographical connections to Sweden.\textsuperscript{91} The bulk of the new work on Dantiscus, though, has come from the faculty and staff at the research lab in Warsaw. They have published three large volumes of his Latin correspondence—edited, annotated, and summarized in English—with imperial courtiers Sigismund von Herberstein, Alfonso de Valdés, and Cornelis de Schepper, in addition to a number of smaller volumes.\textsuperscript{92} Each of these pieces has introduced new questions to a wide audience and suggested how much more Dantiscus’s career can teach historians about the early modern period.

Other than a few short pieces or mentions, however, Dantiscus’s multifaceted significance to the European Reformations has drawn almost no attention, despite the Reformations being the pivotal issue of his time and the incredible richness of his source material and historiographical applicability. Revealing fascinating English-Polish connections, Diarmaid MacCulloch detailed the relationship between Dantiscus and


\textsuperscript{92} CIDT&C.
English reformer Thomas Cranmer in two publications, but stopped short of engaging with Dantiscus’s religious significance more broadly.\(^{93}\) The director of the research project in Warsaw, Anna Skolimowska, who has published a number of important articles about different aspects of Dantiscus’s life and works, recently examined his relationships with a variety of intellectual and ecclesiastical leaders of the Protestant Reformation, but only in a brief essay.\(^{94}\) Natalia Nowakowska referenced moments from Dantiscus’s episcopal career in her monograph, but typically as individual peripheral anecdotes.\(^{95}\) With the exception of these and a couple of other scholarly works, Dantiscus’s religious significance has been overlooked due to the resiliency of traditional narratives about the early Polish-Lithuanian Reformations. Not questioning that evangelical reform there was minor prior to the mid-1540s and that the Catholic Church did not respond substantially prior to the late sixteenth century, historians of Poland-Lithuania have assumed that Dantiscus had small reforming role to play.

**Analytical Approaches**

Utilizing the large corpus of primary materials from Dantiscus’s life and career, my research follows two analytical approaches in order to explore and illuminate his role in the history of Reformations Central Europe. First, although taking his well-established humanist and diplomatic contributions into serious account, it predominantly examines his direct engagement with early modern religious reform, both Protestant and Catholic.

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\(^{95}\) Nowakowska, *King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther*. 
In this case, the general term “reform” refers to the application of new styles of preaching, the publication and dissemination of printed polemical religious texts, the public promotion of particular theological concepts and doctrines, the imposition or restriction of different worship practices, and the elimination, alteration, or restoration of components of ecclesiastical institutions, all of which were common and diverse aspects of the Reformation across Central Europe. In Dantiscus’s view, though, closely associated also would be the radical and violent branches of the early Reformation, which often assumed the label of reform even if disavowed by leaders such as Martin Luther. With all of these aspects and their effects in mind, this dissertation analyzes where Dantiscus traveled, whom he met, what events or reform measures he personally witnessed, how he discussed religious reform in his correspondence, how religious reform influenced his diplomatic work and shaped his literary production, and what reforming or counter-reforming activities he pursued as a bishop. My analysis reflects as much as possible his range of perspectives, inquiries, inspirations, challenges, relationships, and decisions in the religious landscape of early modern Europe. Second, my research highlights and contextualizes the cosmopolitanism of Dantiscus’s reforming career. This approach speaks to the manner in which he pursued religious reform transnationally across a broad, heterogeneous Central Europe. It also introduces an additional historiography of cosmopolitanism.

As explored by Margaret Jacob in Strangers Nowhere in the World: The Rise of Cosmopolitanism in Early Modern Europe, cosmopolitanism could refer to two phenomena in the early modern period. It could mean “the ability to experience people of different nations, creeds and colors with pleasure, curiosity and interest, and not with
suspicion, disdain, or simply disinterest that could turn occasionally into loathing,” and it could mean “transgressing within a traditional society of orders, titles, exclusionary kith and kin, religious barriers and prohibitions, gender norms and affectations…” With and between these two meanings, a number of scholars have addressed the causes, limitations, and effects of cosmopolitanism in a variety of early modern settings. Much of the treatment of early modern cosmopolitanism has been in the context of the Enlightenment. Robert Schneider used the case study of Toulouse and the comments of Jean-Jacques Rousseau to argue that true European cosmopolitanism began in the eighteenth century and that it was inherently confined to urban elites. Therefore, in French urban settings during the Enlightenment, an elite cosmopolitanism coexisted and occasionally clashed with a common localism. The effects of elite activities could “trickle down,” but it was difficult for people of limited means to experience the foreign, let alone embrace it. Margaret Jacob herself concluded that true cosmopolitanism emerged in Europe in the eighteenth century as a social and intellectual response to protracted wars and national rivalries. The elites drove this emergence in her analysis, as well. Among urban non-elites, cosmopolitanism took the form of transgressing intra-societal divisions rather than engaging proactively with the outside world. This variable concept appealed to Europeans in several societal settings, including the scientific community, commerce, and social clubs. Jeffrey Freedman used cosmopolitanism to


98 Jacob, Strangers Nowhere, 1-12.
explain in part the emergence of German markets for French Enlightenment literature. His foundational statements that “books have not been as respectful of national borders as the historians who study them,” and that “the booksellers of early modern Europe moved back and forth across national borders,” apply not only to Enlightenment Europe but to the early sixteenth century as well, as Chapter 5 of this dissertation demonstrates.99

A few other scholars have found convincing evidence of cosmopolitanism well before the Enlightenment. The English Renaissance in particular has inspired a number of contemporary historians to acknowledge and utilize pre-Enlightenment cosmopolitanism. Robert Stillman accessed cosmopolitanism through the poetry of Philip Sidney and the sixteenth-century print culture surrounding his works on the continent.100 Allison Games examined the influence of cosmopolitanism on English imperial enterprises during the Age of Expansion. She indicated that men intrigued by travel—merchants, explorers, soldiers, officials, clergymen—likely were naturally cosmopolitan. An appreciation for and affinity with people of other nations and cultures facilitated their survival, enjoyment, and professional success abroad. Such men drove the early expansion and solidification of the empire. And cosmopolitanism did not preclude the existence of xenophobia among the English, but rather the two often went hand-in-hand in an expanding society.101 In his introduction to *A Companion to the*


Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion, Jyotsna Singh posited that English Renaissance cosmopolitans developed sympathy for foreigners by necessity, but nonetheless cross-cultural exchanges created "cross-pollination" around the world. He agreed with Games that xenophobia often accompanied cosmopolitanism, with both incendiary and constructive effects.¹⁰²

A couple of historians have looked meaningfully at cosmopolitanism in the context of the Reformations, albeit in limited settings. Caroline Hibbard suggested that English Catholics were inherently more cosmopolitan than their Protestant countrymen out of both political necessity and confessional integrity. The exemplar of this trend was Henrietta Maria, French Catholic queen consort of King Charles I of England. Hibbard argued that effective royal courts throughout early modern Europe needed to be cosmopolitan, but that a French Catholic queen in England in particular found a loudly cosmopolitan court and household to be supportive and useful.¹⁰³ Perhaps the most substantial work directly addressing cosmopolitanism during the Reformations is Guido Marneff’s Antwerp in the Age of Reformation: Underground Protestantism in a Commercial Metropolis 1550-1577. Marneff explored how Antwerp’s huge and varied commercial role in the early modern world created a diverse, fluid, and necessarily open society within the city. This diversity and openness allowed Protestantism to develop and thrive in several confessional forms despite the territory officially being a part of the


Catholic Habsburg monarchy’s Spanish dominion. Cosmopolitanism became apparent in commercial regulation, consumer goods, official literary chambers, a municipal education system, the non-enforcement of religious edicts, a thriving printing industry and book market, and popular culture. None of these components of Antwerp’s society could afford to be fully closed to contact and relations with aliens of any type, including people of different religions and Christian confessions. This openness in turn allowed Protestant ideas to flourish among native Netherlanders, even if in a clandestine manner.¹⁰⁴

Scholars long have implicitly acknowledged the cosmopolitanism of Dantiscus’s career, but it has awaited examination in a Reformations context. Growing up in another “commercial metropolis” in Gdańsk and then in his late teens traveling throughout the eastern Mediterranean, he clearly felt comfortable with foreigners and indeed pursued foreign experiences from a young age. Then as a diplomat, he operated nonchalantly and effectively in both elite courts—Cracow, Vienna, Barcelona, London, Valladolid, Rome, Augsburg, etc.—and common settings—eg. Bavarian small-town inns, city markets in the Low Countries, London trade houses, Saxon farmlands, Spanish pubs, Alpine trails, docks along the Danube—spread throughout most of Latin Christendom. The record of his contact with non-Europeans and non-Christians is thin, but he continually encountered, engaged, befriended, and learned from people of different ethnicities, languages, cultures, socio-economic statuses, attitudes towards evangelical reform, and theological beliefs. Then as a relatively sedentary Catholic bishop, he

maintained robust epistolary connections and intellectual exchanges with contacts spread across the western world. He continued to engage foreigners and adherents to different beliefs at least cordially, if not with genuine welcome, even as he was imposing Catholic orthodoxy as widely and thoroughly as possible. Dantiscus’s experiences generally split the difference between Margaret Jacob’s two definitions of cosmopolitanism: openly encountering “people of different nations, creeds and colors” on one extreme; “transgressing” intra-society boundaries on the other extreme. This dissertation examines his engagement with personal contacts, intellectual currents, political arenas, diplomatic relations, and religious reform and counter-reform efforts from across Europe as part of a conscious and intentional personal cosmopolitanism. It flourished both prior to and contemporaneous with his episcopal tenures, and it continuously influenced his approaches to addressing religious reform both abroad and in Poland-Lithuania.

**Arguments**

Drawing upon these analytical approaches, this dissertation puts forth several novel arguments. They directly confront the established gaps in the historiography of both Dantiscus’s career and the early Reformations in Prussia and Poland-Lithuania. I argue that Dantiscus was attentive to and engaged with religious reform initiatives almost from the public emergence of Martin Luther in 1518. He sought and accumulated encounters with reform across Latin Christendom that were undeniably prolific, unique, varied, and moving. During most of these encounters, though, rarely was he the central or most important figure in the room. This quality gave him flexibility and

105 Jacob, *Strangers Nowhere*, 1-5.
maneuverability in critical places and moments, and it allowed him to interpret events through multiple perspectives. I argue that despite Dantiscus’s willingness to engage with, befriend, and work productively alongside scholars, clerics, and princes of different beliefs, he was adamantly opposed to Protestant reform and devoted much of his career to restoring what he saw as the unity, primacy, and strength of the Catholic Church in Central Europe. This opposition, as well as his own reform efforts and theology, were informed almost entirely by his personal experiences, rather than his approach to reform drawing initially from a theological foundation. I argue that Dantiscus received carte blanche to suppress and discourage early evangelical reform in Prussia and Poland-Lithuania from both royal and ecclesiastical officials. With that freedom, he implemented a wide-ranging Catholic reform program throughout his episcopal tenures. His efforts were some of the leading Catholic responses to early evangelical reform in Poland-Lithuania. And I argue that all of these experiences and activities were intentionally transnational and cosmopolitan. They were inspired, informed, and supported by individuals, polities, texts, policies, resources, and personal observations from across Latin Christendom.

**Structures**

As this dissertation is not meant to be a biography, it has particular limitations and structures in place that narrow its treatment of Dantiscus’s career. My historical analysis begins in 1518 (Dantiscus at age 32) for several reasons. In that year, both Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli began disseminating their evangelical ideas to a broad audience, evangelical ideas first penetrated Royal Prussia, Dantiscus began his first diplomatic mission abroad as lead envoy of the Crown of Poland, he most likely first learned about Luther’s and Zwingli’s reform efforts, and Dantiscus’s extant
correspondence began to increase drastically until it became a steady stream in the mid-1520s. My analysis ends in 1548 for even more obvious reasons. It is the year in which both Dantiscus and his royal patron King Sigismund died, it is one of a number of starting points identified for the Counter-Reformation in Poland-Lithuania in the traditional historiography—which I refute—and it is around when Reformed Christianity began to influence the Polish-Lithuanian nobility, thus reinvigorating evangelical reform across the region.

This final thirty-year period of Dantiscus's life—1518-1548—is analyzed in two large sections of three chapters apiece, roughly dividing the period in half and overlapping slightly. The first section, which covers his career 1518-1533, is slightly biographical but arranged based on themes in his lived experience. Tracing significant encounters during his diplomatic missions, it paints an intellectual portrait of Dantiscus as a scholar and official of the Crown and Church, especially with regard to his attention to evangelical reform. Chapter 2 examines his personal encounters with evangelical reform across Central Europe during his first few diplomatic missions. It demonstrates how he formed a pejorative construction of “Lutheranism” based on personal experience that later would inform his intellectual, diplomatic, and political approaches to managing evangelical reform. Chapter 3 explores his intellectual development at the courts of Western Europe throughout his diplomatic career. It reveals how his experiences fostered a tactful but unyielding political voice that he expressed through policy negotiations and polemical literature thereafter, often focusing on containing and eradicating evangelical reform. Chapter 4 analyzes his professional and intellectual self-positioning in the three years between when he learned about his episcopal election
and when he received his ordination and consecration. He embraced his new vocation and established himself as a fierce advocate for the primacy of the Catholic Church across Central Europe.

The second section, which focuses on Dantiscus’s in-person episcopal tenure 1532-1548, is arranged more thematically. It systematically demonstrates his cosmopolitan efforts as a bishop to monitor, evaluate, suppress, and implement religious reform and counter-reform both within his jurisdiction and across Central Europe, aided and supported by the myriad connections and resources he acquired earlier in his career. Chapter 5 provides a succinct narrative of the Polish-Lithuanian Reformations through 1532. It then delves into how bishop Dantiscus attempted to foster an eclectic and polemical literary culture in Prussia in order to provide context, justification, and support for his practical Catholic reform program. Chapter 6 details and illustrates the components of that practical reform program in his two Prussian dioceses—Chełmno Land and Warmia. Chapter 7 further broadens the picture by describing how he engaged with three different developments from the wider European Reformations, both in their various contexts abroad and in their integral relations with the Reformations in Poland-Lithuania.

**Contributions to Early Modern Historiography**

This dissertation primarily fills out the narrative of Johannes Dantiscus’s life as well as of the early Reformations in Poland-Lithuania. Beyond that, though, it intervenes in several important discussions in the historiography of early modern Europe by providing new evidence, arguments, and perspectives on several broad issues. Topics that it engages most directly are the categorization of early modern religious reform in Catholic contexts, the identities and activities of bishops in those contexts, the uses and
effects of early modern cosmopolitanism, and the very definition and nature of Central Europe. Here briefly, I introduce each topic as well as Dantiscus’s relevance. The details of his experiences are crucial to understanding his historiographical significance, though, and therefore I flesh out each topic more thoroughly in the Conclusion.

First, my project provides a unique case study illustrating formal Catholic reform initiatives that developed after Martin Luther’s emergence in 1517 but before the commencement of the Council of Trent in 1545. The exhaustive debate over the use of the terms “Counter-Reformation,” “Catholic Reformation,” and more recently John O’Malley’s “Early Modern Catholicism” has produced a flexible terminology applicable to early modern Catholic reform. But typical narratives still mostly hold that the Council

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106 David Luebke has chronicled the development of this debate. In the early twentieth century, scholars operated under the assumption that the “Counter-Reformation” (Gegenreformation) and the “Catholic Reformation” (Katolische Reformation) were two separate and relatively unrelated movements. The former comprised early modern efforts to pull Protestant princes and peoples back to Catholicism, and the latter referred to the internal institutional reform of the Catholic Church, particularly after the Council of Trent. David M. Luebke, “Editor’s Introduction,” in The Counter-Reformation: The Essential Readings, ed. David M. Luebke (Oxford: Blackwell), 1-16. The first historian to challenge this assumption was Hubert Jedin, who in 1946 proposed that the dichotomy was false and that the two movements in fact worked hand-in-hand, linked by the proclamations of Trent. He ignited a debate over terminology that would last for much of the twentieth century. Hubert Jedin, “Catholic Reformation or Counter Reformation?,” in The Counter-Reformation: The Essential Readings, ed. David M. Luebke (Oxford: Blackwell), 19-46. This article was first published in 1946 in Jedin’s book, Katholische Reformation oder Gegenreformation? Ein Versuch zur Klärung der Begriffe nebst einer Jubiläumsbetrachtung über das Trienter Konzil (Luzern: Verlag Josef Stocker, 1946). In the next generation of scholarship, A. G. Dickens proclaimed that both movements were obviously essential to the Reformations and that the efforts to parse them were unnecessary and unproductive. A. G. Dickens, The Counter Reformation (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969). Meanwhile, H. Outram Evennett argued that the intellectual, spiritual, and institutional reform of the early modern Catholic Church evolved together and had a complex impact on Europe’s Catholic population. H. Outram Evennett, The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970). Another generation later, John W. O’Malley reoriented the discussion, effectively ending the polemical debate over whether “Counter-” or “Catholic” was a more-appropriate qualifier for the Church’s activities during the Reformations. He recommended using the label “Early Modern Catholicism,” a broader term that could include the components of both narrower movements and be less beholden to chronological limitations. John W. O’Malley, as Ignatius Loyola a Church Reformer? How to Look at Early Modern Catholicism,” in The Counter-Reformation: The Essential Readings, ed. David M. Luebke (Oxford: Blackwell), 65-82. Since O’Malley’s intervention, historians’ use of all of these terms has been much more flexible, and indeed they have discovered and penetrated the haziness around the chronological, geographical, ecclesiastical, and confessional edges of each facet of Early Modern Catholicism. O’Malley himself has continued to enrich the field with his own work. John W.
of Trent marked the beginning of formal Catholic reform during the Reformation. In general and on a large scale, that may be true. Dantiscus’s career, however, introduces new evidence that should encourage historians of the Reformation to consider a more nuanced timeline of Catholic reform. His formal reform program occurred almost entirely prior to the Council of Trent, but in a less commonly-acknowledged easterly part of Latin Christendom. Subsequent chapters demonstrate that it was intentional, strategic, and systematic, as well as widely known among his clerical and intellectual peers across the western world. His experiences therefore give cause to reevaluate the chronological and geographical parameters of the narrative of Catholic reform during the early Reformation.

Second, my research introduces and begins to answer questions about who a Catholic bishop was and could be in the context of the early Reformation, a period for which the activity of bishops remains rather obscure in modern scholarship. Dantiscus’s career offers fascinating insights. It reveals how a wide range of origins, trainings, duties, experiences, and inspirations could drastically shape a bishop’s abilities, resources, goals, and achievements when dealing with religious reform. In turn, those qualities could shape the religious, political, intellectual, and social environments of Christians both within his diocese and farther afield. It also shows the complexity of a

bishop’s loyalty, which could extend to both religious authorities and secular princes, often simultaneously and frequently in moderate conflict. Such loyalty, to whichever target, could shape a bishop’s behavior and impact as much as any other quality. Dantiscus’s career thus provides an unusual but enlightening lens into the complex world of the Catholic episcopate during the early Reformations.

Third, my research expands upon the previously-mentioned work of Marnef, Grayson, Hibbard, and others to demonstrate how cosmopolitanism could serve a variety of functions and purposes in the early modern world, particularly for religious reformers. The example of Dantiscus’s career challenges and expands common notions of where, when, and how cosmopolitanism could appear during the Reformations, as well as how intentionally early modern actors could utilize it. It introduces new arenas for evaluating the relationships between cosmopolitanism, toleration, humanism, Christian unity, and religious reform in the first half of the sixteenth century.

Fourth and most importantly, Dantiscus’s reforming career speaks quite loudly to the definition and nature of early modern Central Europe. His experiences and reform efforts occurred and were deeply connected throughout the region, broadly defined. An analysis of his approaches to reform serves to explode some of the tight national or regional narratives that have limited the history of early modern Europe, particularly of the territories within the Habsburg and Jagiellonian monarchies. Dantiscus’s reforming environment was a diverse, fluid, interconnected, and more easterly Central Europe, of which the heterogeneous Poland-Lithuania was an integral part. Such a concept is an invaluable component of the historiography of the Reformations, as well as of tangential topics such as Christian-Muslim relations, Renaissance diplomacy, and Atlantic
expansion. His career can serve to imbed this component more fully in the historiography.
Figure 1-1  Map of Poland-Lithuania, c. 1525
Figure 1-2  Map of Royal Prussia, c. 1525
Figure 1-3  Map of Notable Stops on Dantiscus’s Travels, 1518-1532
Stranded in the rain on the southern banks of the swollen Elbe River in Upper Saxony in early summer 1523, unable to ride across the partially-submerged wooden bridge, Polish royal envoy Johannes Dantiscus and his road-weary delegation abandoned their horses and boarded a small skiff in order to cross the river’s wide floodplain. After a slow, cautious crossing, during which they recounted the dangers they had already faced on their long journey from Valladolid to Cracow, they gained the Elbe’s northern bank on the outskirts of the town of Wittenberg, the home of the famous imperial outlaw, Martin Luther. For weeks they had braved marauding sectarian bandits, disquieted peasant populations, and the devastating flooding of the Elbe along an extended detour in order to sit down with the exiled reform leader. After entering the town and meeting with the young scholar Philipp Melanchthon at the University, Dantiscus was led into a dimly-lit hall where Luther had just finished eating dinner with several of his former Augustinian brothers. Melanchthon and Dantiscus joined the gathering and conversed with them for more than four hours. The astute diplomat later wrote about Luther, “I found an acute, learned, and eloquent man, but one leaning toward slander, arrogance, and spite for the Pope, the Emperor, and certain other princes.” Dantiscus described Luther’s countenance as that “of one who devours books.

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1 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, August 8, 1523, Cracow, CIDT&C. Diarmaid MacCulloch, The Reformation (New York: Viking, 2003), 135-36. Philipp Melanchthon became a colleague and disciple of Martin Luther at the University of Wittenberg after being appointed as professor of Greek there in 1518. Following the 1521 Diet of Worms, at which Luther had been declared a heretic and named an outlaw, Melanchthon assumed the responsibility of managing Luther’s following in Wittenberg and refining some of the reformer’s ideas and writings. His contributions became central to the organization of Luther’s reform movement. Melanchthon and Luther were reunited when the latter returned to the University faculty in early 1522.
His gleaming eyes are piercing and terrifying, such that now and then he appeared possessed…His speech is emphatic, full of yelling and scoffing…He wears an expression that cannot be discerned even by a skillful courtier.” Acknowledging their company, Dantiscus then added, “It is said that he acquired this expression in his first true home, the monastery.” The diplomat continued:

Sitting together, we not only conversed, but also drank wine and beer with cheerful faces, as is the custom, and [Luther initially] appeared to be a good companion. But I became aware of an unmistakable contempt in him, as well as the great arrogance of ambition. He was blatantly loose with his mockery, interruptions, and scoffing. If anyone differs in opinion on this fact, [Luther’s] written works depict him clearly.\(^2\)

Parting with the brash reformer after what would be their one and only meeting, Dantiscus and his company soon resumed their overland trek to Cracow. Prior to his visit to Wittenberg in 1523, he had already been critical of Luther’s evangelical reform efforts and their mounting effects in Central Europe.\(^3\) Through Dantiscus’s vivid description of this encounter, it is clear that Luther did very little to endear himself to the Prussian envoy and no more to convince him of the righteousness or propriety of his initiatives. Dantiscus’s disdainful impression of the reformer thereafter would engender further his own firm objection and opposition to any form of religious dissent that was inspired by Luther’s works.

During a fourteen-year period—1518-1532—encompassing his meeting with Martin Luther, Dantiscus served as the lead envoy from the Crown of Poland on three diplomatic missions to the Holy Roman Empire and western Christian kingdoms and two

\(^2\) Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, August 8, 1523, Cracow, CIDT&C.

\(^3\) Ioannes Danticus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 28, 1522, Nuremberg, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, September 18, 1522, Antwerp, CIDT&C. His descriptions of various “Lutheran” dissidents will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.
less remote missions to Royal Prussia. He spent more than twelve years in total on the worn roads of Central, Western, and Southern Europe and at the courts of dukes, bishops, kings, and emperors. Along the way he accumulated dozens of experiences like his 1523 meeting with Luther—dynamic engagements with the intellectual, religious, and political leaders of his age. During the first six years of this itinerant period, 1518-1524, some of Dantiscus’s most influential experiences were unexpected, dramatic encounters with evangelical reform efforts and the various, sometimes violent effects and offshoots of those efforts. These encounters occurred across much of Central Europe, including in the Archduchy of Austria, the Prince-Archbishopric of Salzburg, the Duchy of Bavaria, Franconia, the Rhineland, the Low Countries, the Electorate of Saxony, and Royal Prussia. His professional duties in these lands coincided with some of the most volatile and experimental phases of the Reformations there, when men such as Martin Luther, Andreas Karlstadt, Ulrich Zwingli, and Martin Bucer led ambitious and multidimensional movements to reform Christianity and the Roman Church. When Dantiscus departed Cracow on his first mission in autumn 1518, there was no indication that he even had been aware of the early Reformations taking root in Central Europe. As they developed across the region during the long 1520s, however, his familiarity grew alongside as a direct result of his charged experiences along his diplomatic routes.

This chapter will examine how Dantiscus’s encounters with different manifestations and effects of evangelical reform during his itinerant diplomatic service in Central Europe between 1518 and 1524 shaped his views of and responses to the early Reformations. Direct observation and engagement influenced his conception of religious reform far more than any theological investigation or pious devotion, until at least a
decade later. The result was a composite, pessimistic construction of evangelical reform based on diverse and impressive personal experiences. This construction had several components. It especially reflected those reformers who, in Dantiscus’s view, violated the sanctity and necessity of established social, political, and religious order by breaking from Roman obedience. He championed a peaceful, unified Christendom, which for him meant allegiance to secular authorities and the universal Church. A reform movement dissenting from the Church was inexcusable. It also reflected his grappling with how expansive a role Church institutions ought to play in upholding this idealized order and unity. He pondered how active the Church should be in practically suppressing evangelical reform. Dantiscus’s early encounters in the Reformations led him to place most evangelical ideas, leaders, initiatives, and offshoots under the pejorative label “Lutheranism,” which to that point was a vague and fluid designation used by many of Luther’s opponents. He came to see all evangelical adherents and associates as complicit in Martin Luther’s beliefs—deemed heretical—that faith alone was necessary for justification (sola fide) and that Sacred Scripture precluded the need for or authority of Sacred Tradition and the Magisterium (sola scriptura). He vilified those who eschewed the authority of the Pope, and he defended devotional and liturgical practices that evangelical reformers dismissed. In almost every instance, Dantiscus presented

4 When the evangelical reform movement began to spread in the late 1510s and 1520s, there was yet no established or codified Christian doctrine that definitively could be called “Lutheran.” Luther himself had particular ideas, texts, and followers, but there were numerous simultaneous efforts to reform the Roman Church, and even Luther’s doctrines were subject to change. Reformers and their supporters likely would have called themselves “evangelical.” A more concrete international definition of “Lutheran” did not begin to appear until the late 1520s, after Luther had returned to Wittenberg and resumed his theological work with Philipp Melanchthon. Only with the publication of the Augsburg Confession in 1530 did there emerge a distinct evangelical Lutheran Church, and even then it was not set in stone. Nevertheless, Dantiscus referred to reformers broadly as “Lutherans” from very early on in the Reformations. What the term “Lutheran” specifically meant for Dantiscus during the 1520s will be discussed further later in this chapter.
“Lutherans” as misguided, infectious, subversive, heretical, and dangerous. The political and religious impact of his critical construction of “Lutheranism” would develop, intensify, and spread across the region over the next two and a half decades.

**Early Conflicts in the Holy Roman Empire**

Dantiscus’s encounters with religious reform were few and indirect during his first diplomatic mission abroad, which began in October 1518 when King Sigismund of Poland appointed him to lead a delegation to the Viennese court of the Holy Roman Emperor. This mission, however, coincided and intersected with several watershed moments in early modern religious and political history, moments that catalyzed phenomenal shifts and transformations across Christendom and indeed for him personally. His appointment came less than one year after the frustrated Augustinian professor Martin Luther had distributed his *Ninety-Five Thesis* from Wittenberg, and it began in the same month in which Italian Cardinal and Papal representative Thomas Cajetan met Luther in Augsburg in order to debate the Roman Church’s use of indulgences. The impact of Luther’s public criticisms of the Church was still being felt only sporadically and inconsistently, even where it was most concentrated in the central part of the Holy Roman Empire. The response of the Papacy, though, betrayed the seriousness with which Luther’s critique was already being treated. Dantiscus’s mission


6 MacCulloch, *The Reformation*, 119-22. Martin Luther did not intend to start a religious revolution when his *Ninety-Five Theses* began circulating in October 1517. There were many elements of Roman Catholic worship that he did not disparage at first, although they would become the focus of his ire within a few years. He did intend his criticism of the Church’s indulgence system to be public, as demonstrated by his formal letter presented to Archbishop Albrecht of Brandenburg in November of that year. Although Luther developed a local audience rather quickly, it took almost a year before his public profile rose to the point of being more widely recognized as a challenger of Church authority, even if his specific challenges and solutions were not yet formalized. The October 1518 meeting between Cajetan and Luther did not
also encompassed the unexpected death of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I and the contested election of his grandson Charles V. The machinations of this succession generated a complex and unstable political environment that obscured and emboldened the religious reform efforts building in Wittenberg. They also contributed to the formation of one of the archetypal Renaissance princes in Charles, an individual who could claim sovereignty over more territory and people than any other early modern European prince.  

Thrust into this conjunction of flashpoints, Dantiscus’s experiences would illustrate several unofficial but increasingly important dimensions of his professional and personal agenda.

The extent of contemporary political conflicts made Dantiscus’s official responsibilities on this mission quite grave. Tension between the Kingdom of Poland and the Teutonic Knights in Prussia, the presence of Ottoman armies in Southeastern Europe, violent clashes between the Habsburgs and the Valois in Northern Italy, and proceed or end amicably, and thereafter Luther increasingly sharpened his resolve to solve some of the more significant problems facing the Church’s provision of salvation.

7 MacCulloch, The Reformation, 122-8. At the height of his power, young Charles could simultaneously claim the titles of Holy Roman Emperor, King of Spain, King of Italy, and Lord of the Netherlands, among others. Dantiscus’s tenures at his court occurred during some of the most compelling and contentious periods of Charles’ various reigns. The details of Charles’ election will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

8 Marian Biskup, Polska a zakon krzyżacki w Prusach w początkach XVI wieku: u źródeł sekularyzacji Prus Krzyżackich część I (Olsztyn: Wydawnictwo Pojezierze, 1983). This tension will be further explained in the following section of this chapter.

9 MacCulloch, The Reformation, 51-5. The Ottomans had made been making territorial gains in southern Hungary at the expense of Christians since 1512, when they seized a number of fortresses in Bosnia. As they solidified authority over the region, larger targets such as Belgrade, Zagreb, Budapest, and through them Vienna came into view, causing many Latin Christians to panic over the security of their eastern borders.

10 Richard Bonney, The European Dynastic States 1494-1660 (Oxford: OUP, 1991), 79-108. The ambitious expansion of French territory under King Charles VIII and King Louis XII at the end of the fifteenth century and during the beginning of the sixteenth century drew great concern from the other powers of Western and Central Europe, resulting in a series of wars fought mostly in Northern Italy. These wars created political conflicts in the Empire, in Spain, for the Papacy, and for several other...
the simmering border war between the Grand Duchy of Moscow and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, all made it obvious to Sigismund that cooperative relations with the Holy Roman Empire were vital to ensuring the security of Poland-Lithuania and keeping Central Europe politically stable. Most pressing for Dantiscus, however, was the task of securing the Neapolitan inheritance of Queen Bona Sforza of Poland, whom King Sigismund had married during the previous April. Bona was the grandniece of Queen Joanna IV of Naples, who died in August 1518 and left her estate in Bari to Bona’s mother, Princess Isabella of Milan and Bari. Unfortunately for the Polish Crown, Emperor Maximillian’s grandson Charles—King of Spain and future Holy Roman Emperor—himself maintained a claim to the estate through his royal Aragonese lineage. Charles even was responsible for approving any transaction with the inheritance. This conflict would become a predominant diplomatic issue between Habsburg and Jagiellonian princes and courtiers in the first half of the sixteenth century, and it would reverberate throughout the political arena of Central Europe for decades. It would influence Polish royal responses to evangelical reform during the next half-century, as

European politics. Violent conflict would escalate after the ascensions of King Francis II of France in 1515 and Holy Roman Emperor Charles V in 1519, and will be discussed more in Chapter 3.

11 Robert O. Crummey, *The Formation of Muscovy 1304-1613* (New York: Longman, 1987), 93-6. Janet Martin, *Medieval Russia, 980-1584*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 302-26. Raiding and violence had been frequent on the border between Lithuania and Muscovy since the 1480s, a result of attempts by Prince Ivan III to consolidate and then expand the territories of the Grand Duchy of Moscow. A series of wars, marriage pacts, and diplomatic agreements had failed to ease the tension. In 1512 a new series of political blunders and raids led to cross-border assaults by both Lithuanian and Muscovite troops. These assaults continued periodically until the two sides established a truce in 1522.

both Sigismund and his son Sigismund Augustus would maneuver for more diplomatic leverage over the Habsburgs.\(^\text{13}\)

Despite the volume and urgency of the Polish Crown’s diplomatic agenda, Dantiscus’s official engagement with imperial authorities in Vienna was brief and disappointing. He had been anxious to return to the palaces, churches, trade shops, and public houses of the Habsburg capital since the end of his productive and pleasurable 1515-1517 residence there,\(^\text{14}\) but in autumn 1518 Emperor Maximilian

\(^{13}\) Ioannes Dantiscus and Nikolaus Nibsitz to Sigmund von Herberstein, February 21, 1518, Cracow, CIDT&C; Wojciechowski, Zygmunt Stary (1506-1548), 67-90; Władysław Pociecha, Polska wobec elekcji cesarza Karola V w r. 1519 (Wrocław: Wrocławskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1947), 54-7; Harold B. Segel, Renaissance Culture in Poland: The Rise of Humanism, 1470-1543 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 174-6. After King Sigismund’s first wife Queen Barbara Zápolya had died in 1515, his second marriage was negotiated with the help of Emperor Maximilian, who did not want the Polish monarch to enter into a marriage contract with a Habsburg rival. Bona Sforza, daughter of Duke of Milan Gian Galeazzo Sforza and Isabella of Naples, was a suitable candidate, whom Sigismund also admired. Bona’s primary inheritance would be estates and income from the city of Bari. As soon as the marriage was consummated, Sigismund was determined to secure that inheritance against competing claims by members of the Sforza and Habsburg families. As negotiations were dragged out, in particular due to Charles’ evasiveness, the Polish princes and their diplomats entertained all possible strategies for securing this inherited income, most of which were disappointingly ineffective.

\(^{14}\) Nowak, Jan Dantyszek: Portret Renesansowego Humanisty, 102-11; Ioannes Dantiscus and Nikolaus Nibsitz to Sigmund von Herberstein, February 21, 1518, Cracow, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigmund von Herberstein, September 11, 1518, Cracow, CIDT&C; Marek Janicki and Tomasz Ososiński, eds., Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Sigmund von Herberstein (Warsaw: Wydzial Artes Liberales, 2008), vol. 1 of Corpus Epistolae Ioannis Dantisici, part II of Amicorum sermones mutui. Dantiscus’s appointment as lead envoy was as much a recognition of his familiarity with the imperial court and city as it was a reward for his achievements to date. He had attended the first Congress of Vienna in 1515 in a prominent role alongside King Sigismund. He then resided at Maximillian’s court until 1517, on several occasions serving as an ambassador from the Emperor to the Republic of Venice. Prior to Dantiscus’s departure from Vienna in 1517, the Emperor had even requested that the impressive Polish diplomat soon return to the imperial court. In September 1518, Dantiscus wrote to his good friend and imperial confidante Sigismund von Herberstein, speculating about his imminent return to Austria and revealing the high praise that he had received from the Emperor during his previous residence. Herberstein was a nobleman from Carniola in modern-day Slovenia – then a part of the Duchy of Austria. A native of Carniola in modern Slovenia, Herberstein had ascended quickly through the ranks of imperial courtiers and became a trusted diplomat under both Maximillian and Charles. The most notable period of his career was his tenure as an ambassador to the principalities of East Central and Eastern Europe, particularly Poland, Lithuania, and Muscovy. He was recognized widely for his publications on Russian history and culture, which were essential to later western understandings of and foreign relations with Russian principalities. His long-lasting friendship with Dantiscus is well documented. Born within a year of each other, the two diplomats became intimate friends while attending the imperial court in Vienna, and their extant correspondence includes almost fifty letters.
refused to entertain the Polish petitions and recommended Dantiscus to his grandson Charles in Spain. As small consolation, the Emperor did guarantee the Polish delegation safe passage through imperial lands. In religious terms, the most notable shortcoming of Dantiscus’s sojourn in Vienna was his failure to secure an episcopal benefice. Establishing an ecclesiastical career had been one of his primary ambitions for years, and he even was willing to leverage his diplomatic responsibilities toward that end. He had discussed his desire with Maximillian during his previous residence in Vienna and had left the Empire in 1517 confident that his Habsburg connections would be fruitful. Dantiscus even wrote enthusiastically to his friend, imperial diplomat Sigismund von Herberstein, that Maximillian had promised to provide him with a benefice in the Empire. This offer did not materialize in 1518, however, and the diplomat again left Vienna without an ecclesiastical position.

Dantiscus probably continued this pursuit of a benefice during the other significant encounter of this diplomatic mission in 1518—his likely meeting with Cardinal

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15 Ioannes Dantiscus and Nikolaus Nibschitz to Sigmund von Herberstein, February 21, 1518, Cracow, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Joachim von Watt, December 17, 1518, Freiburg, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Joachim von Watt, October 21, 1521, Cracow, CIDT&C; Nowak, 107-116. Maximillian’s unwillingness to engage at length with the Polish delegation is not fully explained. He may have been discouraged by Dantiscus’s delayed return to Vienna, by the less-than-subtle political pressure being applied by the Polish delegation, or by Dantiscus’s ecclesiastical ambitions (see below), or he may simply have been preoccupied with other matters.

16 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigmund von Herberstein, July 12, 1518, Cracow, CIDT&C. Owing to his Prussian origin, functionality in German and Latin, and loyalty to the Polish King, Dantiscus had appeared to be a prime candidate for an ecclesiastical career in Royal Prussia. As early as 1515 King Sigismund had promised to Dantiscus a canonry in the Prince-Bishopric of Warmia—in particular the position of custodian—following Andrzej Kletz’ death that September. Unfortunately for Dantiscus, however, Pope Leo X nominated his own candidate, precluding Dantiscus’s appointment and significantly delaying his career in the Church. Dantiscus continued to pursue his ecclesiastical goals alongside his diplomatic career. He did not receive his first parish until 1521, and his first canonry in Warmia not until 1529. For more on Dantiscus’s relationship with Herberstein, see note 14.
Matthäus Lang of Salzburg. From Vienna, Dantiscus traveled by way of Gmunden in Upper Austria to Mühldorf am Inn in Upper Bavaria, with the intention of meeting Herberstein there. The two diplomats missed each other by a few days, though, because Herberstein was forced to depart eastward earlier than expected. They had arranged a meeting with Lang in Mühldorf on 19 November, however, in which case Dantiscus may have met with the Cardinal anyway. Lang was a principal advisor to the Emperor at court as well as Maximillian's trusted confidant. He was also one of the Emperor’s key surrogate administrators and commanded a strong voice in imperial-papal relations. Dantiscus had befriended Lang two years earlier during his first residence in Vienna. They later had exchanged several letters and agreed to meet during Dantiscus’s next journey through the region. There is no extant record of whether or not he and Lang actually met that November, but given their previous exchanges, their documented future meetings, and their geographical proximity, it

17 *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 16, s.v "Matthäus Lang v. Wellenburg." Lang was a practiced political figure in the Church and the Empire, and a man of many talents and personal connections. He held benefices as Bishop of Gurk in Carinthia and Bishop of Cartagena in the Kingdom of Spain, but primarily operated as Coadjutor under the Prince-Archbishopric of Salzburg, whom Lang himself succeeded in 1519. Lang had been named a Cardinal in 1511, making him one of the more influential ecclesiastical figures at the imperial court and in Central Europe.

18 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigmund von Herberstein, November 24, 1518, Munich, CIDT&C

19 Sigmund von Herberstein to Ioannes Dantiscus, August 13, 1520, Pressburg, CIDT&C.

20 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigmund von Herberstein, November 24, 1518, Munich, CIDT&C. Originally the Emperor had instructed Herberstein to be in Mühldorf in order to meet with Lang, but then changed his mind and had Herberstein return to Salzburg prior to the scheduled meeting date. Dantiscus arrived in Mühldorf on 17 November and remained there through the scheduled meeting date. Lang’s itinerary during these few days is uncertain.

21 Thomas A. Brady Jr., *German Histories in the Age of Reformations* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 127, 145.


23 Ioannes Dantiscus to Matthäus Lang, before January 1, 1516, CIDT&C; Matthäus Lang to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 15, 1516, Innsbruck, CIDT&C.
seems likely that they would have connected. Dantiscus certainly would have raised the Polish diplomatic agenda, particularly Bona’s inheritance and Sigismund’s promotion of a coalition against the Ottomans. He also likely would have plugged his great desire for a benefice. Luther’s activity, including the fallout from his recent debate with Cajetan in nearby Augsburg, may have come up in the conversation, but it was not until several years later that Dantiscus proactively engaged Lang about religious reform. Lang’s energetic and punitive responses to evangelical reform efforts in Salzburg in the 1520s, as well as his cautious familiarity with the works of Luther and Philipp Melanchthon as a means to understand the reform movement more thoroughly, would influence several Prussian bishops’ approaches to containing and limiting the spread of evangelical reform in the 1520s and 1530s. Lang became a regular member of Dantiscus’s network of correspondents, significant considering his later prominent role as a counter-reformer in Central Europe and his own abundant connections. Lang also encouraged Dantiscus to visit Austria, Bavaria, and Salzburg during subsequent diplomatic missions, an invitation that the diplomat would indulge.

Dantiscus’s brief encounters in the Holy Roman Empire in autumn 1518 did not suddenly transform him into either an advocate for or an opponent of evangelical

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24 Brady, *German Histories*, 144-56. As a result of the attention given to Luther at the 1518 Diet of Augsburg and the disputation with Cajetan, his name and his works became exponentially more well-known in the Empire within a few months. Within the next couple of years, there would be few people in Central Europe who had not heard about the Luther affair.

25 Oscar Bartel, “Filip Melanchton w Polsce” *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 6 (1961): 73-90; *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 16, s.v “Matthäus Lang v. Wellenburg.” As the reformation intensified in the Empire in the 1520s, Lang fought the movement on both political and spiritual fronts as the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg (from 1519). Coordinating efforts with Archduke Ferdinand of Austria and Duke Wilhelm of Bavaria, he contested reform among both urban and rural populations through a series of edicts as well as the use of force.

26 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 28, 1522, Nuremberg, CIDT&C.
reform, his early knowledge of which is yet unclear. They did, however, formally establish him as a noteworthy ambassador of the Crown of Poland and as an invested participant in imperial affairs, wider Central European politics, and ecclesiastical administration, both personally and professionally. He wore proudly his interest in the religious and political challenges facing the Empire, his commitment to getting the greatest return out of his time spent with imperial contacts, and his public desire for a career within the Roman Church. He did not operate like an outsider at the courts of the Empire, either. Even on his first mission as lead envoy, he moved comfortably and confidently, and his facility would further strengthen with experience. What made this mission consequential for Dantiscus’s religious development was his diligent pursuit of contacts and advancement in such varied, charged settings. This positioning would serve as a springboard for his subsequent missions abroad. The Polish delegation left imperial lands from Freiburg im Breisgau in December 1518 for a journey across southern France to Barcelona and Charles’ Spanish court.27 They remained in Spain for eight months and in late summer 1519 returned to Poland-Lithuania.28 Dantiscus’s experiences in Barcelona will be a subject of Chapter 3.

**War and Reform in Royal Prussia**

Whereas Dantiscus’s appointment as lead envoy to the Holy Roman Empire had coincided with pivotal moments in early modern religion and politics but included no direct engagement with evangelical reform, his subsequent mission generated direct,

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27 Ioannes Dantiscus to Joachim von Watt, December 17, 1518, Freiburg, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, March 12, 1519, Barcelona, CIDT&C.

28 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, August 17, 1519, Barcelona, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Joachim von Watt, October 1, 1521, Cracow, CIDT&C.
provocative encounters with religious reform and other developments that made lasting
impressions on him. After returning to Cracow in autumn 1519, Dantiscus was
appointed to represent the Crown of Poland before the Royal Prussian Council, a
familiar role. He therefore traveled to Toruń, the imposing brick-walled Hanseatic town
stretched along the northern bank of the Vistula River, over which a bridge linked the
southernmost extent of Royal Prussia to Great Poland. He would remain there for the
better part of two years, during which he would be greatly affected by the region’s
various struggles. First, he harrowingly monitored the destructive and traumatic Polish-
Teutonic War that would ravage much of Prussia. Second, he witnessed the
simultaneous frenetic spread of evangelical ideas, texts, and preachers throughout
much of the same region. Both of these occurrences caused uprisings against local
authorities and divided the Prussian lands and peoples along multiple sensitive fault
lines. The resulting disruptions began to form the complex mold for the critical
construction of “Lutheranism” that he would develop throughout the next decade.

The early 1520s was a particularly violent period in Prussian history, illustrated
most clearly by the war that broke out between the Kingdom of Poland and the Teutonic
Order in 1519. This intense two-year struggle was a relatively short outburst in an
extended regional conflict between the Kingdom of Poland and the Teutonic Order,

29 Ioannes Dantiscus to Gdańsk Town Council, May 3, 1520, Toruń, CIDT&C; Nowak, 95-111. As a native
of Gdańsk, Dantiscus was one of Sigismund’s most valuable assets at court for understanding the
concerns of and negotiating with authorities in Royal Prussia. Throughout the 1510s he had served as the
King’s primary envoy to the region and so already was quite familiar with the processes and nuances of
their diplomatic relations.

30 Marian Biskup, Wojny polski z zakonem krzyżackim, 1308-1521 (Gdańsk: 1993); Marian Biskup,
„Wojna Pruska” czyli wojna Polski z zakonem Krzyżackiem z lat 1519-1521 u źródeł sekularyzacji Prus
Krzyżackich część II (Olsztyn: Wydawnictwo Pojezierze, 1991); Walther Hubatsch, Geschichte der
evangelischen Kirchen Ostpreussens (Göttingen: 1968).
which had been clashing over Prussian and Masovian territory for almost three hundred years. In the early thirteenth century, in agreement with Polish dukes, the Teutonic Order had been invited into Chelmno Land and provided with fiefs and castles in order to establish a fortified frontier north of the Christian Polish duchies, as well as to convert the pagan Prussian tribes to Christianity.\(^{31}\) During the next one hundred fifty years, this Teutonic Order steadily converted the Prussians and expanded its territory, stretching northeastward along the eastern Baltic coast into Livonia. As the Teutonic missionary focus moved northeastward, Polish princes and the grandmasters of the Order constantly disputed land rights in southern and western Prussia, often by military means. The conflict intensified after the reunification of Poland in 1320 and especially after the 1386 “conversion” of Lithuania, which by converting the last pagan polity in Europe eliminated the last justifiable mission for the Teutonic Order. Poland gained somewhat of an upper hand thereafter, especially following its decisive victory at the Battle of Grunwald in 1410. Nevertheless, the Order continued to invite German merchants and farmers to settle in Prussia in order to develop the region economically, augment the German-speaking population, and provide more resources for the Teutonic Ordenstaat.\(^{32}\) Dantiscus’s ancestors—his family name was von Höfen—came to Gdańsk among these German immigrants.\(^{33}\)


\(^{32}\) Eric Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades: The Baltic and the Catholic Frontier, 1100-1525* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980). Regarding the violent conflicts that occurred in the region, since the arrival of the Teutonic Order in Prussia in 1230 formal war broke out between the Knights and Polish forces in 1308-1309, 1326-1332, 1409-1411, 1414, 1422, 1431-1435, 1454-1466, and 1467-1479, and local informal violent conflicts were even more frequent. As a part of the marriage agreement between Grand Duke of Lithuania Jogaila and Queen/King Jadwiga of Poland in 1386, Jogaila
The later fifteenth century brought significant political and economic realignment in Prussia, as discussed in the Introduction. In the mid-century, commercial and civic leaders sought political support from the Crown of Poland against the authority of the Teutonic Order. Conflict culminated in the Thirteen Years' War of 1454-1466, as a result of which Pomerania, Malbork, Chełmno Land, and Warmia were ceded to the Kingdom of Poland as the protectorate Royal Prussia. Thereafter, relations between Royal Prussia, the Teutonic Order, and the Kingdom of Poland remained uneasy, and peace relied on the diplomatic support of and often pressure from the Papacy, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The unstable peace lasted until 1519, when Teutonic Grand Master Albrecht—King Sigismund’s nephew—demanded that Royal Prussia be returned to the Order. This demand caused the Royal Prussian Council and the Polish Sejm to declare war on the Order in December. Albrecht’s forces then invaded parts of Royal Prussia, throwing the region into violence and chaos.\(^{34}\) Social tensions simultaneously led to popular revolts in towns throughout Prussia, enhancing the sense of instability and uncertainty.\(^{35}\)

Dantiscus’s mission as envoy to the Royal Prussian Council began early in 1520, soon after the Polish Sejm had declared war. He arrived in Toruń amidst the chaotic

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\(^{33}\) Ioannes Dantiscus to Gdańsk Town Council, 1500, CIDT&C.

\(^{34}\) Biskup, Polska a zakon krzyżacki w Prusach w początkach XVI wieku: u źródeł sekularyzacji Prus Krzyżackich część I, 586-99; Biskup, „Wojna Pruska”.

\(^{35}\) Tadeusz Glemma, *Stosunki kościelne w Toruniu w stuleciu XVI-XVII na tle dziejów kościelnych Prus Królewskich* (Toruń, 1934), 27.
comings and goings of Polish armies, court officials, and the king.\textsuperscript{36} Navigating the complex network of authority that divided Royal Prussian administration should have been enough of a challenge for Dantiscus, but the war’s military movements, destruction, refugee population, and incidental popular violence further complicated his agenda. Polish and Teutonic armies were ravaging much of the countryside in Warmia and Pomesania, destroying dozens of small towns and castles and displacing many inhabitants. The war also interrupted communication, commerce, and travel, and led to commercial unease in the larger towns, which relied on riverine trade and were especially desired as wealthy prizes. Gdański even endured a siege and bombardment by Albrecht’s army and navy.\textsuperscript{37} As early as January 1520, just after the war had begun, Prince-Bishop Fabian von Lusian of Warmia wrote to Dantiscus requesting royal military support against Teutonic armies that had already invaded his territory.\textsuperscript{38} Dantiscus responded by numbering the thousands of foreign battalions recruited and dispatched to Prussia by King Sigismund.\textsuperscript{39} He also informed the prince-bishop about a wave of seasoned troops traveling to Prussia from the Ottoman borderlands. King Louis II of Hungary and Bohemia would be supporting the Kingdom of Poland against the Teutonic

\textsuperscript{36} Ioannes Dantiscus to Gdańsk Town Council, May 3, 1520, Toruń, CIDT&C. Biskup, „\textit{Wojna Pruska}”.

\textsuperscript{37} Biskup, \textit{Polska a zakon krzyżacki w Prusach w początkach XVI wieku: u źródeł sekularyzacji Prus Krzyżackich część I}, 586-599; Biskup, „\textit{Wojna Pruska}”.

\textsuperscript{38} Biskup, \textit{Polska a zakon krzyżacki w Prusach w początkach XVI wieku: u źródeł sekularyzacji Prus Krzyżackich część I}, 586-99. Warmia was a predominantly rural district and semi-autonomous prince-bishopric. It was essentially an enclave within the territories of the Teutonic state, and several large sections of the Prince-Bishopric’s diocesan jurisdiction remained under Teutonic political control. The prince-bishop of Warmia was also suffragan to the Baltic metropolitan Archdiocese of Riga rather than the Polish Archdiocese of Gniezno. Dantiscus would himself be elected as Prince-Bishop of Warmia in 1538 after a long diplomatic career.

\textsuperscript{39} Ioannes Dantiscus to Fabian von Lusian, before February 21, 1520, CIDT&C.
Order and political rifts in the Grand Duchy of Muscovy would likely prevent it from interfering or aiding Grand Master Albrecht.40 Although there are few other extant sources attributed to Dantiscus on his mission to Royal Prussia, this bit of consolation sent to the prince-bishop demonstrates how informed he was of the details of the conflict and its connection to greater geopolitical developments. It also reveals the role that he played as a conduit for information between the Polish royal court and Prussian officials, both secular and religious. This would become a lifelong role for him. After two years of tremendous violence and destruction, in 1521 the Polish-Teutonic War paused under an armistice, driven by the threat of an Ottoman military advance against Hungary. Tension between the Kingdom of Poland and the Teutonic Order, however, would continue to simmer until 1525.41

Although Dantiscus did not comment directly on his impressions of the war in his contemporary extant materials, his later correspondence and diplomatic efforts would provide some insight to the war’s impact on him. During the war, he was able to foster Royal Prussian leaders’ favorable views of the Crown of Poland, especially as a military protector, but he was unable to secure legislative concessions. Even in a situation that appeared to give negotiating leverage to the Crown, the King was as anxious to keep Royal Prussia outside of Teutonic control as Royal Prussia was to remain under Polish

40 Ioannes Dantiscus to Fabian von Lusian, before February 21, 1520, CIDT&C.

41 Jacek Wijaczka, Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach (1490-1568): ostatni mistrz zakonu krzyżackiego i pierwszy książę „w Prusach” (Olsztyn: 2010). In 1525 Grand Master Albrecht would formally secede eastern Prussia from the Teutonic Order and established his own secular Duchy as a semi-independent vassal of the Crown of Poland. Thereafter the tension between Ducal Prussia, Royal Prussia, and Poland shifted in new directions, in particular due to Albrecht’s adoption of Lutheranism. These shifts will be a topic of Chapter 5.
protection, which often neutralized negotiations.\textsuperscript{42} Meanwhile, the war’s widespread violence and destructiveness, the audacity of the Teutonic armies, and the accompanying popular violence especially disturbed Dantiscus, and increasingly he would perceive the Teutonic Order to be provocative and untrustworthy, directed by Albrecht. Dantiscus’s animosity toward Albrecht and the Order became much more outspoken after his departure from Prussia in 1521. In July 1522, Dantiscus warned Sigismund about the unpredictable and dangerous personalities in Teutonic Prussia. He encouraged rallying international support for Poland-Lithuania in the conflict.\textsuperscript{43}

As Polish and Teutonic armies marched back and forth across Royal Prussia during Dantiscus’s term in Toruń, coincidentally the first evangelical texts and sermons were also spreading throughout the same region by way of Gdańsk—the largest city within Poland-Lithuania, a principal commercial center in Central Europe, one of the most highly trafficked ports on the Baltic Sea, and Dantiscus’s home town. Gdańsk uniquely sat at the juncture of several different cultural spheres. Although many of the commodities traded through Gdańsk originated in central Poland and arrived there by way of the Vistula River, the city’s citizens generally looked to the Hansa and other Baltic powers for economic direction. The population of Gdańsk was primarily German-speaking and operated within the milieu of northern Germany and the Hanseatic Baltic as much as, if not more than, that of the Kingdom of Poland. As a principal member of the Hanseatic League and a city with a robust local civic organization, Gdańsk highly


\textsuperscript{43} Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 4, 1522, Wiener Neustadt, CIDT&C.
regarded its own autonomy within Royal Prussia. Its population also was remarkably fluid and contained large groups of traders and workers from around Europe.\(^{44}\)

These characteristics of Gdańsk allowed Martin Luther's ideas to catch on extraordinarily quickly among its population. His use of the German language and his popularity in northern German and Baltic communities hastened the introduction of his texts there.\(^{45}\) The socio-political dimension of Luther's movement—encouragement of communal-determination and independence from religious and secular authorities—was also particularly attractive to Royal Prussian urban leaders and citizens alike, who for decades had clashed with ecclesiastical and royal authorities over the administration of the Prussian Church.\(^{46}\) Such a favorable reception to Luther was not uncommon in the Hansa. The evangelical movement in Hanseatic towns generally flourished due to the prominence of the German language, the heavy involvement of burghers in urban life, and the ease with which Luther’s ideas lent themselves to early modern statecraft and

\(^{44}\) Maria Bogucka, *Historia Gdańska* (Gdańsk: 1982).


\(^{46}\) Michael Burleigh, “Anticlerialism in Fifteenth-Century Prussia: The Clerical Contribution Reconsidered” in *The Church in Pre-Reformation Society: Essays in Honor of F.R.H. Du Boulay*, ed. Caroline M. Barron and Christopher Harper-Bill (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1985), 38-47; Janusz Małłek, „From the Rebellion of the Prussian League to the Autonomy of Royal Prussia: The Estates of Prussia and Poland,” in *Opera Selecta* (Toruń: WNUMK, 2013), vol. 2, 23-40. Much of the historical literature on the Reformations has focused on the role of urban areas in the organization and dissemination of reforming ideas and texts. This trend applied to Prussia as much as it did to German lands of the Holy Roman Empire. The social and political structures of towns and cities allowed evangelical ideas to penetrate more quickly if enough of the urban leaders and inhabitants were supportive of those ideas, but those same structures also enabled towns to broker negotiations and agreements between multiple factions, leading to incredibly nuanced reform efforts that differed from city to city. This did not always guarantee peaceful reform, as urban violence was common throughout the Reformations period in Central Europe. It did however, lead to clearer and better-documented intentions and patterns of reform in urban areas than in rural areas. Peter Blickle, *Communal Reformation: The Quest for Salvation in Sixteenth-Century Germany*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1992), 63-97.
the reform of civic organization. Preachers may have given evangelical sermons in Gdańsk as early as 1518, and the first evangelical texts appeared as early as 1520. They were immediately popular and reproduced. This occurred during Dantiscus’s residence in Toruń, throughout which he was in frequent contact with the Gdańsk Town Council. By 1523, most of Gdańsk’s citizens had been confronted with Luther’s teachings in some local context, either through pamphlets, public sermons, or during Church services. By 1525, enthusiasm for Luther’s ideas in Gdańsk would erupt into open revolt against royal and ecclesiastical authorities.

The evangelical reform movement spread quickly in Prussia well beyond the city of Gdańsk, owing to several distinct characteristics of the broader region. The two other large, dominant centers of commerce—Elbląg and Toruń—along with the mid-sized towns of Grudziądz, Chełmno, Braniewo, Königsberg, and others, all had large German-speaking populations, traditions of moderate local autonomy, and formal Hanseatic ties. They also had close commercial, intellectual, and familial relations with Gdańsk.

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47 Heinz Schilling, “The Reformation in the Hanseatic Cities” Sixteenth Century Journal 14, no. 4 (1983): 443-56. Schilling’s analysis focuses primarily on northwest German towns rather than Hanseatic towns in the eastern Baltic, but many of the same characteristics applied to these other German-speaking communities. In fact, many of the eastern Baltic towns received and embraced religious reform movements even earlier than the towns in northwestern Germany, although this reception followed very similar patterns.

48 Natalia Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther (Oxford: OUP, 2018), 49.

49 Glemma, Stosunki kościelne w Toruniu w stuleciu XVI-XVII na tle dziejów kościelnych Prus Królewskich, 27.

50 Ioannes Dantiscus to Gdańsk Town Council, May 3, 1520, Toruń, CIDT&C.

51 Glemma, Stosunki kościelne w Toruniu w stuleciu XVI-XVII na tle dziejów kościelnych Prus Królewskich, 27; Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther, 49-53.

52 T. Cieślak, „Postulaty rewolty pospólstwa gdańskiego w r. 1525” Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne 6, no. 1 (Poznań, 1954): 123-52. For more context, see Chapter 5.

facilitating the transfer of texts and preachers from the region’s metropolis. The
burghers of Elbląg and Toruń especially embraced Luther’s calls for reform as a way to
increase their own influence over town administration. Local clergy members often were
closely tied to these burghers, either through blood, financial investment, or political
favor. Religious life thus frequently reflected the burghers’ interests and supplemented
civic administration. This included the growth of sympathy for evangelical reform.54
Once the voices of Luther and his disciples had been accepted as legitimate authorities
on Christianity, young men from Prussia and particularly Elbląg enrolled in increasing
numbers at the University of Wittenberg, bringing Prussians into even closer contact
with evangelical leaders and ideas.55

Early evangelical reformers in Prussian towns also were liberated by the relative
disengagement of their bishops, some of whom ignored the evangelical fervor, a few of
whom actually embraced it, and most of whom resided in remote locations rather than
the most influential urban centers or even their cathedral-seats.56 The bishop of
Chełmno lived not in the southwestern commercial hubs Chełmno or Toruń, nor near his
cathedral in Chełmża, but rather in unassuming Lubawa on the far side of the diocese.
The Bishop of Pomesania traditionally resided in rural Prabuty and maintained his
fortified cathedral in nearby Kwidzyn. The prince-bishop of Warmia, whose diocese

54 S. Waldoch, „Początki reformacji w Elblągu i jego regionie” Rocznik Elbląski 4 (1969): 9-20; Michael G.
Müller, „Late Reformation and Protestant confessionalization in the major towns of Royal Prussia,” in The
Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe, ed. Karin Maag (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1997), 192-210;
Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther, 49-53, 77-96.

55 Janusz Małłek, „Marcin Luter a reformacja w Prusach Książęcych i Prusach Królewskich,” in Dwie
części Prus: studia z dziejów Prus Książęcych i Prus Królewskich w XVI i XVII wieku (Olsztyn:
Wydawictwo Pojezierze, 1987), 221-3.

56 Marian Pawłak, Reformacja i kontrreformacja w Elblagu w XVI - XVIII wieku (Bydgoszcz: Wydawn.
Uczelniane WSP, 1994), 6-8; Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther, 49-53, 77-96.
included the important coastal trading centers Elbląg and Braniewo, inhabited a grand castle in the distant town of Lidzbark Warmiński, also far from his fortified cathedral in Frombork on the Vistula Lagoon. Meanwhile, Gdańsk lay under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Włocławek, a town one hundred fifty miles up the Vistula River in Great Poland. The one exception to this trend was Königsberg in Sambia. Religious life in Royal Prussia’s largest towns thus rarely was overseen directly by either bishops or cathedral chapters. Instead, the citizens relied heavily on civic authorities and the local clergy, whose own origins and interests also were very often localized. The prince-bishop of Warmia Fabian von Lusian was suspected of being sympathetic to Luther until his death in 1523, which further emboldened critics of the Roman Church throughout Prussia. Georg von Polentz, as combined bishop of Pomesania and Samland, even became the first Lutheran bishop in Europe when he converted under the influence of Grand Master Albrecht in 1523. These characteristics created a religious landscape in Prussia that inherently was amenable to the methods and sources of early evangelical reform.

While Dantiscus was residing in Toruń in 1520-1521, evangelical ideas exploded through this environment. The initial characteristic of this explosion was a proliferation of evangelical preachers and texts, many of which were printed in Gdańsk. Eventually Martin Luther himself recognized the fertile ground for reform that had been uncovered


58 Pawlak, Reformacja i kontreformacja w Elblagu w XVI - XVIII wieku, 6-8.

59 Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie 26, s.v „Georg v. Polentz.“
in Prussia and took a direct interest in promoting reform across the region. He began writing letters to local leaders, urging them to establish schools and use their civic authority to reform the Prussian Church officially. He also encouraged more Prussian students to attend the University of Wittenberg in order to participate more capably in local reform initiatives. Evangelical leaders in Prussia began building libraries of relevant texts and materials and recruiting disgruntled priests to their cause. They promoted evangelical ideas such as saying the Mass in German, allowing priests to marry, and reworking the administration of the sacraments. These efforts attracted and fostered a vibrant and outspoken evangelical community that quickly caught the concerned attention of royal and ecclesiastical officials, both in Royal Prussia and in Poland-Lithuania proper.60

Having lived in Gdańsk as a youth and maintained relationships with many contacts across Prussia, Dantiscus was well aware of the characteristics that made his native land so receptive to evangelical ideas. He observed the rapid introduction of evangelical reform there through a number of different lenses derived from both the personal identities that he kept and the professional roles that he played.61 Throughout

60 Janusz Małłek, „Marci\n n Luter a reformacja w Prusach Książęcych i Prusach Królewskich,” 221-5; Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther, 77-96.

61 Albert J. Loomie, S.J., “Spanish Secret Diplomacy at the Court of James,” in Politics, Religion, and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe, ed. Arthur Joseph Slavin and Malcolm R. Thorp (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, Inc., 1994), 231-46; Daniela Frigo. “Prudence and Experience: Ambassadors and Political Culture in Early Modern Italy” Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies 38, no. 1 (winter, 2008):15-34. A resurgence of interest in early modern diplomacy over the last two decades has yielded new interpretations of how diplomats trained and operated in the western world, at courts from secular to ecclesiastical and from imperial to local, both domestically and abroad. Some of the richest studies have focused on early modern diplomats’ abilities to perform many roles simultaneously and to function at multiple levels of administration, including in commercial, religious, social, political, and military spheres. This diversity of roles not only ingratiated diplomats in their native and adoptive societies, but also allowed them access to many more channels for pursuing their own agendas. Dantiscus is one of the better examples of an early-sixteenth-century diplomat who operated in many
his career, the contrast between these identities and roles became particularly acute when he was physically residing in Royal Prussia. He witnessed early evangelical reform there primarily as an agent of the Crown of Poland and as a royal representative before the Royal Prussian Council. His responsibility was to promote Crown and Church interests and to keep his patrons informed about relevant developments. But he also witnessed reform as a German-speaking native of Gdańsk with family and friends still living there, and as a man who broadcast his ambitions to return to Prussia with an ecclesiastical career. As a royal envoy, Dantiscus also needed to consider the connections between evangelical reform and broader issues, such as strained Polish-Imperial relations in the region, unwelcome Teutonic influence over Royal Prussian politics, fluid ties between Royal Prussian leaders and the Holy Roman Empire, and the less-than-cooperative relationships between the Polish Sejm, the Prussian Estates, and the Prussian clergy in the actual governance of towns and territories. As a native of Royal Prussia, he would have had strong opinions about all of these issues. He worked diligently to manage the region’s relations with Poland-Lithuania while navigating its tangled web of authority and fealty, in addition to his own sentiments. King Sigismund had appointed him as lead envoy to the Royal Prussian Council in part because of his abilities to relate to the Prussian burghers and to cut through all of these issues. Those capacities during his missions. Much of his diplomatic success was accomplished not in an audience with a foreign prince but rather in backchannel meetings and negotiations with other courtiers and contacts. Dantiscus also used his positions to pursue more personal goals. For many early modern diplomats, holding an ambassadorship was not in itself an end, but rather a means to further advancement personally and professionally.

62 Wojciechowski, Zygmunt Stary (1506-1548), 109-36.
abilities were complicated greatly by the rapid spread of evangelical reform throughout the region.

Dantiscus’s experiences on this mission to Royal Prussia had groundbreaking effects on his perspective on evangelical reform. He observed one of the earliest examples of a cooperative, transnational, multifaceted movement to reform Christian institutions throughout a wide geographical region along the lines of evangelical ideas coming out of Wittenberg. It affected people poor and wealthy, common and noble, urban and rural, clerical and lay, princely and middling, and Polish and German. Simultaneously, the war between the Kingdom of Poland and the Teutonic Order impeded his diplomatic efforts and led to violence, death, and destruction across Royal Prussia, causing tremendous strife among the population. Unfortunately due to a paucity of sources, there is no direct contemporaneous record of Dantiscus’s impressions of these events. During his future travels, experiences, and exchanges across Europe, however, he would recall memories and impressions of this volatile situation in Prussia. They would color his perspective on evangelical reform as well as influence various persons, texts, and policies through his hundreds of notable subsequent encounters. Dantiscus’s critical construction of “Lutheranism,” informed in part by his experiences in Royal Prussia, would begin to emerge in his writings within a short time.

Religious Violence in the Habsburg Monarchy

Dantiscus’s next diplomatic mission abroad began in summer 1522, and it would be significantly more eventful and consequential than his first, especially regarding religious reform. In particular, it brought him into unexpected close contact with treacherous outbreaks of religiously-inspired violence, as well as introduced him
personally to some of Europe’s most famous evangelical reformers. His experiences in Habsburg lands would exacerbate his critical views of evangelical reform and in his view enhance reform as a diplomatic priority for political, religious, and social reasons. The agenda on Dantiscus’s mission was basically the same as it had been in 1518: procure an audience at the court of the Holy Roman Emperor in Spain, secure Queen Bona’s Neapolitan inheritance, monitor international perceptions of the Polish-Teutonic conflict, and coordinate forces against a potential Ottoman military incursion. The stakes for each issue, though, had increased considerably and demanded more preparation, diligence, and tact. The main addition to the agenda was to address Martin Luther’s growing impact in Central Europe, although this addition was minor. Despite already releasing several edicts outlawing evangelical reform, Sigismund still appeared to be only moderately concerned with reform, at least in practical terms. By the end of Dantiscus’s mission, though, the ambassador would take it upon himself to convince his patrons in Poland-Lithuania that evangelical reform was incredibly dangerous and worthy of much more attention. Although he would identify certain evangelical beliefs

63 Wojciechowski, Zygmunt Stary (1506-1548), 137-57. The issue of Bona’s inheritance was still unresolved from Dantiscus’s first mission to Spain in 1518-19. The Polish-Teutonic War had ended with an armistice in 1521, but ripples in the political relations of the Baltic region and Central Europe still needed to be evaluated and managed. Ottoman strength in southeastern Europe was growing, and the Kingdom of Hungary—Poland’s neighbor to the south—was increasingly at risk, in turn putting the security of the Kingdom of Poland into question.

64 Janusz Tazbir, A State Without Stakes (Warsaw: 1973), 36-7; Maciej Ptaszyński, “The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth,” in A Companion to the Reformation in Central Europe, ed. Howard Louthan and Graeme Murdock (Boston: Brill, 2015), 40-67; Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther, 119-26. Early responses to evangelical reform in Poland-Lithuania could be worded quite strongly, but they often either went unenforced or focused on localized reform as rebellion against the state rather than as an earth-shattering heretical movement. In the mid-decade, increased social unrest would bring more attention to the issue, but in 1522 leaders at the royal court still were unwilling to devote great resources or political capital to quelling reform. Dantiscus would occupy a unique position from which he could inform the King, secretaries, and bishops in Poland-Lithuania about the more complex and substantial dangers posed by religious reformers and their adherents.
and practices as challenges to the orthodoxy of the Roman Church, initially he would focus in particular on the threats that evangelical reform posed to established social and political order, in which he had good company. His reporting and advising thereafter would become integral to Polish royal and ecclesiastical responses to the Reformation.

The Polish delegation spent most of July 1522 in the Archduchy of Austria and the Archdiocese of Salzburg. At first, Dantiscus’s interactions focused on external threats to Christendom, which appeared to be more imminent and dangerous. In Vienna, he learned more about the Ottoman consolidation in southeastern Europe from young Archduke Ferdinand I of Austria, Archbishop of Esztergom Georgius Szakmáry, and Sigismund von Herberstein, who was in the process of securing his own properties in southern Austria. Reporting his findings to King Sigismund, Dantiscus did not play the alarmist that he would in diplomatic addresses to the Emperor. He did, however,

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65 Recent scholarship has revealed the great extent to which social and political order rose to the top of authorities’ concerns with early evangelical reform, particularly in the Kingdom of Poland. While it certainly was not the only concern—the purity of practice and belief was no overlooked—it commanded the attention of many royal and ecclesiastical officials. Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther, 119-32, 173-96.

66 Paula Sutter Fichtner, Ferdinand I of Austria: The Politics of Dynasticism in the Age of the Reformation (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 13-53; Thomas A. Brady Jr., “The Reformation of the Common Man, 1521-1524,” in The German Reformation: The Essential Readings, ed. C. Scott Dixon (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 115-6. Ferdinand had a complicated and less-than-trusting relationship with his older brother, Emperor Charles. He was focused on the Ottoman threat to the southeast, and he spent much of his time requesting military and financial aid from other European princes, arguing that Hungary was and soon Austria would be the front lines of defense against the Ottomans. In addition to threat of Ottoman forces, Ferdinand was also facing explosive social unrest in Austria in 1522, where several radicalized groups began convening assemblies and calling for the removal or execution of the nobility, drawing concerned comparisons to the growing threat of unrest in the Swiss cantons.

67 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigmund von Herberstein, July 6, 1522, Klamm, CIDT&C. Neue Deutsche Biographie 8, s.v. “Sigmund v. Herberstein.” A frequent traveler, Herberstein often returned to Austria and Carniola between his many diplomatic missions abroad and was invested in the security of the region, especially as the threat of an Ottoman military advance increased in the 1510s and 1520s.

68 Speech to Emperor Charles V von Habsburg, December 27, 1522, Valladolid, CIDT&C; Speech to Emperor Charles V von Habsburg, October 11, 1524, Tordesillas, CIDT&C; Speech to Emperor Charles V
advise the King to continue efforts to levy soldiers from population-rich Gdańsk and Elbląg.\textsuperscript{69} From Vienna, Dantiscus traveled westward through the Danube River valley across Lower and Upper Austria to the Prince-Archbishopric of Salzburg, which as of 1519 was ruled by his friend Matthäus Lang.\textsuperscript{70} Meeting in the imposing Hohensalzburg Castle, looming over the secluded riverside city from the end of a crescent ridge, Dantiscus and Lang expanded the discussion of threats to Latin Christendom to include the Grand Duchy of Muscovy and the Crimean Tartars. Dantiscus reported on this meeting to his King, whom the diplomat encouraged to remain wary and prepared to meet any military movements from the East.\textsuperscript{71}

By the end of July 1522, in addition to becoming well acquainted with imperial concerns about threats from the East, Dantiscus had learned and observed much more about the development of the evangelical reform movement within the Empire. More than a year earlier, after Martin Luther had refused to recant his criticisms of the Roman Church before the Diet of Worms, Emperor Charles had banished the recalcitrant cleric through the infamous Edict of Worms, making it a crime to either support Luther’s teachings or offer him sanctuary.\textsuperscript{72} Despite this prohibition, many inhabitants of central and southern German lands developed voracious appetites for evangelical materials.

\textsuperscript{69} Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 4, 1522, Wiener Neustadt, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigmund von Herberstein, July 6, 1522, Klamm, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{70} \textit{Neue Deutsche Biographie} 16, s.v “Matthäus Lang v. Wellenburg.”

\textsuperscript{71} Ioannes Danticus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 28, 1522, Nuremberg, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{72} Brady, “The Reformation of the Common Man, 1521-1524,” 92-3. Luther escaped the Diet of Worms and took refuge in Wartburg Castle under the protection of Elector Frederick III of Saxony.
and cultivated the reform movement’s rapid growth during the following several years. The Edict of Worms did not generate much enthusiasm among these populations, and it certainly did not stop the publication of evangelical texts and pamphlets. Evangelical printing actually increased and began to draw concern from state and ecclesiastical administrators. In the early 1520s, the evangelical message steadily moved from private settings such as monasteries and homes into more public spaces such as taverns, shops, and churches, spurred by the patronage of wealthy civic leaders. Occasionally, this evangelical transition into more public spaces led to episodes of unrest and violence, most often in outbursts of iconoclasm but occasionally in larger-scale uprisings. The reform movement in southern German lands was concentrated especially in urban centers such as Strasbourg, Nuremberg, Augsburg, Ulm, but also in parts of Austria. Archduke Ferdinand wrote to his brother Charles as early as 1523 that heresy was being preached openly in the towns of the Empire and that loyal Christians were more in fear for their safety from persecution than were heretics. Dantiscus and his delegation traveled directly through this environment during their journey across Austria, Salzburg, and Bavaria in summer 1522. He observed how popular enthusiasm and magisterial support for evangelical ideas could thoroughly transform local communities and regional societies. His evaluation of this situation became evident in his official reports to his patrons in Poland-Lithuania, the first of which he sent to the King on 28 July.

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75 Ioannes Danticus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 28, 1522, Nuremberg, CIDT&C.
Drawing on his accumulating personal experiences, Dantiscus’s evaluation of evangelical reform came to bear in particular on its more violent and disruptive consequences. In his first letter to the King from Nuremburg, the diplomat began to describe his horror at the pervasive sectarian violence that was impeding his travel and diplomatic engagements across the Empire. His primary example was the series of armed confrontations between the Swabian League and the rebels of the Knights’ Revolt, which made both transit and communication across Bavaria and Franconia quite dangerous. The Swabian League had been founded in 1488 as an alliance between princes, bishoprics, imperial cities, towns, abbeys, and knights in the western German region of Swabia. Its purpose had been to ensure mutual security against ambitious princes and rebellious sections of the population. The League had been effective at suppressing revolts, but in the 1510s it came under local suspicion due to its close association with the Habsburg family, and as a result localized opposition to the league grew. The Knights’ Revolt was a coordinated uprising of imperial knights against imperial and ecclesiastical authorities that broke out in Franconia in summer 1522, just as Dantiscus was traveling across the Empire. The primary instigator of this revolt was Franz von Sickingen. Masquerading as a protector of the poor and a political reformer of the Empire, but in actuality pursuing entitlement as a prince through feuding and plunder, Sickingen and his men ravaged central Germany for more than a year. They

76 Ioannes Danticus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 28, 1522, Nuremberg, CIDT&C.
78 Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, 214-7. The formal feud at the center of the Knight’s Revolt was declared on 27 August 1522, but the factional organization of imperial knights and the related violent outbreaks began several weeks earlier.
imperiled imperial sympathizers traveling across German lands.\textsuperscript{79} The Swabian League would become a great asset in the imperial suppression of the Knights’ Revolt in 1522 and 1523, owing to the league’s brutal approach to subduing Sickingen and his followers.

The reason that this violent conflict appeared sectarian to Dantiscus was that the Knight’s Revolt was an early example of an attempt by opportunists to adapt and contort Luther’s ideas for evangelical reform in order to rouse support for social or political agendas.\textsuperscript{80} Receiving little sympathy from imperial officials for their decades-long impoverishment and disenfranchisement, many imperial knights in the early sixteenth century had taken to using traditional methods of feuding as a means of enrichment. Under the leadership of Sickingen, groups of knights began to abuse both their feuding privileges and the rhetoric of the evangelical reform movement in concert to generate support against the Empire. They intended to use urban enthusiasm for religious reform to bolster their ranks and challenge the authority of Catholic princes and bishops throughout the Empire, particularly in Franconia. Their efforts resulted in dozens of violent raids and extensive theft and destruction of property. Sickingen especially targeted the properties of the Archbishop of Trier. Despite the self-interest driving his adoption of Luther’s rhetoric, Sickingen appeared to become a genuine supporter of


\textsuperscript{80} MacCulloch, \textit{The Reformation}, 151-3; Whaley, \textit{Germany and the Holy Roman Empire}, 219-20; Brady, \textit{German Histories in the Age of Reformations}, 96-7; Zmora, \textit{State and Nobility in Early Modern Germany}, 119-21. The violent outbreak was symptom of a larger cultural phenomenon in Germany at the beginning of the sixteenth century. German knights whose social and political role had been diminishing steadily during the fifteenth century were not receiving the support and reform that they desired from the Emperor, and thus revolted against imperial authority. The Knight’s Revolt is a lesser-known example of the social unrest that spread across southern Germany in the 1520s, culminating with the Peasants’ Revolt of 1525.
evangelical reform. He actively discussed and promoted Luther’s ideas, sheltered various reformers from persecution by both the Church and the Empire, and established a propaganda printing station on one of his estates. All of this fervor caught Dantiscus’s attention during his journey across the southern Empire.

The diplomat’s portrayal of the conflict between the Swabian League and Sickingen’s knights reflected his disdain for violence, disorder, and illicit acts in general, as well as his association of these particular disruptions with the evangelical reform movement. In his 28-July letter to the King from Nuremberg, Dantiscus wrote that he had desired to continue the Polish diplomatic mission by riding to Mainz, but transit across Bavaria and Franconia was being discouraged due to danger on the roads. The culprits were Sickingen’s raiding knights and bandits, whom the forces of the Swabian League were rooting out of hiding. According to Dantiscus, however, several of the Empire’s most prominent princes were meeting in Nuremberg to discuss how to restrain the Swabian League in the likely event that it exceeded the level of suppression desired by the Emperor. Dantiscus could be just as disdainful of the violent imperial peace keepers as of the violent raiders. He focused his ire, however, on Sickingen’s rebellious knights and bandits, whom he began to identify as “Lutheran.” Worst of all in the diplomat’s view, these rebels broadened and intensified the conflict by ambushing unsuspecting clergy members on the roads. According to the princes gathered in Nuremburg, as reported via Dantiscus, so many priests had been assaulted in this way that thousands of German men were rushing to suppress the revolt, making Polish or

Hungarian assistance unnecessary. Although he clearly repudiated all violent acts and disruptions, early on Dantiscus reserved special criticism for the “Lutheran” raiders of the Knights’ Revolt. Especially egregious was their assault on the clergy, which for him was a grave offense in political, social, and religious terms.

Dantiscus did not limit his criticism of the “Lutherans” he encountered in Franconia to the social and political disruption, though. He also waded into some theological evaluation in the report to his king. Discussing the prevalence of evangelical ideas in the region, he wrote, “There is no one here who does not think to privilege [the Epistles of] Saint Paul and the Acts of the Apostles on nearly all topics, so much that these Lutheran texts have thrived, especially in Franconia.” Although he did not get any more specific in this letter, Dantiscus possibly was critiquing Luther’s use of Paul’s letters to the Romans and Galatians in his theological investigations, particularly for the production of the sola fide doctrine. The diplomat would expand his discussion of evangelical doctrine in later materials.

The Nuremberg letter concluded with a description of a particularly revealing meeting that concerned reform. While being reinvigorated during his sojourn in Nuremberg, a lively city enveloping both banks of the picturesque Pegnitz River, Dantiscus met individually with Count Palatinate of the Rhine Frederick II, one of the princes gathered there and the younger brother of Elector Palatinate of the Rhine Louis

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82 Ioannes Danticus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 28, 1522, Nuremberg, CIDT&C. These princes included Elector of Saxony Frederick III “the Wise,” Count Palatinate of the Rhine Frederick II, Count Palatinate of the Rhine and Bishop of Speyer George, and Count Ulrich of Helffenstein, among others.

83 Ioannes Danticus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 28, 1522, Nuremberg, CIDT&C.

84 Ioannes Danticus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 28, 1522, Nuremberg, CIDT&C.

85 Ioannes Danticus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 28, 1522, Nuremberg, CIDT&C.
V. As an ambitious member of one of the Empire’s most powerful families, Frederick overtly was more concerned with political stability and peace than he was with evaluating religious reform. Violent outbreaks such as the Knight’s Revolt greatly troubled him, and he typically sought expedient solutions to such conflicts. Religious issues were becoming more of a consideration, though. During their meeting, Frederick and Dantiscus discussed a number of topics related to the early evangelical reform movement. They began by evaluating the fluid interests of Grand Master Albrecht in Teutonic Prussia, which included opposing Ottoman forces in Hungary. Interestingly, the mention of Albrecht—a friend of Martin Luther—reminded Frederick about Luther, and the count subsequently asked Dantiscus about Polish opinions of the reformer. Dantiscus wrote to King Sigismund, “I responded that we [in Poland] are as yet good Christians, and added for clarity, ‘and we do not imagine otherwise about ourselves, but the end of [this reform] business will demonstrate everything.’” The clear implication was that Luther and his followers were not such “good Christians,” although what exactly that meant to Dantiscus—disobedience? sacrilege? heresy? schism?—would remain vague for the moment. Frederick appeared to be especially worried about the violent tendencies that he observed among the propagators of evangelical reform, and Dantiscus concurred.

Even in this first letter about sectarian revolts in the Empire, and likely supported by his previous experiences in Royal Prussia, it was becoming clear that Dantiscus

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86 Neue Deutsche Biographie 5, s.v. “Friedrich der Weise”; Whaley, Germany and the Holy Roman Empire, 276. Frederick would himself become Elector Palatinate following his brother’s death in 1544, but in the mid-1520s he became known for his reluctant political involvement in the failed effort to restore the Catholic Church in Norway led by deposed Danish King Christian II.

87 Ioannes Danticus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 28, 1522, Nuremberg, CIDT&C.
associated the evangelical reform movement with violence, destruction, and the disruption of political and social order. Although he explicitly criticized all violent actors, he laid most of the blame for what was occurring in the Empire squarely on the “Lutheran” faction. He repeatedly referenced the recent Teutonic attacks on Royal Prussia, led by Grand Master Albrecht, in relation to what he was observing in the Empire. Furthermore, he increasingly revealed his reverence and desire for a peaceful, united Christendom. Especially considering the Ottoman advances from the southeast, he believed that Christian states needed to form a united bulwark, and in his view evangelical reform undermined that initiative. Internal disorder, instability, and fragmentation were the mortal enemies of Christendom beset by external foes, and Dantiscus evaluated early evangelical reform based on how much it fostered these internal enemies.\(^8^8\) The next several weeks of his journey across the Empire would provide even more evidence for him.

In late July and August 1522, Dantiscus and the Polish delegation unavoidably traversed parts of the Empire where the Knights’ Revolt was most active and hostile, until they were able to pass into the Low Countries in late August. Then from the bustling commercial metropolis of Antwerp, he sent a pair of letters to the King and to the Vice-Chancellor of the Crown, Bishop Piotr Tomicki of Poznań, updating them on his recent activities. He included as yet his most detailed descriptions and assessments of evangelical reform, couched within complaints about both the Knights’ Revolt and the Swabian League. Encounters along the delegation’s circuitous route had kept Dantiscus informed of many of the conflicts in and between Nuremberg, Ulm, Speyer, Mainz, 

\(^8^8\) Ioannes Danticus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 28, 1522, Nuremberg, CIDT&C.
Worms, and Frankfurt am Main. He reported that Sickingen’s knights had pillaged towns and countryside across the Empire and left many innocent people dead in their wake. He emphasized that they were targeting the properties and clergy of the Church. Large gangs of knights and foot soldiers had plundered monasteries, harassed priests, and assaulted the estates of several bishops. The Archbishop of Trier and the Archbishop of Cologne were even coordinating funds and troops in order to survive the attacks. The Swabian League was becoming more heavily involved in suppressing the revolt, which only created more violence. But Dantiscus did not divide the blame. He saw the Knights' Revolt as an outrageous attempt by evangelical reformers to subvert imperial and ecclesiastical authority, which created dangerous divisions throughout the Empire and Christendom at a time when Christians most needed to be united.  

Dantiscus’s letter to Tomicki focused even more on the practicalities of responding to evangelical reform and sectarian violence, both in the Empire and in the Habsburg Low Countries. He reported approvingly that the Edict of Worms had outlawed Luther and his texts and instituted harsh punishments for preaching in support of the banished cleric. Many people he encountered thus were reluctant to discuss Luther or his works at all. The envoy made it plain that he strongly supported the Empire’s and Papacy’s labeling of Luther as a heresiarch, but that violent revolts such as Sickingen’s ought to draw more attention from both the Emperor and the Pope. Dantiscus also explicitly addressed the state of religious reform in the Habsburg Low Countries. He described the spread of evangelical texts and ideas there, and the heavy-handed response of Habsburg authorities, writing:

89 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, September 18, 1522, Antwerp, CIDT&C.
A short report on what is thought about Luther in [the Low Countries]. Here Luther is neither discussed nor dared to be mentioned. Those who approve of his books, even if only the texts concerning the Ten Commandments, or impress his speeches, are dragged off to prison, and those who own his books are sought out diligently. Recently there were some who told me of a learned and noble Flemish Augustinian preacher, very accomplished in his own tongue, who had expressed himself one way or another in line with Luther, whom the authorities threw into prison; and if he is undesirous of being killed by [the fires of] Vulcan, the protector of our religion, he will be compelled justifiably by the Roman Church to recant officially those ideas in all respects and condemn Luther publically by means of many prescribed insults and abuses.

There was here another priest who either unknowingly or through ignorance had spoken out on behalf of Luther, who afterwards for a long while paid his penalty in chains, and then was brought in front of the masses in a church and compelled to recant officially Luther's ideas, and call Luther a heresiarch, and condemn him by means of many vile curses. In this region the Emperor's mandate against Luther is inviolably observed.90

For Dantiscus, the penalties for courting Luther's ideas in the Low Countries were a relief from what he had observed in the southern and central parts of the Empire. Early on in fact, Charles had significantly more success in criminalizing Lutheran support in the Low Countries than he did in the politically-fragmented imperial lands. Just five months prior to Dantiscus's arrival in Antwerp, Charles had appointed his own Inquisitor General of the Low Countries, ignoring papal jurisdiction there. His appointee, Van der Hulst, quickly gained a reputation for wanton persecutions of Lutheran sympathizers, persecutions that were still ongoing during the Polish delegation's visit.91 Dantiscus welcomed the religious control that the Habsburg monarch appeared to exercise in Antwerp and the surrounding region.

90 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, September 18, 1522, Antwerp, CIDT&C.

The two months that Dantiscus spent traveling westward across the Holy Roman Empire in the summer of 1522, as well as the several weeks that he then spent in the Low Countries, provided some of the most critical evidence informing his perspective on religious reform of his entire career. He witnessed how evangelical reform was transforming local societies across Central Europe, primarily in urban areas but also in the countryside. He had encounters with political and religious leaders from different principalities, most of whom expressed grave concern over internal religious, political, and social fractures, the unrest that such fractures could cause, and the threats mounting on the borders of Christendom. He observed the effects of severe penalties for engaging with evangelical ideas, and compared them to situations in which consequences were laxer. Most significantly, over an extended period Dantiscus personally witnessed one of the most harrowing early instances of social and political uprising in the name of evangelical reform: the Knights’ Revolt of 1522-1523. Through all of this, his royal and ecclesiastical patrons in Poland were requesting more information, which motivated him to become better acquainted with the theological and practical characteristics of reform.

What Dantiscus observed, encountered, and tried desperately to avoid during this journey, especially on the heels of his experiences in Royal Prussia, starkly informed his perception of the evangelical reform movement as radical, chaotic, disruptive, and dangerous. It also informed his construction of “Lutheranism,” a designation that he used for the first time in that 28-July letter and which began to assume several particular characteristics for Dantiscus.92 The first was its all-

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92 Ioannes Danticus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 28, 1522, Nuremberg, CIDT&C.
encompassing applicability. For Dantiscus, the frenetic ideas and texts spreading through Gdańsk and Royal Prussia, Grand Master Albrecht’s military provocations, the rapid evangelical transformation of urban societies in southern Germany, the violence of the Knights’ Revolt, and the great disruptions caused by wayward priests in the Low Countries all became part of the same “Lutheran” movement. And these were only the manifestations and offshoots of evangelical reform that he personally had witnessed so far. The second characteristic was the pejorative nature of this designation. He only used “Lutheran” to describe antagonistic individuals or groups, and he always either implied or stated some reprehensible violation on their part. To be “Lutheran” was to be a menace. The third characteristic was his increasing association of “Lutheranism” with outright violence that inherently disrupted social and political order. The “Lutherans” that he identified were dissidents who were threatening established political and ecclesiastical authorities. This was unacceptable. The fourth characteristic was his labeling of Luther and evangelical leaders, who he perceived to be leading the “Lutheran” charge, as “heresiarchs.” For Dantiscus, “Lutheranism” was not merely a movement encompassing social and political revolt, but rather it was an assault on orthodox Christian belief and practice, as well as the sacred authority of the Roman Church. It would take years, though, for Dantiscus to clarify the nature and nuances of that assault. Nonetheless, his emerging construction of “Lutheranism” was eclectic and

93 Although the Polish-Teutonic War had not been connected directly to the spread of evangelical reform in Royal Prussia, thereafter Dantiscus perceived an association between the disruptions caused by those reforms and the violent aggressiveness of Albrecht and his knights. As Albrecht exchanged ideas with Martin Luther, entertained evangelical sympathies, and allowed evangelical reform in Teutonic territory during the early 1520s, the association between Albrecht’s Prussia, “Lutheranism,” and the disruption of the status quo grew stronger in Dantiscus’s mind. In 1525, Albrecht would secularize Teutonic Prussia and created a Duchy. He would also convert to Lutheranism, along with many of his subjects. For a more detailed presentation of these and later relations between Dantiscus and Albrecht, see Chapter 7.
included in its foundations the violent conflict and disorder that he encountered personally in summer 1522, alongside other visceral impressions of evangelical reform. For Dantiscus, such a movement posed a grave threat to stability within Christendom, risked the vengeful wrath of God, and poisoned any legitimate critiques of the Church for which reformers might also advocate.

Dantiscus’s emerging perspective on reform would have a significant impact on his diplomatic, political, and religious roles during the next decade, beginning almost immediately. He would become a key informant on issues of reform for several prominent members of the Polish royal court. King Sigismund even utilized him as a counter-reforming agent upon his brief return to Poland-Lithuania in 1523, as described in the next section. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, his experiences also contributed to his role as an authority on evangelical reform at foreign courts across Europe. By the mid-1520s, he not only would be a Crown-sanctioned observer, evaluator, and opponent of evangelical reform, but he would also maintain a reputation as an international authority on the practical effects of reform and the range of appropriate responses by Catholic authorities. Thus his critical views would influence policy across multiple complex polities. They were not based entirely on his excursion summer 1522, though. He still had substantial encounters to follow.

**Luther and Melanchthon in Wittenberg**

In the early 1520s, Dantiscus may have acknowledged more readily Martin Luther’s own opposition to radical and violent reform efforts were it not for the envoy’s personal encounter with the reformer on the return leg of his second diplomatic mission abroad. Eight months after departing from Antwerp in September 1522 for visits to England and Spain—topics of Chapter 3—Dantiscus returned to the Low Countries in
order to travel back across the Holy Roman Empire to Cracow. During that long trek, he would experience the single most notable encounter with religious reformers of his entire career: he met in person with both Martin Luther and Philipp Melanchthon during a spontaneous visit to Wittenberg. The actual face-to-face meeting, as well as some bizarre accompanying circumstances, had a tremendous impact on his perspective on evangelical reform. It also established him as a legitimate, experienced connoisseur of evangelical reform efforts in the eyes of many of his patrons and peers. He described the encounter and its context in detail in a letter written to Piotr Tomicki in August 1523. While stopping in Nuremberg, the Polish delegation had crossed paths with Duke Georg of Saxony, and the Duke had informed Dantiscus that Luther was again residing in Wittenberg and teaching at the University there. Dantiscus immediately added the Saxon town to the Polish delegation’s eastward itinerary, unable to forego the opportunity to meet the famous and still outlawed reformer. Despite the long journey that still lay ahead, the continued threat of violence from the ongoing Knights' Revolt,

94 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, August 8, 1523, Cracow, CIDT&C.

95 Brady, German Histories in the Age of Reformations, 211-4, 293; Whaley, Germany and the Holy Roman Empire, 173, 176. Duke Georg was no friend of Luther or his movement. He was a staunch Catholic and a frequent critic of the reformers, particularly Luther himself. A first Georg appeared moderate toward the reformers, but likely only out of pragmatism. He recommended allowing Luther to answer his critics (hopefully to convince him to recant) and finding a compromise with those political and religious leaders who had taken up Luther’s cry for reform. Even after Luther’s refusal to recant, Georg supported attempts to draw Lutheran preachers back toward the Roman Church, and argued to allow a general council to resolve the religious divisions within the Empire. Over time Georg grew increasingly devoted to strengthening ecclesiastical authority and maintaining the Roman Church as the one true church.

96 MacCulloch, The Reformation, 138. After being outlawed by the Edict of Worms, Luther had secluded himself in Wartburg Castle with the help of Elector of Saxony Frederick III, where the reformer composed more ambitious and thorough texts criticizing the Church and promoting various evangelical reforms. In March 1522, Luther returned to Wittenberg and assumed the mantle of harnessing and leading the reform movement that he had started four years earlier, with the support of several of his colleagues, including especially Philipp Melanchthon.
and catastrophic flooding of the Elbe River that made any travel across Saxony
treacherous, Dantiscus and his company made the detour.\footnote{Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, August 8, 1523, Cracow, CIDT&C.}

Even before the company arrived in Wittenberg, however, Dantiscus’s experiences on the journey across Saxony further darkened his views of the evangelical reform movement and its impact on an already imperiled Christendom. His first observation regarded a natural disaster that recently had struck the region. Dantiscus reported to Tomicki that:

\begin{quote}
There was so much flooding of the rivers, especially the Elbe, which flows through Wittenberg, that almost all of the crops in the region were submerged and dying. I heard much about this from the peasants, who cried out against Luther and his dreadful accomplices. It is believed that [the flooding] occurred because [Luther’s followers] ate meat throughout Lent, and for that reason God rectified the entire province.\footnote{Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, August 8, 1523, Cracow, CIDT&C.}
\end{quote}

There are two especially compelling dimensions of this anecdote. The most obvious is that Dantiscus felt it necessary to reinforce his own scathing evaluation of the evangelical reform movement by warning his patrons about the temporal consequences of allowing its leaders to operate freely and endorse heretical practices, such as consuming meat during Lent. Whether he fabricated the anxieties of Upper Saxony’s notably informed peasant population or not,\footnote{Whaley, \textit{Germany and the Holy Roman Empire}, 188-9. The reach of the evangelical reform movement among the peasant population is difficult to measure, due primarily to the relative lack of written sources from rural areas in comparison to more urban environments. Although it is true that reform gained in popularity more quickly in urban centers, studies have shown that many rural peasants at least heard about the evangelical movement, and some may have experienced it firsthand. There were active rural evangelical preachers, and the countryside surrounding reform-minded towns were likely to have had access to evangelical pamphlets or sermons. The severity of the Peasant’s War and the role that evangelical rhetoric played in that uprising is indication enough that the reform movement could have an impact among rural populations, at least in particular German or Swiss territories. At the very least, the} he considered that a providential
interpretation of Saxony’s hardships was important context for Luther’s recent return to
public life in Wittenberg. The fact that he composed his description of God’s punitive
flood well after his actual encounter with Luther also indicates that the meeting did not
soften Dantiscus’s views toward the reformer. In fact, the meeting generated even
greater animosity for the diplomat.

The second important dimension of Dantiscus’s description of the devastating
d flood in Saxony is its correlation with a critical moment in German popular astrology,
when early modern hysteria over predictions of an imminent deluge sent by a vengeful
God reached its apogee in the Empire. Much like Dantiscus’s 1518 journey across
Salzburg and Bavaria as Martin Luther debated Cardinal Cajetan in Augsburg, his 1520
residence in Royal Prussia during the frenzied introduction of evangelical reform and
the destructive Polish-Teutonic War, and his 1522 travels through Franconia during the
violent outbreak of the Knight’s Revolt, this new encounter was remarkably fortuitous.
Dantiscus’s spontaneous 1523 journey through Saxony coincidentally made him a
witness to a unique and transformative moment in Central European religious history.
This moment would reveal to him intensely what he perceived to be the social and
political effects of evangelical reform. In 1523, these effects comprised a natural
disaster that would have been seen by many Germans as a long-expected sign of the
apocalypse.

During the late fifteenth century and into the sixteenth, astrological predictions of
impending disaster became much more common in German society through vernacular

rural peasants in Saxony would have had some conception of the evangelical reform movement, as well
as some opinion of how that movement was affecting their own lives.

\(^{100}\) Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, August 8, 1523, Cracow, CIDT&C.
pamphlets, scholarly texts, and sermons. Robin Barnes has argued that many of these predictions were the work of imperial agents. They intended to promote the authority and traditional mores of the Church and the Empire, and thus reinforce the sovereignty of the Habsburg dynasty. One recurring apocalyptic prediction that caused mounting tension in Central Europe was calculated from the regular conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, a phenomenon that occurred every twenty years and prompted hysterical speculations in 1483-4, 1503-4, and especially 1523-4. The characteristics of the disasters that Germans expected to accompany these astronomical events were derived from the constellations in which they visibly occurred.\textsuperscript{101} The 1503-4 conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn within the watery constellation Cancer led several leading astrologers to predict that the next repetition in 1523-4 would bring devastation, sickness, and death by means of raging flood waters on a biblical scale. Among these scholars was the Empire’s most notorious astrologer Johann Virdung von Hassfurt, who held a position at the court of the Elector Palatine.\textsuperscript{102} Dantiscus’s own experience crossing the extraordinary floodwaters of the Elbe occurred just a few months before this astrological event was set to begin.

The early 1520s also brought a concurrence of several tensions in the Empire that led to widespread speculation about apocalyptic flooding. An interest in the mysteries of unexplainable phenomena accompanied many late medieval concerns about the supernatural effects of social and political instability, creating in the early modern period a cult of curiosity around destructive meteorological events such as

\textsuperscript{101} Robin B. Barnes, \textit{Astrology and Reformation} (Oxford: OUP, 2016), 82-9.

\textsuperscript{102} Barnes, \textit{Astrology and Reformation}, 24, 95.
storms, floods, and draughts. Disastrous flooding had been a common European literary
trope for centuries, drawn both from Biblical stories—typically Genesis—and from
traditional astrological interpretations. The imagery of overflow and imbalance was
particularly evocative for early modern Europeans as it related to the balance of Galenic
humors in the medieval understanding of bodily health. As flood obsessions peaked in
Central Europe in the early sixteenth century, many Europeans had also become
frustrated by frequent ominous astrological predictions and overwhelmed by the
constant fear of imminent providential disasters. The despair resulting from these
predications contributed to a rise in individual and communal anxieties about sinfulness,
contrition, and grace throughout much of Central Europe. All of these tensions
continued to boil as the 1523-4 planetary conjunction approached, stoked by popular
astrologers who predicted unprecedented damage caused by a purifying, equalizing,
and divinely-driven deluge. The final and most provocative contribution to the flood
hysteria, however, emerged from the tip of Martin Luther’s pen beginning in 1517, as
the reformer challenged the two primary authorities whose responsibility it was to
maintain social, political, and religious order in European society—the Church and the
Empire—and preached to Germans about their sinfulness and helplessness under the
eyes of God.103

Dantiscus’s commentary on the flooding of the Elbe River in summer 1523 did
not explicitly address this important moment in popular astrology, but it does fit
compellingly into the historical narrative of how the late medieval German flood hysteria
developed and peaked in the early 1520s. He did not mention the region’s history of

103 Barnes, Astrology and Reformation, 89-97.
flood speculation, nor did he propagate the scholarly and popular conviction that in that same year God would scourge the Earth with a series of watery natural disasters. He did not invoke predictions or astrology in his letter, and he did not refer to the Great Flood of Genesis. Dantiscus did, however, cultivate the not uncommon belief that God would justifiably send punishments down upon Christendom for the terrible sins and heresies of Luther and his followers, especially in those regions where the heresies were most egregious, such as the town of Wittenberg and the surrounding countryside of Upper Saxony. God would “rectify” what had already been corrupted.104 Having spent so much time in the Empire during the previous eight years, it is unlikely that Dantiscus was unaware of the crescendo of apocalyptic speculations that accompanied the approach of the 1523-4 conjunction cycle, or of the German obsession with flood imagery. In 1523 he may not yet have viewed the evangelical reform movement as a sign of the coming end of times, but during the course of the decade the severity of Dantiscus’s providential interpretations of events surrounding him, including attempts to reform the Roman Church, would increase dramatically. This severity would peak for Dantiscus in 1529 when he composed De nostrorum temporum calamitatibus silva, an urgent plea to the princes of Europe to unite against the Ottoman invasion of Central Europe, which Dantiscus believed to be God’s retribution for the sins of the Christian peoples.105 The foremost of these sins for Dantiscus was the disruptive, destructive, violent, and heretical reform efforts of Luther and his disciples, which by July 1523 Dantiscus had already witnessed somewhat intimately.

104 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, August 8, 1523, Cracow, CIDT&C.
105 Ioannes Dantiscus, De nostrorum temporum calamitatibus silva, CIDT&C.
After circumventing some of the flood damage, crossing to the northern bank of the overflowed Elbe by skiff, and passing through the gates of Wittenberg, Dantiscus proceeded to the University in order to meet Martin Luther face-to-face. He provided Tomicki with a detailed description of his experiences there, in a candid and somewhat awestruck tone. He did not go into detail about the Wittenberg reformers’ criticisms of the Church or their proposals, but he did offer a clear, critical evaluation of their personalities and intellectual merits. This type of evaluation would become typical of Dantiscus’s early reform commentary. At first he was much less concerned with the theological ambitions of evangelical reformers and more attentive to their comportment, respectfulness, and accountability for the unintended consequences of their ideas and actions. He began his description on a positive note by praising Luther’s young associate Philipp Melanchthon, whom the diplomat obviously held in high regard. He wrote, “[In Wittenberg] I discovered a number of youths quite learned in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin—especially Philipp Melanchthon, who is known to be the foremost educated among them. For a man of only 26 years he is most refined and brilliant.” He implied a cordial and stimulating relationship between himself and Melanchthon, who apparently remained by Dantiscus’s side for the entirety of his three-day stay in Wittenberg. When Melanchthon inquired as to the diplomat’s purpose there, Dantiscus responded that, “It is commonly believed that those who have seen neither the Pope of Rome nor Luther of

106 MacCulloch, The Reformation, 135-6, 152. Prior to Luther’s return to Wittenberg in 1522, Melanchthon had begun organizing the reformer’s ideas into more formalized texts, such as Loci Communes, so that readers could more easily apply those ideas to their beliefs and practices. After Luther returned from his sanctuary in Wartburg Castle, he and Melanchthon began composing a series of works intended to illustrate how they believed the German church ought to be organized and administered in relation to secular authority. It was in these first years, during which Dantiscus would approach them in Wittenberg, that they developed their “two kingdoms” doctrine in opposition to the authority claimed by princes such as Duke Georg, the man who encouraged Dantiscus to visit Wittenberg on his way back to Cracow.
Wittenberg have in fact seen nothing at all. Whence I am eager to see [Luther] and address him." He seemingly allayed any of Melanchthon’s suspicions, as the envoy continued writing to Tomicki, “Luther is not easily approached by just anyone, and yet Melanchthon admitted me not the least bit grudgingly.” As encouraging as the pleasant encounter with Melanchthon had been, his meeting with Luther would proceed quite differently.

Melanchthon led Dantiscus into the hall where Luther had been eating dinner with several of his former Augustinian brothers, whom Dantiscus identified by their distinctive hairstyles despite the strangely militaristic arrangement of their white tunics. With an authoritative wave of his hand, Luther indicated where Dantiscus should sit. Their ensuing, intense, and wide-ranging conversation lasted for nearly four hours. Although Dantiscus did not record the specific topics of their conversation, he did offer an extensive and detailed description of Luther himself:

I found an acute, learned, and eloquent man, but one leaning toward slander, arrogance, and spite for the Pope, the Emperor, and certain other princes. If I should want to describe all of his transgressions, it would take several days and nights. Even now I am prepared to do this, having collected many items together. Luther has an expression of one who devours books. His gleaming eyes are piercing and terrifying, such that now and then he appeared possessed…His speech is emphatic, full of yelling and scoffing…He wears an expression that cannot be discerned even by a skillful courtier. It is said that he acquired this expression in his first true home, the monastery. Sitting together, we not only conversed, but also drank wine and beer with cheerful faces, as is the custom, and he [initially] appeared to be a good companion. But I became aware of an unmistakable contempt in him, as well as the great arrogance of ambition. He was blatantly loose with his mockery, interruptions, and scoffing. If anyone differs in opinion on this fact, [Luther’s] written works depict him clearly. He has produced many texts, after all.

107 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, August 8, 1523, Cracow, CIDT&C.
Dantiscus closed his letter to Tomicki by paying further respect to Melanchthon. He wrote, “Among all learned men of Germany, [Melanchthon] is exceedingly pleasing to me, and neither does he agree with Luther on all issues; concerning those issues, I desire vehemently to meet [Melanchthon] in person again before too long.”108 After three eventful days in Wittenberg, the Polish delegation again set out eastward on the return journey to Cracow.

Dantiscus’s description of his lengthy meeting with Melanchthon and Luther indicates the criteria by which he chose to judge religious reformers at that early point. Tellingly, the only explicit opinions that Dantiscus chose to relay to Tomicki concerned the personalities and intellectual characteristics of Luther and Melanchthon, neglecting their specific criticisms of the Church and their approaches to reforming it. The contrast of the two men is most revealing, as he reserved his highest compliments for Melanchthon and his greatest criticisms for Luther. Dantiscus was willing to forgive his theological disagreements with Melanchthon out of respect for the young doctor’s composure, intelligence, temperance, and deliberation. Seven years later, he again would encounter Melanchthon at the Diet of Augsburg and even there was encouraged by the reformer’s contributions to religious debate,109 despite the sobering circumstances of the Diet.110 In contrast, Dantiscus never forgot his uneasy and

108 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, August 8, 1523, Cracow, CIDT&C.
109 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 30, 1530, Augsburg, CIDT&C.
110 MacCulloch, The Reformation, 168-70. The 1530 Diet of Augsburg called by Charles V had been intended to reconcile the Protestants and Catholics of the Empire, especially in the light of papal reluctance to convene a Church council to resolve Europe’s religious disputes. Despite the view toward reconciliation, the council quickly resulted in the hardening of lines between the Catholic powers and the Protestant princes, as well as the formal establishment of the Lutheran confession. In Luther’s absence from the council, Melanchthon had taken the position of lead evangelical negotiator, and Dantiscus’s
frustrating exchange with Luther. It had been marred by the reformer’s contempt and disrespect for decorum and the traditional hierarchies of judgment and power in the Church and Empire. Despite Luther’s obvious erudition, Dantiscus could not overlook his arrogant, condescending demeanor, his shameless ambition, or his disdain for ecclesiastical and imperial authorities. He perceived such disrespect as blatantly offensive, and it overshadowed any admirable qualities that Luther possessed.

This evaluation became crucial to Dantiscus’s perception of the broader evangelical reform movement. He appreciated the scholarly contributions of reformers and was willing to engage them personally and intellectually, but he had no tolerance for any social upheaval, destruction, or violence that might result from reform initiatives. He also greatly lamented what he saw as reformers’ assaults on the clergy, both secular and regular. Regarding Dantiscus’s particular construction of “Lutheranism,” previously it had been informed by his witnessing war and reform in Royal Prussia, his enduring the Knights’ Revolt in Bavaria and Franconia, his monitoring Habsburg responses to reform in the Low Countries, and his surviving the providential flooding of Saxony’s rivers—all disruptive, violent, or destructive events. After meeting Martin Luther in person, this construction also incorporated Dantiscus’s antagonistic memory of the encounter. The diplomat increasingly would invoke “Lutheranism” as an ambitious, malicious, unruly, disruptive, and destructive force that resulted in many different manifestations of reform but was shaped and compelled by Luther himself, whose demeanor it reflected. It was a threat to established authorities and Christian stability,

good friend and imperial courtier Alfonso de Valdés negotiated on behalf of the imperial party. The Diet will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.
and it ought not to be tolerated by the Roman Church or the polities of Christendom. As Dantiscus’s role as an advisor on reform issues at courts across Europe grew, this experience and perspective would impress several of his contacts, as will be described in subsequent chapters.

**Reform, Counter-Reform, and Riot in Gdańsk**

The last major series of events to impact Dantiscus’s perspective on evangelical reform in these early years occurred in his home city of Gdańsk. Although these events occurred over a short period of time in 1523-1524 and in part in his absence, they were highly significant both personally and professionally for him. His foreign delegation had returned to Cracow in late July 1523. Then King Sigismund decided to take advantage of and reward Dantiscus’s experiences by giving him an official counter-reforming role. On 14 September, the diplomat received a lucrative benefice as parish priest at St. Mary’s in Gdańsk—the enormous, brick-gothic hall church that had been completed just a few years earlier and dominated the city’s Christian life and busy skyline. The ecclesiastical appointment was a personal success for Dantiscus, but it also created an opportunity for the King. As evangelical reform had attracted more proponents and followers in Royal Prussia, Sigismund needed to use any available

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111 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, August 8, 1523, Cracow, CIDT&C.

112 Nowak, *Jan Dantyszek*, 124. Katarzyna Cieślak, *Między Rzymem, Wittenbergą a Genewą. Sztuka Gdańska jako miasta podzielonego wyznaniowo* (Wrocław, 2000). Consecrated at the beginning of the sixteenth century, St. Mary’s was one of the largest churches in Europe and the mother church of the largest urban center in Poland. It maintained a large canonry that had a strong cultural and political influence in the city and the surrounding region. In the 1520s, St. Mary’s would host several conflicts over efforts to reform the Roman Church, and would begin to provide both Catholic and Lutheran services for the people of the city. A motivated counter-reformer would be a boon to the King’s plans for counter-reform.
resources to counter the movement’s effects and reinforce the Catholic Church there.\textsuperscript{113} Dantiscus’s appointment was attractive for several reasons. As a native of Gdańsk and a skilled diplomat, he could assimilate easily and make his way among the city’s prominent families and individuals. Having more direct experience with evangelical reform than most of the clergy in Poland-Lithuania, he also was one of the most qualified candidates to confront the issue. He was fiercely loyal to both the Polish Crown and the Roman Church, and yet he was invested personally in the prosperity of Gdańsk and Royal Prussia. Finally, it was well known that Dantiscus desired a lucrative, permanent career in the Church, and such a position would support that ambition and keep him focused. Now all he needed to do was counter evangelical reform on the ground. He left Cracow for Gdańsk in September.\textsuperscript{114}

Unfortunately for Dantiscus’s ecclesiastical ambitions and Sigismund’s counter-reform initiative, the new canon’s residence in Gdańsk would last less only a few months and see little direct impact. Spurred by renewed imperial challenges to Queen Bona’s Neapolitan inheritance and increasing Ottoman military activity in Hungary, in late winter 1524 Sigismund again appointed Dantiscus to lead a diplomatic mission to Charles’ court in Spain. He was to reside at the imperial court permanently until these diplomatic issues were resolved.\textsuperscript{115} This third, longest, and final diplomatic mission abroad would last for eight years, most of which would be spent in Spain. It began with


\textsuperscript{114} Nowak, \textit{Jan Dantyszek}, 124-5.

a southern route Cracow, Vienna, Villach, Venice, and Rome.\textsuperscript{116} While Dantiscus was in transit, though, Gdańsk hosted several alarming reforming events that would crystalize his critical construction of evangelical reform and demonstrate the role that he needed to play in Royal Prussia in the future.

As Dantiscus was traveling through the Archduchy of Austria in March and April, his dear friend Bishop Maciej Drzewicki of Włocławek—whose diocese included Gdańsk—sent him a letter about some recent, urgent problems with evangelical reform in the city.\textsuperscript{117} The letter contains one of the most detailed, vivid, extant descriptions of religious reform and unrest from all of Dantiscus’s correspondence, including from his tenures as bishop of Chełmno and prince-bishop of Warmia. Both the content of the letter and its wider context reveal the intensity of early evangelical reform in the Prussian city, as well as the commitment of Dantiscus and his colleagues to suppressing such reform. Drzewicki played a central role. King Sigismund had sent Drzewicki and Archbishop Jan Łaski of Gniezno—Primate of Poland—to Gdańsk for a diplomatic summit, one topic of which would be Lutheran reform in the city.\textsuperscript{118} By Dantiscus’s leave, Drzewicki had been residing in the diplomat’s own house while

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\textsuperscript{116} Nowak, \textit{Jan Dantyszek}, 125-7; Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, April 8, 1524, Villach, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, May 7, 1524, Venice, CIDT&C. Some details of this journey will be discussed in Chapter 3.

\textsuperscript{117} Maciej Drzewicki to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 12 or April 24, 1524, Gdańsk, CIDT&C. Drzewicki had a distinguished career as a diplomat and clergymen, both in Poland and abroad. Along with Rafał Leszczyński, he accompanied King Sigismund and Dantiscus to the Congress of Vienna in 1515, and was part of the subsequent delegation sent by Maximillian to the Republic of Venice. Drzewicki had been named Bishop of Włocławek in 1513 and held that position until 1531, when he was named Archbishop of Gniezno, the Primate of Poland. He remained in regular contact with Dantiscus for the rest of his life (d. 1535), especially discussing Church matters in the Crown lands. This letter, although written in the early spring, did not find Dantiscus until late autumn after he had already arrived in Spain.

\textsuperscript{118} Nowakowska, \textit{King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther}, 79.
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attending the summit and temporarily managing local counter-reform measures. This arrangement clearly aligned Dantiscus with the Polish episcopacy and its efforts to suppress reform in Royal Prussia. It demonstrated how seriously Dantiscus considered his ecclesiastical role and felt responsible to support the Roman Church in Gdańsk, despite his relations with many of the city’s reforming leaders.

Early counter-reform measures in Gdańsk were not proceeding smoothly for the prelates. Drzewicki bitterly informed Dantiscus that, “while I was filling your position here, there was an uprising agitated against me by the vile commoners.” He then provided a harrowing example of the city’s swell of evangelical reformers and the social unrest they were instigating. Together they illustrated the boldness with which the citizens of Gdańsk were pursuing evangelical reform and the growing disregard for ecclesiastical authorities there. Dziewicki wrote that, “[Since you left last month,] I already have detained one false priest from Pomerania, who in my presence was proclaiming heretical ideas publicly and teaching recklessly.” He detained the preacher in the cellar until Archbishop Łaski could arrive and evaluate the man’s transgressions.

Tumult erupted on Drzewicki the next day when he attempted to rebuke the preacher publicly:

\[\text{[References]}\]

119 Maciej Drzewicki to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 12 or April 24, 1524, Gdańsk, CIDT&C.

120 Maciej Drzewicki to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 12 or April 24, 1524, Gdańsk, CIDT&C.

121 Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*, 42-4. Pomerania is the geographical region of northeastern Germany and northwestern Poland bordering the Baltic Sea. Gdańsk and the Wisła River are generally accepted as its eastern boundary. Royal Prussia’s westernmost political subdivision was the Palatinate of Pomerania. In this letter, though, Drzewicki’s use of “Pomerania” likely was a reference to the Duchy of Pomerania, a sizeable, independent, German-speaking principality located on the modern day border between Germany and Poland. This can be seen in Figure 1-2. Evangelical reform spread quickly in the Duchy of Pomerania in the 1520s and subsequently to Royal Prussia, often by means of traveling preachers.
In the morning while I said Mass, a disturbance was instigated by several lay defenders of the Lutheran sect, and also by several priests and religious persons. As I left the church accompanied by the proconsuls, into whose care I had given the heretical priest, the uprising came right to the doorposts of [your] house, and [the rioters] attempted to break down [your] door by force, as they shouted with a great rising clamor. The [strong] doorway hindered the break-in, but meanwhile the priest whom I had detained escaped. And thus the riot ceased.122

Drzewicki clearly was shaken by this riot in Gdańsk, and both he and Łaski would flee the city in fear for their lives.123 He wanted to inform Dantiscus immediately, though, both for personal reasons—their friendship and the role of the house—and for practical professional reasons—Dantiscus’s benefice at St. Mary’s and his implicit support of Drzewicki’s arrest of the preacher. The bishop offered an essentializing evaluation of the incident when he wrote:

Behold the religiosity of your people [in Gdańsk]. I fear that together with the lord Archbishop I was able to accomplish nothing in correcting worship practices, or in correcting false priests and misguided religious persons. After our departure things deteriorated further, so for you there should be little about which to rejoice.124

Even had Dantiscus been able to stay in Gdańsk longer, it seemed that countering evangelical reform there would have been a tremendous challenge considering the extent of reform among the elite and common populations. His ecclesiastical superiors, including Gdańsk’s bishop, did not display much confidence.

Drzewicki concluded his letter with a more general description of the religious challenges arising in Gdańsk and Royal Prussia, especially among the clergy. He wrote:

122 Maciej Drzewicki to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 12 or April 24, 1524, Gdańsk, CIDT&C.
123 Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther, 79, 120. This encounter would not deter Drzewicki, though. He would continue to work to counter evangelical reform, including imprisoning false priests form Royal Prussia in his own episcopal castle.
124 Maciej Drzewicki to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 12 or April 24, 1524, Gdańsk, CIDT&C.
Residing in your house, I was being taken great advantage of [by the locals]. Therefore I decided to remove my tribunal from there and locate it elsewhere, because there it is not seen as official, and the honest priests who work with me for the inquiries will only come out of fear, in the way of Nicodemus.\textsuperscript{125}

The bishop then illustrated why his fears were not unfounded, reporting that:

The Gdańsk lords greatly desire that the [investigative] officials [of the Church] remain with them, and where [the officials] will not remain, [there the lords] fear that heresy will spread its wings widely. The people are devouring meat and butter [during Lent], believing everyone to be bound for salvation through faith and not through works.

The range of problems identified by Drzewicki is striking—from lack of respect for diocesan officials, to fearful priests, to orthodox practice requiring close oversight, to specific evangelical practices and beliefs that were deemed to be heretical. And according to Drzewicki, these problems were not confined to Gdańsk but rather had spread throughout much of Prussia, particularly to Königsberg, due to the growing presence of preachers from Wittenberg.\textsuperscript{126}

After months on the road and almost a year removed from his personal experiences as a canon in Gdańsk, Drzewicki’s letter was one of the first batches of information to greet Dantiscus when he arrived in Spain in autumn 1524. His reading of the letter came more than six months after its composition, but surely he would have been just as disturbed as Drzewicki, if not more so, by the state of religiosity in his home

\textsuperscript{125} Maciej Drzewicki to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 12 or April 24, 1524, Gdańsk, CIDT&C; Carlos M. N. Eire, \textit{Reformations} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 303-4. Nicodemus was a Pharisee who only visited Jesus in secret for fear of popular and official backlash against him, as described in the Gospel of John. The invocation of Nicodemus is striking and ironic here, because later in the Reformations, especially among Calvinists beginning in the 1540s, the term “Nicodemite” would be used to refer to Protestants who appeared to practice Catholicism in order to avoid persecution, rather than boldly proclaiming or living their faith. In this letter, Drzewicki’s “Nicodemites” are Catholic priests anxious about backlash from the evangelical sympathizers in Gdańsk, but unwilling to disobey the bishop or archbishop and not answer their call—an interesting reversal.

\textsuperscript{126} Maciej Drzewicki to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 12 or April 24, 1524, Gdańsk, CIDT&C.
city. He had known that he would be associated with the Roman Church’s responses to evangelical reform there, but he likely never assumed that his property would be assaulted or that his fellow canons would be so reluctant to work openly with the Church’s inquiries. Worst of all, he was in no position to manage the situation in Gdańsk and had no idea how long his residence in Spain would last. Concern for the state of religious life in Prussia, though, would become a frequent component of his correspondence with contacts in Poland-Lithuania after 1524. In fact, not long after Drzewicki’s report, a fellow royal envoy Jan Zambocki also wrote to Dantiscus, “You know of the Lutherans gaining strength in Silesia and also in Prussia—they are detested here in Cracow—but we would know more of your opinion on the matter.” Dantiscus also received this letter at his residence in Spain immediately upon arriving.\footnote{Jan Zambocki to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 10, 1524, Cracow, CIDT&C.} Unfortunately, any response to either letter has been lost, but Dantiscus surely felt the pressure of responding to evangelical reform across Central Europe even as he initiated his high-stakes diplomatic residence in Spain.

Although we have only scant record of Dantiscus’s brief tenure in Gdańsk in 1524 and none of his responses to colleagues’ early letters about evangelical reform in Royal Prussia and Poland-Lithuania, these episodes do illustrate characteristics of his perspective on reform and his increasingly vital role in Central European religious matters. His experiences with reform during the previous six years had convinced King Sigismund to augment his religious responsibilities in Poland-Lithuania. Dantiscus was already a significant figure in Royal Prussia, but as of 1524 he exerted influence officially through both the Church and the Crown. This influence would continue through
various means until the end of his career, and one of his primary focuses would be quelling evangelical reform. By the mid-decade, his conception of reform and his construction of “Lutheranism” drew from myriad personal experiences, none of which lessened his concern or stayed his hand.

A Construction of “Lutheranism”

When Polish royal envoy Johannes Dantiscus departed from Cracow in autumn 1518 on his first diplomatic mission to the court of the Holy Roman Emperor, there was no evidence that he had ever heard of or thought about Martin Luther or the early evangelical reform movement centered in Wittenberg. When he arrived in Spain in autumn 1524 on his third mission to the imperial court, however, he wielded a pragmatic and critical construction of “Lutheranism,” the foundation of which was unique among the intellectual, political, and religious figures of Europe. This construction was not built on the basis of pamphlets, tracts, sermons, theological exploration, blind devotion, political rivalry, or hearsay. Rather it was informed predominantly by Dantiscus’s own personal experiences with and observation of an incredible variety of manifestations, effects, and offshoots of evangelical reform witnessed by very few—if any—other sixteenth-century individuals, all of which traced pivotal moments in the early development of the Protestant Reformations across Central Europe. These manifestations included Luther’s infamous debate with Cajetan in Augsburg, the frenzied introduction of evangelical reform in Royal Prussia and simultaneously the devastating Polish-Teutonic War, the harrowing early months of the Knight’s Revolt in Bavaria and Franconia, the Habsburg persecution of evangelical sympathizers in the Low Countries, a natural disaster identified by Saxon peasants as God’s catastrophic punishment for Luther’s actions, a personal meeting with Luther and Philipp
Melanchthon in Wittenberg, an appointment as a counter-reforming canon in evangelical-rapt Gdańsk, and finally religious riots in that same city. His experiences with reform spread across much of Central Europe—from Prussia, Poland, and Hungary to Baden, the Rhineland, and the Low Countries—and emerged from various local and regional contexts. They penetrated modern geographical and cultural boundaries and illustrated the extraordinary diversity, fluidity, and interconnectivity of this region. Dantiscus’s multifaceted experience-based education on evangelical reform was truly unique, but at the same time it reflected myriad, less accessible perspectives and contexts from across a complex region of Christendom.

Dantiscus’s travels and experiences in Central Europe during these six years ultimately yielded for him the conclusion that “Lutheranism”—broadly inclusive of most evangelical reform efforts—was a subversive, heretical, and violent movement, the various leaders of which sowed dissent, instability, and destruction throughout Christendom. For Dantiscus, such a movement was an existential threat to established secular and religious authorities, as well as to the social and political order that those authorities maintained. This umbrella movement was encapsulated most appropriately in Martin Luther himself, which became clear to Dantiscus after their face-to-face meeting in Wittenberg in 1523. The reformer’s abrasiveness and disrespect conveniently embodied Dantiscus’s critical conception of evangelical reform and solidified into polemic what previously had been a doubt about the validity and intentions of the evangelical reform movement. His views on evangelical reform, informed by his vivid experiences, would resonate increasingly throughout religious and political arenas across Christendom for another two and a half decades. Beginning in
autumn 1524, when he started his eight-year tenure as resident ambassador at the imperial court in Spain, Dantiscus would use his construction of “Lutheranism” to influence relationships, diplomacy, and policy throughout Europe, but especially in the expansive, multicultural, and complex polities of Central Europe: the Polish-Lithuanian Union and the Habsburg Monarchy.
CHAPTER 3
AN INTREPID POLITICAL VOICE: LOOMING AT WESTERN EUROPEAN COURTS, 1518-1530

*Il Pasquino* is a worn and damaged stone sculpture of Menelaus that fronts an otherwise nondescript rear corner of Rome’s *Palazzo Braschi*, adorning a small square just a few steps west of the *Piazza Navona*. The seemingly out-of-place statue, originally carved in the third century B.C.E. and at some point buried and forgotten, was re-erected there in the public eye in 1501 by notable art patron Cardinal Oliviero Carafa after it emerged from an excavation nearby. A decade later, *Il Pasquino*, at that point commonly mistaken for Hercules, had become the most famous of the “talking statues of Rome.” Roman citizens would attach to it pieces of anonymous satirical poetry criticizing both civic and ecclesiastical leaders, which printers would then collect and publish for distribution throughout Europe. During a period when adherents and dissenters alike found plenty about the Roman Church to criticize, *Il Pasquino* became a popular forum in Rome and a widely-recognized symbol abroad of well-meaning efforts to purify the Church. Sixteenth-century humanist scholars, who embraced the phenomenon’s classicism, literary sensibilities, and reforming intentions, especially appreciated the practice.¹ During his tenure as a diplomat at the royal and imperial

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¹ Jerzy Axer and Anna Skolimowska, ed. *Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Alfonso de Valdés* (Warsaw: Wydział Artes Liberales, 2013), vol. 3 of *Amicorum sermones mutui*, part II of *Corpus Epistolarum Ioannis Dantisci*, 57-8; Gladys Dickenson, *Du Bellay in Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 155-64. Humanism was the multifaceted educational, literary, and philosophical movement, centered on the restoration and recentralization of classical texts and classical Latin in Christian intellectual culture, which began in Italy in the fourteenth century. In the second half of the fifteenth century, Italian humanist scholars began to travel much more widely and frequently through other parts of Europe, bringing their education programs and ideas to courts, societies, and universities throughout the continent. The result was the formation of diverse regional humanist intellectual communities that were connected to each other across ethnic, linguistic, and cultural divisions by common goals, rules, and works of literature. Especially in Northern Europe, this also led to the formation of Christian humanism, by which scholars used similar techniques and resources to reform elements of the Roman Church and Christian practical
courts of Europe in the 1520s, Polish royal ambassador and renowned humanist Johannes Dantiscus borrowed *Il Pasquino*'s Latin name—*Pasquillus*—for the title of one of his more incendiary compositions.²

Dantiscus’s text *Pasquillus*, lost to modern scholars and referenced only in his correspondence, was likely a compendium exposé of entertaining, scandalous, critical, and supposedly true stories about the Roman Church and its clergy, which he circulated in drafts among his closest confidants but never actually published. Only two entries from *Pasquillus* remain extant in Dantiscus’s correspondence, both of which point to some of the text’s characteristics. In a 1529 letter written to his close friend,³ influential Spanish humanist and imperial secretary Alfonso de Valdés,⁴ Dantiscus disclosed a pair of stories that he thought ought to make terrific entries, both involving sexual scandal among the clergy. He wrote:

I recently heard regarding [Charles V’s confessor and Bishop of Osma Juan García de Loaysa y Mendoza] a commonly-known story, yet one previously unknown to me, that while he was [Master of the Dominican Order] he strayed from the Order and maintained for his own pleasures the lady Maria de la Torre, who lived near the Monastery of St. Paul. From the testimony of all of the local residents I would believe and assert that the woman had been of singular virtue, such that they were in the habit of

² Axer and Skolimowska, *Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Alfonso de Valdés*, 57-8.
³ Ioannes Dantiscus to Alfonso de Valdés, February 1, 1529, Valladolid, CIDT&C.
⁴ Valdés is one of the most compelling figures of the Spanish Renaissance. His youth and education are largely obscured by a lack of sources, but he rose quickly through the ranks of Charles’ court in the 1510s and 1520s, owing largely to his patronage by Chancellor Mercurino Gattinara. Valdés became one of the leading proponents of Erasmian humanism in Spain and one of the most vocal humanists at the Spanish court. He accompanied or represented Charles at several of the most significant political and religious events of the early sixteenth century. He befriended Dantiscus during the diplomat’s visit to Spain in the early 1520s, and thereafter the two courtiers maintained an intense and candid friendship, resulting in over eighty extant letters. Alfonso de Valdés, *Dialogue of Mercury and Charon*, trans. Joseph V. Ricapito (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), ix-xii.
kissing reverently all of the fringes of her garments, and believed that a pleasant fragrance rose from her bed when she died, and that the bells of the monastery then motionless resounded by themselves, but I do not know who saw these signs. Yet immediately after her death it was discovered that with the Master this holy woman had born two sons, who were raised in a small nearby town.

Dantiscus provided his own classicist and sarcastic moral evaluation of the episode when he wrote, “I do not find fault with [the Bishop]; on the contrary I extol him highly, for to use the words of Aristotle, ‘the best of our nature is to procreate in our own likeness.’” He obviously recognized the provocation of commending a celibate bishop for procreating, even if in jest. Dantiscus provided a second likely entry when he wrote, “Yesterday I received news from the court of the Bishop of Seville that he had seized in the chapter a certain pregnant monk, whom they discovered to be of both sexes, in other words a hermaphrodite.” These two excerpts from *Pasquillus* clearly do not illustrate the breadth or impact of this lost text. They do, however, provide some insight to the trajectory of Dantiscus’s intellectual activity. Most significantly, *Pasquillus* is a more entertaining example of how in the late 1520s Dantiscus expanded his literary production ambitiously and harnessed an intrepid political voice as a result of extended contact with politicians, clergymen, and other humanist scholars from around Europe. This voice spared not even the Roman Church from criticism, even as the diplomat grew increasingly hostile toward evangelical reform.

This chapter will explore Dantiscus’s intellectual development in scholarly and political arenas alongside his vigorous pursuit of the Polish royal diplomatic agenda in Western and Southern Europe, in particular during his three missions to royal and

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5 Ioannes Dantiscus to Alfonso de Valdés, February 1, 1529, Valladolid, CIDT&C.
imperial courts in Spain, England, and Italy between the years 1518 and 1530. During this period, he witnessed and navigated pivotal events in early modern history and transformed his goals and activities as a diplomat, humanist, religious critic, and political writer. This transformation was manifest in several interrelated ways. One was his emergence as a proactive, persuasive, and formidable diplomatic agent in the eyes of European princes and many of his peers. Another was the escalation of his literary production including editing, collaborating, and writing, through all of which he found, exercised, and projected a prolific and flexible political literary voice. Another was the refinement of that literary voice with an eye toward resolving major transnational political and religious issues. He widened his intellectual scope and made conscientious efforts to address matters both great and small within a much larger political picture. This widened scope incorporated several novel initiatives for Dantiscus, including evaluating the evangelical reform movement from a position of international intellectual authority, promoting policy for the good of a broader Christendom, publicly deferring to established secular and religious authorities, and supporting the Emperor at the expense of the Pope in international politics. Finally during this period, Dantiscus also became a leading Erasmian scholar, recognized widely for his erudition and relationship with the great Dutch humanist. These manifestations combined to hone an unexpected and highly effective political voice for Dantiscus. Like his encounters with evangelical reform in German lands, this political voice and his accompanying intellectual development would heavily influence his responses to religious reform and his more general impact on the Reformations, both contemporaneously and during his later ecclesiastical career.
There are several crucial contexts for these shifts. First, Dantiscus’s three foreign missions occurred between 1518 and 1532, but in 1530 he was nominated and elected as the bishop of Chełmno in Royal Prussia, which added a new dimension to his perspective on political, intellectual, and religious matters. Therefore, this chapter will cover his activity abroad only through June 1530, when he first learned about his election.\(^6\) Second, the highest target of Polish diplomacy during this period was the Habsburg King of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. The primary goal of each of these three missions was to procure an extended and productive audience with Charles. During the second decade of the sixteenth century, Charles had become the most powerful prince in Europe by inheriting an enormous conglomeration of sovereign territories. Already the Duke of Burgundy and Lord of the Netherlands, within three years—1516-1519—Charles became also King of Castile, King of Aragon, Archduke of Austria, and King of the Romans or Holy Roman Emperor-elect, all of which included complex rule over vast territories in Western, Central, and Southern Europe and the Mediterranean.\(^7\) These positions and possessions also included contentious political relations with neighbors, in particular the Valois kings of France and the Jagiellonian kings of Poland. The gravity of Habsburg-Jagiellonian relations, which were paramount in the political environment of Central Europe, was the main reason that King Sigismund of Poland chose Dantiscus to lead these diplomatic missions.\(^8\) Third, because Charles

\(^6\) Piotr Tomicki to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 5, 1530, Cracow. CIDT&C.

\(^7\) Richard Bonney, *The European Dynastic States 1494-1660* (Oxford: OUP, 1991), 109-12. Ruling in these positions separately rather than with them conjoined, Charles frequently needed to travel back and forth across the continent in order to administer his vast “monarchy.”

\(^8\) As described in Chapter 2, peaceful relations between the Jagiellons and the Habsburgs had enormous implications for both sides. Maintaining their respective territorial sovereignty, combatting the
resided in Spain between 1522 and 1529, the majority of the ten years that Dantiscus spent abroad was spent in Iberia, with shorter visits to German lands, France, the Low Countries, England, and Italian city-states. Fourth, during those ten years Dantiscus established himself publicly as one of Europe’s leading diplomatic and intellectual figures by means of myriad speeches, poetry, prose, correspondence, and personal relationships developed in courts, parlors, and public houses across the continent. His engagement with scholars, clergymen, and statesmen such as Charles, Mercurino Gattinara, King Henry VII of England, Thomas Wolsey, Thomas More, Alfonso de Valdés, King Christian II of Denmark and Sweden, Philipp Melanchthon, Martin Luther, Hernando Cortés, Pope Clement VII, and others made him one of the most accomplished and famous diplomatic agents and intellectuals in Christendom.

**New Contacts in Habsburg Catalonia**

The extant sources from Dantiscus’s first and shortest mission abroad as lead Polish envoy reveal only the beginnings of this intellectual and political development. More importantly, though, they reveal vital contexts for his early diplomatic career as well as his initial but lasting impressions of Charles’ court, all of which informed his later work. As discussed in Chapter 2, the first item on Dantiscus’s diplomatic agenda in autumn 1518 was an audience at the Viennese court of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I. It was there that the Emperor had refused to address the issue of Queen Bona Sforza’s Neapolitan inheritance and passed it on to his grandson in Spain. Charles recently had taken up residence in Barcelona, thus leading Dantiscus

Reformations, keeping peace between Christian kingdoms, and resisting the advance of Ottoman forces in southeastern Europe all relied on cooperation between these two Central European dynasties, but that cooperation was anything but simple or easy. Many political issues put the dynasties at odds, in particular during Dantiscus’s diplomatic career.
unexpectedly across the Empire and southern France to Catalonia. The Polish
delegation would take creative precautions to avoid getting caught in the ongoing
conflict between the Habsburgs and the Valois.\footnote{Bonney, \textit{The European Dynastic States}, 79-130. With the territorial consolidation and then expansion of France under Valois princes in the late fifteenth century, French kings increasingly came into conflict with their neighbors on all sides. By the early sixteenth century those neighbors in Spain, the Low Countries, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Italian city-states had all fallen under the purview, if not direct rulership, of the Habsburgs, particularly under Prince Charles during the 1510s. The rivalry between Charles and King Francis I of France created tension throughout Western, Southern, and Central Europe, making cross-border overland travel precarious, especially for Habsburg allies traveling through Valois territory.} Dantiscus wrote to his friend Joachim von Watt that he was traveling to Spain in order to walk the Way of Saint James,\footnote{Ioannes Dantiscus to Joachim von Watt, December 17, 1519, Freiburg, CIDT&C.} the popular pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia.\footnote{This pilgrimage to venerate the relics of St. James the Greater—one of the first Apostles and the patron saint of Spain—had become popular throughout Europe during the high middle ages and continued to draw pilgrims into the early modern period. Routes to Compostela stretched through all the way through Northern and Eastern Europe. It was one of the most important public penitential acts common to Christians, both physically and spiritually. Diarmaid MacCulloch, \textit{The Reformation} (New York: Viking, 2004), 18.} It took him three years to divulge to his friend that he had in fact traveled to Charles’ court in Barcelona rather than performing a pilgrimage. Dantiscus had obscured his motives in case the original letter had been intercepted by French authorities,\footnote{Ioannes Dantiscus to Joachim von Watt, October 1, 1521, Cracow, CIDT&C.} who might not have allowed a Habsburg ally to travel freely across French lands, even should he intend to wrest from the Habsburgs a large inheritance.\footnote{As described in Chapter 2, the enormous inheritance of Bari in the Kingdom of Naples was claimed by both the Jagiellonian Queen of Poland Bona Sforza and the Habsburg King of Spain Charles I. Both parties were adamant over their rights to the inheritance, particularly because of the great wealth that it would have brought to their respective kingdoms. The Valois likely would have supported the Jagiellonian claim, if only to strip the Habsburgs of this significant income.} He apparently traveled unmolested, however, and his party arrived in Barcelona on 14 January for an eight-month residence.\footnote{Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, March 12, 1519, Barcelona, CIDT&C.}
The Polish delegation’s mission to Spain came at a precarious but critical time for Charles, who was attempting to establish control in his newly-inherited Iberian territories while also maneuvering to be elected as his paternal grandfather Emperor Maximilian’s successor. Born and raised in the Low Countries, Charles had come of age as the Duke of Burgundy in 1515. One year later he inherited the Kingship of Aragon from his maternal grandfather Ferdinand and with it the regency and then Kingship of Castile. The primary obstacle to Charles’ success in Spain was the overwhelmingly foreign character of his upbringing, his court, his advisors, and his political priorities. From Ghent, Charles had begun appointing Burgundians to important posts at the Castilian and Aragonese courts and seemed disinclined to entertain Spanish interests. Archbishop Ximénes de Cisneros of Toledo and Regent of Castile pleaded with Charles—who did not speak Spanish—to come govern in person, especially to pacify the nobility, but it was only at the urging of his chief Burgundian advisor Lord Guillaume de Croy of Chièvres that Charles decided to visit Spain in 1517. The Spanish nobility began to resist the young king soon after his arrival, first via the cortes of Castile in Valladolid in winter 1518, and then via the cortes of Aragon in Zaragoza later that spring. The most difficult challenge arose in Catalonia, where the cortes traditionally maintained more privileges vis-à-vis the monarch. Thus Charles spent almost a year in the ancient Catalan capital and Mediterranean commercial hub Barcelona. It was there

that Dantiscus sought to reinvigorate the Polish-Lithuanian presence and impact at the imperial court in 1519.\textsuperscript{16}

Dantiscus’s eight months among the narrow lanes, gothic stone churches, and crowded palaces of the diverse port city Barcelona were informative but ultimately frustrating. He managed to secure an early audience with Charles, and from a privileged perspective at the royal court he witnessed several events momentous for both the Kingdom of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire. But his record of his first mission to Spain is most notable for what he failed to accomplish. On 21 February, he presented a formal address to Charles in a royal audience in which he strongly requested that the King confirm Bona Sforza’s Neapolitan inheritance.\textsuperscript{17} Charles made no immediate concession and delayed responding long thereafter. In March, Dantiscus reported to King Sigismund that Charles was still unresponsive, but that he was in fact holding productive audiences with many other envoys.\textsuperscript{18} Dantiscus’s final letters from Barcelona reveal the diplomat’s great frustration with the court’s slow procedures and stubborn personalities. He would be glad to return to Cracow, despite failing to secure the inheritance.\textsuperscript{19}

The most significant event that occurred during Dantiscus’s residence in Barcelona, and which ultimately made his mission worthwhile, was Charles’ election as


\textsuperscript{17} To Charles V of Habsburg, February 21, 1519, Barcelona, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{18} Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, March 12, 1519, Barcelona, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{19} Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 30, 1519, Barcelona, CIDT&C.
Holy Roman Emperor on 28 June.\textsuperscript{20} Emperor Maximilian had been trying to get Charles elected as King of the Romans—his imperial successor—since early 1518 but had come up against unwilling electors, competing claims and subversive alliances on the part of King Francis I of France, and undermining arguments by Pope Leo X.\textsuperscript{21} During Dantiscus’s audience with Maximilian in Vienna, he had attempted to convince the Emperor to support Bona Sforza’s claim to her Neapolitan inheritance by proposing that the Crown of Poland could put further pressure on reluctant imperial electors, an offer that Maximilian—unfortunately for the Polish delegation—did not entertain.\textsuperscript{22} An election became necessary, however, when Maximilian died in January 1519, just after Dantiscus’s arrival in Barcelona. During a five-month interregnum, Charles and Francis openly vied for favor among the Empire’s electors, nobility, and even commoners. Eventually, Charles’ Habsburg lineage, his indisputable status as a German prince, and above all his deeper pockets in providing bribes to interested parties swayed the electors.\textsuperscript{23}

Dantiscus followed this entire process from Barcelona, acutely aware that his exclusive perspectives on the election were a direct result of the fortuitous timing of his mission. First, Dantiscus would have been King Sigismund’s chosen representative at the imperial election ceremony in Frankfurt am Main had he not already arrived in

\textsuperscript{20} Lynch, \textit{Spain 1516—1598}, 52.
\textsuperscript{22} Ioannes Dantiscus and Nikolaus Nibschez to Sigmund von Herberstein, February 21, 1518, Cracow, CIDT&C.
\textsuperscript{23} Whaley, \textit{Germany and the Holy Roman Empire}, 157-9.
Barcelona when Maximilian died in January. Dantiscus had been prepared and anxious to participate in this most pivotal of diplomatic events, but instead was relegated to waiting from afar for word of the Diet’s result. Second, Dantiscus received an informative insider’s report on the election from his replacement at the Diet—fellow Polish envoy and good friend Rafał Leszczyński. To receive a candid description of the procedures from a friend and fellow diplomat who had attended the Diet was a privilege that did not go unappreciated by Dantiscus, but his inability to attend himself magnified his frustrations with the Spanish royal court. Third, Dantiscus witnessed firsthand the beginnings of the administrative and intellectual transitions that occurred at Charles’ court once he had formally been elected as Emperor. The diplomat’s resulting familiarity with the characteristics of Charles’ imperial court would become a vital asset on subsequent missions.

Fortunately for Dantiscus, imperial transitions began almost immediately. Soon after the election, Charles began to rely much more heavily on the advice of his Italian imperial Grand Chancellor, Mercurino Gattinara, who understandably focused more intently on imperial politics. The aristocracy and towns of both Castile and Aragon grew even more wary of Charles’ policies, fearing that their foreign monarch was placing imperial interests ahead of Spanish royal ones. When Charles departed Spain in spring 1520, many of his subjects even assumed that he would never return. Gattinara also brought a new intellectual element to Charles’ court, of which Dantiscus would take

25 Rafał Leszczyński to Ioannes Dantiscus, July 4, 1519, Frankfurt am Main, CIDT&C.
26 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 30, 1519, Barcelona, CIDT&C.
advantage. The new Grand Chancellor was an erudite jurist, humanist, and follower of Erasmus, and through propaganda campaigns he ambitiously promoted Charles as the monarch of a global Christian empire. Dantiscus deduced that Gattinara would be key to his own future role in Spain and the Empire. The Polish envoy successfully pursued a close relationship with the Grand Chancellor and took advantage of their common affinity for Erasmus and Christian imperialism in an effort to carve out a more significant space for Polish voices at the imperial court. By July, Dantiscus had become a regular companion of Gattinara during his midday meal, building both a social and a tactful professional relationship. This relationship would be greatly beneficial and would provide immediate returns for Dantiscus on his subsequent missions to Spain.

Dantiscus concluded this first mission in late summer 1519 and travelled back to Cracow. He would spend the next two and a half years at the Polish royal court and with the Royal Prussian Council in Toruń, as described in Chapter 2, before again being appointed as the lead ambassador to the courts of Western Europe in summer 1522. Meanwhile, Charles eagerly moved his court and entourage to the German lands of the Empire in May 1520 before political instability in Castile forced him to return to Spain in July 1522 for a much longer period. Dantiscus’s first diplomatic mission abroad as lead Polish envoy had been brief, spontaneous, and unsuccessful in comparison to his later missions. It is also much less illuminating in terms of his intellectual development. It did, however, create a stable, professional, diplomatic foundation that would be vital to

27 Bonney, The European Dynastic States, 110; Lynch, Spain 1516—1598, 52-3.
28 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 30, 1519, Barcelona, CIDT&C.
29 Bonney, The European Dynastic States, 111.
his later successes at the courts of Western and Southern Europe, in particular through his relationship with Gattinara and other Spanish humanists.

**A Growing Impact in the Low Countries, England, and Castile**

Dantiscus’s intellectual and professional development was significantly more robust during his second mission abroad, which was also longer and more ambitious than his first. As a result, his political voice developed more drastically and vividly. As described in Chapter 2, in the summer of 1522 King Sigismund appointed Dantiscus to lead a mission with an expanded scope and audience. Queen Bona’s Neapolitan inheritance was again the first priority for the Polish Crown, but Sigismund’s desire to form a Christian military coalition to oppose the impending Ottoman invasion of southeastern Europe was a close second. The King also wanted Dantiscus to curry international favor in Poland’s conflict with the Teutonic Order. In addition to seeking another audience with the Emperor, Dantiscus would be either encouraged or permitted to approach Charles’ younger brother Archduke Ferdinand I of Austria, Prince-Bishop Cardinal Matthäus Lang of Salzburg, Governor of the Netherlands Archduchess Margaret of Austria, and King Henry VIII of England on behalf of the Polish Crown, as well as several other leading political and religious figures. Sigismund’s agenda inherently would provide Dantiscus with great opportunities for operating and networking within elite circles across Europe, which enhanced his acumen, résumé, notoriety, and stature at foreign courts.

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The mission departed from Cracow in early summer 1522. After cautiously and strategically traversing the Bohemian-Hungarian borderlands, the Archduchy of Austria, the Prince-Archbishopric of Salzburg, the Duchy of Bavaria, and finally the chaotic and violent region of Franconia over the course of two months, Dantiscus’s delegation arrived intact and relieved in the Low Countries in early August. Traveling first to the Catholic ecclesiastical stronghold Utrecht—birthplace of the recently-elected and vehemently anti-Lutheran Pope Adrian VI—they reached the bustling metropolis of Antwerp on 22 August. There Dantiscus composed letters to King Sigismund and Piotr Tomicki summarizing his experiences and challenges crossing the Empire. He especially described the perils of traveling across or near any areas that were contested by both the Habsburgs and the Valois. Archduke Ferdinand had even provided the Polish delegation with a guide and an official imperial dispensation to guarantee their safety in contested lands. During Dantiscus’s residence of several weeks in Antwerp, he decided to continue the journey to Spain via England rather than directly in order to seize an opportunity to address King Henry VIII. His decision was likely influenced by the extensive local connections with England that he observed while traveling through

31 See Chapter 2 for details about Dantiscus’s harrowing but informative experiences with evangelical reform in German-speaking lands and his encounters with the Knight’s Revolt.

32 Lynch, Spain 1516—1598, 54, 89. The Prince-Bishopric of Utrecht had long been a locus of Habsburg political and ecclesiastical administrative power. Adrian of Utrecht had been Charles’ tutor and a close ally during the King’s youth. Adrian was named Bishop of Tortosa in Spain in 1516, became Charles’ regent in Castile when the King traveled to the Empire in spring 1520, and was also the Inquisitor General of the Spanish Inquisition. In the latter position he took drastic steps to prevent Luther’s texts and ideas from spreading in the Kingdom of Spain in the late 1510s. Adrian was elected Pope in January 1522.

33 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, September 18, 1522, Antwerp, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, September 18, 1522, Antwerp, CIDT&C.

34 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, September 18, 1522, Antwerp, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, September 18, 1522, Antwerp, CIDT&C.
Antwerp and other Netherlandish towns. The Polish delegation subsequently rode to the fortified port town of Calais in the Habsburg-Valois borderlands, held by the third-party King of England because of its value as a functioning center of cross-Channel trade. They set sail some days later and arrived safely at the small English port of Sandwich despite a dangerous storm in the Channel. There they began a tour of England that would last for more than two months.

Dantiscus and his companions arrived in England at the end of September 1522 during a particularly dynamic period in English history. King Henry VIII was becoming much more engaged with continental political conflicts, and just two months earlier he had joined an alliance with the Habsburgs against King Francis of France, which soon would be supported by the Dutch Pope Adrian VI as well. Henry was also one of the most vehement early opponents and critics of Martin Luther. Luther’s ideas had made inroads among some of the learned members of English society, but in 1521 Henry had published *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum* as a direct response to Luther’s reform efforts. The text included detailed explanations and defenses of the seven sacraments and even lauded the theological authority of the Pope. It led Pope Leo X to label Henry

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35 Andrew Pettegree, “Humanism and the Reformation in Britain and the Netherlands,” in *The Education of a Christian Society: Humanism and the Reformation in Britain and the Netherlands*, ed. N. Scott Amos, Andrew Pettegree, and Henk van Nierop (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 1-18. By the early sixteenth century, the Low Countries and England had fostered voluminous trading arrangements, and their cities hosted large communities of each other’s merchants. Alongside these trade relations, vibrant cultural and intellectual exchanges between the English and the Netherlandish developed. In the commercial center of Antwerp, which also boasted a high concentration of excellent schools and thus a lettered and engaged population, Dantiscus would have had many encounters with representatives of English commercial and intellectual society, which might have encouraged him to extend the Polish mission across the Channel.

36 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1522, London, CIDT&C.

37 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1522, London, CIDT&C.

38 Bonney, *The European Dynastic States*, 100-1.
as “Defender of the Faith.” England was also in the middle of one of the most significant periods of development of humanist thought experienced anywhere in early modern Europe. Thomas More’s 1516 publication of *Utopia* is the most famous example of the literary production of the humanist community there, but many other English humanist scholars and texts of the early sixteenth century contributed to a provocative and powerful intellectual environment. Erasmus actually lived in England from 1509 to 1514 and lectured at Cambridge in order to take advantage of this environment. He became a cherished adoptee of the English humanist community, which included men such as John Colet, William Grocyn, John Fisher, Thomas Linacre, and of course Thomas More. This community continued to gain notoriety and expand its contacts on the continent through the 1510s and 1520s. Fittingly, Dantiscus’s mission to England would become one of the most concentrated periods of encounters with leading religious, political, and intellectual figures of his entire career, with two principal outcomes. First, he would play a crucial role in the advancement and resolution of a volatile diplomatic issue, bringing him to the fore of King Sigismund’s diplomatic core; second, he would expand his political and intellectual network with significant effects for later in his career.


The first couple of weeks of Dantiscus’s mission in England involved several moving experiences and some momentous albeit unexpected encounters. Travelling from Sandwich to London, Dantiscus first led his delegation through the ancient city of Canterbury where they marveled at the stone gothic cathedral and venerated the relics of Saint Thomas Becket. The envoy claimed to be humbled by the experience and prayed for the saint’s intercession during his time in England.\textsuperscript{42} The delegation arrived in London several days later and was invigorated by the sight of its sprawling skyline with dozens of church towers, ships’ masts, and the imposing Tower of London. Dantiscus met near the riverfront with a small community of Gdańsk merchants,\textsuperscript{43} who resided in London as a part of the Hanseatic trade network.\textsuperscript{44} He learned from them about an ongoing quandary that would inspire some of his most resourceful diplomatic work, result in one of his career’s most significant accomplishments, and advance a pressing political issue that was miring diplomatic relations in Central Europe.

According to the Gdańsk merchants, the Prussian nobleman Dietrich von Schönberg, a close advisor to Teutonic Grand Master Albrecht, had been residing in London for more than six months and attempting to win King Henry’s favor in the conflict between the Teutonic Order and the Kingdom of Poland. Schönberg was running up

\textsuperscript{42} Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1522, London, CIDT&C. In particular Dantiscus commented on the elaborate sarcophagus holding the relics, which was covered with precious gemstones and impressive artistic gilding.

\textsuperscript{43} Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1522, London, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{44} Philippe Dollinger, \textit{The German Hansa} (Bristol: Macmillan, 1970), 315-6. Under the administrative authority of Thomas Wolsey, relations between the Gdańsk Hanseatic merchants and the English had soured somewhat during the previous six years due to a series of reciprocal trade restrictions. But with the intervention of King Henry VIII in early 1522, trade relations had again improved and the Hanseatic community in London was maintaining relative commercial success in relation to the decline seen in some other Baltic communities. Therefore Dantiscus was not running as much of a risk by interacting with the merchants as he would have been less than a year earlier.
considerable debt and pestering both royal agents and various foreign communities for financial and diplomatic support, a behavior that might work in favor of the more tactful Dantiscus. Dantiscus was well aware of the potential ramifications of Schönberg’s efforts. As described in Chapter 2, the Teutonic Order and the Kingdom of Poland had been fighting over territorial sovereignty in Prussia and Masovia for almost three centuries. The Teutonic state was also a significant weight in the geopolitical balance between the Kingdom of Poland, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and the Grand Duchy of Moscow. Controlling much of the eastern Baltic coastline, the Knights were an important part of northern maritime trade networks and expanded the German ethnic and linguistic presence in the eastern Baltic. As a monastic state, the Order was also theoretically a bastion of the Roman Church in the region, although complexly at odds with similarly Rome-centric Poland. During the late fifteenth century and early sixteenth, imperial relations also had become a critical dimension of the Polish-Teutonic conflict. The Teutonic Knights drew their leadership from prominent German families in order to prevent Polish influence supplanting imperial influence, most recently in 1511 with Albrecht of Brandenburg-Ansbach from the House of Hohenzollern. Thus German and imperial political and dynastic interests were tied integrally to the fluid role of the Teutonic state in the Baltic region. Dantiscus knew that any diplomatic gains for the Teutonic Order abroad were likely losses for Poland-Lithuania and potentially could jeopardize the delicate political relations between the union and the Empire. He not only


46 Whaley, Germany and the Holy Roman Empire, 22-3; Marian Biskup, Polska a zakon krzyżacki w Prusach w początkach XVI wieku: u źródeł sekularyzacji Prus Krzyżackich część I (Olsztyn: Wydawnictwo Pojezierze, 1983).
sought to mitigate Teutonic influence abroad, but he also advocated for the productive and widely-beneficial relationship between Poland-Lithuania, the Empire, and other kingdoms.\textsuperscript{47}

Wasting no time in his reaction to Schönberg, Dantiscus first appealed to Archbishop of York Thomas Wolsey, the England’s most influential cleric and second most influential politician.\textsuperscript{48} Wolsey had risen through the ranks of both the clergy and the royal court under Kings Henry VII and Henry VIII due to the combination of his overt support for papal authority over liturgical and theological matters and his tacit approval of English royal administration of the native episcopacy. In 1515, he had been appointed both Lord Chancellor by Henry VIII and Cardinal by Pope Leo X. He already was the foremost political and religious figure in the Kingdom besides Henry himself, and in 1518 he added “papal legate a latere” to his list of appointments. This title meant that in addition to being the highest ranking English churchman and the representative of the English Church in the College of Cardinals, Wolsey also would be the Pope’s official representative at the English court.\textsuperscript{49} Wolsey was also instrumental to Henry’s involvement in and management of the Habsburg-Valois conflict on the continent. During the previous summer, he had been responsible for mediating a settlement between King Francis and Emperor Charles in Calais, which unfortunately resulted in another outbreak of war. But Wolsey continued to play a diplomatic role and participated

\textsuperscript{47} Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1522, London, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{48} Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1522, London, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{49} Solt, \textit{Church and State in Early Modern England}, 9-12.
in the brokerage of Henry’s alliance with the Habsburgs in summer 1522.\textsuperscript{50} Further increasing his stature and visibility, Wolsey recently had built the enormous and expensive Hampton Court Palace on his estate on the River Thames, several miles west of London. It was there that he agreed to host Dantiscus in October 1522.\textsuperscript{51}

Dantiscus leapt at his opportunity. He traveled upriver from London by boat and then rode the last two miles overland to the newly completed Hampton Court Palace. After circling the impressive gardens, he entered the palace between the extending arms of its magnificent brick façade. He introduced himself by means of a salutary letter procured in Antwerp from the Habsburg Regent of the Netherlands, Archduchess Margaret of Austria. Wolsey was quite ill and confined to his bed at the time, but he nonetheless spoke with Dantiscus for over two hours. He appeared intelligent, well-spoken, appreciative of good relations with friendly Christian princes such as King Sigismund, and hateful of the French. After Dantiscus inquired about recent Teutonic diplomatic activity in England, Wolsey amusingly responded—according to Dantiscus:

that [Dantiscus] had come quite conveniently, considering that [Schönberg] had already been granted an audience and had advocated for Albrecht’s positions, many of which were complaints against King Sigismund. Yet in satisfying his petitions [Schönberg] had been frustrated, considering that responding to his requests was a difficult process and required detailed correspondence with Sigismund. [Wolsey] concluded that the King of Poland was much more precious among Englishmen and their [King Henry] than were the [Teutonic] brothers, whom [the English] do not grant even one penny, and advised [Dantiscus] to confer further with [King Henry].

\textsuperscript{50} Bonney, \textit{The European Dynastic States}, 100-1.

\textsuperscript{51} Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1522, London, CIDT&C.
Wolsey promised to arrange the royal audience and dismissed Dantiscus with much goodwill. The envoy reveled in the encouraging news and the promising invitation that he had procured. He especially appreciated that even at such a late hour the Polish delegation still maintained the upper hand over the Teutonic Order, at least in Tudor England.\textsuperscript{52}

An intermediary approached Dantiscus three days later in order to bring him before King Henry. Despite having to travel twenty-seven miles outside of London to Henry’s residence, the eagerly-sought encounter was highly impressive, pleasing, and ultimately successful. Dantiscus marveled at the mounted escort to the King’s castle, the elegant antechamber in which he waited, the ample service of wine and beer, the number of other foreign courtiers seeking an audience, and even the handsomeness, grace, and charisma of Henry himself.\textsuperscript{53} In a flowery formal speech delivered in the King’s ornate audience chamber, Dantiscus requested military and financial aid for an international coalition against the Ottoman Turks.\textsuperscript{54} Henry amply returned Dantiscus’s compliments but graciously responded that he could not commit any manpower or assistance for fear of an attack by the French. Dantiscus then requested a private conversation with the King in order to discuss the Prussian matter. Speaking together in broken Latin underneath the audience chamber’s rear window, Henry and Dantiscus discussed Schönberg’s incessant petitions. The envoy presented the Polish case, and Henry was relieved to learn that Schönberg’s claims about King Sigismund’s deceptive

\textsuperscript{52} Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1522, London, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{53} Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1522, London, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{54} Ioannes Dantiscus to Henryy VIII Tudor, before October 12, 1522, CIDT&C.
manipulation of Albrecht and the Order were fabricated. Dantiscus even invoked England’s mid-fifteenth-century support of King Casimir IV against the Teutonic Order during the Thirteen Years’ War as precedent for harmonious relations between England and Poland-Lithuania. Henry assured Dantiscus that Albrecht would receive no aid and no further audiences, and that Sigismund had the English Crown’s full support, although peace was always preferable to war. Dantiscus departed and returned to London, well pleased and eager to continue his mission.\textsuperscript{55}

This brief but productive sojourn in England resulted in several important achievements for Dantiscus. Foremost, he secured English royal support for the Crown of Poland against the Teutonic Order, formidably reshaping a political conflict that was intensifying and disrupting diplomatic relations throughout Central Europe. Dantiscus aggressively stepped into his role as an ambassador and promoted Sigismund as a significant international political figure, through direct and extensive encounters with the two most powerful men in England no less. He further publicized the grave concern of Central European princes over the threat of Ottoman military strength in southeastern Europe, which would require a coordinated multi-state response. He also planted seeds to grow his diplomatic and intellectual network, including meeting Thomas More, who translated Dantiscus’s speech to Henry as well as the King’s response.\textsuperscript{56} During the

\textsuperscript{55} Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1522, London, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 29, 1522, Plymouth, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{56} Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1522, London, CIDT&C; Henryk Zins, “A British Humanist and the University of Kraków at the beginning of the sixteenth century: a chapter in Anglo-Polish relations in the age of the Renaissance,” \textit{Renaissance Studies} 8, no. 1 (1994): 13-39; Janusz Tazbir, “Thomas More in Poland,” \textit{Acta Poloniae Historica} 33, no. 1 (1976): 5-22; Ioannes Dantiscus to Cornelis De Schepper and Godschalk Ericksen, December 23, 1535, Lubawa, CIDT&C. This was a terrific and highly desired encounter for Dantiscus, both as a humanist scholar generally and as one familiar with the English humanist community in Cracow. The transnational educational environment
1530s, Dantiscus’s reputation at the English court would even lead to a fruitful relationship with Thomas Cranmer, the great English churchman and reformer, which will be a topic of Chapters 4 and 7. Most importantly, however, Dantiscus’s experiences in London further informed his perspective on the delicate relations between Poland-Lithuania, the Empire, and the Teutonic state, prodding him to consider those relations more intently and with a much wider scope. Hearing Schönberg’s mischaracterization of the Polish-Teutonic conflict in Prussia, which laid the blame at the feet of King Sigismund and accused him of deception and manipulation, further persuaded Dantiscus that the Teutonic Order led by Grand Master Albrecht was an inherently destabilizing polity, not only in Central Europe but throughout Christendom. Although the Order would need to participate in any coalition against the Ottomans—one of Sigismund’s priorities—Dantiscus convinced himself that the most advantageous

at the University in Cracow had long fostered scholarly connections between Poland and England, as well as with the rest of Europe. During the 1510s and 1520s, the English humanist Leonard Coxe had resided and taught at the University, and he acclaimed both the school and the city. There he built relationships with many of Poland’s leading humanist scholars and was one of the primary channels for intellectual exchange between Poland and England, in which Dantiscus also participated from the Polish royal court. Coxe routinely wrote about the scholarly achievements and respectability of Polish humanists, as well as about the merits of the religious and political environment of Poland. More’s work and legacy developed a substantial appreciation and following within the intellectual circles of sixteenth-century Poland as well, in the likeness of Erasmus’ own influence, and Dantiscus maintained some celebrity in these circles because of his personal interaction with More. After More refused to sign King Henry’s Act of Supremacy and was executed for treason in 1535, Dantiscus greatly lamented his death and that of John Fisher, calling both a terrible loss for the Church and the humanist community. He also advocated for their saintliness. This will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

57 Henryk Zins, Polska w oczach Anglików XIV-XVI w. (Warsaw, 1974), 114-5; Solt, Church and State in Early Modern England, 16-39, 44-56. Dantiscus first met Cranmer in person at the Diet of Regensburg in 1532. He would regularly correspond with the Englishman throughout his own eighteen-year career as a Prussian bishop, during which Cranmer was directing much of the development of the English Reformation. Cranmer became an influential voice during Henry’s separation from the Roman Church in the 1530s, and then led the increasingly drastic efforts to reform the Anglican Church during the youthful reign of Edward IV. The resulting religious reform and environment in England had very particular effects on Dantiscus’s own approaches to reform in his dioceses.
diplomatic strategy for the Crown of Poland was to attempt to sideline the Knights and work toward more productive relations with the Emperor and other Christian princes.\textsuperscript{58}

After such a whirlwind visit to London, Dantiscus was eager to continue his mission to Charles’ court in Spain. The Polish delegation left the city on 13 October and rode to the fortified port of Plymouth on the southern coast, where they hoped to procure sea passage to Iberia. They were hindered, though, by several weeks of unfavorable winds and strong storms, during which they boarded in Plymouth and tried to convince both local and foreign sea captains to attempt a southward voyage. In the interim, Dantiscus sent four letters to his Polish patrons, in which he recounted his experiences in London, updated them on recent geopolitical developments on the continent, and complained endlessly about the weather, his expenditures, his health, and English cuisine. He did, however, revel in his proximity to St. Michael’s Mount,\textsuperscript{59} the beautiful Benedictine monastery located on rocky-topped tidal island in southwestern Cornwall. The weather broke slightly by late November, and the delegation secured passage across the Bay of Biscay on a small convoy. They disembarked after a turbulent week at sea at Cudillero, a modest natural port and fishing village nestled between two steep hills on the rocky coast of Asturias in north-central Spain. They hired six horses and rode southward to the city of León via narrow winding roads through the dramatic Cantabrian Mountains, which according to Dantiscus “no one on earth could

\textsuperscript{58} Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1522, London, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 29, 1522, Plymouth, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, November 10, 1522, Plymouth, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{59} Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, October 29, 1522, Plymouth, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 29, 1522, Plymouth, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, November 10, 1522, Plymouth, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, November 10, 1522, Plymouth, CIDT&C.
possibly call ugly.” Then they made the equidistant trip across Spain’s northwestern plateau to Valladolid, the ancient residence of the Kings of Castile and one of the several cities that would host Charles’ peripatetic Spanish court. Dantiscus arrived on 18 December for his second diplomatic mission to Spain, which would last for less than four months. In that time, he would lay the groundwork for his long-term impact on the Habsburg monarchy and for its impact on his own scholarship.

Dantiscus’s social, intellectual, and professional activity in the royal seat of Valladolid began immediately. On the day after his arrival, Grand Chancellor Mercurino Gattinara hosted him for a cordial meal and diplomatic consultation, a welcome continuation of the regular meetings that they had enjoyed in Barcelona during the summer of 1519. Gattinara regretfully informed Dantiscus that any audience with the Emperor on behalf of the Polish Crown would have to wait until after Christmas and the Feast of St. Stephen. True to Gattinara’s word, though, on 27 December Dantiscus formally addressed Emperor Charles in the Royal Palace. Rather than restating the Polish argument for Queen Bona’s inheritance rights in Naples, which was still Dantiscus’s predominant concern from 1519, his 1522 address focused almost entirely on King Sigismund’s desire to build a Christian military coalition to oppose the Ottoman armies advancing from the Balkans. Gattinara’s official response on behalf of Charles

60 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, January 4, 1523, Valladolid, CIDT&C.
61 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, January 4, 1523, Valladolid, CIDT&C.
62 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 30, 1519, Barcelona, CIDT&C.
63 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, January 4, 1523, Valladolid, CIDT&C.
64 Speech delivered on behalf of the King Sigismund I Jagiellon by the Polish Envoy Ioannes Dantiscus, to the Emperor Charles V von Habsburg, December 27, 1522, Valladolid, CIST&C.
indicated that while the initiative would be taken under consideration, and while the princes of Europe would collectively continue to negotiate the terms of contributing to eastern defenses, resources and alliances were too strained to allow any immediate formal arrangements for such an endeavor.65 This response and the subsequent dodging of further audiences throughout the winter marked another period of great professional frustration for Dantiscus.

Stonewalled diplomatically, the envoy took advantage of his position in Valladolid in alternative ways during the next three months. He mostly continued to build up his network and reputation. Dantiscus embraced the challenge of operating at Charles’ fickle court, either overtly or through back channels. He claimed to be approached by “dukes, counts, barons, and many other courtly noblemen,” who recognized his predicament and lauded his diplomatic acumen and the political contributions of his Polish patrons.66 His energy and intelligence won him admirers, allies, friends, and confidants, both in the immediate confines of the imperial court and farther afield. He made concerted efforts to build strong relationships with particularly influential or compatible members of the court in preparation for renewed engagement on future diplomatic missions.67 Already he had developed a close working relationship with Gattinara, which had yielded some sensitive information and two timely imperial audiences, but thus far it had led to no diplomatic concessions to the Crown of Poland.

65 Reply to the speech, delivered by the Polish Envoy Ioannes Dantiscus in Valladolid, 1522-12-27, given by Mercurino Arborio di Gattinara on behalf of the Emperor Charles V von Habsburg, December 27, 1522, Valladolid, CIDT&C.

66 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, January 6, 1523, Valladolid, CIDT&C.

67 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, February 25, 1523, Valladolid, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, March 20, 1532, Valladolid, CIDT&C.
Through Gattinara, however, Dantiscus became acquainted with imperial secretary Alfonso de Valdés, who would become the envoy’s closest friend, ally, informant, collaborator, and influence at Charles’ court.

Secretary Alfonso de Valdés came from a family of lesser nobility in Cuenca. His ancestors included *conversos* within two or three generations, but during the 1480s and 1490s his grandfather and father had risen to influential political positions in the extended service of Queen Isabel of Castile. Alfonso was likely born around the turn of the sixteenth century. His education is entirely undocumented but must have been either impressively robust or impressively self-motivated. It was most certainly based on humanist principles or texts, and Peter Martyr d’Anghiera likely played a key role. He was twin brother to Juan de Valdés, a notorious Christian humanist reformer who would run afoul of the Spanish Inquisition later in the decade. Alfonso rose quickly in the Spanish court as a talented and ambitious humanist scholar and statesman. He may have entered imperial service in Gattinara’s Chancellery as early as 1518, but he is first recorded as present at court in October 1520 and is first listed as the Grand Chancellor’s scribe in January 1522. Throughout the 1520s and into the 1530s, Valdés would become an essential member of the chancellery and imperial court, and in several cases he served as the intellectual mouthpiece or representative of the Empire. He would be instrumental in the construction of imperial propaganda, ultimately shaping how many readers in Europe perceived the Empire and its prince. Although he died in 1532, Valdés’s short but extraordinary life made a lasting impact on the political role of the Holy Roman Empire in Europe and the Reformations. It is highly likely that Dantiscus and the young scribe Valdés were introduced by Gattinara in early 1523,
especially considering how much time the Polish envoy spent with the Grand Chancellor that winter. Their extant correspondence does not begin until 1526, however, when it became clear that Dantiscus and Valdés cultivated a stimulating, intimate, and influential friendship that lasted until Valdés’s death.\textsuperscript{68}

Unfortunately, the only themes that emerge explicitly from the extant record of Dantiscus’s first residence in Valladolid are his ambitious networking, his diplomatic frustration, and his requests for more funding from the Polish Crown. From the dynamic intellectual environment in which Dantiscus was necessarily operating in 1523 in Spain, however, we can discern another likely consequence of his second mission there. Fortuitously, he arrived in Valladolid at a critical moment in Spanish intellectual and religious history. Seemingly endlessly debated by modern scholars, the arrival of Charles’ imperial court in Valladolid just a few months earlier in 1522 corresponded with fundamental shifts in Spanish intellectualism, especially regarding the role of humanist scholarship and the influence of the works of Erasmus in Spain.\textsuperscript{69} The characteristics of these shifts, even if slight at first, would have been highly enticing to a humanist scholar and diplomat such as Dantiscus, and they influenced him heavily.

For almost a century, the humanist movement in Spain had developed in fits and starts, shaped by native and foreign scholars working both in residence and \textit{in absentia}.


Spanish humanism, as in most of Europe, was by no means a singular intellectual approach or philosophy. Rather it was divided along particular although occasionally obscure fault lines, heavily influenced by geography, literary culture, and personality. Some scholars worked in classical languages, others in Castilian, Navarro-Aragonese, and Catalan. There were humanists who focused on ancient pagan texts and others who worked with sacred texts, both ancient and contemporary. Scholars could devote themselves exclusively to literature, history, education, theology, ethics, linguistics and philology, or to any combination of those fields. Despite humanism’s inherently transnational dimensions, for many years readership of the work of more incendiary foreign authors—such as Erasmus—whose orthodoxy could questioned was limited to a few privileged or more daring individuals. After 1478, while the ever-vigilant Spanish Inquisition was persecuting *conversos*, *moriscos*, and—beginning in 1517—“Lutherans,” reading texts written by potentially heretical authors was discouraged and avoided. Following Erasmus’ repudiation of Martin Luther in 1521, however, and with the increasing acknowledgement of his well-intended criticism of clerical abuses, Erasmian humanism and targeted critiques of the Roman Church began to earn more supporters among the Spanish learned elite. This support was bolstered by the 1522 return of Charles’ court, which included several established Erasmian scholars, such as Alfonso de Valdés. Thereafter humanist scholarship in Spain expanded substantially but along several different tracts. In particular there arose a distinction between scholars focused on the humanities as an educational or literary program and those using Christian
humanism to address problems in the Roman Church. Charles’ court hosted individuals and groups dedicated to both.⁷⁰

Humanism influenced reform of the Roman Church in Spain in unique ways. Reform actually had begun in earnest in the 1490s, led by the remarkable Archbishop of Toledo Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros—Queen Isabel’s confessor and the Primate of Spain. More than twenty years before the evangelical movement arose in Central Europe, Cisneros initiated an ambitious internal reform program that made only slight practical impacts but significantly altered the rhetoric surrounding the reform of Iberian Christianity. He made unparalleled efforts to reform and regulate the behavior of the secular and regular clergy to serve the needs of both Old and New Christians. These efforts included eliminating clerical concubinage, keeping secular priests in their parishes, forcing the clergy to preach weekly, introducing catechisms for children, and imposing more Observantist rules among religious houses. He attempted to enhance education for both the clergy and the laity and used modern humanist principles for inspiration. He founded the University of Alcalá to provide Spain’s priests with holistic ecclesiastical and theological training, heavily influenced by humanism. The most notable scholarly achievement of this program was the six-volume Complutensian Polyglot Bible, first published in 1522. The Bible included a Hebrew, Greek, and Latin Old Testament, a Greek and Latin New Testament, and a glossary with vocabulary and grammar. It was designed to improve priests’ comprehension of Scripture, and its use

inherently required an educated priest. These internal reforms did not lead to drastic changes, but they contributed to an intellectual environment in Spain that would affect the development of the Reformations there.

When Dantiscus arrived in Valladolid in December 1522, already interested in both literary neo-classicism and Christian humanism, he likely would have welcomed the intellectual shifts that he observed and attempted to interact with his fellow scholars as much as possible, both to supplement their erudition and to learn from them. He was a moderate supporter of Erasmus at that point, but gravitated toward other Erasmianists at court, such as Gattinara and Valdés, among many others. Reciprocally, scholars in Valladolid would have recognized the expertise and perspective that Dantiscus brought and likely would have consulted him on their work. Although Dantiscus’s engagement with Spanish humanist developments does not appear in documents from 1523, it would become obvious during his third mission to Spain beginning in 1524. By then, he would have become much more widely acknowledged as an intellectual and political figure, not only for his humanist scholarship but also for his diplomatic role, and even increasingly for his expertise on the evangelical reform movement, informed by significant experiences with religious reform across Christendom, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Dantiscus nonetheless was frustrated and disappointed by the lack of diplomatic results on his second mission to Charles’ court. His residence there did not last long, however, and the Polish delegation departed from Valladolid in March 1523.

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decided to culminate their journey to Spain with an actual visit to Santiago de Compostela, endpoint of the popular pilgrimage route that as a ruse he had claimed to have taken three years earlier. They rode back across Castile’s northwestern plateau, passed through the forested mountains of the Serra do Eixe, and crossed Galicia to the pilgrim city, where they venerated St. James’ relics in the massive Romanesque cathedral. Delaying only briefly, the Polish delegation then rode northward to the fortified coastal town of A Coruña, perched on a small, rocky peninsula on the northwestern tip of Galicia. Following another month stuck in port due to storms and unfavorable winds, they again set sail over the Bay of Biscay and—avoiding French territory—were ferried to Zeeland in the southern Low Countries, where they would begin the return journey overland to Cracow.

Dantiscus’s brief time in Zeeland would prove to be yet another incredibly fortuitous moment in his career. Only one day after his arrival in the small island-port of Veere, Dantiscus observed the dramatic entrance of a fifteen-vessel Danish fleet, led by the impressive flagship Mary and carrying none other than King Christian II, embattled ruler of Denmark and Sweden. Alliances with the Habsburgs and Grand Prince Vasili III of Moscow, as well as several ill-advised trade regulations, had alienated Christian from the nobility of Sweden and Denmark and from Hanseatic merchants. He had been attempting to suppress a revolt of the Swedish nobility since 1520, and in late winter

73 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, March 20, 1523, Valladolid, CIDT&C.
74 Ioannes Dantiscus to Joachim von Watt, December 17, 1519, Freiburg, CIDT&C.
75 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, May 12, 1523, Bergen op Zoom, CIDT&C.
76 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, May 12, 1523, Bergen op Zoom, CIDT&C.
1523 the Danish nobility also revolted. They deposed him and elected Frederick of Holstein as King in his place. Christian fled Copenhagen with his family in April, and less than three weeks later arrived in Veere, with Dantiscus watching. From Christian and members of his company, Dantiscus learned about their escape from Denmark and the King’s desperation to retain his throne, ideally with the help of other European princes. Christian would eventually pledge himself as a vassal of Emperor Charles in exchange for support in reconquering Scandinavia, a feat that he would never actually accomplish. Dantiscus’s encounter with Christian provided the envoy with valuable information about political and religious developments in Northern Europe. He sympathized with Christian as the rightful prince and as—at that time—a righteous defender of the Roman Church against dissenters. Christian’s usurpers already had either embraced Lutheranism or advocated for wider religious toleration. He actually would follow suit in 1524 and then six years later return to Catholicism as part of his negotiations with the Emperor. Such changeability later would undermine Dantiscus’s respect for Scandinavian princes, especially as their reforms were modeled in part on the secularization of Ducal Prussia in 1525.

After their Danish encounter, Dantiscus and his company traveled eastward past the Zeeland coastal islands to Bergen op Zoom, the impressively-fortified mainland town and a main point of control in the imperial provinces of the Netherlands. They

77 Bonney, *The European Dynastic States*, 244-5.
78 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, May 12, 1523, Bergen op Zoom, CIDT&C.
80 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, May 12, 1523, Bergen op Zoom, CIDT&C.
81 Bonney, *The European Dynastic States*, 245.
rested and resupplied within the town’s extensive system of canals and fortifications for several days, preparing for the long overland journey homeward.\textsuperscript{82} Before leaving the Low Countries, Dantiscus also had several sensitive conversations with Regent of the Netherlands Archduchess Margaret of Austria and her confidant Jean Carondelet, Archbishop of Palermo and close advisor to Charles V. In particular, they discussed the political challenges created by the ouster of King Christian II, especially with regard to peace in the Baltic region and the potential role of the Jagiellonian princes in resolving any issues that might arise. The Polish delegation was on the road again by late spring, once more trying to avoid the violence in central Germany by traveling through Cologne and Leipzig. It was on this journey that Dantiscus would have his notable and enlightening encounter with Philipp Melanchthon and Martin Luther in Wittenberg, described in Chapter 2. They returned to Cracow in August, when Dantiscus was dispatched again to Royal Prussia for his first stint as a parish priest in Gdańsk.\textsuperscript{83}

The fourteen months or so that Dantiscus spent on his second diplomatic mission abroad were vital to his career in several interrelated ways, but especially in terms of bolstering his reputation and political capital as a diplomat and scholar. Although Dantiscus diligently pursued an anti-Ottoman military coalition and an advantageous solution to Queen Bona’s inheritance issue, he achieved neither in 1522-1523. His persistence, however, would win admirers and allies and contributed to this mission and the next. Dantiscus made great strides in advancing Poland’s position in its conflict with the Teutonic Knights in England, Spain, and the Low Countries. The unpredictable

\textsuperscript{82} Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, May 12, 1523, Bergen op Zoom, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{83} Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, August 8, 1523, Cracow, CIDT&C.
Knights increasingly were aggravating the Papacy, the Empire, and Poland, and Dantiscus was able to build support for the Crown as European princes recognized the need for political stability in Central Europe. Ultimately, though, Dantiscus’s most substantial feat on this mission was the cultivation of his intellectual and diplomatic network among princes, courtiers, and humanist scholars. In the Low Countries, he had productive exchanges with King Christian II of Denmark and Archduchess Margaret of Austria. In England, he impressed Thomas Wolsey, King Henry VIII, and Thomas More and would maintain contact with English political and religious leaders long thereafter. In Spain, he built up his relationship with Mercurino Gattinara, likely met Alfonso de Valdés, and circulated easily among some of the most powerful figures in Christendom. Underlying these connections were humanist scholarly exchanges, which Dantiscus utilized as a resource as successfully as any other courtier in Europe. All of these relationships and connections would be fundamental to his greatly augmented intellectual activity during his lone remaining mission abroad, as well as to his longer-term impact on the political and religious arenas of early sixteenth-century Europe.

**Fruitful Roles in Italy and Spain**

Dantiscus’s third mission abroad was far and away the most ambitious and challenging assignment of his diplomatic career. It was also the most significant period for the growth and emergence of his intellectual development, public intellectual activity, and measurable professional influence concerning major political and religious issues both in Poland-Lithuania and abroad. Although the eight-year mission—1524-1532—comprised several phases that brought him to different parts of Europe, almost all of it took place in the political milieu of the Holy Roman Empire, despite the fact that he resided in Spain for five of those years. This section examines some of Dantiscus’s
activities during the first six years of that mission, preceding his nomination and election as bishop of Chełmno in spring 1530. The momentous events, diplomatic negotiations, scholarly exchanges, and productive relationships that he accumulated during that period, especially during his tenure in Spain, would be transformative for him as a diplomat, public intellectual, and religious reformer. They reflected, in part, the heavy responsibilities laid upon Dantiscus by King Sigismund at the mission’s outset. The mission’s goals again were familiar—secure Queen Bona’s Neapolitan inheritance, organize a military coalition against the Ottoman Empire, garner support for the Kingdom of Poland against the Teutonic state, end the reform crisis growing in Central Europe—but the complexity of their geopolitical contexts had grown considerably. Further increasing the pressure, Sigismund instructed Dantiscus to remain at the imperial court indefinitely until these matters were resolved and to establish a more substantial position for the Crown of Poland at the imperial court. 84

When Sigismund dispatched the mission from Cracow in spring 1524, he sent it first to Italy in order to circumvent the frustrating procedures of Charles’ court and seek Bona’s inheritance as close as possible to its source. The Polish delegation traveled to familiar Vienna, 85 then southward through the Austrian Alps to the colorful Alpine town of Villach, 86 and then into the territory of the Republic of Venice. Once safely within the canaled island city, over the course of some weeks Dantiscus met with representatives of the Sforza family of Milan as well as the Habsburg family, and with emissaries from

84 Sigismund I Jagiellon to Lodovico Alifio and Ioannes Dantiscus, March 25, 1524, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, May 7, 1524, Venice, CIDT&C.
85 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, March 28, 1524, Vienna, CIDT&C.
86 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, April 8, 1524, Villach, CIDT&C.
Naples and Rome and Venetian dignitaries. They discussed both major geopolitical challenges facing Christendom and the Neapolitan estate in Bari. In the end, no feasible agreement over the inheritance could be reached. Further frustrating Dantiscus, no proposal for a military coalition against the Ottoman Empire could garner support in that setting due to the vital maritime trade relations between the Venetians and the Ottomans. Negotiations also stalled due to the politics of the ongoing Italian Wars, in which Charles and King Francis of France fought a series of direct and proxy battles for control of the provinces of northern Italy. Both Venice and Milan were heavily involved in the conflict, which would reach a climax less than one year later at Pavia, after Dantiscus had arrived in Spain. After exhausting his options in Venice, Dantiscus departed and for several months navigated the ravaged Habsburg-Valois borderlands of Southern Europe. He finally arrived in Valladolid on 19 September 1524, prepared to remain at Charles’ court indefinitely.

Dantiscus’s third tenure as a diplomat at the imperial court fostered the starkest growth and emergence of intellectual development and public, intellectual activity of his entire career. This growth and emergence would amplify his political voice in several arenas. It would enhance his diplomatic and literary impact across Europe and begin to

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87 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, May 7, 1524, Venice, CIDT&C.
88 Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 138-47. Although the Venetians and Ottomans were in many ways competitors, their respective reliance on maritime trade made them necessary partners, especially in the nebulous central Mediterranean region. Emperor Charles’ consolidation of power in the Western Mediterranean left the Republic of Venice as somewhat of a “frontier principality” between two expanding empires, but warfare on the Mediterranean nevertheless remained limited.
89 Bonney, *The European Dynastic States*, 99-104.
90 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 3, 1524, Valladolid, CIDT&C.
mold the reforming disposition that he would later wield as a bishop. Although this shift had been germinating since 1518 and occurred throughout the period 1524-1530, and although it was fueled by continuous interactions and exchanges alongside his negotiations about evangelical reform, Ottoman military movements, Albrecht’s activity in Prussia, and Queen Bona’s inheritance, it accelerated significantly beginning in 1525-1526 for a few noteworthy reasons. One reason was that in mid-1525 Grand Master Albrecht of the Teutonic Order converted to Lutheranism and secularized the lands of the Ordenstaat in Prussia. He received the title Duke in Prussia by means of the Treaty of Cracow and became a nominal, largely independent vassal prince of his uncle King Sigismund of Poland. This act created the very first Protestant state, facilitated quite incredibly by the Catholic Crown of Poland. The mere existence of such a state generated entirely new problems in diplomatic relations between the Duchy of Prussia, Royal Prussia, the Kingdom of Poland, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Roman Church. The impact of this shift across Central Europe is described in more detail in Chapter 5. At the imperial court, Dantiscus was best positioned and equipped to manage the fallout. His duties defending Sigismund’s decision and Albrecht’s sovereignty, however, resulted in significant professional and personal complications. Dantiscus was responsible for supporting Sigismund’s actions, even when imperial and Church authorities viewed those actions as openly courting heresy and when the diplomat himself doubted their righteousness. This charge was quite challenging for him.91 Likely in response, he would increase his efforts to understand, contextualize,

91 Janusz Małłek, Prusy Książęce a Prusy Królewskie (Warszawa: PWN, 1976), 18-46; Michael G. Müller, “Late Reformation and Protestant confessionalization in the major towns of Royal Prussia,” in The
justify, and promote the political and diplomatic initiatives of Sigismund, for audiences both at the imperial court and farther afield.

Another reason for this acceleration in 1525-1526 was that Dantiscus’s obligatory efforts to defend King Sigismund and Duke Albrecht, his famous earlier encounters with evangelical reform in Central Europe, and certain characteristics of some of his foreign colleagues together fostered suspicions among Spanish authorities about the orthodoxy of members of his household, which resulted in a contentious, harrowing run-in with the Spanish Inquisition.92 As early as January 1526, in a letter to Sigismund, Dantiscus provided a brief, tantalizing summary of an official investigation that only recently had been resolved:

And lest I leave anything whatsoever untouched, when Your Most Fair Majesty wishes to have knowledge of even the smallest things, I have written that two of my own [Polish] attendants were arrested by inquisitors [of the Spanish Inquisition], despite their innocence. Contrary to a great number of promises made to me, for five months [the inquisitors] detained them [as Lutheran heretics] in prison with the Marranos.93 The Emperor, persuaded by a tremendous effort on my part, finally secured their release on 4 December by granting a bishopric to one of the inquisitors.94

This short report of his attendants being arrested for Lutheranism by the Inquisition left a lot for Dantiscus to unpack and explain. Almost a full year would pass, though, before he chose to provide more details to his superiors in Poland. Those details would reveal

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92 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1526, Granada, CIDT&C; Nowakowska, 140-141.

93 Marranos were Iberian former-Jews who had converted to Christianity in order to escape persecution. When distinguished from conversos, marranos were those perceived still to be practicing Judaism in secret, having converted only nominally to avoid punishment.

94 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, January 10, 1526, Toledo, CIDT&C.
how the episode had unnerved the normally-steady diplomat and instigated his future intellectual activities.

By autumn 1526, Dantiscus agreed to be more forthcoming about the matter. He confirmed to both King Sigismund and Queen Bona that one of the attendants arrested by the Inquisition had been Fabian Wojanowski, a fellow royal secretary and envoy who hailed from Polish nobility. Wojanowski since had requested to retire from diplomatic service in Spain and return to Poland. In an extensive follow-up letter to the king, Dantiscus provided details about the investigation, trial, imprisonment, and eventual release. He began by positing the source of the initial accusations, his description of which displayed a disdainful, stereotyping view of New Christians, or in his words Marranos. He wrote:

It has come about that perhaps one of my [local Marrano servants] was not able to keep silent, and thus even now the contents of this story have been discovered by the public. My brothers, who scarcely testified, discovered that such [Marranos]—who live at the height of hypocrisy, as is common here—wish to be thought of as far more pious than others, and so as to redeem themselves they have begun to strive—not in [pious Christian] ways—in cooperation with the inquisitors in order to indict me and my [attendants] as Lutherans. Concerning this matter, [the inquisitors] called among the witnesses one of my own guests as well as a certain Basque rascal, who had served me as a courier but was dismissed by me, and they fashioned clandestine processes thusly. But still they were able to prove nothing before the viceroy who had come.

Already claiming that false accusations of Lutheranism against his household were submitted by Marranos only to relieve themselves of suspicion and secure their own good standing, Dantiscus thickened the plot by alleging corruption among the investigating officials:

95 Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, September 1, 1526, Granada, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, September 1, 1526, Granada, CIDT&C.
When a good confessor from Italy had landed, and on my account had evaluated [the witness] who wrongly was concerned about the activities of Your Most Serene Majesty, and then joined [the witness in his opinion], and after each one of them strove separately to agitate the Emperor against me, the inquisitors supported this false process and put forward a long accusation against me and my [attendants].

Dantiscus then described, though, how he had benefitted from the Polish reputation at the imperial court, which conveniently he had helped to establish during his previous two missions to Spain. Other members of his household had not been so lucky, however. He continued:

The Emperor absolved me on account of the honesty of King [Sigismund] and [the Emperor's] own benevolence, just as he informed me afterward, but still he allowed the seizure of two of my attendants who claimed to have been born in Germany, which is infected with Lutheranism. Apparently, the mere association with Germany had implicated the attendants. The inquisitors were keen to prevent the growth of Lutheranism in Spain, and the Emperor was obliging.

As Dantiscus not only was concerned about the reputation of himself, his colleagues, and his king, but also was himself harshly critical of evangelical reform and anxious to eradicate “Lutheranism,” he had not let this situation continue unprotested. He continued in his report:

[Concerning these false allegations of heresy,] I found an opportunity [for rebuttal]: I asserted the injustice and disgrace perpetrated by the inquisitors, which was conspicuous to me and my [attendants] in this place, we who [represent] a king of the kind of which in this time there is no equal throughout the Christian world in punishing Lutherans and protecting the Catholic faith, and under whose authority, insofar as it can be accomplished, such great heresies and men severed [from the Church] are by no means permitted; from this [alone] His Imperial Majesty clearly can recognize the innocence of me and my [attendants].

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96 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1526, Granada, CIDT&C.
In Dantiscus’s view, there should have been no question about the loyalty and orthodoxy of members of the Polish court and delegation considering the counter-reform efforts initiatives already underway in Poland. He then claimed that with great effort he had been able to sway the Emperor, boasting about his own cleverness in the process.

He wrote to the king:

> When by my very fingernails I had exposed to the Emperor the reason for [the Marranos witnesses’] hatred and blindness, I testified publicly that I would say nothing to disgrace the confessor and the others, but at least from there the honesty and innocence of my own [attendants] should emerge; in fact [according to my source] the confessor himself should be considered related by blood to those [Marrano informant] girls; His [Imperial] Majesty responded: ‘How is it possible to be of their blood, when their father and mother would be Marranos, and yet from a house of nobility that [supposedly] never had Marranos?’ He requested that I provide this written history of Gall [as evidence], with a character unnamed except by means of a seal. When I had done this, and when His Majesty became aware of the surrender [to falsehood] brought about by [the witnesses’] hatred and malice, he took pains in earnest to bestow a bishopric upon one of the inquisitors, as authorized with regards to Suarez, by means of which my attendants were liberated at last; unless [the Emperor] had managed this in another way, [my attendants’] hands never would have escaped from the swords.97

Dantiscus dramatically claimed that he had convinced the Emperor of their innocence so fully that Charles made a substantial sacrifice in order to liberate the Polish prisoners, even if several months later.

> After having detailed his self-proclaimed innocence, victimhood, diligence, and accomplishments, Dantiscus subsequently felt obliged to explain matters further in order to restore the king’s confidence as well as to emphasize his own trustworthiness and continued effectiveness. He began:

97 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1526, Granada, CIDT&C.
With regard to Your Majesty, [the Emperor responded that] never was he persuaded of any [behavior] other than that which is appropriate for a Christian king, and likewise with regard to myself, even though only a little while ago I had been reputed to have held something other than good and Christian beliefs at one time. To be sure, this adversity, which through proper administration of justice is reported to have damaged neither my spouse nor myself in such a way that it should be known to me, and due to which [the Emperor] would have expended great effort in order to acquit my attendants which certainly is true, would have befallen me by accidental chance more nearly than by malice.

But perhaps assurances of the Crown’s unblemished reputation and good favor with the Emperor would not be sufficient. Should that be the case, Dantiscus doubled down on the corruption of the investigation and claimed that he was not alone in recognizing and despising the widespread problem, which in his view included the malicious role of the *Marranos*. He wrote:

> Nonetheless, I do not consider myself to pass from this [ordeal] unblemished, in the same way that Fabian [Wojanowski] will return [from Spain discouraged], unless in these matters concerning the Inquisition it becomes accustomed further in this place, under the Emperor’s sound conduct, to lie in wait—for as long as is suitable—for these [corrupt *Marrano* informants] for whom there is unified hatred, who at one time may have acted suspiciously but were not taken care of, given that [the inquisitors] angled for that [reward] for which those [informants] gape openmouthed, to the extent that they are led by a blind greed for plunder.  

It is unclear whether or not the wary envoy recognized the irony dripping from his own recent request for substantial additional funding to compensate for his losses from the investigation.  

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98 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1526, Granada, CIDT&C.

99 Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, September 1, 1526, Granada, CIDT&C.
Concluding his description of the ordeal with the Inquisition, Dantiscus offered one final plea for understanding, sympathy, support, and relief from the royal court. He explained to the king:

> I wrote these things so diffusely to Your Most Serene Majesty so that you would observe more clearly the merit of my position and the innocence of my [attendants] and myself, as well as what I have suffered at the hands of this viceroy, and so that mercifully you would assess carefully whether I have been in any danger while in the service of Your Most Serene Majesty, lest I still dread the matter even after this business, and lest this tragedy be a nuisance to me here at some time or other. For instance, Fabian [Wojanowski] wrote to me from his journey [homeward]—he did not dare to say this to me in person—about [acquitted men] who while he was being detained had fallen back under punishment, who would claim that [such a reversal] had been forbidden, as asserted by the inquisitors themselves. He advised me to take precautions for myself at all times, just as he himself withdrew distantly [to Poland]. For my part, I believe that to this point something lies hidden to some degree by that confessor, assembled in obscurity by that viceroy.

Dantiscus remained concerned that the accusations or persecution would recur, as informed by what Wojanowski had witnessed while imprisoned. Clearly he wanted Sigismund to be aware of his potentially precarious situation. Then finally, he offered a drastic suggestion and solution:

> Wherefore I suppliantly ask Your Most Serene Majesty, that henceforth—and would that it were quick—should you consider recalling me [to Poland], you would wish to obtain through your own correspondence a security from the Emperor for my returning and to give witness ungrudgingly to how much I have been ever a stranger to this evil [Lutheran] sect. Indeed, I suppose Your Most Serene Majesty recalls when three years ago I returned from Spain through Wittenberg, about which concerning this freakish monk [Martin Luther] I experienced and spoke openly.¹⁰⁰

Even though he knew that he was assigned to the imperial court indefinitely, Dantiscus requested with thorough detail to return to Poland in the wake of this run-in with the

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¹⁰⁰ Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1526, Granada, CIDT&C.
Inquisition. He used the excuse that his past encounters with Lutheranism and Martin Luther himself were endangering the mission and him personally. Sigismund would not oblige him, however, and Dantiscus would remain at the imperial court for another six years.

There certainly is a lot of material to analyze in this extensive report about the Inquisition’s investigation, trial, incarceration, and ultimate exoneration of members of Dantiscus’s household. In this chapter, though, the episode primarily serves as another reason for the acceleration of the envoy’s intellectual growth and emergence in 1525-1526, particularly concerning matters of religious reform and confessional political relations. Just as he in fact was becoming more critical of and concerned about evangelical reform in Central Europe, he suddenly felt tremendous pressure to defend his loyalty to the Catholic Church and his orthodoxy. Thereafter, he increasingly would use his resources, connections, and abilities—both diplomatic and scholarly—to address major political and religious issues publicly and vociferously, at least in part to demonstrate his orthodoxy and his vehement opposition to evangelical reform.

The final reason for this acceleration in 1525-1526 was the intensification of Dantiscus’s relationship with Alfonso de Valdés, which became apparent in their correspondence in August. Valdés had been an invaluable scribe working under Grand Chancellor Gattinara for several years already. In February 1525, he had been promoted to secretary within the imperial chancellery, making him responsible for editing and finalizing all of the office’s Latin texts—one of the most influential positions in the Empire. Valdés thus became a crucial figure in shaping imperial policy. He began to collaborate with Gattinara on the composition of imperial propaganda disseminated
throughout Christendom in support of the Emperor’s policies.\textsuperscript{101} Valdés was also one of the leading Erasmian scholars at the imperial court, to wide effect across Spain and the Empire. It is unlikely that he and Erasmus ever met, but their extant correspondence from 1527-1532 demonstrates that they were mutual admirers who shared a friendly, intellectually stimulating relationship. They regularly exchanged ideas, texts, contacts, and favors.\textsuperscript{102} Perhaps earlier but certainly by 1526, Dantiscus and Valdés became intimate friends and industrious partners at the imperial court. Their relationship provided Dantiscus with advantageous access to all of Valdés’s contacts, resources, and information, and it provided Valdés with access to a learned and experienced expert in neo-Latin and in Central European political affairs, in particular issues of evangelical reform. It became instrumental to Dantiscus’s accomplishments during this third mission to the imperial court, including by fostering his intellectual development and broadcasting his political voice through a variety of genres.\textsuperscript{103}

In reaction to these catalysts of 1525-1526, the growth and emergence of Dantiscus’s intellectual activity took on several forms, presented in detail below. Firstly and most prominently, his own literary production—including editing, collaborating, and writing independently—became more frequent and more varied. Secondly, within both his literary production and his correspondence, he began to employ a much wider scope in addressing contemporary political and religious issues, and he considered those

\textsuperscript{101} Axer and Skolimowska, \textit{Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Alfonso de Valdés}, 27-43; Alfonso de Valdés, \textit{Obra Completa}, xii-xx; Valdés, \textit{Dialogue of Mercury and Charon}, tr. Ricapito, x-xii.


\textsuperscript{103} Axer and Skolimowska, \textit{Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Alfonso de Valdés}, 45-50.
issues more thoroughly and deeply. Thirdly, his relationship with and promotion of Erasmus became one of his most notable and recognized characteristics. These qualities would become permanent aspects of his intellectual disposition and thus would be instrumental to his pursuit of religious reform following his transition to an episcopal career in 1530.

The first and most obvious aspect of Dantiscus’s intellectual transformation during this period was the increase and diversification of his literary production in several forms, including editing, collaborating, and writing independently. It was in large part catalyzed by the help that Dantiscus provided Alfonso de Valdés in editing propaganda material produced in the imperial chancellery. The very first extant letter between Valdés and Dantiscus, sent by Valdés in August 1526, was a request for Dantiscus to edit the *Apology*,¹⁰⁴ Emperor Charles’ emphatic public response—written by Gattinara—to a papal brief accusing the Emperor of hostile intentions toward Pope Clement VII. Although Dantiscus’s exact contributions to this text are unclear, Valdés’s many similar future invitations suggest that Dantiscus met his friend’s request willingly, efficiently, and competently. The *Apology* was published in 1527 in a booklet entitled *Pro Divo Carolo…Apologetic i libri duo*, which also contained several other texts written in defense of Charles’ actions and policies, including a few Latin poems. Because neither Gattinara nor Valdés are known to have composed poetry, modern literary scholars have surmised that Dantiscus may have been the author of one or more of

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¹⁰⁴ Alfonso de Valdés to Ioannes Dantiscus, between August 20 and September 17, 1526, Granada, CIDT&C.
Dantiscus also lent his critical editorial eye to Valdés’s own most famous texts—his two lengthy and impressive humanist dialogues. Valdés asked Dantiscus to review his dialogue between Latancio and Arcidiano, and the one between Mercury and Charon, both of which were meant to promote Charles’ legitimacy and righteousness in the face of conflicts with Christian princes and the Papacy. They would earn Valdés widespread renown.

Valdés especially sought Dantiscus’s editorial eye for texts treating Lutheran matters. Their cooperation on religious material began with Valdés’s edition of Opus Epistolarum Petri Martyris sometime between late 1526 and early 1529. Peter Martyr d’Anghiera was an Italian humanist scholar at the imperial court who had been appointed by Emperor Charles to chronicle the Spanish exploration of the Americas. He also had been one of Valdés’s instructors and mentors. In the mid-1520s, Peter Martyr began to collect his correspondence with dignitaries and statesmen for publication but died in 1526 before finishing the project. Valdés assumed responsibility

105 Axer and Skolimowska, Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Alfonso de Valdés, 34-7, 55-6; Pro divo Carolo, eius nominis Quinto Romanorum Imperatore inuictissimo pio, felice, semper Augusto. Patræ patriæ in satisfactione quidem sine talione eoru quae in illum scripta, ac pleraque etiam in uulgum aedita fuere: Apologeticī libri duo; nuper ex Hispaniis allaticum alijs nōnullis, quorum catalogos ante cuiusque exordium reperies Cum gratia & priũlegio Imperiali. Moguntiae: Schoeffer, 1527. Dantiscus’s participation in the composition and preparation of this text would have been a highly sensitive issue. Components of the booklet were strongly and ill-advisably anti-French and anti-papal given the contemporary political climate in Europe. As the representative of the Crown of Poland at the imperial court, Dantiscus’s potential authorship could have jeopardized or severely harmed Polish-French and Polish-papal relations. The text was so harshly worded in places that Emperor Charles himself, when delivering the text to the papal nuncio Baldassare Castiglione, pretended that he had been pressured into its composition by the more vitriolic members of his court and the nobility.

106 Axer and Skolimowska, Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Alfonso de Valdés, 52-5; Valdés, Obra Completa, xxii-xxx; Valdés, Dialogue of Mercury and Charon.


108 Valdés, Dialogue of Mercury and Charon, x-xi.
and asked Dantiscus to correct textual errors regarding early Lutheran reform, writing to the Polish envoy that, “without your judgment, under no circumstances will [these letters] be published.” Dantiscus’s contributions to this text will be discussed further below. He also helped edit the text *Pro religio Christiana res gestae in Comitiis Augustae Vindelicorum habitis anno Domini 1530*, a condemnatory description of evangelical reform efforts written after the Diet of Augsburg. Valdés gave Dantiscus free reign to amend this polemical text as he saw fit, which will be a later topic in Chapter 4. The increase in Dantiscus’s literary production was not limited to editing or amending texts on behalf of the chancellery, however. His collaboration with Valdés would inspire some of his own most renowned written work.

Dantiscus’s own political literary composition increased substantially during this period. He wrote and sent privately at least a dozen epigrams and hymns for Valdés’s amusement and encouragement in difficult political circumstances. These were typically malicious polemics about antagonistic third parties that Valdés immediately destroyed in order to avoid humiliating or damaging consequences should they see light. It was also during the late 1520s that Dantiscus composed his lengthy *Pasquillus* text—described at the beginning of this chapter and now lost to modern readers. The contents of the *Pasquillus* collection were likely critical and targeted anecdotes, written as political satire both for amusement and as serious commentary. Dantiscus had planned to

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109 Alfonso de Valdés to Ioannes Dantiscus, October 31 to December 16, 1526 or January 26 to August 23, 1527 or October 18, 1527 to December 17, 1528 or April 20 to July 27, 1529, CIDT&C; Axer and Skolimowska, 38-42, 51-52.

110 Axer and Skolimowska, Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Alfonso de Valdés, 38-42, 52.
publish *Pasquillus* at some point but seems never to have achieved that goal. His desired addition of the salacious stories about Spanish monastic houses—the mistress and children of the Bishop of Osma and head of the Dominican Order, the pregnant hermaphroditic monk—are a moderate indication of the provocative intentions for this text, regardless of readership or actual publication. While at the imperial court, Dantiscus also composed his single most famous literary work. He wrote his 536-line poem *De nostrorum temporum calamitatibus silva* in late 1529, likely during the months following the Ottomans' unsuccessful three-week siege of Vienna in September. Dantiscus revealed the severity of the Ottoman threat and defended King Sigismund against criticism of his balance of military and diplomatic engagement with Suleiman the Magnificent, especially emphasizing that the Kingdom of Poland was one of the most exposed polities abutting the Ottoman Empire. He sent this text directly to multiple contacts, including princes, diplomats, and his Polish patrons. Several other timely political works, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, also expanded his portfolio during this period. Dantiscus composed a series of impassioned epitaphs for Grand Chancellor Mercurino Gattinara, who died in June 1530, and in autumn 1531 he published his *Victoria Serenissimi Poloniae Regis contra Vayeuodam Muldauiæ Turcae tributarium et subditum 22 Augusti parta 1531*. This short print celebrated Sigismund's

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111 Alfonso de Valdés to Ioannes Dantiscus, September 18 to October 11, 1526, Granada, CIDT&C; Alfonso de Valdés to Ioannes Dantiscus, September to December 17, 1528, CIDT&C; Alfonso de Valdés to Ioannes Dantiscus, January 16, 1529, Toledo, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Alfonso de Valdés, February 1, 1529, Valladolid, CIDT&C; Axer and Skolimowska, *Ioannes Dantiscus's correspondence with Alfonso de Valdés*, 55-8.

112 Ioannes Dantiscus to Alfonso de Valdés, February 1, 1529, Valladolid, CIDT&C.

victory at the Battle of Obertyn against Petru Rareș, the prince of Moldavia (1527-1538
and 1541-1546), and again defended his relations with the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{114} It
capped a period during which Dantiscus’s hand became much more active in editing
and composing.\textsuperscript{115}

The second prominent aspect of Dantiscus’s intellectual transformation during
this period was the widening of his literary scope, which was apparent in all of these
texts. This widening included the style in which he wrote, the topics that he addressed,
the context in which he set his arguments, and the audience that he targeted. Prior to
Dantiscus’s third diplomatic mission abroad, his compositions had been predominantly
classically humanist and secretarial. He typically wrote for and about classical virtues,
lauded influential patrons with courtly deference and classical comparisons, and
targeted a general but realistically limited scholarly or royal audience. A few examples
of many such works are \textit{De virtutis et fortunae differentia somnium}, \textit{Epithalamium}
\textit{Sigismundi et Barbarae}, and \textit{Ad iuventutem}.\textsuperscript{116} In contrast with his earlier compositions,
Dantiscus’s editing and composing in 1524-1530 focused more often on current and
urgent transnational political and religious issues. His arguments intentionally targeted a
broader audience and applied more readily to concerns common across Christendom.

\textsuperscript{114} The text earned acclaim among many of Dantiscus’s colleagues, including Erasmus. After he had
received a copy, Erasmus commended the Prussian humanist’s work to their mutual acquaintance and
fellow imperial courtier Cornelius De Schepper. Schepper then relayed Erasmus’ praise to Dantiscus.
Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 9, 1530, Innsbruck, CIDT&C; Axer and Skolimowska,
\textit{Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Alfonso de Valdés}, 59-60; Dantiscus, \textit{Carmina}, 140-159.

\textsuperscript{115} B. Milewska-Ważbińska, “The Poetry of Joannes Dantiscus in the Diplomatic Service,” in \textit{Joannes
Dantiscus (1485-1548): Polish Ambassador and Humanist}, eds. J. Ijsewijn and W. Bracke (Antwerp:

\textsuperscript{116} Dantiscus, \textit{Carmina}, 4-27, 36-9, 43-56; Harold Segel, \textit{Renaissance Culture in Poland} (Ithaca: Cornell
Specific novelties in his work included evaluating evangelical reform, promoting the good of a unified Christendom,\textsuperscript{117} publicly deferring to established authorities, and strongly defending the Emperor against the Pope. This shift was informed by his access to resources and information at the imperial court, his ever-growing network of correspondents and contacts, his work in the imperial chancellery, his heightening responsibilities on behalf of King Sigismund, and his personal experiences with and remote observations of evangelical reform and other contemporaneous movements. It often illustrated his introduction to many new people and perspectives. Perhaps the most iconic of these was Hernando Cortés, famed conqueror of the Aztecs, with whom Dantiscus formed an unlikely friendship and exchanged several letters even after Cortés’s return to New Spain.\textsuperscript{118} At the center of many of these components of Dantiscus’s intellectual development, though, was his relationship with Valdés.

One example of his widening scope is his collaboration with Valdés on \textit{Opus Epistolarum Petri Martyris} sometime in 1526-1529. Valdés’s intention in publishing these letters was to create a candid insider’s chronicle of important imperial political events. Coming from the office of the Chancellor, the publication nevertheless needed to portray the administration and Emperor as favorably as possible. Thus, someone would need to edit the letters into a partially-contrived propaganda piece but sell them as the original correspondence of Peter Martyr chronicling genuine responses to pivotal moments in real time. Valdés noticed that two of his own letters to Peter Martyr were

\textsuperscript{117} This goal extended to his diplomatic engagement as well. Nowakowska, \textit{King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther}, 148.

\textsuperscript{118} Hernando Cortés to Ioannes Dantiscus, September 11, 1529, Madrid, CIDT&C; Hernando Cortés to Ioannes Dantiscus, August 1, 1531, Mexico, CIDT&C; Hernando Cortés to Ioannes Dantiscus, August 4, 1531, Mexico, CIDT&C.
inaccurate concerning “Lutheran” matters, and so he recruited Dantiscus—an excellent neo-Latinist who was more familiar with the evangelical reform movement—as an editor. Valdés even wrote to his friend, “if you love me, read them, reread them, correct them, and do something to make them Latin instead of barbarian. Without your judgment, under no circumstance will they be published.” Dantiscus thus had the heaviest hand in editing both content and style where these letters concerned evangelical reform. They reveal much of Dantiscus’s perspective and authorship lightly filtered through a final proofread by Valdés, edited or recomposed on behalf of the Empire for consumption by a public audience.

In the first of Peter Martyr’s relevant letters, which supposedly had been written in Brussels on 31 August 1520, the author described key moments and exchanges from the first year of Martin Luther’s public activity—through the end of 1518. The author began by admitting to Peter Martyr, “What you desire to learn from me, that is what of the Lutheran sect has emerged, arisen, and progressed recently among the Germans, I will write if not ornately then diligently and in good faith, passing on that which I also received in deserving faith.” He then described Luther’s infamous initial objections to a 1517 sale of indulgences in Saxony. Despite a relatively critical and honest description of the controversial indulgences offer, the author nonetheless quickly revealed his

119 Alfonso de Valdés to Ioannes Dantiscus, October 31 to December 16, 1526 or January 26 to August 23, 1527 or October 18, 1527 to December 17, 1528 or April 20 to July 27, 1529, CIDT&C; Axer and Skolimowska, Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Alfonso de Valdés, 39-41, 51-2. In addition to including words and perspectives that were not necessarily Valdés own, the heavily edited letters would also incorporate dates and locations that were inaccurate and in some cases demonstrably impossible, including some of the places and times that Valdés claimed to have written the letters themselves.

120 Valdés, Obra Completa, 11; Euan Cameron, The European Reformation (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 101-2. Under Popes Julius II and Leo X, plans to rebuild St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome required massive expenditures, which were offset in part by a papal offer of indulgences to the Christian people in
disdain for Luther’s faction. He referred to Luther as “the author of this tragedy and the stirrer of hatred against the Dominicans.” He also described how, during their animated but civil debate with the Dominicans, “the Augustinians (in whom there lies the audacity of wicked men) even began to mock these gifts from the Pope.” From that first “scene” the author expanded to discuss higher-level responses to Luther’s emergence. His point-by-point presentation of the exchanges between Luther, the Pope, the Emperor, and some imperial princes was relatively evenhanded in its specifics, but it more generally positioned Luther as a prideful dissenter against a righteous Roman Church who was justifiably labeled a “heretic and schismatic.” The author repeatedly implied, however, that the Pope was also prone to acting irrationally or unjustly and that the Emperor stepped forward and led the way in rebuking Luther for the good of Christendom. This first letter concluded with the suggestion that unless the Pope and Emperor could begin to cooperate in mobilizing the Church against the evangelical reformers, the reform movements would continue to spread disruptively, especially among the Germans.  

This “prediction” was probably an observation made in hindsight but was likely also intended to inspire or frighten the contemporary audience reading this text in the late 1520s.

The second of Martyr’s letters concerning evangelical matters, which supposedly had been written on 13 May 1521, polemically described the infamous Diet of Worms,

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exchange for donations to the construction project. In Germany the Dominican friars were the most vocal proponents of taking part in the offer of indulgences. At the same time, the Archbishop of Mainz had made a massive donation to the St. Peter’s project in order to secure his controversial investiture, and then—with permission—sold additional indulgences to offset his own debts. The Archbishop’s apparent abuse of this relatively common penitential practice was what riled Martin Luther and the Wittenberg Augustinians more than anything in 1517.

gathered in that same year by Emperor Charles V, “desiring that by the authority of the entire Roman Empire the insanity of this man [Luther] be contained, and that the rest [of the population] be protected from that insanity.” The Diet demanded that Luther recant his heretical works before the imperial administration. According to the author:

Luther, after a long and diffuse speech, which he delivered first in Latin and then in German, said that it was not possible for him to recant the content of his written texts, unless it is proven that the teachings of the Gospels and the evidence from the ancient sources themselves had led him astray.

After Luther’s refusal, the Emperor banished him and his followers and banned all of their texts from the Empire, for the good of the Christian people. He called on all imperial electors, princes, and lords to uphold this decree, thus installing a metric by which to measure the loyalty and orthodoxy of his subjects. However, the author concluded the letter with a dire and revealing lamentation, writing that,

They considered this to be the end of this tragedy, but I am convinced that it was not the end, but rather the beginning…for afterwards editions of Luther’s text were sold here and there, in villages and on the streets, with impunity. You will easily predict what will happen in the Emperor’s absence. This evil, now with a great advantage, will be able to overthrow the Christian Republic, unless the Pope not remain averse to a general synod, and not place his personal interests ahead of the good of the people. But as long as the law holds [the Pope] in its teeth and his ears remain stopped up, as perhaps only with faithful affection he desires Luther to be condemned and consumed by flames, I see the whole Christian Republic destroyed, unless God himself runs to our aid.

The author of these two letters was not unbiased, uncertain, reluctant, limited, or narrow in his evaluation of the events of the early evangelical reform movement. Regardless of provocation, Luther reportedly had caused unacceptable and catastrophic disruptions across the “Christian Republic,” which the Church and the Empire needed to address cooperatively. He was labeled a heretic and schismatic. The Pope, however, was obstructing reasonable attempts to resolve the problem at the expense of the peace,
stability, and perhaps existence of Christendom, inexplicably leaving the great responsibility to the Emperor.\textsuperscript{122}

In the politicized historical narrative provided in this text, the author or editor—who likely was predominantly Dantiscus—achieved several different broad goals. He condemned Luther himself and the evangelical movement from an apparently knowledgeable and authoritative position, based primarily on the disruption of established hierarchies and social order, but also on reformers’ violations of orthodoxy. He presented his argument on behalf of the good of a unified Christendom or “Christian Republic.” He promoted the highest ruling orders—the Papacy and Holy Roman Empire—as the proper authorities equipped to address the problem of religious reform. And he audaciously criticized the Pope to the benefit of the Emperor and imperial sovereignty. These positions were consistent with Dantiscus’s hardening critical views of evangelical reform and would have required someone more knowledgeable about and experienced with transnational reform than Valdés had been. Dantiscus appears to be the obvious candidate.

The most significant examples of Dantiscus’s widening literary scope from his own outright composition are found in his most famous text, the epic poem \textit{De nostrorum temporum calamitatis silva}. The contents of this text have been analyzed and translated extensively by scholars of Dantiscus and of humanist literature,\textsuperscript{123} but a

\textsuperscript{122} Valdés, \textit{Obra Completa}, 19-21.

brief contextualization and description easily divulges its scope. For years, Dantiscus had wholeheartedly supported King Sigismund’s pursuit of a military coalition against the Ottomans, and he promoted such a coalition at courts across Europe. He had not, however, insofar as existing documentation reflects, gone much beyond making impassioned speeches during his royal and imperial audiences.\footnote{See the second section of this chapter for more details.} In the late 1520s, Dantiscus nervously tracked the advance of Ottoman armies through Hungary and pleaded with the Emperor to organize a coalition in defense of Christendom.\footnote{Iоannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, August 17, 1527, Valladolid, CIDT&C; Iоannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, November 15, 1527, Burgos, CIDT&C; Iоannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, January 29, 1528, Burgos, CIDT&C; Iоannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1528, Madrid, CIDT&C.} By the time Suleiman’s armies were approaching Vienna in 1529, the concerned Dantiscus could no longer sit idly by. He composed \textit{De calamitatibus} to be disseminated broadly to convince the princes and people of Christendom that they must act immediately or be damned. The text was published in Bologna in 1529, shortly after Suleiman’s siege of Vienna had been lifted, and then reprinted in Cologne, Antwerp, and Cracow. Dantiscus argued that Ottoman imperial expansion was in large part a result of disagreement and dissention between and among Christian princes, who together could provide formidable opposition to the Turks but never seemed to be sufficiently attentive or organized to do so. He also argued that King Sigismund’s approach to discouraging Ottoman expansion, which included both military opposition and diplomatic negotiation, was the only way to ensure a favorable outcome. Dantiscus concluded reasonably that

the most capable institutions for organizing a coalition were the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire, and he again argued that the Emperor was more likely to succeed in such an endeavor because of his competence and trustworthiness.\textsuperscript{126} In this text, Dantiscus continued to display his widening scope. He addressed an urgent transnational problem to the general public on behalf of a broader endangered Christendom. Every Christian in Europe needed to be worried about the advancing Turks, and the expansion of the Ottoman Empire revealed cracks in the “Christian Republic” that needed to be healed. He deferred to the highest established authorities to lead, but ultimately promoted the Emperor over the Pope, again reflecting his imperial patronage and positioning.\textsuperscript{127} This particular issue—intra-Christian divisions exacerbating the Ottoman threat—would remain a topic of Dantiscus’s written work throughout his career, as demonstrated in Chapter 5.

Although some of Dantiscus’s other texts through mid-1530 are either lost or more obscure in terms of his exact contribution, it is still possible to identify his broadened literary scope in the majority of his materials from this period. In Dantiscus’s writings on religious matters—\textit{e.g.} Pasquillus, \textit{Opus Epistolarum Petri Martyris}, \textit{Pro religio Christiana res gestae in Comitiis Augustae Vindelicorum habitis anno Domini 1530}, various hymns and epigrams—he excoriated Martin Luther and evangelical reform, but he also criticized the Roman Church, highlighting serious problems with the Papacy, the clergy, and especially the religious orders. He even criticized how secular and religious administrators within the Empire had handled the Luther crisis. In


\textsuperscript{127} Dantiscus, \textit{Carmina}, 140-59.
Dantiscus’s more geopolitical works—e.g. Pro Divo Carolo…Apologetici libri duo, De nostrorum temporum calamitatibus silva, Valdés’s dialogues, other epigrams—he emphasized the crucial international role played by established authorities such as the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy. As Lu Ann Homza explains, “authority” or auctoritas in the sixteenth century was understood in two different but not entirely separable ways, especially in the realm of religion: “as opinions, judgments, and advice; and as power, influence, and dignity.” These two meanings had very different connotations and practical applications during the period of Reformation.

Dantiscus’s concern about the former would not appear heavily in his work until his career as a bishop began in 1530. His concern with the latter, however, grew intensely during the 1520s. For him, deference to established authoritative power in both the secular and religious spheres was a singular responsibility and a singular intellectual conversation. He advocated for such authorities as vital to social and political stability. Nonetheless, Dantiscus always championed Emperor Charles V over Pope Leo X as a reflection of his role at the imperial court.

In all of these works through 1530, Dantiscus also promoted maintaining or working toward a unified Christendom for the benefit of all Christians. This ideal was not unique to Dantiscus’s thought but rather a common motif found in the works of many Christian humanists of the early sixteenth century. The schisms of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were...
fifteenth centuries, the endless debate over the role of councils in Church administration, conflict between different monastic orders, and the seemingly growing number of ambitious reformers, had some scholars and prelates on edge over the stability and unity of the Roman Church. Many humanists responded by encouraging open dialogue, the constructive use of language and texts, and deference to authority, both in terms of intellectual pursuits and power relationships. Erasmus especially had encouraged Christian unity even before the breakout of the evangelical reform movement, and continued to do so afterwards despite his contentious public debates with Martin Luther.¹²⁹ In Dantiscus’s texts, he advocated for or commended action and thoughtfulness “for the health of the Christian people,” or on behalf of “the universal Christian Republic.”¹³⁰ In De calamitatis he described the advance of the Turks against various Christian peoples and argued for a unified response as the only solution to the crisis facing Christendom.¹³¹ Along with Valdés he encouraged Christians to look to Emperor Charles V as a reliable, protective, and unifying authority in Christendom, especially given the failings of Pope Clement VII and the dissention sown by Luther in Saxony.¹³² Also in his voluminous correspondence, Dantiscus associated the advancing Turks and the more influential “Lutherans” as endangering Christian princes, people, and common institutions. In developing this conception of and consideration for


¹³⁰ Valdés, Obra Completa, 11-21;

¹³¹ Dantiscus, Carmina, 140-159.

¹³² Axer and Skolimowska, Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Alfonso de Valdés, 27-56.
Christendom, Dantiscus was utilizing a wider intellectual and political lens and engaging a much broader audience. He also clearly recognized that the problems most urgently facing Central European states—evangelical reform, political fragmentation, Ottoman advances—were just as much a threat to the rest of Christendom and needed to be addressed collectively by Christian princes.

The third major aspect of Dantiscus’s intellectual transformation during the late 1520s was the emergence of his relationship with Erasmus of Rotterdam, his affinity for the Dutch humanist’s works, and the effects of those works on his own perspective and activity. As with Dantiscus’s increased literary production and widening intellectual scope, his familiarity with Erasmus came by means of humanist contacts at the imperial court. Scholarly support for Erasmianism had expanded tremendously in Spain with the return of Charles’ court in 1522. This was in part due to a regional appetite for humanist texts, but had far more to do with Iberians’ eagerness for religious reform. Particular prominent court Erasmianists enabled and fostered this expansion. By the time Dantiscus arrived in Valladolid in late 1524, Erasmus’ texts were already being translated into and published in Spanish, and their reception was beginning to stir intense debates about his orthodoxy among theologians, prelates, monks, and political figures. Some of the earliest proponents of Erasmianism were imperial secretaries Philip Nicola and Maximilianus Transsilvanus, who each corresponded with and promoted the Dutchman across the Empire. By the mid-1520s, they had both also won over secretary Alfonso de Valdés, who became one of the leading Erasmianist scholars at court and developed a prolific correspondence with Erasmus until his own death in

1532. Erasmianism heavily influenced Valdés’s own texts, including the dialogues edited by Dantiscus. It was likely through Valdés and Mercurino Gattinara that Dantiscus acquired and studied Erasmus’ works more thoroughly and made the humanist’s acquaintance by means of correspondence.\textsuperscript{134}

Dantiscus’s subsequent relations with Erasmus and Erasmianism would develop along several tracks. Their direct correspondence began in the mid-1520s and likely continued until Erasmus’ death in 1536, but unfortunately only two letters between the two scholars remain extant, both of which were written after Dantiscus’s departure from Spain.\textsuperscript{135} Despite never meeting in person, they became strong mutual admirers, to the point where Dantiscus sent Erasmus a medal with his likeness, Erasmus dedicated one of his texts to Dantiscus, Dantiscus kept a Hans Holbein portrait of Erasmus in his episcopal residence, and Erasmus kept a plaster bust of Dantiscus in his library.\textsuperscript{136} During Dantiscus’s tenure at the imperial court and well beyond, he communicated indirectly with and about Erasmus with numerous other correspondents. They included humanist contacts in Poland,\textsuperscript{137} Valdés,\textsuperscript{138} and imperial courtier Cornelis de Schepper, through whom Erasmus once recommended himself to Dantiscus and lauded the Polish

\textsuperscript{134} Axer and Skolimowska, \textit{Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Alfonso de Valdés}, 29; Segel, \textit{Renaissance Culture in Poland}, 178.

\textsuperscript{135} Ioannes Dantiscus to Erasmus of Rotterdam, October, 1531, CIDT&C; Erasmus of Rotterdam to Ioannes Dantiscus, April 30, 1532, Freiburg im Breisgau, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{136} Segel, \textit{Renaissance Culture in Poland}, 178.


\textsuperscript{138} Alfonso de Valdés to Ioannes Dantiscus, August 19-31, 1528, Madrid, CIDT&C; Alfonso de Valdés to Ioannes Dantiscus, February 14, 1529, Toledo, CIDT&C;
envoy’s *De calamitatibus* text.\textsuperscript{139} He also would have come across much of Erasmus’ literature during his time in Spain, as well as witnessed intense debates about its nature and impact. As a result, he came to serve as a crucial intermediary between scholarly humanist circles in Spain and Poland.\textsuperscript{140} Modern scholars have even argued that Dantiscus was partially responsible for the accelerated spread of Erasmian texts and ideas in Spain in the 1520s.\textsuperscript{141}

From the beginning of their interaction, many of Dantiscus’s own writings reflected Erasmian thought. In the early 1520s, Erasmus had found himself caught between different intellectual factions of the Reformations, all of which seemed to claim that he represented or perhaps even led their opponents. He was at first reluctant to choose a side in the debate over evangelical reform, but mounting pressure to write against Luther led to his publication of *On Free Will* in 1524. This text clearly pitted Erasmus against Luther’s German evangelical movement, in particular against the Saxon’s denial of free will in salvation. Yet some critics in France and Spain who had been combatting the spread of Lutheran texts for years continued to insist that Erasmus was in fact a Lutheran. This assumption was brought on in particular by the translation and publication of his *Enchiridion*.\textsuperscript{142} His hesitant affirmation of the sacrament of the Eucharist and his criticism of the aesthetics and materiality of the Roman Church led

\textsuperscript{139} Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 9, 1530, Innsbruck, CIDT&C.


\textsuperscript{142} Lynch, *Spain 1516-1598*, 89-91.
many to continue to question his orthodoxy. His academic association with the Swiss evangelical reformers further encouraged his critics. Yet Erasmus always argued for extensive reform within and through the hierarchy of the Roman Church, inspired by spiritual renewal within all Christian souls. He explicitly condemned reformers who sowed division between Christians.\textsuperscript{143} Dantiscus was developing a similar perspective. This was especially true of his forceful condemnation of Luther and his support for organized internal reform with respect for the authority of the Roman Church. In a letter written in early 1526 to Bishop Piotr Tomicki, Dantiscus encapsulated these views when he vilified evangelical reformers in his home city of Gdańsk, writing,

\begin{quote}
When at any time they dare to position themselves shamelessly against God and the established Church and the superiority of His Royal Majesty [King Sigismund] with such contempt, it is little wonder that I and my peers are enraged, especially when they see me [a prominent Prussian counter-reformer]\textsuperscript{144} bound to royal business and drawn so far away.\textsuperscript{145}
\end{quote}

His ire at the riots in Gdańsk—described in Chapter 2—clearly had not dissipated.

The environment in which Dantiscus became acquainted and affiliated with Erasmian thought was anything but static or docile. Despite the increase in support for Erasmianism in certain Spanish scholarly circles since 1522, Erasmus was not nearly a universally praised or accepted intellectual authority. Beginning in 1524—the year of Dantiscus’s arrival in Spain—representatives of the monastic orders began to resent the constant criticism of the regular clergy found in Erasmus’ works, especially in the Spanish translations of the \textit{Enchiridion}. Their complaints grew as Erasmianists became


\textsuperscript{144} Dantiscus’s counter-reforming role in Gdańsk in 1524 was discussed in Chapter 2.

\textsuperscript{145} Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, February 24, 1526, Toledo, CIDT&C.
more prominent and influential across Charles’ Kingdom over the next several years. The clamor grew so strong that in 1527, Alfonso Manrique—Archbishop of Seville, Inquisitor General, and a supporter of Erasmus—gathered thirty-three leading Iberian theologians for a conference in Valladolid in order to address the orthodoxy of Erasmus’ work and its appropriateness for consumption by Iberian readers. This conference gathered for a period of two months, opening on 27 June, before disbanding suddenly after an outbreak of plague in Valladolid and never again reconvening. The theologians present argued vociferously for and against the orthodoxy of specific texts, and they rarely agreed on any single interpretation or evaluation of Erasmus’ more controversial statements. Although the lack of consensus precluded a ban on Erasmus’ texts at that moment—many were banned some years later—theologians continued to question his orthodoxy and discourage the reading of his texts in the Iberian Peninsula.

How directly or closely affiliated Dantiscus and his fellow court Erasmianists were with this conference is unclear, but his correspondence does indicate awareness, evaluation, and some minor connections to its participants. Dantiscus was present in Valladolid while the conference took place in early summer 1527, and there is little chance that he would not have paid some attention, regardless of his official role. In early May, around the time that the Inquisitor General would have begun summoning participants, Dantiscus discussed one of Erasmus’ poems with his Polish colleague

146 Lynch, Spain 1516-1598, 89-91; Homza, Religious Authority in the Spanish Renaissance, 49.
147 Homza, Religious Authority in the Spanish Renaissance, 49-76; Bataillon, Erasmo y España: estudios sobre la historia espiritual del siglo xvi, 226-78.
148 Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, June 17, 1527, Valladolid, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, August 17, 1527, Valladolid, CIDT&C.
Krzysztof Szydłowiecki, revealing the still active connections between Spain and Poland through the envoy himself. On 17 June, ten days before the conference convened, he also wrote tellingly to Polish Queen Bona Sforza:

Yesterday on the Feast of the Trinity, when the Emperor passed near to me on his way to the church for Mass, I saw the Duke of Béjar [Álvaro de Zúñiga] on his right side and the Archbishop on his left, who previously were always in the habit of preceding, and I dreaded the sight [of their close conference], lest the pestilence [of Lutheranism] from Germany [truly] be crossing into this place. It is good to see the initiation of this discussion, however, since the issue is debated everywhere; fifteen doctors and theologians have been summoned here, who must determine whether the works of Erasmus of Rotterdam ought to be read here or not, as the monks in great number are opposed to the works of Erasmus. Erasmus’ *Enchiridion militis Christiani*, elevated in Spanish conversations by those bishops who remain unopposed, as well as translated and printed here, is read everywhere by everyone, because of which many people are against this [conference] ceremony, and thereupon many others gradually follow suit.

Dantiscus was glad that such matters of theological purity actually were attracting debate in Spain, and he explicitly stated his fear that such debate might be a response to Lutheran incursions. He did not, however, question the orthodoxy of Erasmus’ works, and he looked forward to the great humanist being exonerated and liberated in Iberian scholarly circles.

Thus Dantiscus must have been relieved when the conference participants were not able to come to consensus in opposition to Erasmus’ works or release any decrees against the Dutch humanist. It was likely after the conference closed that Dantiscus began his own activity spreading Erasmian ideas and texts. He wrote to Piotr Tomicki

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149 Ioannes Dantiscus to Krzysztof Szydłowiecki, May 6, 1527, Valladolid, CIDT&C
150 Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, June 17, 1527, Valladolid, CIDT&C.
a year later about how Erasmus’ works were flourishing in Spain in the wake of the Valladolid conference and with enthusiastic support from other Erasmianists. First, he lamented that, “We are falling into a wretched time, in which virtue, faith, and religion are being put to the test here, there, and everywhere.” He maintained hope, however, in that:

> Here for long time, there has been no small contention about the works of Erasmus among the [monastic] brothers who call themselves pious and the other learned men whom [the brothers] say are secular, yet the more sensible faction overcame [in Valladolid last year]. Many works of Erasmus have been translated into the Spanish language, and they are born and read everywhere in this place of no small superstition.¹⁵²

For Dantiscus and his fellow Erasmian and humanist scholars at the imperial court, this was a great—even if expected—victory. In the fight against evangelical reform and corruption within the Catholic Church, Erasmus was a warrior whom they needed to be active and impactful. Expanding readership in Iberia was a great stride toward that end.

At least one leading intellectual figure from the Valladolid conference did make a direct impression on Dantiscus. One of Erasmus’ staunchest supporters in Spain was Alfonso Ruiz de Virués, an instructor of Scripture and preacher at the Benedictine monastery San Juan de Burgos. For years Virués had written letters, tracts, and sermons defending Erasmus’ orthodoxy, distinguishing him from the evangelical reformers, and simultaneously condemning Luther and his followers. Notably he also spoke for the defense at the Inquisition’s infamous trial of Erasmianist Juan de Vergara in 1533.¹⁵³ Virués joined the Valladolid conference in 1527 and played a significant role

¹⁵² Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, June 28, 1528, Zaragoza, CIDT&C.

as one of Erasmus’ most forceful defenders. In addition to asserting repeatedly that Erasmus was no Lutheran, like a true Erasmianist Virués continually argued that peaceful and loving relations were crucial to productive religious discussions and effective reform efforts in a fragile Christendom. Ultimately, he was one of several theologians who defended Erasmus enough to prevent the wholesale condemnation of the Dutch humanist by the conference.154

Dantiscus was not acquainted with Virués in 1527, but toward the end of his residence in Spain he would become much more familiar with the Dominican preacher. In February 1529, Dantiscus wrote to Valdés from Valladolid, “Still I am delighted that on any given Sunday I can hear a truly pious and Christian sermon by the Benedictine brother Alfonso de Virués. I did not know the man except by reputation, so if your own experience with him intercedes somehow, do share that knowledge with me.”155 Two weeks later, Valdés responded from Toledo:

Alfonso de Virués, whose sermon you reported to have heard, is most dear to me, and if I remember correctly I often had discussions about him with you. He once wrote to Erasmus some frivolities—unknown to me—that enraged the little man, and yet my own works were always returned in goodwill. Deservedly there are many who are pleased by the man, and yet there are others who are justly displeased. We accept what he gives, the rest we devour—thusly he must live.156

When Dantiscus arrived in Spain in 1524, his perspective on religious reform had been aligned with that of Erasmus more from personal experience than from engagement with the great scholar’s texts or supporters. By 1529, however, not only was Dantiscus

155 Ioannes Dantiscus to Alfonso de Valdés, February 1, 1529, Valladolid, CIDT&C.
156 Alfonso de Valdés to Ioannes Dantiscus, February 14, 1529, Toledo, CIDT&C.
gravitating toward and lauding preachers who broadcast explicitly Erasmian ideas from the pulpit, but he also was a regular correspondent with Erasmus himself and a crucial member of the vibrant Erasmian scholarly network that permeated imperial court culture in Spain.

The experiences, encounters, and exchanges during Dantiscus’s third diplomatic mission to Spain and Italy, only some of which appear here, were transformative for how he viewed the political and religious intricacies of Christendom. They subsequently molded how he chose to address the challenges and problems that he identified within Christendom through his own intellectual goals and activities. The most important contributor to this transformation was Dantiscus’s relationships with leading political, religious, and intellectual figures in Western and Southern Europe. It was also inspired by events that he witnessed and news that he received through his vast and growing diplomatic network. Between 1524 and 1530, Dantiscus became a more prolific editor and writer in the public eye. He simultaneously expanded the scope of his literary production in order to confront the enormous challenges facing the Christian Republic, even if it should draw the ire of the Pope, the Emperor, or others. In the background of this development, Dantiscus became and earned a significant reputation for being a knowledgeable and devoted Erasmian humanist scholar. All of these qualities of Dantiscus’s intellectual engagement in Spain would prove to be fundamental to his future literary, religious, and political activity in all phases of his career.

Dantiscus’s ten-year periodic residence in Spain came to an end amidst monumental political events. In 1528, the issue of Queen Bona’s inheritance was finally
settled when she received the rights to her family castle and estate in Bari.\textsuperscript{157} In July, Emperor Charles V secured a major victory when Pope Clement VII abandoned the French faction in the long-waged Italian Wars. The Emperor and Pope came to terms in the Treaty of Barcelona,\textsuperscript{158} at the signing of which Dantiscus was likely present.\textsuperscript{159} Thereafter, the imperial court departed for Italy, where Charles expected to reap financial, military, and political rewards from his recent victory as he proclaimed his view of an expansive Christian empire, now including vast new territories among the Italian city-states and republics. Charles brought his court to Bologna in late autumn 1529, where it would remain throughout the winter and host another pivotal moment in imperial history. In February 1530, Charles was formally crowned as Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Clement VII. This act legitimized his title and authority in the highest possible terms, and Charles hoped that it would lead to more success in pacifying various Habsburg territories and subduing the evangelical reform movement.\textsuperscript{160} Dantiscus intently observed these events and the subsequent administrative transitions at the imperial court, in particular appreciating the heightened focus on addressing the challenge of brazen and destabilizing religious reform. Despite his desire to return to Poland sooner rather than later, Dantiscus was determined to play his role fully in the

\begin{flushleft}
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\item[159] Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, July 26, 1529, Barcelona, \textit{letter lost}, CIDT&C.
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impending confrontations with evangelical reformers and their followers.\footnote{161} That role would be shaped drastically, however, by Dantiscus’s new vocation as bishop of Chełmno, for which he was nominated and elected in late spring 1530.\footnote{162}

**An Intrepid Political Voice**

At the outset of his diplomatic service on behalf of King Sigismund I of Poland, Johannes Dantiscus was already prone to harboring strong opinions about the people he met, the places he visited, his role as a diplomat, and how he imagined his career would progress decades into the future. He was rarely reserved in expressing these opinions in his correspondence, even to his patrons. Dantiscus’s public political voice, however, resonated in only a relatively small arena when he set out from Cracow for Vienna in autumn 1518. Over the next twelve years, during which he traveled extensively throughout Central, Western, and Southern Europe and resided abroad for years at a time, that voice amplified substantially and earned great renown farther afield. This shift was fueled by the myriad experiences, relationships, and exchanges that he accumulated during this period. Dantiscus served three separate stints as the Polish ambassador to the court of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, even following the Spanish court from city to city over the course of five years. He also traveled through the Empire, France, the Low Countries, England, and various Italian provinces while pursuing his king’s diplomatic agenda. During these voyages, he became personally acquainted with great princes such as Charles V, Archduke Ferdinand I of Austria,
Archduchess Margaret of Austria, King Henry VIII of England, and exiled King Christian II of Denmark and Sweden, in addition to dozens of other lords, knights, and courtiers. He generated and developed relationships with some of the most prominent scholars, statesmen, and churchmen in Christendom, including Sigismund von Herberstein, Cardinal Matthaüs Lang, Mercurino Gattinara, Thomas Wolsey, Thomas More, Alfonso de Valdés, Juan de Valdés, Philipp Melanchthon, Martin Luther, and Hernando Cortés, among countless others. With most of these figures, Dantiscus entered into vibrant diplomatic or intellectual exchanges, and he often emerged enlightened by what he had learned or achieved.

All of these experiences combined to transform Dantiscus’s intellectual goals, activities, and ultimately the political voice that he projected and utilized to great advantage thereafter. By 1530, he had become a famous diplomatic agent across Europe, recognized for his tenacity and accomplishments in the service of both King Sigismund I and the Holy Roman Emperors Maximilian I and Charles V. This reputation would follow him for the remaining eighteen years of his life. The most significant aspect of Dantiscus’s intellectual transformation, however, lay in how he utilized his rising platform. Especially during the late 1520s, his literary production increased drastically, and with it his audience. He shrewdly projected his views through a vast diplomatic and humanist network of correspondence, an unofficial but influential role at the imperial chancellery, and the publication of his own compositions. Meanwhile, he enhanced his literary scope. Targeting a much broader audience than earlier in his career, through his writing and editing he addressed major religious and political issues in the wide context of an imperiled Christendom and did not hedge in his evaluation of the questionable
roles of formidable political institutions such as the Empire and the Papacy. At the same time, he became one of Europe’s most notable supporters of Erasmus, whose works shaped his own writings and perspective well into his later career. Therefore, when Dantiscus departed Southern Europe for good in spring 1530, he brought with him an empirical, seasoned, and ambitious political voice that was trained to address big issues in transnational contexts, often with the stability and security of the Christian Republic at stake. As with the critical construction of “Lutheranism” that he had developed during his travels in German-speaking lands years earlier, Dantiscus would utilize this intrepid, critical, and highly relevant political voice as a valuable asset and policy cornerstone in a variety of professional settings during the next eighteen years.
From the beginning of his service to the Crown of Poland, secretary and diplomat Johannes Dantiscus expected to receive an episcopal vocation. He eventually earned one, but only via an extended and unorthodox route. After the Congress of Vienna in 1515, King Sigismund of Poland hastily had promised him a canonry in Warmia, the first step toward potentially becoming prince-bishop. To both men’s disappointment, however, the king could not fulfil this promise in the short term. Dantiscus then claimed that Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian had promised him a benefice in the Empire, an agreement that would never come to fruition.\(^1\) He received his first ecclesiastical benefice in 1521 as a parish priest in Gołąb,\(^2\) a small town situated just below the first westward bend of the Vistula River, about seventy miles upstream from Warsaw. He would earn other parochial appointments throughout the next decade, but he repeatedly petitioned his Polish patrons for a bishopric in the Crown lands.\(^3\) His opportunity came in spring 1530 on the heels of the death of a Prussian prelate. On 4 May, royal secretary Fabian Wojanowski sent a letter to Dantiscus in Italy informing him of the

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\(^{1}\) Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigmund von Herberstein, July 12, 1518, Cracow, CIDT&C; Marek A. Janicki and Tomasz Ososiński, eds. *Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Sigismund von Herberstein*, (Warsaw: OBTA, 2008), vol. 1 of *Amicorum sermones mutui*, part II of *Corpus Epistolarum Ioannis Dantisci*. The extant record of Dantiscus’s early professional years abroad is scanty, but the scholars at the CIDT&C research project have reconstructed some of his relationships and exchanges, especially those with his patrons King Sigismund and Emperor Maximilian. The interactions described here are included in the project’s annotations to Dantiscus’s letters with fellow imperial courtier Sigismund von Herberstein.

\(^{2}\) Sigismund I Jägiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 17, 1523, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, October 29, 1522, Plymouth, CIDT&C.

\(^{3}\) Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, October 14, 1526, Granada, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, June 28, 1528, Zaragoza, CIDT&C.
passing of Bishop Jan Konopacki of Chełmno. The populous Diocese of Chełmno in Royal Prussia, despite its underwhelming magisterial significance, was crucial to the Polish Church’s footing in the region. With evangelical reform efforts growing in Royal Prussian towns, Sigismund needed to appoint administrators who were knowledgeable, resourceful, talented, determined, and loyal in order to uphold the Roman Church there. Dantiscus deserved and fit this bill. Wasting no time, Sigismund sent his own letter to the diplomat on 5 May, writing, “Acknowledging your loyalty and diligent service…we wish to honor you with the Bishopric of Chełmno, which is now vacant,” thus launching his episcopal career.

Dantiscus’s nomination and subsequent election immediately garnered congratulations, expectations, and input from his patrons, peers, subordinates, and parishioners. On the same day that Sigismund sent his notice of nomination, Bishop Piotr Tomicki of Cracow and Vice-Chancellor of the Crown sent his own letter congratulating Dantiscus. He praised the diplomat’s past labors and assured him that the new position was well-deserved on account of his accomplishments and sound

4 Fabian Wojanowski to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 4, 1530, Cracow, CIDT&C.

5 Chełmno Land was the southernmost region of Prussia. It bordered Greater Poland and occupied the interior of the great northern bend of the Vistula River. Its bluffs on the Vistula’s northern/eastern bank commanded the river for almost a hundred miles, and the three fortified riverside towns—Toruń, Chełmno, and Grudziądz—as well as a number of other ridgetop castles, were vital centers of political power and economic activity for Poland, Royal Prussia, and the Hanseatic trade network. Its bishops were not as influential as others in Poland-Lithuania and Prussia, but they did serve as important aids to and supporters of more powerful prelates, such as the prince-bishop of Warmia. As described in Chapter 2, evangelical reform began spreading in Chełmno Land’s towns in the early 1520s, maintaining a strong hold over the urban populations throughout the next decade, particularly in Toruń. The violent height of Chełmno Land’s early reform was an urban revolt in Toruń in 1523. As a nearest part of Prussia to the Kingdom of Poland, Sigismund grew increasingly concerned with religious and political reform there. Józef Buława, Walki społeczno-ustrojowe w Toruniu w I połowie XVI wieku (Toruń, 1971); Marian Biskup, Historia Torunia (Toruń: Towarzystwo Naukowe w Toruniu, 1992); Marian Biskup, ed. Dzieje Chełmna i jego regionu (Toruń: TNT, 1968).

6 Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 5, 1530, Cracow, CIDT&C.
judgment. Bishop Andrzej Krzycki of Płock—later Archbishop of Gniezno and Primate of Poland—also wrote to congratulate his friend, assuring him that “the small ship that is our church, set upon in these times by the most violent tides, requires such a wise and learned [pilot].” Cracow alderman Jan Aichler wrote that Dantiscus’s accomplishments ought to have been rewarded even more substantially, and lamented that there was not a more prestigious episcopal vacancy for the diplomat to fill. Indeed the bishop-elect received kind words and affirmation from contacts spread across Christendom, including his friends from the imperial court Alfonso de Valdés, Cornelis de Schepper, and Sigismund von Herberstein. He also quickly began to address practical matters in his jurisdiction. Despite having no immediate plans to return to Chełmno Land from abroad, he assumed pastoral and political responsibilities of the bishopric alongside his continuing diplomatic duties. Within a month of his election, the Chełmża cathedral chapter sent him a letter warning about extensive evangelical reform efforts, dangerous worship practices threatening Catholic orthodoxy, and jurisdictional conflicts with the bishop of Pomesania—now a Lutheran magnate under Duke in Prussia Albrecht of Hohenzollern—in the diocese. Members of the chapter would...

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7 Piotr Tomicki to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 5, 1530, Cracow, CIDT&C.
8 Andrzej Krzycki to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 28, 1530, Płock, CIDT&C.
9 Jan Aichler to Ioannes Daniscus, June 3, 1530, Cracow, CIDT&C.
10 Alfonso de Valdés to Ioannes Dantiscus, October 31-November 5, 1530, Augsburg, CIDT&C.
11 Cornelius De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 27, 1530, Innsbruck, CIDT&C.
12 Sigismund von Herberstein to Ioannes Dantiscus, October 8, 1530, Poznań, CIDT&C.
13 Kulm Chapter to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 10, 1530, Kulmsee, CIDT&C.
14 Janusz Małłek, Prusy Książęce I Prusy Królewskie w latach 1525-1548 (Warszawa:PWN, 1976), 17-46; Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie 26, s.v „Georg v. Polenz.” Duke Albrecht secularized his administration
continue to inform Dantiscus about Prussian matters and seek his counsel until he returned to Chelmno Land in 1532. He also contacted evangelical leaders across Prussia in an effort to establish relations peacefully and project his newfound authority in the region. The first extant correspondence between Dantiscus and Duke Albrecht was sent by the bishop on 2 July, which began a long and relatively cooperative relationship. Dantiscus even contacted Lutheran Bishop of Pomesania, Paul Speratus, a former student of Martin Luther. This flurry of correspondence, which connected individuals and groups of diverse confessions and standings from across Europe, would become a consistent characteristic of Dantiscus’s episcopacy, even as he gathered and employed myriad resources and contacts to suppress Protestant reform across and beyond his jurisdictions.

For many modern historians, Dantiscus’s seemingly undiscriminating episcopal correspondence with scholars, churchmen, and statesmen of different confessions from across Europe, which began during his diplomatic career and lasted throughout his tenure as a bishop, has led to a mischaracterization of his religious disposition. They have alternately described him as sympathetic to evangelical reform, indifferent to matters of belief and practice, hollowly concerned with upholding orthodoxy, resigned of the Teutonic Order in 1525 and created the Duchy of Prussia, by treaty a vassal of the Crown of Poland. He converted to Lutheranism and thus it became the de facto religion of state within the Duchy. During this process Georg of Polentz served as the Bishop of Samland and Pomesania—the two diocesan jurisdictions within Ducal Prussia. In 1523 he converted to Lutheranism and thus became the first Lutheran bishop in Europe. Due to incongruent political and ecclesiastical jurisdictions in Prussia, he and Prussia’s Catholic bishops often came into conflict over territories and populations.

15 Kulm Chapter to Ioannes Dantiscus, October 16, 1530, Kulmsee, CIDT&C.
16 Ioannes Dantiscus to Albrecht I von Hohenzollern-Ansbach, July 2, 1530, Augsburg, CIDT&C.
17 Pawel Speratus to Ioannes Dantiscus, October 13, 1530, Marienwerder, CIDT&C.
only to writing informally about religious matters, ineffectual in halfhearted counter-
reform efforts, or even completely unremarkable in the context of the Reformations. A
more diligent and careful examination of his episcopal career, however, reveals that
from its inception he was attentive to matters of religious reform and determined to
develop a wide-ranging and effectual orthodox reform program both within his
jurisdiction and beyond. This program would include clear anti-Protestant positions,
widespread information-gathering, varied counter-reform initiatives, and thorough
internal diocesan reform, each of which will be a topic in Chapters 5-7. It would also
reflect his robust literary and epistolary exchanges with diverse correspondents from
across Latin Christendom. While the tangible components of this program would not
emerge until after Dantiscus’s return to Prussia in 1532, many of its qualities and
elements sprung and drew from the persona, vocational temperament, and confessional
positions that he assumed between his nomination-election in spring 1530 and his
ordination-consecration in 1533, most of which he spent abroad.

This chapter will analyze Dantiscus’s assumption of stark confessional Catholic
positions during the first three years of his episcopacy, the most transitional phase of his
career, which began in May 1530 with his election as the bishop of Chełmno and
extended through his consecration in September 1533. Because he was absent from
his diocese for most of this period due to continuing diplomatic travels across Central
Europe, the markers of this assumption were the diverse events, encounters,
 exchanges, and relationships that he accumulated abroad. In these years, he willingly
and productively engaged with people and texts from different tracks of Christian belief
and practice across Europe in a variety of circumstances, some of them quite
momentous. Various ideas shaped his intellectual, spiritual, and practical religiosity and contributed to the transnational formation of his episcopal vocation. Even with cross-confessional engagement, however, he ultimately developed a firm stance against evangelical reform or any reform outside of the authority of the Roman Church. That stance included hope for reconciliation among Christians but did not allow for any concessions to Protestant demands. Thereafter, his early experiences as a bishop combined with those of his prior diplomatic career to equip him with knowledge, perspective, confidence, and tools to combat Protestant reform in his dioceses, which he would commence upon returning to Royal Prussia in summer 1532.

**Views Reinforced at the Diet of Augsburg**

Dantiscus’s influential experiences as a transitioning bishop began almost immediately, and from the moment of his nomination they would become vital to his episcopal disposition. His accounts of those experiences would be some of the most revealing of his career. He received King Sigismund’s letter of nomination to the Bishopric of Chełmno while passing through Innsbruck on 16 June 1530.\(^\text{18}\) This happened to be the Feast of Corpus Christi and the day after Holy Roman Emperor Charles V momentously assembled the *Reichstag* in the Free Imperial City of Augsburg, Dantiscus’s destination one hundred fifty miles northward.\(^\text{19}\) Attending the 1530 Diet of Augsburg, one of the pivotal events of the Reformations, would become one of the most important experiences of Dantiscus’s professional life. His observations of the diet’s proceedings would have significant, lasting effects on his perspective on evangelical

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\(^{18}\) Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 5, 1530, Cracow, CIDT&C.

reform and reformers. They would reinforce the unforgiving anti-Protestant position that would emerge more clearly in his writings and activities. It would be foundational for his subsequent reform efforts as a bishop. It also reflected the Diet’s complex historical contexts.

Having been absent from both the Imperial Diet and the Empire itself in the decade since Martin Luther’s condemnation and banishment at the Diet of Worms, on 31 January 1530 Emperor Charles summoned the princes and electors to Augsburg later that spring with the explicit intention of restoring peace between Christians of the Empire. In his absence, the religious and social reform initiated by men such as Luther and Ulrich Zwingli, as well as the political support given to them by prominent lords and electors, had affected all levels of society and threatened the stability of the imperial administration. Reforming groups of varying sizes and strengths had transformed Christian belief and practice in rural communities, cities, cantons, and principalities throughout the Empire. A year earlier at the Diet of Speyer, the evangelical reformers in a rare moment of unity had formally protested against oppressive imperial policies, and thus had been labeled “Protestants” by their Catholic opponents. The divisions between the Protestant reformers and their followers, however, were in fact becoming increasingly delineated and hostile. With Pope Clement VII reluctant to call a Church council to address evangelical reform, Charles claimed responsibility for settling the religious schism in order to mobilize western Christians more effectively against looming external threats, particularly the Ottomans. He was emboldened by his official coronation as Holy Roman Emperor by the Pope in Bologna only four months earlier. Charles took advantage of his enhanced sacred and secular authority when he decided
to gather and weigh Protestants’ arguments in Augsburg in order to negotiate reconciliation between the Roman Church and the reformers.\textsuperscript{20}

While bishop-elect Dantiscus was still on the Alpine road from Italy,\textsuperscript{21} the diet opened with grand imperial ceremonies. Charles’ entourage had approached the city from the south along the Lech river valley and on 15 June gathered within view of Augsburg’s tall Romanesque church walls and eclectic towers and spires. As burghers and lords came forth to greet the Emperor, the wealthy Swabian city became the symbolic center of the Holy Roman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy. Then began a festive, flamboyant, and highly orchestrated parade of thousands of soldiers, nobility, dukes, electors, diplomats, priests, bishops, horses, cannons, and all the accompanying retinue, which embodied the Empire itself and proclaimed Charles as the sacred protector and pacifier of the vast expanse of Christendom.\textsuperscript{22} The procedures and ceremonies, however, also revealed underlying tensions. Everyone recognized that critical proceedings and decisions were at hand but that the desire and will for an irenic solution were situated precariously. Before audiences assembled to hear arguments, the imperial administration went to great lengths to moderate the city’s inhabitants and visitors. Primarily they declared that all public preaching by Lutherans, Zwinglians, and Catholics must cease.\textsuperscript{23} These efforts did not create neutral footing though, as the

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\textsuperscript{21} Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 5, 1530, Cracow, CIDT&C.
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\textsuperscript{22} Stollberg-Rillinger, \textit{The Emperor’s Old Clothes}, 86-91; Brady, \textit{German Histories}, 217-8.
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\textsuperscript{23} Whaley, \textit{Germany and the Holy Roman Empire}, 298-9; Brady, \textit{German Histories}, 218-9.
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Emperor continued to privilege those seen as loyal to the Roman Church. On the day after his grand entrance, Charles embellished the Corpus Christi Mass and procession, intentionally prodding the Protestants who had repudiated the Eucharist, the Mass, or material aspects of Catholic piety and liturgy. He demanded that all citizens observe the ceremonies, and that all delegates participate should they expect an audience at the diet. Most Protestants managed to excuse themselves, but Charles’ disposition left an indelible impression.24 Many doubted that the diet would reflect their perspectives or interests, even though Charles claimed to seek an irenic solution to the schism.25

Dantiscus arrived in Augsburg as late as eleven days after Corpus Christi,26 so he likely did not witness the initial phase of the diet. His friend and imperial diplomat Cornelis de Schepper begged him to travel as quickly as possible in order to arrive for the opening procession,27 but melting snows on the Alpine route had slowed transit.28 The diet, however, lasted until mid-November,29 and Dantiscus would be present for its remainder.30 Although he was not an official orator or negotiator, he would be an eager observer and listener. As a skillful agent of surreptitious diplomacy and a rising prelate, he also would be called to play less overt roles on behalf of both King Sigismund and Emperor Charles. He would gain access to conferences both large and small, meet with

25 Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, 298-9; Brady, *German Histories*, 219.
26 Georg Hegel to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 4, 1530, Cracow, CIDT&C.
27 Cornelius De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 27, 1530, Innsbruck, CIDT&C.
28 Brady, *German Histories*, 217.
29 Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, 300.
30 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, November 29, 1530, Augsburg, CIDT&C.
many fruitful contacts from multiple confessions, and horde and report information about the negotiations to a variety of interested parties. Ultimately, his experiences in Augsburg would teach him invaluable lessons about Protestant perspectives and negotiating the terms of religious reform, especially as he prepared to return to Chelmno Land to confront his diocese’s own challenges with evangelical reformers.

Dantiscus’s most important contact in Augsburg was his friend from the imperial chancellery—see Chapter 3—secretary Alfonso de Valdés. After the sudden death of Grand Chancellor Mercurino Gattinara in early June, Charles had made Valdés his principal negotiator for the diet. The secretary quickly found himself at odds, however, with the conservative papal representative Lorenzo Campeggio. Valdés’s training as a humanist scholar, his affinity for Erasmian approaches to Church reform, his relationship with his twin brother and reform-minded theologian Juan, and his converso lineage all made him uniquely sympathetic to critiques of abuses within the Church. Like Dantiscus, he developed tremendous respect for his evangelical counterpart Philipp Melanchthon and was encouraged by their conviviality rather than deterred by their theological differences. The emissaries of the Papacy typically did not entertain such sympathies or leniencies. From the outset, Valdés supported a slow and open-minded approach to theological and practical negotiations, which impressed Dantiscus as a humanist scholar but frustrated the less forgiving representatives of the imperial or papal positions. Dantiscus’s friendship with Valdés provided the envoy and bishop


32 Alfonso de Valdés, Obra Completa, ed. Ángel Alcalá (Madrid: Fundació José Antonio de Castro, 1996), 208-28; MacCulloch, The Reformation, 169; Euan Cameron, “The Possibilities and Limits of Conciliation:
with privileged access to information and strategy, particularly from the diet’s imperial and Catholic factions.

At first there appeared to be enough force of will and theological flexibility among most of the diet’s participants to enable a settlement between the Protestants and Catholics. The Protestants were eager for an accord that would lift the shadow of imperial punitive or retributive action. Many Catholics were still unaware of or unconvinced by the Church’s limited official responses to Protestant reform, especially that of Martin Luther. These were urgent problems for both sides to solve, but neither side was unified in their goals or approach. Most participants agreed, however, that a resolution brokered by the Emperor in good faith was possible and preferable to allowing the religious uncertainty and instability hovering over Central Europe to continue. This agreement came despite the palpable mutual suspicions of Protestant representatives, Catholic representatives, and the Emperor himself. Many participants had arrived in Augsburg wary of Charles attempting to wield absolute spiritual or secular authority. Both sides monitored the Emperor ignoring what they considered to be accepted boundaries and limitations of his authority, especially as he attempted to fill the magisterial void left by the Pope’s refusal to call a council. Nevertheless, they were encouraged by his apparent interest in deliberating fairly and finding an irenic solution. He promised to consider Protestants’ arguments and solicited their explanations within the first few days of convening the diet.33


33 Whaley, Germany and the Holy Roman Empire, 298-9; MacCulloch, The Reformation. 168-9.
Despite this promise, Charles quickly took to orchestrating the diet’s proceedings strategically and self-interestedly by dictating the ceremony, style, audience, and location of the deliberations. This orchestration came at the expense of the Protestant’s desired presentation format and primarily projected Charles’ own authority over the participants. As a result, the Protestant submissions or confessions were organized and presented somewhat hastily or ineffectively. Some of the contributors felt that their confessions were in fact incomplete and thus misrepresentative. Those confessions nonetheless came before the Emperor’s theologians for review in short order. By the beginning of July, the largest Protestant group led by Philipp Melanchthon—Martin Luther was still banished from the Empire—had submitted the *Confessio Augustana*, a secondary group led by Jacob Sturm and Martin Bucer had submitted the *Confessio Tetrapolitana*, and Ulrich Zwingli had submitted his own statement of faith. Even with their disadvantages, the Protestant leaders at Augsburg employed a great deal of tact in their negotiations and presentations before the Emperor’s representatives. Melanchthon recognized his commonalities with Alfonso de Valdés and saw an opening for constructive dialogue. He focused his arguments on abuses within the Roman Church that the Lutherans simply were attempting to fix, and in some cases had fixed. He thus avoided the theological points that were most contested between Protestants and Catholics. Valdés, himself a vocal critic of the Church’s abuses, was sympathetic to

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34 Stollberg-Rillinger, *The Emperor’s Old Clothes*, 97-100.
much of what Melanchthon had to say. Meanwhile, the theologians behind the Confessio Tetrapolitana, led by the politically savvy of Jacob Sturm, maintained a largely-Zwinglian conception of the Eucharist but took several theological steps in the direction of the Lutherans. Their goal was to appeal to the majority of Protestants at the diet and come to some consensus in order to show more unity and strength. Depending on the Emperor’s reaction to Melanchthon’s group, such a position might even have appealed to the Emperor himself. Zwingli’s own submission was basically ignored.

The decisions of the Diet ultimately did not favor the Protestants. Charles had instructed his negotiators and theologians to find enough overlapping belief and desire for resolution to reach a compromise while the maintaining the stability and efficiency of imperial political and ecclesiastical administration. As lead negotiator, Valdés encouraged Charles to be optimistic and to leave dialogue open, even after receiving the initial Protestant confessions that were less conciliatory than the Emperor had hoped. But Charles embraced his perceived role as defender of the true Church and took the vitriolic advice of papal representative—Valdés’s rival—Cardinal Campeggio. They treated the Confessio Augustana as if it represented Protestant beliefs generally and then rejected it outright. As a response to the Protestants, on 3 August Charles’ theologians presented the Confutatio Augustana, which refuted Melanchthon’s text and

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38 Brady, “Jacob Sturm of Strasbourg,” 183-202. Zwingli’s reform in Zurich and the reform in neighboring West German cities had been more radical than Luther’s in several ways. Primarily Zwingli denied the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist, a denial that Luther found unfathomable. The description of the Eucharist found in the Confessio Tetrapolitana was conciliatory and closer to Luther’s conception, but still fell short of confirming transubstantiation. It was seen as a bridge between Zwingli and Luther.
39 Whaley, Germany and the Holy Roman Empire, 300.
40 MacCulloch, The Reformation, 169
confirmed the established doctrine of the Roman Church. This response was rejected by Melanchthon and the Protestants, but Charles subsequently refused to accept any further Protestant rebuttals, effectively ending attempts at theological reconciliation. Instead, the deliberations turned to focus on how restrictively the Empire ought to permit Protestant practice and belief in the short term. Debate continued through autumn and ended when most of Protestant representatives departed on 14 November. An unchallenged Catholic majority then composed the diet’s recess. The recess reaffirmed the Edict of Worms and restored—at least nominally—the primacy, authority, and freedom of the Roman Church to operate throughout the Empire. It then outlined the legal repercussions for violators of this “public peace.” The Protestant princes, cities, and scholars were given five months to comply.41

Dantiscus witnessed all of this from his advantageous position at the imperial court. Although he had missed the opening grand procession, he had arrived in Augsburg as late as 27 June—two days after the submission of the Confessio Augustana—and was able to observe many of the key moments of negotiation, particularly via his close relationship with Valdés.42 From early July through the end of November, he wrote at least thirty letters from Augsburg containing reports on the diet, of which thirteen remain extant. Those extant letters to patrons and colleagues provided precious detail about his participation in and reaction to the diet’s decisions. The most informative letters were those written to his royal and ecclesiastical patrons, which included vivid descriptions of major religious determinations that revealed his

41 Whaley, Germany and the Holy Roman Empire, 300.
42 Georg Hegel to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 4, 1530, Cracow, CIDT&C.
perspective on the diet as well as his candid opinions about its proceedings. Those
descriptions also suggested his potential ministerial application of what he learned in
Augsburg about dealing with Protestant reformers.

The first of these extant reports was to King Sigismund, written within a week of
Melanchthon’s submission of the *Confessio Augustana*. Dantiscus began by lamenting
that:

…thus far nothing more has been accomplished regarding our role, which
is to attempt to impel the Lutherans to come to their senses, by any
means including threats. One can hardly believe that the common people
have been infected to this extent by this blight! Should the princes desire
it, the commoners, whom this more deeply-rooted venom has sapped,
should still be able to be driven back [to orthodoxy].

From the outset, his characterization of evangelical reform was visceral and disdainful.
For him, the reform movement was not a dignified approach to religion, but rather an
infection plaguing the poor, defenseless commoners, the perseverance of which was
untenable and unacceptable. He later returned to the subject, writing:

Discussions on the business of faith have continued, but nothing has been
concluded yet, nor has the Emperor given a response [to the Protestant
confessions]. There are those who command us to hope [for a resolution],
and although the end is not yet in sight, I do still hope, because Lord
Valdés and Philipp Melanchthon have been meeting together…If the
Emperor adopts an [erudite] approach similar to Valdés’s, then we should
see several learned and pious men brought to these negotiations and
anything could be accomplished. But one swallow does not make a
spring!

The first indicators of Dantiscus’s approach to addressing and suppressing reform begin
to emerge from these excerpts. Despite his vitriolic description of evangelical reform
found in the former, he welcomed productive discussions about religious disagreements

43 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, June 30, 1530, Augsburg, CIDT&C.

44 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, June 30, 1530, Augsburg, CIDT&C.
in the latter, especially when those discussions included well-meaning and intelligent representatives of both sides. Valdés and Melanchthon in particular exhibited the qualities necessary for conducting efficacious dialogue, and should serve as models for all parties. Nevertheless, for him it was the imperial, Catholic faction that occupied the righteous position, and it was the Catholic representatives’ responsibility to convince and reincorporate their wayward counterparts through argumentation or even threats.

The religious tension extended into Dantiscus’s diplomatic negotiations in Augsburg. He described charged exchanges with both Catholic and Protestant princes from across Central Europe, including Emperor Charles, Archduke Ferdinand of Austria and King of Hungary and Bohemia, Duke Ludwig X of Bavaria, Margrave Georg of Brandenburg-Ansbach, and Duke Georg of Saxony, as well as dozens of other courtiers, lords, generals, clerics, and scholars. With Ferdinand he discussed common popular access to Silesia, the fertile and prosperous region between the Kingdom of Poland and the Kingdom of Bohemia. Ferdinand reportedly had restricted free passage across Silesian borders in order to prevent “Lutheran” preachers and texts from spreading further into Moravia and eastern Bohemia. Dantiscus could not justify this because he claimed that there were already Lutherans in Bohemia, Silesia, and Poland-Lithuania. He labeled the restrictions as detrimental to traders, travelers, and diplomatic relations, and he assured King Sigismund that he would not let the issue rest. Another of his diplomatic discussions focused on the potential consequences of Lutheranism spreading through Prussia and the Baltic region following Duke Albrecht’s conversion in 1525. Dantiscus described the enthusiasm mounting for the Teutonic Order in Livonia to lead an attack on Albrecht and force his reconversion to Catholicism. Personally, he
suddenly appreciated the role of the Teutonic Order, because of which “nothing is left of the blemish of Lutheranism in Livonia, and the sect only evokes hatred there, such that if someone were to mention the name of Luther, they would be killed immediately by the region’s inhabitants.”

Ironically though, Sigismund simultaneously was ordering Dantiscus to defend the Crown’s relations with Duke Albrecht and promote the king as an upstanding Catholic leader. Sigismund faced mounting criticism as some princes perceived him to be soft on evangelical reform. Dantiscus thus walked a fine line.

After another five weeks at the diet, Dantiscus’s frustration with Protestants and his hardline attitudes toward resolving the schism began to show more clearly. On 1 August, two days before the Emperor’s theologians presented the Confutatio to the Protestants, Dantiscus wrote to Tomicki:

Concerning the Lutheran issue the negotiators have great hope, but I see nothing beneficial in the near future. The most recent [Catholic] debate was between the proponents of destroying [the Lutherans] within the year and the proponents of fully [and mercifully] reconverting them.

Dantiscus presented this pair of options as a measured but difficult response to the Lutherans’ supposed stubbornness and unreasonableness. It indicated his and the Catholics’ unwillingness to make concessions to the Protestants. He posited that one of the two proposed solutions—destruction or reconversion—would be necessary but that neither would be a peaceful process, and he compared the situation to the dilemma faced at the early fifteenth-century Council of Constance. 

At the council in 1418,

45 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, June 30, 1530, Augsburg, CIDT&C.

46 Natalia Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther: The Reformation before Confessionalization (Oxford: OUP, 2018), 143.

47 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, August 1, 1530, Augsburg, CIDT&C.
Emperor Sigismund had claimed to have restored Christian unity by resolving the papal schism, but he also decided to execute the Bohemian preacher Jan Hus, whose teachings were popular in Bohemia but were deemed heretical. After the Council, Sigismund led an army to quell the resulting revolts in Prague, touching off the bloody and extended Hussite Wars.\(^48\) For Dantiscus, the eradication of heresy was paramount, and the level of violence would reflect the resistance put up by the heretics.

Dantiscus also desired a solution to the schism that would stabilize and reinforce the strength of the Roman Church, the eternal authority of which he thought was beyond question and ought to extend throughout the world. Referring to imperial and papal representatives who worried about the dangers of allowing Protestant sympathizers to go unpunished, Dantiscus explained to Tomicki that:

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\text{[Papal legate Campeggio] agrees [with those concerned Catholics] precisely because of the reformers’ accusations of abuses against the Church and their desire to have it reformed or destroyed completely, all of which he wants to be understood clearly. To the benefit of the Holy See no [imperial] response has been predetermined, because if a decree is decided and enacted here, it will be enacted throughout the entire world.}
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He could not allow evangelical reformers to undermine the Church’s authority nor subvert the influence of the papal representatives in Augsburg, even if those representatives came into conflict with his friend Valdés. Catholicism must be upheld, both by the Empire and by the Papacy, and the men in attendance would assuredly work toward that goal. Dantiscus concluded by writing, “Soon a response to the

\[^{48}\text{Brady, German Histories, 75-6.}\]
Lutherans will be given, because when something must be accomplished, the Emperor and princes will not lie hidden."\(^{49}\)

Within two days of that letter to Tomicki, Charles’ theologians presented the *Confutatio* to Protestant leaders. Dantiscus reported to Sigismund a lengthy, detailed description of the scene and the nature of the Catholic rebuttal. He wrote:

…at the hour of Vespers the Emperor assembled all the men from both parts of the imperial schism and set into law the response that was written to the articles presented by [the Lutherans], and it became final: in the first place the Emperor decreed that all of the points that the opposing faction had proposed were refuted by Holy Scripture, seeing that only a little while earlier such arguments had been condemned as heretical by the Church. Recognizing the grave issues facing Christendom, the Emperor refused to undertake any new debate with [the Lutherans] lest they refute any matter whatsoever and lest the resolutions, which should be considered complete by the Church, should be called into doubt by somebody else. The Emperor urged and instructed that [the Lutherans] abandon their errors and return to the unity of the Church, because if they refused to do this he would drive them out with the aid of the remaining imperial electors and states and with all the Christian princes, owing to his office and oath given by the Roman Church and even surpassed by his imperial authority. After being read aloud publicly these decrees were recorded on eight whole pages, while [the Lutherans] requested that they be allowed to confer among themselves; this was permitted. After their conversation the chancellor of the most illustrious Duke of Saxony, in the name of all present and most eloquently in his own tongue, claimed that the *Confutatio* was tedious and arduous when read aloud, and so that its reasoning could be heard more effectively he requested that the *Confutatio* be written down [for further deliberation]. The Emperor again consulted with his men and shortly after responded that if [the Lutherans] wanted the *Confutatio* to be written for public consumption, they ought to promise that they would heed it. Having struggled with such adversity on this day, [the Lutherans] formed and submitted their petition in writing, contesting the *Confutatio* in kind and commemorating their response. With this the assembly was dissolved, with the indignation of many present.\(^{50}\)

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\(^{49}\) Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, August 1, 1530, Augsburg, CIDT&C.

\(^{50}\) Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, August 8, 1530, Augsburg, CIDT&C.
The unrelenting determinations of Charles and his scholars ended the theological debate and shifted the diet’s focus to the extent to which Protestants would be able to practice their faith in the Empire. Protestant leaders began discussing their suddenly precarious position and their need to be able to organize and defend themselves. Their deliberations must have been somewhat overt, as Dantiscus provided further descriptions of their preparations and movements in a follow-up letter to his king. He remained adamant that the Protestants were operating outside of acceptable deference to imperial and papal authority, which could not be tolerated. 51

Five weeks later, Dantiscus sent another update to Sigismund castigating the Protestants, who apparently could not agree among themselves and were holding up negotiations. He explained:

I do not know who induced the suspicions born against the Emperor that he has inserted himself into [the Protestants’] convention, which even now has been going on for several days. One hopes that by tomorrow or even today they should be organized, if they are not delayed by deciding on which ambassador [would make the debate] more equal for them. It is assumed that this process will render them even more obstinate, and in my judgment not unjustly. The debate has moved beyond [the Protestant demands of] abolishing a large canon of the Mass, permitting communion in both kinds, allowing priests to marry, and restoring monastic property [to the princes]. Yet still the Emperor deliberates for the benefit of the public. For the sake of ease he desires that the remaining business be compiled and addressed together, with the unsettled religious issues decided by a certain time, by means of which this entire tragedy should be subdued. The Emperor has been reflecting that if the deliberation is not completed at present, then in the near future “the last error will be worse than the first.” [MT 27:64] Clearly negotiations have been labored up until now. 52

51 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, August 12, 1530, Augsburg, CIDT&C.

52 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, September 20, 1530, Augsburg, CIDT&C.
Dantiscus’s frustrations with the pace of negotiations were clear, but he displayed a sense of relief at certain Catholic practices and beliefs being above debate. Within two weeks he wrote again, describing how Charles had decided to regulate religious practice within the Empire and given the Protestants until 15 April to respond and comply. He reported that:

[The Protestants] by no means wanted to accept this [ruling], but rather they prefer that all issues be conceded to them through further deliberation during these six months, and even now they are unwilling to suffer having conceding themselves. Again they requested that the Confutatio be given to them by the Emperor in writing. It had not yet been put into writing because [the Protestants] had pushed for a new sect or new doctrine when they assembled with us to address all of the articles of faith in this convention. They stood apart to this extent even while they laid claim to the ceremonies and traditions of men. The Emperor received their request scornfully and refused to give the Confutatio to them in writing, but rather commanded that first they obey the edict, insofar as they conform themselves to all ceremonies and rites of our Church, because should they not do that which duty and piety demand, compliance will be forced upon them and exerted through the Emperor’s grave office. Thus he departed, leaving no small indignation from the other party. 53

This illustration of the Protestant leaders’ stubbornness and dissent before the Emperor was Dantiscus’s final detailed report on the event, even though the Reichstag would continue for another two months.

These four letters, in which Dantiscus described at length the diet’s formal negotiations, provide substantial insight to the bishop-elect’s disposition toward evangelical reform and the process through which Catholic authorities sought to address it. He superficially welcomed free discussion, commending the Emperor and the Catholic faction for entertaining the arguments of the Protestants and allowing some debate through the exchange of Confessio and Confutatio. He also frequently implied or

53 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 2, 1530, Augsburg, CIDT&C.
explicitly stated, however, that the Protestant positions were not worthy of being entertained by the Catholics, and that the Emperor’s willingness to engage with the Protestants was a sign of his great magnanimity, which deserved appreciation and deference even from dissenting factions. Dantiscus repeatedly characterized the Protestants as disagreeable, disunited, and subversive in contrast to the Catholic negotiators. He thought that they ought to have behaved most admirably in order to offset their egregious and heretical religious demands, but in fact they were unappreciative, unaccommodating, and petty in their negotiations. Their approaches and achievements, or lack thereof, made a stark impression on him.

Given the relatively few extant letters of Dantiscus at the Diet of Augsburg, another important and revealing source is a contemporaneous letter written to him from elsewhere. Filippo Nicola, a secretary in the imperial chancellery who remained in northern Italy in summer 1530, appealed to his friend Dantiscus in late August for information about the “Lutheran terrors.” In a candid, detailed, and impassioned plea to a colleague clearly of like mind, Nicola’s letter illustrates his own and likely Dantiscus’s shared views about religion in the Empire. The letter arrived in Augsburg on 4 October, which Nicola began with the general lamentation:

How great is the [religious] uproar that I see daily and how many are the petitions and the complaints. It is certain that one status or one situation in life is never satisfying for long, and while we seek something new and believe that to obtain it is to improve, many of us are caught straying from reason. Surely no church at any time will be severed without experiencing great sufferings, and therefore only imposing an end to these sufferings will let Christians excel.\(^{54}\)

\(^{54}\) Filippo Nicola to Ioannes Dantiscus, August 21, 1530, Cremona, CIDT&C.
Nicola associated the complaints about the Roman Church that he heard daily, or even worse the efforts to deconstruct the Church in the name of reform, with the common people’s inability to find satisfaction in a single station. People were uneasy unless they had a new trend to follow, even if that trend led them away from reasonable belief or practice. Such a departure from reason naturally led to social and political upheaval, and the only solution was to bring the people back. Dantiscus, who saw unity under the Roman Church as the only status beneficial for all Christians, likely could not have agreed more with Nicola.

Nicola continued his letter by presenting several related arguments to demonstrate the errors of the Protestant leaders and their followers:

What kind of person strives so diligently to alter ceremonies, destroy sacrifices, reject fasts, and abolish confessions, even when men would never find peace in their [perpetual] stirrings should those rites not exist? Should all these rites be removed, priests would be altogether idle, even worse considering that now both [secular and regular] priests are accumulating as monasteries are being destroyed. Afterwards [the reformers] surely will lament that our divine worship was so reduced and made so meager as to create deprivation in the church. It would be through their peace with pagan gods or wicked demons and their reverence of so many authorities of all types such as priests, vestal virgins, men of fellowship, guilds, various pontiffs, and priestly kings. In contrast to the tradition of having kings removed from sacred rites, instead [kings] would daily put their hands upon the sacred altars, wither our cult of the one true God is now driven so wretchedly, so feebly, so heedlessly.

Nicola was not attempting to convince Dantiscus but rather confirming and expounding upon prior agreement. In their view, the violations of the Protestants were not only cavalier assaults on practical and traditional elements of Christian religiosity and society that must be upheld for the good of all, but they were also a betrayal of the one divine truth found in God and the Catholic Church. Nicola concluded his tirade by arguing that the roots of these errors were not in Scripture or Sacred Tradition but rather in the
interpretive fallibility and hubris of men, whose superficial reasoning drew misguided and incomplete understanding:

In the end we should learn to understand these faults to be not of nature but rather of our own making. Those who before were pleasing only by a little, now displease; those who now displease, at length will please again. Germany, which worshipped Christ as if to the point of superstition, now appears nearly ready to cast down religious rites, as if the ceremonies of our time were the ceremonies of ancient times, when worshippers sacrificed beasts and men to the gods. I believe they think the ancients’ nostrils to have been soothed excessively by such strong fumes!

Although we have no extant record of Dantiscus’s reply, his own critical characterizations of evangelical reform and the Italian’s candid and unapologetic criticisms leave little doubt about the bishop’s agreement with Nicola. They were clearly comfortable questioning, criticizing, and lambasting the Protestants based on agreed-upon assumptions. They also clearly viewed the Protestants not merely as dissenters from consensus, but rather egregious violators of orthodox belief and practice.

As a newly-elected bishop who would soon return to his diocese to face fervent evangelical reform efforts, the still impressionable Dantiscus took key lessons from the Diet of Augsburg on the processes of reform and counter-reform, as revealed by his descriptions and opinions of the diet’s proceedings. They supplemented his previous experiences and made a cumulative impact on his intentions for responding to evangelical reform as a bishop. Most fundamentally, he developed a deeper understanding of the complexity and breadth of Central Europe’s turbulent religious conflict and its political dimensions. The diet illuminated for him the intricate entanglement of practical and theological justifications driving the evangelical reform

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55 Filippo Nicola to Ioannes Dantiscus, August 21, 1530, Cremona, CIDT&C.
movement, especially considering the different approaches of the Lutherans, the
tetrapolitans, and the Zwinglians. He observed their deliberations and took note of the
immense task of distilling their diverse beliefs and practices into more concise
confessions, and distilling their diverse demands into coherent petitions to be brought
before the Emperor. He also engaged with Protestant political leaders and came to
understand more fully the range of conflicts that faith selection among imperial princes
was causing across the Empire. Catholic princes and the Emperor himself were, of
course, unmitigated contributors to these conflicts as well. Political and social animosity
throughout the Empire had been exacerbated by religious disagreement and solidifying
religious distinctions, and Dantiscus could identify similar problems across a broader
Central Europe, particularly in his native territory of Royal Prussia.

More practically, the diet demonstrated for Dantiscus several different
approaches to managing, limiting, and suppressing evangelical reform in varied
circumstances. It revealed the diligence and attentiveness required to confront such a
challenge on behalf of both a complex polity and the Church. In formal and informal
settings, he engaged with clerics, theologians, courtiers, and princes of different
confessions, taking note of their goals, methods, and achievements in their own
territories and jurisdictions. In the more general negotiations of the diet, he heard
arguments from multiple perspectives and took note of both Catholic and Protestant
negotiating strategies. He recorded the aims and techniques of Protestant
representatives and monitored their successes and failures. Most importantly, Dantiscus
paid attention to how representatives of the Catholic factions settled conflicts favorably
for the Church and the Empire. He observed how religious and secular power could be
wielded tactfully to neutralize, convince, or subdue dissenting adversaries. He recorded what both Catholic and Protestant representatives were willing to acknowledge or concede to their counterparts and traced the practical consequences of those decisions among all parties. Similarly, he took note of where the different factions were unwilling to negotiate and what consequences arose from their steadfastness. These experiences provided Dantiscus with a more sophisticated understanding of how Protestants—especially Lutherans—were organized, how their initiatives progressed, and how they could be opposed effectively, either by individual prelates or through coordinated Catholic efforts.

The most significant impact of the Diet of Augsburg on Dantiscus’s episcopal disposition was the emergence of his support for hardline anti-Protestant positions in the Empire, the Church, and Poland-Lithuania, which occurred in several steps. First, through his reports Dantiscus more bluntly revealed his conformist and compliant conception of religious authority. Throughout his letters he argued that established religious authorities—in terms of both judgment and power—must be heeded and respected, even if the accords procured in times of disagreement were not satisfactory to dissenting groups. In terms of judgment, he explicitly referred to the three authorities of the Catholic Church that for him had already amply refuted Protestant arguments: Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium. Among these authorities, he included the Emperor’s legion of theologians who had refuted systematically each of the Protestant positions, even if in a format not to the reformers’ liking. In terms of power, Dantiscus

made it clear that determinations made by the Church or the Emperor were sacrosanct and bore unassailable political and cultural prescriptions. Any parties appealing or dissenting were exceeding their natural limitations. To him the Protestants were not irrevocably reformed, transformed, or enlightened, but rather they were wayward members of the Body of Christ who had been infected by a heretical disease and were in need of healing through persuasion, regulation, and even threat. Their methods and internal distinctions, as well as their particular heresies, were not nearly as important as returning them healthy to the fold, and the best means of drawing them in was through the Church’s and Empire’s established authority. In both an intellectual and a practical sense, he could scarcely conceive of proper Christian life or worship outside of the beliefs, practices, and authorities of orthodox Catholicism.

Second, Dantiscus outlined his strategic self-positioning in the complicated jurisdictional world of Central Europe, especially concerning this religious authority. He consistently implied and occasionally stated outright that although theological disagreements should be settled by the Church and based on Holy Scripture, regulating orthodoxy of belief and practice within the boundaries of the Empire was the responsibility of the Emperor and the imperial administration. On this topic Dantiscus walked a fine line. He was not advocating for an authoritative secular administration of religious issues within just any polity’s borders. Rather he was promoting the sacred administrative authority inherent in the role of Holy Roman Emperor, especially when the individual serving in that role had been crowned formally by the Pope, as Charles had been in February. Dantiscus had developed this view over the course of the previous decade during his residence at the imperial court and through his exchanges
with imperial agents like Valdés, Mercurino Gattinara, Cornelis de Schepper, and Sigismund von Herberstein, and it was political as much as it was an intellectual conception of authority. He recognized his own role as a vital diplomatic intermediary between the Central European polities of the Holy Roman Empire, Ducal Prussia, Royal Prussia, the Kingdom of Poland, and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. His positive relationship with leaders in the imperial administration, especially Charles, was thus crucial to his success. He also considered his overlapping ecclesiastical responsibilities, however. As much as Dantiscus supported the Emperor’s prerogative to regulate religious practice within the Empire, his own allegiance was to the Holy See through his metropolitan diocese. Therefore, he carefully promoted Charles’ authority as unique and privileged, but also within the spiritual domain of the Roman Church. This was in some contrast to his former diplomatic positions, in which he had railed against the Papacy’s political violation of imperial jurisdiction and authority for years.  

Third and finally in this emergence of Dantiscus’s anti-Protestant views, he consolidated and began to promote an animated hostility toward the ideas, methods, and impacts of evangelical reformers, and especially Lutherans, which occasionally extended personally to reformers and their followers. We have already seen how his jarring encounters during the 1520s informed a critical and fearful construction of “Lutheranism”—meaning evangelical reform and its various offshoots—and its adherents. Starting at the Diet of Augsburg, this hostility took on several new forms in his writings. One manifestation was his portrayal of the diet’s Protestant leaders and representatives as prideful, ungrateful, bitter, and uncooperative, with the sole exception

of Philipp Melanchthon. In Dantiscus’s view, it did not matter how generously the Catholic faction—his faction—was willing to devote time or resources to debate, or how gracious it was for them to enter at all into debate with heretical dissenters. The Protestants never participated honorably and would continue to act like victims, despite their obvious perpetrations and violations against orthodox belief and practice. Another manifestation of Dantiscus’s hostility was his continued lumping of Protestant reformers into one dissident group, despite the fact that those present were clearly in disagreement with each other. They were “the other side” or “the other part” of the debate, and even when their own fault lines were obvious they appeared to him to be of one disruptive heretical mind. To him they were delinquents in a society that could only thrive if everyone was compliant with the authorities of the Empire and the Church. A final manifestation of this hostility was less novel but more articulated than it had been in the past. From Augsburg, Dantiscus made it clear that he believed Protestantism to be infectious and corrosive; it could not be allowed to spread or even simply remain contained, but rather it must be destroyed. Compromise with or concessions to the Protestants were unthinkable and unacceptable, and their temporary coexistence with the Catholics was only tolerable as long as the Protestants were working back toward orthodoxy genuinely and contritely.

By the time Dantiscus left Augsburg in late autumn 1530, he displayed a renewed sense of purpose and urgency in his vocation as a bishop. The diet had introduced him to entirely new facets and contexts of negotiating religious reform, and his own diplomatic, ecclesiastical, and scholarly circumstances increasingly required him to apply the lessons he had learned there. Most importantly, whereas his writings
from prior to the diet generally had suggested animosity toward evangelical reform but had stopped short of revealing a sense of personal responsibility or strategic approach to responding to it, his letters from the diet and his subsequent writings display the emergence of an unforgiving anti-Protestant position both in his episcopal disposition and in his conception of order in Central Europe. It required him to act dutifully. As we will see in the remainder of this chapter, this position would continue to develop and solidify during these first three years of his episcopacy spent abroad. A variety of new relationships and exchanges would inspire Dantiscus to diversify and enhance his approaches to addressing reform, all of which would inform his identity and vocation as a bishop.

In the wake of the Diet of Augsburg, the Christian world in which Dantiscus would operate as a bishop would differ significantly from the one he had traversed as diplomat. The first decade after Luther and Zwingli began their public refutations of the Roman Church had been characterized by rather disorderly attempts at evangelical reform of inconsistent scopes and degrees in mostly localized settings. This disorderly movement was what Dantiscus had pejoratively called “Lutheranism.” After Augsburg, where Protestants were prompted to define their confessions more explicitly and intentionally, their distinctions across Central Europe became more readily identifiable. Two divergent Protestant groups—Lutheran and Reformed—emerged as a result of the impasses between the leaders of reform movements in Saxony, the western Empire, and Zurich, but both stood in opposition to the Roman Church. Princes, lords, townsmen, and
peasants more easily built individual or communal associations with particular sets of beliefs, especially as political units became more uniform in their religiosity.  

Confessionalization of Humanism in the Low Countries

Following the solidification of Dantiscus’s anti-Protestant views at the Diet of Augsburg, they immediately began to impact his ongoing professional activities and relationships. Knowing that soon his diplomatic mission would end and he would return to his diocese in Royal Prussia, he took advantage of his remaining time abroad by promoting counter-reform efforts among international politicians, prelates, and scholars through a variety of channels. The first arena in which he pursued this agenda was the humanist community of the Low Countries. Beginning in winter 1531, he would spend more than a year in Brussels, Ghent, and Antwerp while continuing to attend the imperial court. There Dantiscus generated intimate personal relationships and exchanges with leading humanist figures, including some whose own role in the Reformations was unparalleled. One collateral effect of these connections was the wider dissemination of his own reputation, literary work, and correspondence. The most significant dimension of his activity in the Low Countries, however, was his participation in the broader confessionalization of humanism, an integral intellectual component of the Reformations in the mid-sixteenth century. Dantiscus’s contribution to this process


59 Some of these connections were presented in the first ever monograph to focus on his life—*John Dantiscus and his Netherlandish Friends* by Henry de Vocht. Vocht painstakingly chronicled Dantiscus’s Netherlandish exchanges, but like most other twentieth-century historians and literary scholars he devoted very little analysis to their religious contexts, revelations, or impact. Henry de Vocht, *John Dantiscus and his Netherlandish Friends* (Louvain: W. Vandermeulen, 1961).

60 This subject has been explored most thoroughly by Erika Rummel in *The Confessionalization of Humanism in Reformation Germany*, as well as in her other works and the works of several other authors in the past two decades. Her main contention is that while scholars for decades have examined the
in the Low Countries and later in Poland-Lithuania was based on both his employment of humanist epistolary networks to engage in counter-reforming dialogue and his use of humanist texts to combat reform on the ground across Central Europe, both personally and via surrogates.

This process started with the expansion of his regional humanist networks. From Augsburg, Charles and the imperial entourage had trudged across western Germany to Cologne and then across Burgundy to Brussels, the Habsburg capital of the Seven Provinces. Once inside the double stone walls of the imperial city, dominated by the towering, newly-completed, gothic Church of St. Michael and St. Gudula, Dantiscus set up his residence and ambitiously entered into correspondence with dozens of humanist contacts across Central Europe. One of the first was Eobanus Hessus, with whom he had long been familiar but had met in person only four months earlier in Augsburg. Hessus was a widely-known neo-Latinist and professor of classics and history, whose career was split between the Universities of Erfurt and Nuremberg. Their epistolary exchanges would last until 1540, and their friendly but competitive work with poetry as

Influence of humanism on religious reform, they have overlooked the influence of reform on the application of humanist principles. In the 1520s and especially 1530s, well before the traditional period of “confessionalization” as defined by Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard, intellectual figures in Germany developed and applied humanist tropes and texts to various polemical confessional purposes, utilizing humanism as a tool for religious arguments that had already been delineated. This intellectual confessionalization preceded the political and social confessionalization that would dominate the second half of the sixteenth century, particularly following the determinations of the Peace of Augsburg in 1555. Rummel focuses her analysis on humanism in German lands. A careful examination of Dantiscus’s activities in the Low Countries in 1531-1532 reveals a similar intention and process in his interactions with Netherlandish humanists, which he would develop systematically and then bear back to Poland-Lithuania in his much anticipated return in summer 1532. Although he would relinquish much of his reliance on humanist materials and principles in his later composition during his episcopacy, the spirit of this confessionalization of intellectual activity would nonetheless pervade his work after 1532. Erika Rummel, The Confessionalization of Humanism in Germany (Oxford: OUP, 2000), 3-8.
well as with drinking Gdańsk spirits became quite notorious among their peers.\textsuperscript{61} Dantiscus’s most consequential new contact was Johannes Campensis, a theologian and philologist at the University of Louvain known for his translations of Scripture and especially his work in Hebrew. They began exchanging letters and literary work frequently in spring 1531 and continued until Campensis’s death in 1538. None but the last of Dantiscus’s sent letters have survived, but much can be gleaned from the almost three dozen extant letters penned by the Dutchman, as well as the texts that he sent to Dantiscus for review. They built an intimacy and trust, which spawned more connections through Campensis’ scholarly network,\textsuperscript{62} and Campensis even accompanied Dantiscus to Poland in 1532.\textsuperscript{63} Most famous among Dantiscus’s Dutch contacts was Desiderius Erasmus. Alfonso de Valdés had likely introduced the pair via correspondence in the mid-1520s,\textsuperscript{64} but Dantiscus’s budding relationships with other Dutch scholars and his avid promotion of Erasmus’ works intensified their relationship.\textsuperscript{65} Dantiscus would use several of Erasmus’ texts for reforming purposes after his return to Prussia. Of their letters only a solitary draft remains extant, but the secondary evidence for their friendship and exchange is abundant.\textsuperscript{66} The greatest personal impact on Dantiscus

\textsuperscript{61} Vocht, \textit{John Dantiscus}, 61.

\textsuperscript{62} Vocht, \textit{John Dantiscus}, 66-8. Campensis was his humanist moniker, a transliteration of his Dutch name Jan van Campen.


\textsuperscript{64} Axer and Skolimowska, \textit{Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Alfonso de Valdés}, 29.

\textsuperscript{65} Vocht, \textit{John Dantiscus}, 104-106.

\textsuperscript{66} Vocht, \textit{John Dantiscus}, 104-110; Wit, “Joannes Dantiscus and the Netherlands,” 27-43; Axer and Skolimowska, \textit{Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Alfonso de Valdés}, 46-63.
came from the Flemish imperial counselor Cornelis de Schepper, one of Charles’ most accomplished diplomats. Their correspondence began in 1525 after they had met at the Spanish court, and they would remain close friends and regular correspondents until Dantiscus’s death. There were dozens of other new and renewed contacts for Dantiscus during this period as well, all of whom pulled him into their scholarly circles.

The most amusing illustration of Dantiscus’s connections and reputation among Netherlandish humanists in the early 1530s was his participation in their excited exchange of artistic likenesses and other gifts. It is unclear whether Dantiscus was accustomed to the practice of exchanging likenesses prior to his residence in the Low Countries, but he quickly became used to it. Having been acquainted for less than a month, on 31 March Campensis already thanked Dantiscus for sending a likeness of himself, although he regretted that it was in silk rather than in lead. Dantiscus must have responded attentively and liberally, for on 27 April Campensis again thanked him for the additional leaden picture as well as for a gift of gold coins from different realms of Europe. On that same day, another Netherlandish humanist Conradus Goclenius wrote in gratitude to Dantiscus for his kind words and enclosed an effigy of their mutual friend Erasmus painted by Hans Holbein. Dantiscus would cherish this painting and thereafter hang it in his residences—town houses in the Low Countries and castles in

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68 Vocht, John Dantiscus, 62-141.

69 Ioannes Campensis to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 31, 1531, Louvain, CIDT&C.

70 Ioannes Campensis to Ioannes Dantiscus, April 27, 1531, Louvain, CIDT&C.

71 Conradus Goclenius to Ioannes Dantiscus, April 27, 1531, Louvain, CIDT&C.
Prussia. He gratefully responded to Goclenius and asked about Erasmus’ age in the portrait. Goclenius could not answer that question but derived great pleasure from the Prussian’s enjoyment of the gift. He returned praise for the leaden likeness of Dantiscus sent to Campensis and requested one for himself. They continued to discuss the remarkable effigy of Erasmus throughout the spring. The showpiece of all of these interactions was the series of exchanges made directly between Dantiscus and Erasmus. Dantiscus sent a leaden likeness of himself to Erasmus, and in gratitude Erasmus dedicated his 1532 translation of Basil the Great’s *De Spirito Sancto* to the Prussian bishop. Erasmus then went out of his way to acquire a small plaster bust of Dantiscus, which he famously kept in his study. These exchanges indicate how ingratiated Dantiscus was in this community of leading humanist scholars, and thus how genuine and meaningful were their candid religious discussions, which from the outset proceeded intensely.

The confessional nature of all of these relationships revealed itself in their correspondence rather quickly. Especially evident was Dantiscus’s mounting reputation as an anti-Protestant scholar and prelate and his humanist correspondents’ encouragement of his pursuits. Two letters in particular speak to the severity of his


73 Conradus Goclenius to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 12, 1531, Louvain, CIDT&C.

74 Conradus Goclenius to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 2, 1531, Louvain, CIDT&C.


77 Segel, *Renaissance Culture in Poland*, 178.
views, the range of people familiar with them, and their general acceptance among his humanist contacts. The first of these letters was written by Hessus on 4 April 1531. Responding from Nuremberg to an earlier—now lost—letter from Dantiscus, Hessus wrote:

I come to that part of your letter in which you write that for me to live here [in Nuremberg] amidst this [Lutheran] tragedy is not much to my advantage. O my Dantiscus, I perceive and understand well enough the tragedy of which you speak, but who will liberate me from this tragedy? Who will turn me from a tragic actor into a comic one? It must follow that you recognize, by way of these people and conditions and customs amongst which I have fallen, that it is compulsory for me, as if I were Ixion bound to the [flaming, spinning] wheel, to turn, revolve, and be carried off and rolled over to wherever the impetus of measured fate drives all things. Certainly this is clear to you, for in this place and concerning these subjects our voices are by no means free.78

After engaging Protestant leaders at the Diet of Augsburg, Dantiscus was no more sympathetic to populations who indulged in evangelical reform. In fact, he perceived the perseverance of Lutheran reformers and reform as a great tragedy. Likely viewing himself as an experienced authority on evangelical matters, he was bold enough to instruct Hessus—an erudite Erasmian well-acquainted with Lutheranism—to take better stock of his own situation and pursue either a remedy for or an escape from evangelical reform. Hessus acknowledged Dantiscus’s knowledge and experience, not only with evangelical reform in general but also with his particular situation in Nuremberg. He despaired, however, that the inertia of reform was so great and that it seemed so irreversible as to be considered fate. As one should expect, the humanist shared this frustration in the form of a classical metaphor—that of Ixion, who after offending the gods was bound to a fiery wheel that spun across the heavens for all eternity.

78 Helius Eobanus Hesses to Ioannes Dantiscus, April 4, 1531, Nuremberg, CIDT&C.
Another even more revealing exchange was a letter written to Dantiscus by Campensis a couple of weeks later. It contained clear indication of either the two scholars’ fast intimacy or Dantiscus’s growing international reputation as a critic of evangelical reform, or more likely both. That indication was Campensis’ recommendation of his colleague Jean Maquet, a promoter of the University of Louvain who also served the Roman Inquisition.79 On 18 April, Campensis wrote a letter to Dantiscus in which he included the postscript:

This Maquet, who will deliver this letter to you, is a hammer of evil men, especially of the Lutherans, whom he pursues with such hatred that he could hardly be tempered even by Christ himself. In fact once he even publicly threw a New Testament into the fire together with other Lutheran books. If you are not loaded down with too many guests, I beg that you invite him once to your table and you will not find him ungenial but rather a boon companion, especially if once and again you greet him with your drinking cup!80

Either Dantiscus’s abhorrence for evangelical reform had preceded him to the Low Countries, or he had earlier expressed it in his own letters to Campensis. Whether it was intentional or not, Dantiscus was becoming known internationally for his opposition to evangelical reform, and it seems unlikely that he disapproved of or discouraged this reputation. Rather it became an important element of his professional and social engagement in settings across Central Europe. It apparently was a predominant facet of his relationships with Netherlandish humanists and here earned him a drinking companion more to his liking than Luther himself had been in 1523.81

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79 Vocht, John Dantiscus, 66-74.
80 Ioannes Campensis to Ioannes Dantiscus, April 18, 1531, Louvain, CIDT&C.
81 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, August 8, 1523, Cracow, CIDT&C.
Beyond expanding his epistolary networks and accumulating anti-Protestant contacts, Dantiscus’s participation in the confessionalization of humanism during his time in the Low Countries was evident in his scholarly, literary, and diplomatic exchanges. Indeed, his exchanges with fellow humanists came to reflect his mobilization toward formally combating evangelical reform across Central Europe. Ironically, one of his preferred weapons in this conflict was biblical humanism, which itself had drawn vehement opposition from the Catholic Church. Sixteenth-century humanists who retranslated, reworked, or commented on Scripture often drew the ire of the Church, which claimed ultimate interpretive authority of Scripture and saw any alternative to that authority as akin to Protestant dissention. Many of the more famous Netherlandish humanists, even ones considered to be orthodox, had made their names through biblical humanism, and yet the Church was determined to monitor and limit their publication. Despite this conflict, Dantiscus saw popular works of biblical humanism by orthodox Catholics as assets in the struggle against evangelical reform, and he would invoke relevant authors and texts throughout his episcopal career, as will be described in more detail in Chapter 5. During his sojourn in the Low Countries, however, he did not shy away from patronizing and utilizing humanist authors and texts that he found advantageous to upholding orthodoxy, even if he was out of step with Church officials in Rome.

One of the best examples of this activity was his series of literary exchanges with scholar of Hebrew Johannes Campensis. In early spring 1531, Campensis began

sending drafts of his exegetical work on Scripture for Dantiscus to review. As early as 7 March, the Dutchman promised to send an early draft of his translation of and commentary on the *Psalms*, and he regretted not being able to send his *Ecclesiastes*, which had been prohibited under an imperial edict contrived by anti-Erasmian counsellors. Dantiscus would go to great lengths to lift this edict at court. On 16 April, however, Campensis did in fact send both of these texts to Dantiscus. Campensis contrasted his work with that of the supposedly more heretical Martin Bucer of Strasbourg, in order to exonerate himself. Within just a few days, Campensis again wrote to confirm that Dantiscus had received these texts, for the *Psalms* were not yet published or public and should have been guarded carefully. Dantiscus reviewed them and responded with extensive comments, accompanied by some of his own poetry for Campensis’ enjoyment. Unfortunately, Dantiscus’s edits and comments are no longer extant themselves, but Campensis was effusive in his gratitude and pledged to send the entirety of his work on the Psalms when it had been completed. For the next year, Campensis and Dantiscus exchanged letters and texts and often discussed their friendship and literary contributions with third parties.

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83 Ioannes Campensis to Ioannes Dantiscus, 7 March, 1531, Louvain, CIDT&C.

84 Wit, “Joannes Dantiscus and the Netherlands,” 27-43.

85 Ioannes Campensis to Ioannes Dantiscus, April 16, 1531, Louvain, CIDT&C. Bucer began preaching in support of several evangelical causes in the early 1520s, particularly against clerical celibacy. By the Diet of Augsburg he supported approaches to reform that attempted to reconcile the ideas of Zwingli and Luther. By the early 1530s the openness of Strasbourg’s magistrates to several alternative approaches to reform had enticed Anabaptist groups as well, and soon Bucer had to balance persecuting Anabaptists and purifying the city while also defending Zwingli’s beliefs about the Eucharist to the leaders of the recently-consolidated Lutheran confession. Brady, *German Histories*, 175-9, 204, 216-20.

86 Ioannes Campensis to Ioannes Dantiscus, April 18, 1531, Louvain, CIDT&C.

87 Ioannes Campensis to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 12, 1531, Louvain, CIDT&C.
published his *Enchiridion Psalmorum* in May 1532, he wrote a dedicatory letter to Dantiscus praising him for his support and contributions.\(^{89}\)

The confessional nature of this series of literary exchanges was multifold. Independent of Dantiscus, Campensis was himself interested in Pope Clement VII’s contemporaneous initiative to produce a new translation of the Old Testament, one that would reinforce Catholic scriptural interpretation in light of recent Protestant challenges.\(^{90}\) His work with the *Psalms* was agreeable with this project and thus was an example of the use of biblical humanist approaches for confessional purposes. Dantiscus not only desired to review this work, but in fact he contributed to the final draft, albeit to an undeterminable extent. Additionally, Campensis explicitly contrasted his work with that of a notorious Protestant leader, Martin Bucer, in order to justify his exegesis to Dantiscus. This was an overtly confessional argument, which adhered to an inherently anti-Protestant position. Furthermore, following his introduction to Campensis’ work, Dantiscus’s own compositions in ensuing years would draw more from scriptural interpretation than from classical tropes and models. Campensis may even have inspired or instigated this turn.\(^{91}\) The bishop’s work would be tailored for reforming purposes, as will be seen in Chapter 5. Strengthening their connection, in 1532 Campensis would accompany Dantiscus even back to Poland, where Piotr Tomicki

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\(^{91}\) Segel, *Renaissance Culture in Poland*, 180-1.
welcomed the Dutchman and facilitated his entry into teaching and publishing at the University of Cracow.\footnote{Wit, “Joannes Dantiscus and the Netherlands,” 27-43.}

Alongside his literary exchanges, Dantiscus continued to perform his diplomatic duties while residing in the Low Countries, but his activities increasingly took on a confessional edge. In reports to his royal patrons in Poland-Lithuania, Central Europe’s volatile religious matters garnered much more attention. As befit a bishop whose own diocese was being riven by evangelical reform in his absence, and whose king was at least nominally opposed to the Protestant Reforms, these reports were detailed and sharply critical of Protestants. Dantiscus railed against the “schismatic and disobedient” imperial princes and electors who were complicating or imperiling vital administrative processes across Habsburg territory.\footnote{Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, January 13, 1531, Aachen, CIDT&C.} He also sent a detailed description of the debate over religious authority that was roiling politics and papal relations in England. He explicitly sympathized with English humanists, such as Thomas More, who wanted measured reform in the Church but with respect for orthodox doctrine. He could not, however, support King Henry’s justification for antagonizing the papacy, instead condemning those who sought to undermine or supplant the apostolic authority.\footnote{Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, May 19, 1531, Ghent, CIDT&C.} Dantiscus kept King Sigismund abreast of the continuing imperial negotiations with Lutheran princes, hoping for a peaceful resolution to the schism that would not challenge the Church’s authority further.\footnote{Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, June 15, 1531, Ghent, CIDT&C.} Apparently, Lutheran princes were
sending representatives continuously to the Emperor either to challenge, soften, or delay the restrictions and repercussions determined at the Diet of Augsburg. Dantiscus described any type of opposition to the Protestants as commendable.96

In his letters to the king from the Low Countries, Dantiscus also provided several specific examples of admirable approaches to suppressing evangelical reform. Despite the administrative difficulties caused by the often-uncooperative Frisian lord Junker Balthasar, Dantiscus praised him for subduing “Lutherans and Zwinglians in all their perversity” in Frisia. He also singled out the reportedly-absurd offenses of the Anabaptists. The was his first explicit mention of radical reformers. He wrote:

Concerning this new sect in Germany, which permits neither baptism nor public opinion of the Word of God nor the other sacraments, but to this point is threatening no more than a dream or an apparition, I know that Your Majesty has already considered [the problem]. It is a remarkable strike at God, who grants so much authority to the impure souls in men, yet I see no one like this at the court of the Emperor, who provides for very many. But then again our hearts cannot but be concealed.97

Either through the sophistication of his religious perspective or the nuance required for imperial diplomacy, Dantiscus began to distinguish different Protestant reformers more finely during this transitional period than he had before. He certainly criticized Zwingli and his reform efforts in Zurich more explicitly. Eventually he reveled quite gruesomely in Zwingli’s defeat in the Second War of Kappel. In late October Dantiscus wrote to Sigismund:

Today there came new word that recently the Swiss [cantons] fiercely waged war amongst themselves, and those Zwinglians, who hold such great contempt for the sacrament of the Eucharist, were overcome in a

96 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 20, 1531, Brussels, CIDT&C.
97 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 20, 1531, Brussels, CIDT&C.
great slaughter by those who preserve and protect true faith in Christ and the ceremonies and institutions of our holy fathers…Zwingli himself, while still living, was torn into a thousand pieces.98

This victory for the Catholic Swiss cantons was celebrated widely, although Zwingli had never been considered as dangerous as Luther in the estimation of the imperial court or the Papacy.99 But Dantiscus enthusiastically feted and publicized any victory over Protestant reformers, cities, or armies, either on behalf of the Empire or the Church.

The confessionalization of humanism was a complex process that developed across Central Europe in the 1520s and 1530s. It became most evident following the momentous decisions of the Diet of Augsburg, particularly in the German lands of the Empire where it served as a possible solution to political and religious conflicts that were numerous and volatile.100 It also extended into neighboring territories, however, and Dantiscus’s professional activities provide an invaluable, albeit limited, lens into that process in the Low Countries. Having settled on such a firm anti-Protestant stance in Augsburg, he immediately applied his new knowledge and position to his relationships, diplomatic duties, and literary work, most of which were couched in his vibrant humanist network. The result was a series of humanist exchanges in the Low Countries that were undeniably confessional. They championed a Catholic victory in the Christian schism

98 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 22, 1531, Brussels, CIDT&C.
99 Zwingli and his followers in Zurich had not been satisfied with their first political agreements with neighboring Catholic cantons. After they again made moves to isolate and convert by force those cantons in autumn 1531, a combined Catholic army advanced on Zurich in order to resist. After his forces were routed near the monastery at Kappel, Zwingli and a small detachment attempted to regroup and stave off defeat. They were overwhelmed, and Zwingli himself fell and was torn apart by enemy troops. Although Zwingli had been more of a regional concern for Swiss Catholics than labeled by the Pope as a threat to all of Christendom, like Martin Luther, Catholic factions nonetheless celebrated his fall and the decapitation of one of the more radical evangelical reform movements. MacCulloch, The Reformation, 171-2.
100 Rummel, The Confessionalization of Humanism, 121-49.
and encouraged the persecution of Protestants. Dantiscus’s humanist friends and colleagues seemed at least to entertain his pursuits and at most to indulge and patronize them. The humanist milieu in the Low Countries ultimately provided an important testing ground for Dantiscus’s anti-Protestant pursuits, especially considering the similarly-humanist and religiously-riven settings in Poland-Lithuania to which he would return.

**Publishing alongside Valdés**

While religious arguments and positions formed a growing dimension of his professional duties and activities in the early 1530s, Dantiscus seized any opportunity to project his voice to larger swaths of the Christian population. One vital outlet was his continued work with Alfonso de Valdés—now imperial Grand Chancellor in the wake of Mercurino Gattinara’s death—writing and publishing polemical texts. As described in Chapter 3, Valdés often had sought Dantiscus’s input on Latin propaganda texts being produced by the imperial chancellery. Even before the Diet of Augsburg, Dantiscus typically had received free rein in editing sections of these texts that concerned the evangelical reform movement, due to his personal experiences with reformers and the varied effects of their efforts. His colleagues sought his erudite input. Dantiscus’s collaboration with Valdés in the chancellery continued uninterrupted until his friend’s death in 1532, but it took on heightened religious significance in light of what they had observed in Augsburg in the summer and autumn of 1530. Thereafter, Dantiscus took advantage of his platform to express his views widely and influence religious discussions across Central Europe.

This religious dimension of his literary work emerged almost immediately. In early November 1530, Valdés requested Dantiscus’s input on his text *Pro religio Christiana*
res gestae in Comitiis Augustae Vindelicorum habitis anno Domini 1530, a description of the Diet of Augsburg written from an imperial perspective. Valdés first wrote to Dantiscus, "I ask that you and master Cornelis [de Schepper], if he is present, read this [text] and remove, change or add whatever you deem necessary. You know how lowly I value my own and how highly your judgment, and not without cause." Within a few days Valdés sent him a second letter asking him to correct the text, emphasizing that for the moment it was to be kept secret. As with Dantiscus’s earlier editorial work, we do not know exactly what contributions or edits he made. The text’s contents, however, likely reflected his opinions quite strongly given that he had free editorial rein and that Valdés had been somewhat marginalized for the latter part of the diet.

In fact, sections of Pro religio Christiana quite closely mirror Dantiscus’s own descriptions of the diet that he had written privately to Polish patrons months earlier, and portray less the sympathetic and irenic views of Valdés. The text described most of the formal deliberations in language consistently privileging the imperial and Catholic positions, and championed established Catholic authorities. It relegated the distinct Protestant groups together as “the other to” or “the opponents of” the Catholic faction. According to the author, the Protestants—particularly the Lutherans—professed falsehoods and half-truths, beliefs that were “contrary to our own” and that could not compete with the reason or evidence provided by Catholic theologians. The text read, “each day the Lutherans showed themselves to be more stubborn and demonstrated

101 Axer and Skolimowska, Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Alfonso de Valdés, 41-2, 52. Translation by A. Skolimowska.

102 Alfonso de Valdés to Ioannes Dantiscus, October 31-November 6 1530, Augsburg, CIDT&C.

that there was no hope to be had in pursuing their compliance,” language that sounds remarkably like Dantiscus’s own from his correspondence and contrasts with Valdés’s approach to the negotiations.\textsuperscript{104} Dantiscus’s specific contributions to the text cannot be known, but its closeness to his own professed views is clear and his consultation on its final drafting is well-established. Acknowledging that he played a significant part in its production, \textit{Pro religio Christiana} reveals how quickly and publicly he came to command an important religious opinion and voice in Central Europe, in part because of his unabashedly anti-Protestant stance. Prior to 1530, he had collected some of the most varied and impactful experiences with evangelical reform of anyone in Christendom. His peers and superiors had sought his opinion on religious issues in certain settings, but his participation in public religious discourse had been somewhat limited. Then he became a bishop and seized the opportunity to observe closely the Diet of Augsburg. He came to know its events, participants, arguments, and decisions from a position of religious authority. When Valdés offered him a chance to exercise his voice publicly soon afterward, Dantiscus did not hesitate. By way of \textit{Pro religio Christiana}, he helped shape the official and public imperial memory of the diet’s proceedings and decisions, which the chancellery then disseminated to imperial subjects. His contributions were highly critical of Protestants and reflected his eagerness for their suppression.

Another published text from this period that reflected Dantiscus’s production of religious polemic was \textit{Victoria Serenissimi Poloniae Regis contra Vayeuodam Muldauiae Turcae tributarium et subditum 22 Augusti parta 1531}, written and printed in three languages—Latin, Dutch, French—in autumn 1531. Unlike his previous literary

\textsuperscript{104} Alfonso de Valdés, \textit{Obra Completa}, ed. Ángel Alcalá, 229-40.
work at the imperial court, for this text Dantiscus was the primary author. In it he portrayed the Polish military victory at the Battle of Obertyn, by means of which the Crown of Poland seized the region of Pokutia in modern southwestern Ukraine from the Principality of Moldavia, ruled by Voivode Petru Rareş. Despite the facts that this battle was the latest salvo in a long-standing political conflict between Poland and Moldavia, that Poland was the aggressor, and that Moldavians were predominantly Orthodox Christians, Dantiscus composed the text as a polemic against the “enemies of our religion,” by which he meant the Ottomans. Counselors at the imperial court had sought an example of a great victory by Christians over non-Christians to publicize, and he further saw it as an opportunity to defend King Sigismund’s handling of diplomatic and military relations with the Ottoman Empire, even if he had to fabricate the context. Dantiscus neglected the Moldavians Orthodoxy, did not mention Sigismund’s recent diplomatic arrangements with Sultan Suleiman, and implied that Rareş was a Muslim vassal of the Ottomans. Even the text’s title—“…contra Vayeuodam Muldauiae Turcae tributarium et subditum” or “…against the Voivode of Moldavia, tributary and subordinate of the Turks”—promoted this false portrayal. In Dantiscus’s fabricated context, the Christians had achieved a great victory through which they wrested lands and souls from heathen oppressors. Valdés later praised Sigismund for this reason, emphasizing the King’s virtue as a holy and prudent monarch fighting on behalf of Christendom. He prayed to God that the Poles would achieve victory over Christendom’s other enemies, including the internal ones—i.e. Protestant reformers—who were causing such strife in Central Europe.105 It is plain that Dantiscus took

105 Alfonso de Valdés to Ioannes Dantiscus, August 22-September 24, 1531, Brussels, CIDT&C; Ioannes
advantage of his colleagues’—and perhaps his own—ignorance of political conflicts to the East for polemical purposes. He seized an opportunity to embellish his king’s role as a noble, Christian warrior-prince and to build up his own reputation as an informed courtier.

Dantiscus’s growing voice in public religious debates, and subsequently his wide-ranging approach to reform in Royal Prussia, owed much to the support of Valdés. Despite their slightly different approaches to negotiating matters in Augsburg, they maintained a warm and stimulating friendship and active literary collaboration, including on religious topics, until the Grand Chancellor died in autumn 1532. In late September of that year, Valdés contracted the plague while the court was in Vienna, and he remained behind in order to recover while the Emperor fled to cleaner environs. Valdés succumbed to the disease and died on 6 October, and his attendants buried him in St. Stephen’s Cathedral. After reading the news in mid-November, Dantiscus wrote a moving epitaph that he requested be placed over the tomb. Their relationship had been as intimate, fruitful, and influential as any other in his life. Valdés had drawn out and emboldened Dantiscus’s religious expertise and political voice, and he had provided a wide audience for the envoy’s polemical texts. Dantiscus’s influence at the imperial court, his ability to articulate complex issues in poetry and prose for diverse audiences, his access to abundant readers, his familiarity with people and information at the Diet of Augsburg, his opportunities to network with humanist leaders, his sense of intellectual and religious authority, and his charge into public religious debates were all

Dantiscus to Esteban Gabriel Marino, September 24, 1531, Brussels, CIDT&C; Axer and Skolimowska, Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Alfonso de Valdés, 59-60.

106 Axer and Skolimowska, Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Alfonso de Valdés, 42-3, 63-9.
in some part a product of his relationship with Valdés. During this transitional period in his career, Dantiscus took much from their relationship and used Valdés’s support to become a formidable public proponent of anti-Protestant positions.

**Cranmer as a Strange Bedfellow**

As Dantiscus’s diplomatic duties abroad came to a close in 1532, he had a significant encounter that provided a fittingly unique end to his foreign travels and an appropriate push into his domestic episcopal career. This encounter was the initiation of his deep but star-crossed friendship with Thomas Cranmer during his three-month residence at the Diet of Regensburg. Cranmer was an increasingly influential English humanist and statesman serving as King Henry VIII’s representative to the diet, as well as more famously the future great reformer of the Church of England. The significance of his relationship with Dantiscus to reform in Central Europe would not appear until years later and will be a topic of Chapter 7, but its beginning in 1532 is an important signifier of Dantiscus’s intellectual and professional development. In late spring, the Polish envoy accompanied the imperial court to Regensburg, the ancient and colorful free imperial city in northeastern Bavaria. It was the easternmost that Dantiscus had traveled in almost eight years. Serendipitously, he also received most welcome news almost immediately upon his arrival. On 6 April, he opened separate letters from King Sigismund and Vice Chancellor Piotr Tomicki, which together confirmed his final recall back to Cracow for his consecration as bishop of Chelmno and permanent positioning in Royal Prussia. Some stimulating interactions at the diet awaited first, however.

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107 Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus, February 17, 1532, Cracow, CIDT&C; Piotr Tomicki to Ioannes Dantiscus, February 18, 1532, Cracow, CIDT&C.
Less monumental than the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, the 1532 Diet of Regensburg still addressed urgent problems facing the Empire, particularly political and military conflicts with the Ottoman Empire and other European polities. Dantiscus’s role on behalf of King Sigismund was typical—observe and report on diplomatic relations and decisions, especially those concerning the Turks.\textsuperscript{108} In contrast, Cranmer’s assignment on behalf of King Henry was manifold and rather difficult. Henry expected his envoy to renew the treaty guaranteeing protected trade between England and the Low Countries, to keep the Emperor hopeful of English contributions to the fight against the Turks without committing to any actual expense, and to encourage Lutheran princes surreptitiously to continue resisting imperial subjugation despite the English Crown’s own persecution of Lutherans. Even with Cranmer’s best efforts, negotiations with imperial authorities on these topics proved to be unpleasant. His company in Regensburg was not entirely disappointing, however, for it was there that Cranmer befriended Dantiscus.\textsuperscript{109}

Cranmer and Dantiscus quickly became friends and argumentative sparring partners. Like many other humanists and courtiers before him, Cranmer found intellectual eagerness, common interest, sharp wit, and genuine companionship in Dantiscus. They both operated in positions of privilege at the imperial court and often found themselves collaborating, even though they did not see eye-to-eye on many issues. Dantiscus had visited England in 1522 and was familiar with many of Cranmer’s

\textsuperscript{108} Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, April 16, 1532, Regensburg, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, April 18, 1532, Regensburg, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 7, 1532, Regensburg, CIDT&C.

colleagues, friends, and opponents there. Meanwhile, Cranmer was investigating the
players, processes, and results of evangelical reform on behalf of his patrons in
England. Dantiscus had been observing and evaluating religious reform in imperial
lands for almost fourteen years, and so he was anxious to discuss and debate
Cranmer’s first direct encounters with reform on the continent. Cranmer’s previous stop
on the journey to Regensburg had been Nuremberg,¹¹⁰ which the previous year
Dantiscus had warned his own friend Eobanus Hessus to abandon to the Lutherans.¹¹¹
At the diet, the two humanist diplomats argued playfully about papal authority, and
Dantiscus even chided Cranmer about clerical marriage¹¹²—whether Dantiscus
mentioned his own mistress and children back in Spain is unknown.

The two scholars built a deep mutual respect, made evident by three particular
episodess. First, prior to leaving Regensburg Dantiscus entrusted a Lithuanian youth
from his own entourage to Cranmer in order to provide the boy with a well-rounded
humanist education and upbringing in England. Their diverging religious views were
already known to each other at the time,¹¹³ so Dantiscus was overlooking the faults that
he identified in Cranmer’s religiosity out of respect for the Englishman’s erudition and
integrity. Second, Cranmer personally escorted Dantiscus down to the banks of the
Danube when the Polish envoy was boarding his boat to travel eastward back to Poland
later that summer. This gesture made a strong impression on Dantiscus, and they both

¹¹¹ Helius Eobanus Hesses to Ioannes Dantiscus, April 4, 1531, Nuremberg, CIDT&C.
¹¹² MacCulloch, Thomas Cranmer, 73.
¹¹³ For a discussion of Cranmer’s religious beliefs and participation in reform, see the longer section in
Chapter 7.
lamented parting after so brief an encounter.\textsuperscript{114} Third, several months after Dantiscus’s departure, Cranmer wrote to him from Vienna. The English envoy extended effusive compliments to Dantiscus and assured him that the work of foreign envoys at the imperial court was quite miserable without his charm and proclivity for socializing.\textsuperscript{115} Diarmaid MacCulloch has suggested this may have been a continuation of Cranmer’s attempts to recruit the Polish ambassador into a political alliance against the Empire and the Papacy. Even if that is an exaggeration, the diplomats’ mutual affinity was palpable. They admired each other and sought to gain from their intellectual companionship, even when they each acknowledged their disagreement over political and religious matters.\textsuperscript{116}

Although they would never again meet in person, Dantiscus’s epistolary relationship with Thomas Cranmer would last until at least 1540.\textsuperscript{117} Cranmer’s role in the Reformations would ever be on Dantiscus’s mind, and the handful of letters that they exchanged would reveal much about his perspective on religious reform, all of which will be discussed in Chapter 7. Their relationship would be one of the most consequential fruits of his participation at the Diet of Regensburg in 1532, though. More


\textsuperscript{115} Thomas Cranmer to Ioannes Dantiscus, October 6, 1532, Vienna, CIDT&C.


\textsuperscript{117} Ioannes Dantiscus to Thomas Cranmer, September 1, 1540, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
broadly, their interactions illustrated some important qualities of this transitional phase of Dantiscus’s career. Even as—and indeed after—he prepared to return to Prussia permanently as a Catholic bishop with a counter-reforming agenda, Dantiscus continued to engage with intellectual, religious, and political leaders of all stripes in order to maintain open dialogue, exchange, and understanding. His writings since the Diet of Augsburg made clear his animosity toward Protestantism, but he still remained focused on bringing Protestants back to the Roman Church through candid argumentation. He also harbored little ill will against reformers personally and enjoyed his relationships with supposed heretics. Each of these qualities would be central to his episcopal administration in Prussia, and through him central to broader relations across Central Europe. In summer 1532, however, he was able finally to culminate his eight-year mission abroad and return to Poland-Lithuania for good in order to combat the Reformation there. In mid-July, with Cranmer waving from the docks along the Danube, Dantiscus boarded a boat and set off downstream on his last journey across the eastern reaches of the Habsburg Monarchy.  

**Homecoming, Ordination, and Consecration**

Dantiscus’s return to Poland-Lithuania was a long-anticipated and welcome event for him as well as for many of his colleagues and friends there. It was also a relief to religious and secular authorities concerned about the state of the Church in Prussia. Firmly opposed to evangelical reform but engaged with diverse religious communities across Christendom, Dantiscus was eager to take up the administration of his diocese

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118 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund von Herberstein, July 16, 1532, Sitzendorf an der Schmida, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Thomas Cranmer, October 15, 1536, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
in order to identify and suppress Protestantism among his flock. He had the knowledge, 
tools, experience, and disposition to assume this responsibility. After a month on the 
rivers and roads of Austria, Moravia, and Silesia, he arrived in Cracow at the end of 
July, where he would remain for several weeks before traveling northward to Royal 
Prussia. Then in late September, he took up residence in the bishop’s castle in the 
small town of Lubawa, Chełmno Land’s picturesque episcopal capital located on a wide 
hill on the placid Sandela River, near the northeastern border with the Duchy of 
Prussia. He wasted no time establishing himself as the religious authority in the 
territory.

From Lubawa, Dantiscus immediately set to work organizing his diocesan 
administration, reestablishing connections with political and religious leaders in Prussia, 
and addressing the spread of reform in Chełmno Land, despite being yet neither 
ordained nor consecrated. One of his first initiatives was to make a great effort to meet 
Duke Albrecht in Prabuty in October in order to begin cooperating cordially and 
productively on general Prussian political and religious matters. After a few months, 
Dantiscus already had transplanted to his new environment his reputation for harsh 
opposition to evangelical reform, which his superiors enabled and encouraged. In late 
winter 1533, he sent notice to King Sigismund about a priest promoting heresy in the 
town of Grudziądz in Chełmno Land. Still technically lay and unconsecrated, the bishop-

\[119\] Ioannes Dantiscus to Stanisław Rzeczyca, July 31, 1532, Cracow, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Albrecht Cuon, September 24, 1531, Lubawa, CIDT&C.

\[120\] Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, September 24, 1532, Starogród, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Albrecht I von Hohenzolern-Ansbach, September 30, 1532, Malbork, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, October 8, 1532, Prabuty, CIDT&C.
select requested permission to deal with the situation authoritatively. Sigismund responded with a directive granting wide-ranging permission to Dantiscus, allowing him to handle the issue efficiently in accordance with his proximity, knowledge, and abilities. This episode will appear in more detail in Chapter 5. It will illustrate how the king expected Dantiscus to exercise his full capability in countering evangelical reform, regardless of the formality of his role. Combatting Protestantism was both a strength and duty of Dantiscus in his new position, and that task clearly had informed his selection to the episcopate.

Dantiscus’s ordination as a priest and consecration as a bishop would take several more months to become finalized, however. The first step came in early spring during the week of the Feast of the Annunciation, 25 March. He traveled northeastward to meet Prince-Bishop Mauritius Ferber of Warmia in Braniewo, Warmia’s small but active Hanseatic town located at the fall line of the Pasłęka River, just a few miles from the border with Ducal Prussia. Dantiscus received his orders from the prince-bishop and then remained in Braniewo through the end of Lent. He presided over his first Mass in the wide-naved Church of St. Catherine on Easter. Writing to Queen Bona, he expressed great gratitude for this delayed ordination and explicitly positioned himself in a chain of transnational religious authorities, including the congregation of bishops, the Emperor, and God. He demonstrated due deference to his Polish and Prussian lords

121 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, February 21, 1533, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
122 Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 13, 1533, Cracow, CIDT&C.
123 Zbigniew Nowak, Jan Dantyszek: Portret Renesansowego Humanisty (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1982), 165.
but primarily embraced his role as a churchman in a complex religious landscape.\textsuperscript{124} He was, however, still anxious to complete this professional transition. His consecration as the bishop of Chełmno would come almost six months later on 14 September. It took place in Płock, the ancient capital of the Duchies of Poland and Masovia guarding the central stretch of the Vistula River. It was attended by Dantiscus’s great friend and fellow humanist poet Andrzej Krzycki, the Bishop of Płock. Again writing to Bona several days after the ceremony, Dantiscus gave thanks to God and to the Polish King and Queen and wrote of his eagerness to fulfill his responsibilities to the Crown and Church, especially regarding Royal Prussia’ growing reform movement.\textsuperscript{125}

**A Befitting Vocation**

As newly-consecrated Bishop Johannes Dantiscus of Chełmno sailed down the wide Vistula River from Płock in early autumn 1533, he bore several key attributes that he had developed and honed over the previous fifteen years. For more than a decade, he had confronted evangelical reform in politically-charged settings across Europe, and as a result had acquired a critical, unforgiving conception of “Lutheranism” and a sharp, experienced, and specialized literary voice. His transnational intellectual network, particularly among humanists, was strong and active, and he was equipped to evaluate religious reform in broad social and political contexts, particularly in Central Europe. He also had three years of experience acting in the role of bishop from abroad and observing other ecclesiastical administrations in diverse settings. Finally, he held a firm and fully-formed anti-Protestant disposition in terms of both Christian belief and

\textsuperscript{124} Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, March 26, 1533, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{125} Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, September 19, 1533, Płock, CIDT&C.
practice. While he could interact cordially and productively with Protestants of all statuses, concessions to Protestant demands for reform were anathema to him, as his royal and ecclesiastical patrons were well aware. The Diet of Augsburg had been crucial to this development, but ultimately it was the accumulation of his myriad experiences since departing Poland on his first diplomatic mission in 1518. His approaches to political responses to religious reform, episcopal administration, and ministry were all informed by these experiences, and his reputation as a worldly anti-Protestant prelate often preceded him.

The product of all of these experiences, acquisitions, and attributes, from both Dantiscus’s earlier career and his professional transition drawn out from spring 1530 to summer 1533, was an eclectic, transnational collection of contacts, resources, and ideas all suitable for managing a Catholic diocese and countering evangelical reform. Eager to fulfill and maximize his vocation, Dantiscus would employ this collection diligently during his tenure as a bishop following his consecration in autumn 1533. He would support, promote, and initiate diverse efforts to quell evangelical and radical reform in Prussia as it pervaded his dioceses in various ways, and he would seek counsel and help from colleagues and friends both at home and abroad.
CHAPTER 5
A COSMOPOLITAN EPISCOPACY I: SELF-POSITIONING IN EARLY-REFORMATIONS POLAND-LITHUANIA, 1532-1548

When recently-confirmed Prince-Bishop Johannes Dantiscus of Warmia relocated to his new episcopal capital of Lidzbark Warmiński during the winter of 1537-1538, he found that the “pearl of Warmia” offered an idyllic and promising—even if remote—setting for establishing an international library and humanist salon, his long-held personal desire.¹ Lidzbark’s immaculate brick-gothic Bishop’s Castle occupied a manicured island where the Symarsa tributary fed into the winding Łyna River. Its high tower, elongated outer castle complex, and separate mill island guarded the low-lying shoreline of the brick-walled town, which nestled inside one of the Łyna’s oxbows.

Shallow surrounding ridges cradled Lidzbark within the Prussian plain, and well-traveled roads led outward to some of the most important commercial towns in Central Europe, particularly Toruń, Elbląg, Gdańsk, and Königsberg. Elaborate furnishings, bountiful cellars, and various amenities equipped the castle, and the well-regarded castle school served as a vehicle for both putting intellectual exercises into practice and disseminating orthodox principles more widely.² Dantiscus’s residence thus offered robust cosmopolitan connections as well as beauty, comfort, and privacy for intellectual...
gatherings and musings. And its security virtually was guaranteed in a bishopric dominated politically by the Catholic Church. Unfortunately for Dantiscus, the in-person attendance at his salon in Lidzbark Warmiński would be much less prolific than he intended, despite his numerous invitations to foreign scholars. He would, however, maintain epistolary connections with intellectual leaders far afield throughout his episcopacy. Thus the Bishop’s Castle in Lidzbark would function as an international intellectual center in some capacity.3

Dantiscus’s efforts to construct an expansive library and humanist salon in Lidzbark Warmiński illustrate a crucial component of his episcopacy that shines a light on the nature of his participation in the wider European Reformations. As a well-educated, well-traveled, and well-connected humanist, he viewed scholarship and literary production as a noble, meaningful, and effective way to engage with princes, courtiers, noblemen, scholars, clerics, and all common members of society concerning myriad contemporary issues, both locally and internationally. Literary activities and exchanges, whether they developed in person or through correspondence, became an invaluable part of his professional and personal development. They persisted from his early education through his diplomatic career abroad, and then through his episcopal tenure until the end of his life. Increasingly, though, they came to reflect and address the volatile religious tensions and conflicts in his near and distant purview. This shift inspired new methods and goals in his literary work, especially during his episcopacy. Nonetheless his work continued to be eclectic and transnational. Robust literary activity ultimately created vital connections between his own intellectual development, the

practical reform of his dioceses, religious and political currents in Poland-Lithuania, and the progress of the European Reformations overall, regardless of the measurable impact of that activity among the local population of Prussia.

This chapter will discuss the reforming environment into which bishop-elect Dantiscus entered when he returned to Poland-Lithuania in 1532, as well as how he situated and ensconced himself in that environment by means of polemical literary activity throughout his episcopacy. It begins with a description of how evangelical reform spread widely but inconsistently through the complex polity during the 1520s and became concentrated most strongly in Prussia, where he would serve as a bishop. It continues with an analysis of the overarching way in which Dantiscus sought to influence and shape that reforming environment: producing and disseminating topical, polemical literature. This literature would includ his own compositions as well as texts from notable foreign and domestic writers, some even printed in Gdańsk or Cracow. It would explicate his confessional sensibilities and general ideas about reform. He maintained this literary activity until his death in 1548. It intentionally set the tone for and supported his policies and extensive practical reform program within the Church in Prussia, both of which will be the subject of Chapter 6. Dantiscus’s duties and goals in all of his reforming endeavors—literature, diplomacy, practical reform—explicitly would include stifling Protestantism, revitalizing the Catholic Church, and reinforcing the prestige and authority of the Polish Crown. The experiences, contacts, resources, and skills that he had acquired during his diplomatic career abroad continuously informed his perspective, agenda, and initiatives in these reform efforts, and they made his literary activity and wider reform program notably cosmopolitan. The nature of his
reform efforts reflected in particular his critical construction of “Lutheranism,” his resolute political voice, and his proud sense of Catholic episcopal vocation.

**The Early Reformations in Poland-Lithuania**

The religious environment into which Dantiscus settled as a bishop in 1532 was complex, unique, and significant to a broader Latin Christendom. It constituted an important dimension of the growth of the European Reformations. And while mid-sixteenth-century religious and political developments in Poland-Lithuania are curious and compelling enough by themselves, they also heavily influenced diplomatic relations, princely administration, and confessionalization across Central Europe and the greater Baltic region. Dantiscus’s role, especially as prince-bishop of Warmia beginning in 1537, was integral to this. In order to analyze his episcopal career properly and to evaluate his contribution to religious reform across Europe, thus it is essential to understand the basic narrative of the Reformations in Prussia and Poland-Lithuania, as well as their wider contexts. As discussed in the Introduction, Natalia Nowakowska’s recent monograph *King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther* in particular has been invaluable in this process, as it provided both a thorough narrative of the early Lutheran Reformations in Poland (for her 1517-c.1540) and a comprehensive analysis of the historiography on the subject.⁴

The early Reformations in Poland-Lithuania (defined by myself and others as 1518-1548⁵) proceeded sporadically and inconsistently, in great part due to the union’s

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diverse, large, but sparsely-concentrated population. Qualitatively, though, there is much to consider. As described in Chapter 2, evangelical reform first entered Poland-Lithuania among the German-speaking populations of Royal Prussia’s Hanseatic towns Gdańsk, Elbląg, and Toruń around 1518-1520, which Dantiscus witnessed as a royal envoy. It then spread southward and eastward during the next decade, including into Teutonic Prussia (later the Duchy of Prussia), further described below. Evangelical reform spread as a minority interest in Polish lands, patronized by a few noble families. It typically appealed to German-speaking urbanites but occasionally attracting Polish-speaking and rural adherents. It made inroads even in Polish royal and ecclesiastical cities such as Cracow and Poznań, and it garnered sympathizers among the university faculty in Cracow. Traveling preachers, erudite scholars, correspondence between Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon, and dozens of evangelical reform leaders, and abundant printed texts and pamphlets all stimulated evangelical communities regardless of their size or location. The growth of evangelical reform also reflected social, economic, and political tensions, particularly in denser or more independent urban areas. It resulted in riots and uprisings that challenged established authorities in dozens of towns and alarmed both religious and secular leaders. Evangelical reform persisted in Poland-Lithuania despite preventive and punitive measures taken by King Sigismund, high-ranking members of his court, most of the region’s Catholic bishops, and members of the noble and patrician classes who remained Catholic. These measures included forceful edicts, bans on evangelical materials, violent suppression, polemical literary production, and legal proceedings.\(^6\) In the late 1520s and increasingly during the 1530s,

\(^6\) The early Lutheran Reformation in Poland has received moderate scholarly treatment in Polish and
radical reform groups such as Anabaptists and Mennonites also grew in Poland-Lithuania, particularly along the lower Vistula River and the Baltic coast. Most of their adherents came as migrants from Silesia or the Low Countries, often fleeing persecution by Catholic or magisterial Protestant authorities there. These two trends—contested urban Lutheranism, Anabaptism along the Vistula—dominated the early Protestant Reformations in Poland-Lithuania for almost three decades. Subsequently, German, as well as slight treatment in English, all in a range of journals, anthologies, monographs, and broader histories. There has been much less coverage of this period, however, than the phases of reform following the death of King Sigismund I in 1548. Some more recent publications have assembled terrific summaries and syntheses of the historiography that encourage modern scholars to pose new and compelling questions to an abundant pool of sources that has received somewhat narrow treatment to date. Ideally, such questions will bring out the nuance and complexity of early Polish reform that often goes overlooked or downplayed in the traditional historiography. A comprehensive list is included in the bibliography, but a sampling of some of those newer Anglophone approaches and some older iconic pieces concerning early evangelical reform in Poland includes: Ptaszyński, "The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth," 40-50; Howard Louthan, "A Model for Christendom? Erasmus, Poland and the Reformation," Church History 83 (2014): 18-37; Natalia Nowakowska, "High Clergy and Printers: Anti-Reformation Polemic in the Kingdom of Poland, 1520-1536," Historical Research 87 (2014): 43-64; Agnieszka Madej-Anderson, "Lutherans in Cracow – Contesting the Sacred Topography," in Lutheran Churches in Early Modern Europe, ed. Andrew Spicer (Routledge, 2012), 377-401; Norman Davies, God's Playground: A History of Poland, (Oxford: OUP, 2005); Oskar Bartel, "Filip Melanchton w Polsce," Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce 6 (1961): 73-90; Udo Arnold, "Luther und Danzig," Zeitschrift für Ostforschung 21, no. 1 (1972): 94-121; George H. Williams, "Erasmianism in Poland: An Account and an Interpretation of a Major, Though ever Diminishing, Current in Sixteenth-Century Polish Humanism and Religion, 1518-1605," The Polish Review 22, no. 3 (1977): 3-50; Juliusz Domanski, "Der Einfluss des Erasmianismus und die Reformation in Polen," Acta Poloniae Historica 55 (1987): 41-56; Janusz Tazbir, "Filip Melanchton w pamięci Polaków," Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce 40 (1996): 5-16. The most recent work is Nowakowska's King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther, which follows on the heels of another approach to Lutheranism in Poland from a few years ago: Natalia Nowakowska, "Forgetting Lutheranism: Historians and the Early Reformation in Poland (1517-1548)," Church History and Religious Culture 92 (2012): 281-303. In these publications, Nowakowska argues that evangelical reform, which she gathers under the ambiguous but contemporary term Lutheranism, was far more pervasive during the earliest phase of the Reformations in Poland than most scholars have assumed, and that due to both political realities and different understandings of "orthodoxy," Polish authorities were relatively lenient and passive when it came to persecuting or even excluding Lutherans. Although my argument will challenge hers in some respects, her work provides an excellent modern resource for scholars the Reformations in Poland and Central Europe, both for narrative and historiography.

Reformed Christianity made significant inroads among the region’s nobility during the mid-1540s and became the predominant influence during the height of the Reformations in Poland-Lithuania—the second half of the sixteenth century.\(^8\)

Prior to Dantiscus returning to Poland-Lithuania in 1532 in order to assume his position as bishop of Chełmno, Prussia—where he would serve—in particular underwent a decade of tumultuous and occasionally violent religious and political reform that greatly affected how his role there would develop. As described in Chapter 2, he had witnessed the introduction of evangelical reform to the region in 1519-1521 during the Polish-Teutonic War, and then he served as a royal agent of early ecclesiastical counter-reform in 1523-1524 in Gdańsk, however briefly. After his departure from Gdańsk in 1524, evangelical reform expanded and intensified in that city and the other major towns of Elbląg, Toruń, Chełmno, Grudziądz, Braniewo, and Königsberg. The same qualities that had fostered evangelical reform initially in Royal Prussia—remote bishops, German language and cultural influences, Hanseatic ties, relatively independent governance—continued to enable effective reform throughout the decade. Wealthy citizens and commoners alike demanded varying degrees of augmented control over local affairs, including religious belief, organization, and practice. Lutheran sympathizers became members of city councils and evangelical preachers found audiences inside urban churches. Reform found its way to the countryside as well, although not quite as intensively as to urban populations. Various tensions caused several violent revolts against local, regional, and royal authorities during the mid-1520s, all of which caused great concern for churchmen and statesmen alike. The most

drastic example was the 1525-1526 revolt in Gdańsk, during which residents of the city armed themselves and marched against current civic and church administrators. King Sigismund personally led a small army into the city in order to quell the revolt, and under military occupation he re-imposed royal and Catholic control, at least nominally and for a short while, and exiled the revolt’s leaders. Evangelical preachers, services, and reform efforts continued to proliferate in Prussia, however, and evangelical Christianity became a powerful religious, cultural, and political force in Gdańsk and other towns throughout the region.9

Further exacerbating the evangelical reform movement in Prussia and Poland-Lithuania were the policies and initiatives of Albrecht of Brandenburg-Ansbach, the young Grand Master of the Teutonic Order and nephew of King Sigismund. After settling the temporary Polish-Teutonic ceasefire in 1521, Albrecht began to chart and

9 Early reform in Royal Prussia has been the subject of numerous articles and short monographs, most of them in the German or Polish historiography. There have been only a few new studies in the very recent past, including the work of Natalia Nowakowska. Many of the treatments of reform in this region have focused on local and regional developments without making deep connections to similar events occurring throughout Central Europe, and even without analyzing the diversity of experiences within Prussia. Some of the more focused and notable traditional works on early Prussian reform, although not an exhaustive list, include: A. Borrmann, Ermland und die Reformation, 1523-1772, (Königsberg: 1912); Tadeusz Glemma, Stosunki kościelne w Toruniu w stuleciu XVI-XVII na tle dziejów kościelnych Prus Królewskich (Toruń, 1934); Henryk Zins, Powstanie chłopskie w Prusach Książęcych w 1525 roku. Walki społeczne w Prusach w początkach reformacji i ich geneza (Warszawa: PWN, 1953); T. Cieślak, „Postulaty rewolty pospolita gdańskiego w r. 1525,” Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne 6, no. 1 (Poznań, 1954): 123-52; H. Zins, „Rewolta e Elblagu w r. 1525,” Zapiski Historyczne 22, no. 4 (Toruń, 1956): 7-50; H. Zins, „Aspects of the Peasant Uprising in East Prussia in 1525,” The Slavonic and East European Review 38, no. 90 (Dec. 1959): 178-87; H. Zins, “The Political and Social Background of the Early Reformation in Ermland,” The English Historical Review 75, no. 297 (Oct. 1960): 589-600; E.M. Wermter, “Reformversuche in Ermland vor dem Konzil von Trient,” Zeitschrift für die Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ermlands 29 (1960): 428-37; Walther Hubatsch, Geschichte der evangelischen Kirchen Ostpreussens (Gottingen: 1968); Arnold “Luther und Danzig,” 94-121; Marian Pawlak, Reformacja i kontreformacja w Elblagu w XVI-XVIII wieku (Bydgoszcz: Wydawn. Uczelniowe WSP, 1994); Janusz Małłeć, „Martin Luther und die Reformation in Danzig, im übrigen königlichen Preussen und im herzogtum Preussen,” in Opera Selecta (Toruń: WNUMK, 2011), vol. 1, 509-18; Janusz Małłeć, „Philipp Melanchthon und polnisch-Preußen,” in Opera Selecta (Toruń: WNUMK, 2011), vol. 1, 519-30; Janusz Małłeć, „The Prussian Estates and the Question of Religious Toleration (1500-1800),” in Opera Selecta (Toruń: WNUMK, 2013), vol. 2, 205-14; Janusz Małłeć, Opera Selecta (Toruń: WNUMK, 2013), vol. 4; Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther. See the bibliography for a more complete list of works.
embark on a fascinating course that would disrupt political and religious relations across Central Europe and indeed all of Latin Christendom. First he met and befriended Martin Luther, who quickly gained Albrecht’s ear and convinced him to allow or adopt some evangelical reform in his territory. Thereafter the knights, clergy, and populace of the southern part of Teutonic territory—the part entangled with Royal Prussia—steadily embraced and adopted evangelical reform. Albrecht even began to refer to himself as a Lutheran. The most astounding rupture came in 1525 when Albrecht secularized the southern reaches of the Teutonic State, renounced his position as Grand Master, and declared himself Duke in Prussia as a vassal of the King of Poland, all confirmed by the Treaty of Krakow. This move had enormous consequences, including: alienating the Holy Roman Empire, to which the Teutonic Order was subject in part; alienating the Papacy, which obviously disapproved of losing ecclesiastical territory; drastically shifting the political priorities of Poland, which lost a centuries-old enemy and acquired somewhat of a pariah-vassal; creating in essence the first Protestant state, a major benchmark of the early Reformations; and establishing a Lutheran haven with permeable borders, which greatly impacted reform in neighboring lands.10

Albrecht’s actions in Teutonic and then Ducal Prussia complicated matters greatly for Dantiscus for the rest of his career. As the Crown’s lead diplomat in the 1520s, Dantiscus struggled to justify and defend King Sigismund’s protection of Albrecht at foreign courts, in particular the imperial court. His struggles abroad were compounded by the fact that he also exchanged complaints and suspicions about Albrecht and evangelical reform in Prussia with members of the prelacy and royal court back in Poland-Lithuania. Albrecht’s role in Central Europe also emerged prominently at the Diet of Augsburg, as discussed in Chapter 4. After returning to Royal Prussia in 1532, Dantiscus maintained friendly relations with Albrecht for a variety of intellectual and political reasons, as has been well researched. He also found, however, that having such an impenetrable haven for Protestantism so near to and indeed overlapping jurisdictionally with Royal Prussia and Warmia could erect substantial obstacles to counter-reform. Albrecht himself enabled evangelical preachers to cross into and out of Warmia with relative impunity, which aggravated Dantiscus greatly. The Duchy of Prussia also remained a point of contention in Polish diplomatic relations, which Dantiscus continued to monitor and even participate in. His interactions and conflicts with Albrecht with regards to his episcopal reform program in Chelmno Land and Warmia will recur throughout these next three chapters.

11 Nowakowska, *King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther*, 135-43.
12 Nowakowska, *King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther*, 82, 124, 139
The strongest Prussian opponent of Protestant reform prior to Dantiscus’s return in 1532 was Prince-Bishop Mauritius Ferber of Warmia, who continually attempted to discourage, outlaw, and eliminate evangelical sympathizers. He was mostly—albeit not entirely—effective in his own territory. When evangelical reformers first spread through Prussia around 1520, they found a few audiences and adherents in the towns of Warmia, but several characteristics of the region provided significant resistance. Warmia’s predominantly rural nature, the vast property ownership of the prince-bishopric, the social and political strength of the clergy, and the historical dependence of towns and villages on ecclesiastical administrators produced more anti-reform inertia there than was found in other parts of Prussia. Nevertheless, a parade of evangelical preachers, a few serious urban reform efforts, and some dissention among the clergy did manage to disrupt things in the diocese.\textsuperscript{14} The bishops of Warmia for decades had exercised a modicum of independence from the archbishops of Riga, and thus both King Sigismund and Primate of Poland Archbishop Jan Łaski of Gniezno sought more political and ecclesiastical cooperation with prince-bishop Ferber in the face of the spread of evangelical reform.\textsuperscript{15} Ferber, another well-informed, well-connected, and influential native of Gdańsk, indeed implemented anti-Lutheran policy through several edicts during the 1520s. He banned various evangelical texts and practices from Warmia and supported Sigismund’s own related policies in Royal Prussia, especially

\textsuperscript{14} Henryk Zins, „Początki reformacji na Warmii,” 	extit{Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce} 2 (Warsaw, 1957): 53-90.

\textsuperscript{15} R. Bodański, „Walka diecezji warmińskiej o niezależność od metropolii ryskiej i gnieźnieńskiej od 1426 do 1566 r.,” 	extit{Studia warmińskie} 19 (1982):123-46.
during the years 1524-1526. Evangelical activity in the diocese’s largest town, Elbląg, was of particular concern to Ferber, who intently monitored locals who sought education in Wittenberg and then returned to Prussia. Generally, however, the strength of the episcopacy and clergy in Warmia upheld a dominant, if not homogeneous, Catholicism during the 1520s, in contrast to the rest of Prussia.

The onset of the 1530s brought some events that would alter this Polish-Lithuanian and Prussian reforming environment, though, just in time for Dantiscus to assume his bishopric in Chełmno. The Diet of Augsburg, which Dantiscus attended in 1530, initiated the solidification of a more coherent Lutheran identity for evangelical reform communities throughout Central Europe, and at the very least it drew more solid lines between Catholics and Protestants. This applied to Polish and Prussian Christians as well. The diet’s determinations increased both toleration and violence between Christians in Central Europe, depending on the local or regional context. One of the best examples of this process was the formation of the defensive Protestant Schmalkaldic League, which lasted until its defeat by Catholic forces in the 1546-1547 Schmalkaldic War. The League drew concern from Polish authorities alongside those of the Empire, including Dantiscus. As mentioned earlier and as will be discussed in

16 Stanisław Achremczyk, Historia Warmii i Mazur: Od pradziejów do 1945 roku (Olsztyn: 1992), 71-3; A. Borrmann, Ermland und die Reformation, 1523-1772 (Königsberg: 1912), 45-54; Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther, 119-32.


18 As one of the most critical periods of the Reformations, the two decades following the Diet of Augsburg have been the subject of countless books and articles, both general and highly specific. Some of the more useful treatments for identifying broad contexts and themes can be found in: Steven Ozment, The Age of Reform 1250-1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); Heiko Oberman, The Dawn of the Reformation: Essays in Late Medieval and Early Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids: T&T Clark, 1992); Diarmaid
more detail in Chapter 7, the influx of Anabaptists to the Vistula delta region also grew exponentially during this period, frightening many Catholics and magisterial Protestants across Prussia. Meanwhile, the Prussian Catholic episcopate underwent some instability and transition. The bishop of Chełmno, Jan Konopacki, died in spring 1530, creating the opening for Dantiscus’s nomination and election described at the beginning of Chapter 4. Then in 1531, Catholic defender Ferber fell gravely ill, which would substantially diminish his influence until his death in 1537, in part due to suffering a series of strokes. Wavering confessional homogeneity in Warmia followed this diminishment.19 According to Nowakowska, the Polish state and church also became much more lenient toward evangelical reformers during this period, trickling down from King Sigismund himself.20 All of this combined to create a changeable, unpredictable religious environment to which Dantiscus returned in 1532, one in which the Catholic Church was still seeking strong footing and counter-reform success, even in traditionally-stable Warmia.

King Sigismund had promoted Dantiscus as an episcopal candidate in Prussia due to his experiences, abilities, and impressive connections domestically and abroad, as well as because of his proven loyalty to the Crown and Church. All of his diplomatic, administrative, and political skills were in desperate need for the episcopate as


19 Neue Deutsche Biographie 5, s.v “Ferber, Mauritius.”

20 Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther.
evangelical reform spread and strengthened in Prussia and Poland-Lithuania. On 5 May 1530, Sigismund had written:

Acknowledging your loyalty and diligent service, which for no small amount of time attending to the duties of an envoy you brought to bear on us and our most fair wife, lady, and queen, we wish to honor you with the Bishopric of Chełmno, which is now vacant, which we declare to you with this letter.

Moreover, we are sending another letter to you, by which we thus recommended you to our most holy and most reverend lord, Cardinal [sic] Jan Łaski, protector of our kingdom, that he may without delay confirm you to the Bishopric of Chełmno…

After the tumultuous and violent 1520s, Sigismund recognized the value that Dantiscus’s talents and knowledge would bring to the prelacy in the face of rising reform. The Bishopric of Chełmno contained some of the most worrisome evangelical communities in the kingdom and it was typically the stepping stone toward the more powerful and influential Prince-Bishopric of Warmia. Thus it was a convenient place for the diplomat to begin his episcopal career.

Sigismund’s selection and promotion of Dantiscus shed light on how famous and impressive the diplomat’s former experiences with religious reform had become, as well as how favorably his patrons in Poland-Lithuania viewed those experiences in the context of dealing with reform in Prussia. Royal Prussia was already quite familiar to Dantiscus. It also exhibited similarities to religious and political settings with which he had become well acquainted during his travels throughout Central Europe. He even had attempted to quell evangelical reform in some of those settings. He implied such

21 Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 5, 1530, Cracow, CIDT&C.
commonalities to the King, focusing in particular on the political consequences of ignoring reform efforts in a variety of settings.\textsuperscript{23} When Dantiscus returned to his homeland in 1532, he bore the critical construction of “Lutheranism,” the polished and ambitious political voice, and the strong sense of vocation that he had developed during the previous fourteen years. None of these characteristics or their origins did he hide from his patrons. In fact, his reputation for criticizing and vilifying Protestant reform preceded him throughout Poland-Lithuania. His Catholic superiors and peers embraced it.\textsuperscript{24} Many of them would encourage Dantiscus to treat Protestants harshly, in some cases even more harshly than he had convinced himself was necessary. In particular did his friend Maciej Drzewicki, who as bishop of Włocławek in 1524 had reported to Dantiscus about the religious riot in Gdańsk and who succeeded as archbishop of Gniezno in 1531. Until his death in 1535, Drzewicki consistently pushed Dantiscus to persecute Protestants throughout Royal Prussia, even beyond the jurisdiction of the Bishopric of Chełmno.\textsuperscript{25} He would inspire some of Dantiscus’s later reform work in Warmia.

Dantiscus’s reform efforts and achievements cannot be understood properly without this Prussian, Polish-Lithuanian, and indeed Central European context. As subsequent sections and chapters of this dissertation demonstrate, beginning in 1532 he would vigorously pursue counter reform and Catholic reform for sixteen years, barely stepping outside of Prussia during that time. He always would consider, however, his

\textsuperscript{23} Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, February 7, 1525, Madrid, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1526, Granada, CIDT&C.


\textsuperscript{25} Nowakowska, \textit{King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther}, 126, 162-6, 213.
mandate and patronage from the Polish Crown and Church as well as the intricate and often delicate political relations throughout Central Europe and the Baltic region that framed the Reformations these. He was closely attentive to how reform was proceeding in Poland-Lithuania, the Holy Roman Empire, Sweden, Denmark, and England. He also was deeply aware of how his own reform initiatives would reverberate more widely and how broader reform movements would affect matters in his jurisdiction. During this time, although his most informative contacts were his friends and colleagues abroad, his most important contacts were the three dominant personalities at the royal court in Cracow—King Sigismund, Queen Bona, and Vice Chancellor of the Crown Bishop Piotr Tomicki of Cracow (until his death in 1535). Correspondence with those three individuals in particular reveals his consciousness of and self-positioning within the broader reform environment of Poland-Lithuania and Central Europe.

**Overview of Dantiscus’s Episcopal Career**

Before exploring different aspects of Dantiscus’s reform program so thoroughly, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of his episcopal career in order to orient subsequently his many exchanges and activities. The rest of this chapter, as well as Chapters 6 and 7, will not proceed as chronologically as did Chapters 2-4, and so this timeline should be kept in mind.

As described in Chapter 4, Dantiscus was nominated and elected as Bishop of Chełmno in spring 1530, just prior to attending the Diet of Augsburg. He returned to Chełmno Land in September 1532, was ordained in Braniewo in Warmia in March

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26 Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 5, 1530, Cracow, CIDT&C.

27 Ioannes Dantiscus to Albrecht Cuon, September 24, 1531, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
1533, and received his investiture six months later in the ancient Polish capital of Płock. As his first official episcopal act, he toured the western, more commercial part of his diocese for several weeks. He traveled to the walled, riverside, trading towns of Grudziądz and Chełmno, as well as the castle-village of Starogród. Then he rode eastward for some days to the capital of his bishopric, Lubawa. He managed diocesan and intra-Prussian political matters from there for the better part of the next four years. In December 1536, he traveled to Cracow for two months, in order to discuss with King Sigismund his likely succession—among other things—as prince-bishop of Warmia, for whom Dantiscus also was elected as coadjutor. When Mauritius Ferber died in July 1537, within three months Dantiscus was elected as prince-bishop unanimously by the Warmian Chapter and officially assumed the position at the end of the year. That winter the new prince-bishop relocated his household to Lidzbark Warmiński, the capital of the Prince-Bishopric of Warmia and one of rural central

References:

28 Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, March 26, 1533, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
29 Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, September 19, 1533, Płock, CIDT&C. For more details about these events, see the end of Chapter 4.
30 Ioannes Dantiscus to Gdańsk Town Council, October 7, 1533, Grudziąż, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Gdańsk Town Council, November 13, 1533, Chełmno, CIDT&C.
31 Ioannes Dantiscus to Gdańsk Town Council, October 30, 1533, Starogród, CIDT&C.
32 Ioannes Dantiscus to Marienburg Town Council, November 26, 1533, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
33 Ioannes Dantiscus to Mauritius Ferber, December 13, 1536, Cracow, CIDT&C.
34 Ioannes Dantiscus to Mauritius Ferber, January 22, 1537, Cracow, CIDT&C.
35 Neue Deutsche Biographie 5, s.v “Ferber, Mauritius.”
36 Ioannes Dantiscus to Gdańsk Town Council, September 22, 1537, Lubawa, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Tiedemann Giese, September 22, 1537, Lubawa, CIDT&C; Segel, 180-181.
Prussia’s most important economic, political, and cultural centers. Dantiscus would reside and work there and in Warmia for most of the last ten years of his life, returning only once to Poland proper for two months in 1543. His reform efforts intensified corresponding with the greater political and judicial authority of the Catholic Church in Warmia. He also increased contact with prominent Protestant leaders, including especially Duke Albrecht, whose own capital in Königsberg lay only fifty miles northward. Dantiscus died in Lidzbark in October 1548, just six months after the death of his beloved and aged patron, King Sigismund. He was succeeded in Warmia by Bishop Tiedemann Giese of Chełmno.

During Dantiscus’s sixteen years as a bishop in Royal Prussia and Warmia, his professional activity underwent some expected shifts. He devoted most of his time to his episcopal administration and ministry, especially addressing and suppressing the territory’s flourishing evangelical reform movement in cooperation with other Catholic leaders in Prussia and Poland-Lithuania. He was relatively sedentary in this vocation, conducting most of his affairs from his bishops’ castles. He did, however, continue his extensive epistolary communication with princes, courtiers, prelates, and scholars throughout Prussia, Poland-Lithuania, Central Europe, and the western world. He also maintained some diplomatic responsibility on behalf of the Polish Crown, albeit almost

37 Ioannes Dantiscus to Albrecht I von Hohenzollern-Ansbach, February 26, 1538, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
38 Ioannes Dantiscus to Warmia Chapter, May 16, 1543, Cracow, CIDT&C.
39 Nowak, 207-209.
40 Epitaphium Sigismundi regis, April 1-August 22, 1548, CIDT&C.
41 Neue Deutsche Biographie 6, s.v “Giese, Tiedemann.”
entirely through correspondence. Throughout all of this, King Sigismund basically gave his trusted diplomat-bishop *carte blanche* to combat and enact reform in his Prussian jurisdictions. He trusted the bishop to work efficiently and effectively for the benefit of the Church and the Crown. The king made this clear both directly,\(^2\) and through the intermediation of Piotr Tomicki:\(^3\) The new bishop wholeheartedly embraced and pursued this responsibility, for which he had been preparing for years.\(^4\)

Dantiscus’s immersion into the complex reforming environment of Prussia, his responses to evangelical reform, and his leeway granted by the Crown and Church all came about quite quickly. They emerged even prior to the conceptualization of his episcopal reform program and his domestic polemical literary activity. Their suddenness and intensity are exemplified rather neatly by one particular episode that occurred right at the beginning of his episcopacy and would set the tone for some of his later responses to evangelical reform. The main setting was one of Chełmno Land’s key centers of trade, Grudziądz, characterized famously by its towering brick granaries stacked along the right bank of the Vistula River. In February 1533, still prior to his ordination, Dantiscus reported to Piotr Tomicki, and through him King Sigismund, that:

The town of Grudziądz, a parish priest of which has seceded to this desperate [Lutheran bishop] of Pomesania and taken a wife of similar makeup, is completely infected with Lutheranism and such, which [the people] bear through the fault of [local nobleman] Jan Sokolowski, who as they claim has labored and still labors on behalf of this disease.

\(^2\) Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus, September 7, 1533, Vilnius, CIDT&C.

\(^3\) Piotr Tomicki to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 15, 1533, Cracow, CIDT&C; Piotr Tomicki to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 24, 1533, Iłża, CIDT&C; Piotr Tomicki to Ioannes Dantiscus, September 8, 1533, Kielce, CIDT&C.

\(^4\) Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, February 21, 1533, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
The evangelical reform in Grudziądz apparently was being driven by one local priest, one local landowner, and the nearby Lutheran bishop. Their promotion of evangelical reform posed an immediate challenge to bishop-elect Dantiscus, and he desired to respond with strength. After requesting permission to implement counter measures and rectify the situation, he promised that:

If I will obtain [permission] in such a way, I hope that not a few of these wandering sheep will be brought back into my folds. If Your Most Reverend Lordship [Tomicki] will make your support available to me in this, especially with regard to God Almighty and His Holy Church, it will be well deserved, and in the duty of my office [the Church] will be rendered more steadfast.\(^{45}\)

Dantiscus clearly was anxious to begin rooting out Protestantism with authority, and he considered himself to be well qualified to pursue that end and accomplish his goals.

Tomicki must have passed the message along to the king, for Sigismund responded to Dantiscus a few weeks later with a sweeping directive:

Seeing that this common [priest] in our town of Grudziądz has been infected and corrupted by the Lutheran heresy, and has led his [illicit] wife against the principles and traditions of our Holy Fathers, and thus by his abominable deed cut her off from the aforementioned rightly guided and administered Church, at the present time we grant to Your Paternity, in recognition of your abilities, the provision to install in succession some other priest from this same church in our town of Grudziądz, whose conduct and morals you have known, and whom you judge to be fit and proper for this office, and to establish him and give him investiture without waiting for a letter of our presentation, by uniting and entrusting to you the responsibility, control, and administration of spiritual and temporal matters, just as if this pastoral office already had been discerned to pertain to Your Paternity.\(^{46}\)

Sigismund’s sweeping grant of administrative and counter-reforming permission to Dantiscus must have pleased the un-ordained bishop-elect greatly. He would not delay

\(^{45}\) Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, February 21, 1533, Lubawa, CIDT&C.

\(^{46}\) Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 13, 1533, Cracow, CIDT&C.
to take advantage of that permission in a variety of circumstances in Chełmno Land.

Tomicki further confirmed Dantiscus’s authority, responding a couple of days later:

_I release to Your Most Reverend Lordship the patron’s law, being bestowed upon the present parochial church in the town of Grudziądz. May you use it with your own judgment and place in command of that church a pastor so excellent as to be the greatest of that place, such as men seem to require in this suspicious time._

Very quickly, before his consecration or even his ordination, Dantiscus assumed some responsibility for ridding this major town in Chełmno Land of evangelical reform and restoring the respectability and strength of the Catholic Church there. He wasted no time, removing the Lutheran priest and sending further instructions to the other clergy of Grudziądz to purify and uphold the integrity of the Catholic Church in the town’s churches, schools, and other institutions. The town council subsequently wrote to Dantiscus in dismay, claiming that such a measure broke some promise of leniency that he had made formerly. If true, clearly he had chosen to side with the Church and Crown.

The last word on this introductory episode in Grudziądz fell to Sigismund, who followed up with Dantiscus a few weeks later. The king wrote:

_Enduring with a troubled spirit [the Protestants’] rash and aggressive language, which with hostile speech Your Paternity reported came by means of this captain [Sokołowski] and our citizens of Grudziądz, and refusing to let [such language] pass unpunished, we brought together our advisors of that land [Royal Prussia], so that in the next assembly convened there for an investigation into this matter they should admonish this captain and the citizens of Grudziądz, in accordance with the manner_
and urgency of their great digression, and for our sake in fact [the assemblymen] should determine and institute an appropriate penalty.\textsuperscript{50} Town leaders fiercely lobbied Dantiscus, and through him the Crown, to be lenient. With the permission of the king, and considering that the Lutheran leaders had been eliminated, the bishop-elect mitigated the assembly’s punishment so as to foster peace in the important commercial center.\textsuperscript{51} This episode in Grudziądz reveals how quickly and completely Dantiscus entered and affected the reforming environment of Royal Prussia. Many of his practical initiatives in response to evangelical reform would take years to develop, but from 1533 he began to assemble and implement a wide-ranging reform program to deal with matters both regionally and locally. He would set the mood and standard for this reform program by means of diverse and far-reaching literary enterprises.

\textbf{Literature as an Approach to Reform}

The overarching way in which bishop Dantiscus engaged with the reform environment of Central Europe and set the intellectual stage for the implementation of his practical reform program in Prussia was composing, patronizing, collecting, and disseminating polemical and apologetic Catholic literature. In particular, the various and numerous texts that he produced and channeled during his episcopacy publicized the errors of Protestant sects, the dangers posed by unrestrained or decentralized religious reform and all evangelical reform, the righteousness of Catholic orthodoxy, and the faults of particular prominent individual reformers, as well as more general religious commentary. These texts had widely varying levels of publication, distribution,

\textsuperscript{50} Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus, April 28, 1533, Cracow, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{51} Nowakowska, \textit{King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther}, 162.
reception, and reaction, much of which unfortunately is difficult to assess. Nevertheless, three particular aspects of Dantiscus’s literary activity stand out as significant. First, he personally composed poems and hymns on religious topics, intended for differing levels of publicity. His propensity for assorted composition with political and religious messaging continued uninterrupted from well earlier in his diplomatic career—as seen in Chapter 3—until his death in 1548. Second, he dedicatedly promoted the works and ideas of ancient Church Fathers and current international humanist colleagues whose opinions still were considered orthodox by Church authorities. Such contemporaries included Erasmus, Thomas More, and Johannes Campensis, among others. Third, he publicized and disseminated the Roman Church’s official tracts about doctrine and reform. Each of these three initiatives supported and worked within Dantiscus’s wide-ranging reform program in Prussia and was enhanced especially by his established literary connections and legacy across Europe. They reflected the increasing intellectual and political influence that he wielded during his episcopacy as well as his self-positioning in the religious and political landscape of Central Europe. They reveal quite boldly his perspective on reform as well as some essential cultural and intellectual dimensions of his efforts to counter evangelical reform within his jurisdiction. They also fit into and continued a tradition of anti-evangelical printed polemic produced in great quantity by the high clergy of Poland-Lithuania during the early Reformations.52

Dantiscus’s own composition of religiously-themed works began soon after his consecration in autumn 1533 and continued throughout his tenure as a bishop. From

52 Nowakowska, *King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther*, 155-7; Nowakowska, “High Clergy and Printers,” 43-64.
the beginning, it addressed the challenges posed to the Church by evangelical reform and identified important factors for the public and administrators to consider. His first substantial religious piece was a twenty-four-couplet poem from early 1534 entitled *De Haeresi* (On Heresy). Only recently attributed to Dantiscus, the poem was sent among his correspondence to Archbishop Johannes Magnus of Uppsala, who was living in exile in Gdańsk after the Lutheran Reformation in Sweden. Written in support of the Catholic Archbishop, some excerpts of *De Haeresi* reveal the work’s comprehensive critique of evangelical reform and its display of Dantiscus’s views toward reform more generally:

Not quite for nothing in German lands was born  
this heresy vomiting venom in all directions 4
And wise people do not need spelling the causes;  
this noxious poison flows from the head, 8
Affects also the remaining members of the rotten body,  
from where the puss gets back to the head…

If gods, wiping out errors, do not provide remedies, a consequence will follow (let it happen much later):
Not only Swedish, or Danish, or British Kingdoms, but all others in the world rush into war…

There is almost no faith and piety towards the highest Lord of Thunders,  
rare is respect for our religion, 20
Pious words of the fathers are being spurned, prescribed times, laws and sacred rituals observed earlier.


54 King Gustav of Sweden had sent Magnus to Gdańsk in 1526 as an emissary, but after Sweden’s Lutheran Reformation he ultimately did not allow the archbishop-elect to return. The national Lutheran Reformation began in 1527 and steadily purged all remnants of the Catholic Church there, with the exception of the episcopate that became entirely Lutheran. For more detail about the odyssey of Magnus and his younger brother Olaus, see Chapter 7. Anna Nilsen, “Reform and Pragmatism: On Church Art and Architecture during the Swedish Reformation Era,” in *Reforming Texts, Music, and Church Art in the Early Modern North*, ed. Tuomas M.S. Lehtonen and Linda Kaljundi (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 253-86.
A huge crowd of good-for-nothings excited by the demon’s sting
boasts and believes that all is allowed… 24

He who will renew that or repair,
bringing back the order from the past, should be praised with great praise.
Our forces are no match for this cause,
reason or counsel will not help much… 32

We all badly sinned along with our fathers,
 hence evils that we suffer are justly send by the wrath of God… 40

If God did not spare the yoke for most of the just
 What would He do [to us], who are never without stain? 44
He expects that we will express regret
 and will show himself a merciful father, should we renounce injustice.55

This poem illustrates vividly and explicitly Dantiscus’s perspective on the Reformations
as a transnational phenomenon and problem. He found fault for contemporary
“heresies” both within the Roman Church and without, drawing upon his experiences
with reformers, prelates, and politicians from across Christendom. The context of the
poem’s composition indicates his continuing reliance on strong humanist and diplomatic
connections abroad. But its content is most interesting and revealing.

In De Haeresi, Dantiscus demonstrated his engagement with wide-ranging
perspectives on, discussions about, critiques of, and audiences for religious reform.
From the poem’s very beginning, he acknowledged corruption and fault in the Roman
Church and its leaders when he wrote that “this heresy” was born “not quite for nothing,”
and that it “flows from the head”—i.e. the papacy—in part because “we all badly sinned
along with our fathers.” The Church’s faults were great and needed a remedy, a fact
that he had acknowledged since his days at the imperial court. For Dantiscus, however,
the Protestant responses to those faults and the resulting offenses were blatantly

erroneous. He saw evangelical reform as separatist, heretical, and evil. He lambasted its leaders and adherents for a lack of faith in, piety toward, and respect for the ancient religion, laws, and rituals of the Church, as well as for putting no stock in sacred works in light of Luther's *sola fide* proclamation. But the break with traditional authority was most egregious for the bishop. He also explicitly identified Protestant reform as a cause of tremendous political tumult and warfare that would become a global problem, as exemplified by recent events across Northern Europe—particularly Sweden, Denmark, and England. His reader, Johannes Magnus, was already a victim of such tumult.

Dantiscus stated that in order to resolve the problem, Church leaders must act. The “plague” of reform was God’s punishment for all of the Church’s sins, but only contrition, penance, and the active pursuit of justice could elicit God’s mercy. Any such pursuit must include eradicating heretical reform. Although sent only to Magnus and never published, *De Haeresi* clearly was a call to action against Protestant reform transnationally, but it included a push for a serious examination of the Church’s own faults.  

Dantiscus’s next religious work focused on a local episode of reform rather than addressing the evangelical movement as a whole, but he intended it to resonate with a wide audience. It came on the heels of a frustrating and unsuccessful mission to Gdańsk in spring 1535, during which Dantiscus and Georg Baisen intended to take loyalty oaths from the city’s officials on behalf of King Sigismund. Officials rejected the oath based on its inclusion of the phrase “holy Roman church,” and Dantiscus left the

56 Ioannes Dantiscus to Ioannes Magnus, April 23, 1536, Starogród, CIDT&C.
city rather embarrassed.\textsuperscript{57} In June shortly thereafter, he composed the forty-one-couplet poem \textit{Ionas propheta} (Jonah the Prophet), which then he sent to Piotr Tomicki. It invoked the Old Testament tale of Jonah, who had convinced the inhabitants of Nineveh to repent of their sins in order to discourage God’s destruction of the city. Dantiscus applied this tale to his own relationship with Gdańsk. He admonished Gdańsk’s inhabitants for abandoning the authority of both the Roman Church and the Polish Crown as a result of evangelical reform. He identified recent plagues, fires, floods, and class-conflict in the city as evidence of God’s punishment for their insolence. He meant the poem to forewarn other Christians who either had embraced or had considered embracing evangelical reform and who had rejected his recent overtures in other parts of Prussia. \textit{Iona propheta} also went unpublished during Dantiscus’s lifetime, though, and thus garnered little relevant readership.\textsuperscript{58} It demonstrates to modern readers, however, his self-identification as a servant of God, protector of Prussian Christians and the Roman Church there, loyal subject of the Polish Crown, and persecutor of heretics. It illustrated his perception of evangelical reform as a great violation of God’s mercy, trust, and will. It also depicts his attentiveness to religious developments outside of his own diocesan jurisdiction. He feared and dreaded the damnation of the people of Gdańsk and other Protestant communities in Poland-Lithuania, and he wanted to bring

\textsuperscript{57} Nowakowska, \textit{King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther}, 83.

them back to God’s rightful authorities on Earth—the Church and the Crown. He also wanted all Christians to heed the prophetic warnings found in Sacred Scripture.\textsuperscript{59}

Further indicating his harsh condemnation of non-Catholics broadly and his attentiveness to political currents, Dantiscus also wrote an anti-Semitic poem that became rather famous. Around the same time as he produced \textit{De Haeresi} and \textit{Iona propheta}, he also composed his \textit{Carmen de Iudaeis} (Poem about Jews). In this poem, he basically listed pejorative epithets for Jewish people for twenty-four lines.\textsuperscript{60} Its composition notably coincided with a rise in anti-Jewish attitudes in the Polish capital of Cracow, begging the question of how much the poem was a play in regional politics. It likely would have ingratiated him further among members of the royal court—Queen Bona in particular—during a period in which secular leaders were concerned with the effectiveness of the Church’s bishops in inspiring proper Christian belief and practice throughout Crown territory.\textsuperscript{61} The poem certainly revealed more intolerance for religious traditions that were not Catholic and illustrated Dantiscus’s continuing literary, religious, and political connections with the Polish court, to the point of vying for their favor by means of topical literature.

Another distinctive composition was an epitaph on the tomb stone of Dantiscus’s brother-in-law, Johann Reyneck, written and engraved in 1536. Originally the stone had contained only one epitaph written by Johannes Poliander, a friend of the Reyneck family. Poliander was a Lutheran theologian, preacher, and pastor who was

\textsuperscript{59} Nowak, “Antyreformacyjna elegia,” 5-35.

\textsuperscript{60} Dantiscus, \textit{Carmina}, 166-7.

\textsuperscript{61} Segel, \textit{Renaissance Culture in Poland}, 181.
instrumental in the spread of evangelical reform in the Duchy of Prussia. His epitaph for Reyneck had espoused Lutheran soteriology, stating:

Here Reineck’s line, here the legal wisdom and scholarly tongue expired, only faith survived. It vanquished the unvanquished death and mocked the grave, hence he lives and cannot perish.

Dantiscus felt that he could not let this evangelical declaration—that faith alone (sola fide) had guaranteed the salvation of the deceased—stand over his brother’s tomb unmitigated, and so he added his own epitaph. He wrote:

The power of reason, knowledge of both laws, the charm of eloquence and abundant counsel did not save Reineck from death for eternity, but only piety and faith in Christ. If a man shows his faith during his life through deeds, to heaven he goes, and in this world leaves a good name.

Dantiscus’s blunt inclusion of the words “piety,” “shows his faith,” and “deeds”—all references to soteriological works—prompted some heated epistolary debate with Poliander over the role of works in justification. The bishop engaged Poliander cordially and with respect to the doctor’s erudition, but he could not let the evangelical position win out in this instance. Dantiscus also consulted his fellow Catholic bishops and scholars for support. To substantiate his position, he referenced Saint Paul’s lengthy description of love relying on deeds in order to be active and efficacious. The debate developed around when Dantiscus rose to the position of prince-bishop of Warmia. Thus his role, legacy, and family connections had become even more public. His self-positioning as an episcopal authority was crucial, and the Catholicity of his extended

family might have been a personal concern. He also needed to engage fruitfully, however, with leaders from across the spectrum of Prussian Christianity in order to address reform successfully. As religious debates continued to be public affairs, Dantiscus took advantage of opportunities to exert his personal and professional influence on behalf of Catholicism and the Church.

Soon after becoming prince-bishop of Warmia in 1537, Dantiscus composed one of his most impressive, widely-recognized, and provocatively anti-Lutheran poems, his lengthy *Carmen paraeneticum, iuvenibus huius temporis non inutile, ad ingenuum adulescentem Constantem Alliopagum* (A Moralistic Poem, not Useless for the Youths of this Time, Written to the Noble Youth Constans Alliopagus), completed in 1539. As analyzed by literary scholar Harold B. Segel, “Dantiscus’s *Alliopagus* is an appeal to the youth of his day to heed his advice and remain steadfast in their loyalty to the Roman Catholic faith, to nourish their minds especially through reading, to cultivate the art of poetry, and to avoid religious novelties, by which he meant Protestantism.” As Segel pointed out, some three hundred lines in the middle of this 1182-line poem focused on denouncing Lutheran theology and its widespread, destructive effects. It included explications of Dantiscus’s unflinching belief in the sacredness of Scripture, the importance of Christocentric reverence, and the unequivocal role of works in human salvation.63 This particular section began with the entreaty, “Do not believe the faith that exists in name only, and which does not produce fruits from piety!”64 The implication of this section was not only that faith without pious works was empty, or that Protestantism


64 Dantiscus, *Carmina*, 179.
in general was a perversion of proper Christian religiosity, but also that Protestantism’s appeal and success were akin to the trendy, frivolous, and errant activities of youths rather than the product of mature scholarship or contemplation. His rhetoric was evocative and designed to appeal to—or instigate—a diverse audience in the context of the Reformations in Central Europe.

Such a wide intended audience becomes more obvious when one considers that Dantiscus had *Carmen paraeneticum* published in Cracow in 1539. Cracow long had been the center of printing and education in Poland proper, and indeed scholars traveled from all over Christendom to learn, teach, and publish in the royal capital. The great number of learned men and scholarly connections passing through the city ensured that texts of substance would receive wide circulation. The active role played by many of these men at the royal court of Poland also created channels for new texts to influence royal policy and diplomacy. Dantiscus, who had spent many years studying and serving in Cracow, would have recognized the significance of publishing there. A wide, diverse audience would be readily accessible and he could address issues that concerned readers across Central Europe. In this context and with the publication of his *Carmen paraeneticum*, he fully entered the arena of public religious polemical

65 Segel, *Renaissance Culture in Poland*, 182.

debate that he had observed and tested in limited ways during the previous two decades. This arena had been a battleground for Lutherans, Catholics, and Reformed Christians since Luther’s emergence in 1517, especially in German lands and including in Prussia.\textsuperscript{67}

Dantiscus continued to compose religious literary works for diverse audiences throughout his tenure as prince-bishop of Warmia, with the intention of stirring debate and bring about a resolution for religious reform. One of the more ambiguous collections of his written works was a series of poems either directed at or dedicated to Martin Luther from the mid-1540s, which unfortunately are no longer extant. Dantiscus referenced these poems in several different letters to various correspondents, but never with enough specificity to reveal what they contained or even their general positioning. Many of his correspondents were Lutheran, however, and as made evident by the tone of their letters, their exchanges in both correspondence and literature must have been cordial, with the goal of productive dialogue. Unity among Christians was, after all, a paramount goal for Dantiscus and many of his peers, despite their disdain for “Lutheranism.”\textsuperscript{68}

One final composition that supported and characterized Dantiscus’s wider reforming activity was his \textit{Hymni aliquot ecclesiastici} (Several Religious Hymns), published in Cracow in 1548 shortly after his death. This impressive collection contained twenty-seven simple hymns and four poems providing compositional context. He modeled the hymns on medieval religious poetry rather than classical poetry and

\textsuperscript{67} Peter Matheson, \textit{The Rhetoric of the Reformation} (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 157-214.

\textsuperscript{68} Skolimowska, e Dantiscus and the Reformers, e 201-2.
organized them according to the Catholic liturgical calendar. He claimed that the hymns should serve as a modest form of penance for the overly-adorned and pagan-inspired compositions of his former years. However, he also intended the hymns to celebrate the righteousness, truth, and sanctity of the Roman Church in repudiation of the critiques and amendments of evangelical leaders across Europe. He meant them to inspire a wider audience.69

The two short poems that concluded the collection succinctly and poignantly summarized the purpose of the hymns, including laying heavy emphasis on their rebuke of Protestant reform and reformers. In the penultimate poem, Ad pium lectorem (To the Pious Reader), Dantiscus wrote:

I devote nothing to those, who in our topsy-turvy
Time destroy everything that, according to custom,
Has been established solemnly by our Fathers,
And whose stomachs and throats, given over to being
Loathsome and unholy, sing their Germanic funeral dirges,
And who will pay grave penalties when willed by Christ,
To whom there be praise, honor, and everlasting glory,
With the eternal Father and Spirit,
Who strengthens the heart of all the faithful
By means of his true, trusting, heavenly grace. Amen.70

In case his illustration of evangelical reformers as barbaric Germans who had destroyed all of sacred tradition and earned God’s eternal punishment was too vague in terms of geopolitics, in the final poem Dantiscus described in even blunter terms the source, spread, nature, and potentially catastrophic effects of evangelical reform. He wrote:

Who knows to what extent in Pannonia71 the Peace

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69 Dantiscus, Carmina.

70 Dantiscus, Carmina, 291.

71 Pannonia was an ancient Roman province in Central Europe located south and west of the stretch of the Danube River that bisects modern Hungary. It roughly comprised parts of modern Austria, Hungary,
Throughout his episcopal career, but especially toward the end of his life, Dantiscus reveled in his own cautionary, experience-based criticism of the evangelical reform movement. He saw Protestantism as a contagion spreading transnationally across Central Europe, heeding no political, social, or cultural boundaries, and he was proud to wield the intellectual authority of having visited the places and peoples among whom it had originated. His own earlier encounters with evangelical reform along Germany’s three great rivers—the Danube, the Elbe, and the Rhine—reinforced this sense of authority, and he was proud to wield it.

This brief passage, however, also reflected and propagated a greater geopolitical concern and criticism of evangelical reform that Dantiscus had been disseminating for decades. As demonstrated in Chapters 2-4, one of the most egregious effects of evangelical reform identified by Dantiscus was the threat posed to Christian unity when Christendom most needed to be united against external enemies. In his *De calamitatibus silva* from 1529, he had blamed the weakness of Christian powers in the face of Ottoman aggressiveness in Central Europe on the fissures created by evangelical reformers and their supporting princes in the Holy Roman Empire.

Apparently in 1548, Dantiscus still feared “…to what extent in Pannonia [the Habsburg-
Ottoman borderlands] the Peace/Has been skinned back” by the political impact of evangelical reform becoming more entrenched in Central Europe. He dreaded that the peace between Christian and Muslim princes would suffer and that Central Europeans would suffer further as a result. His hymns were one form of reparative penance, intended to serve as an essential part of good, responsible Christian living for multiple levels of society. At the end of his life, Dantiscus clearly continued to believe that the problem of evangelical reform was increasing, and that its potential catastrophic fallout demanded both a collaborative, high-level political solution and the active spiritual participation of the clergy and laity. For him, knowledge and wariness of the tragedy caused by evangelical reform must also be imparted to everyone, by liturgical means if necessary.

The second crucial aspect of bishop Dantiscus’s reforming literary endeavors was his collection and promotion of texts written by contemporary humanist colleagues from across Christendom as well as the Church Fathers. From early in his career, he had been a famous literary enthusiast and bibliophile. Therefore, such activities were already well ingrained and refined. As of 1532, though, he redirected those activities toward reforming and counter-reforming ends. During his diplomatic travels, he had met and befriended numerous leading scholars and teachers, whose commentaries on classical literature, examinations of Scripture, and diverse compositions in Latin and Greek inspired and supplemented his own scholarship. In addition to maintaining correspondence with these figures, as we already have seen in Chapters 3 and 4 and

as we will see further in Chapter 7, during Dantiscus’s episcopacy he sought to acquire, master, utilize, and promote their orthodox works toward reforming ends by building and sharing a remarkable literary collection. Such a project was not out of the ordinary in early modern Europe, particularly in Poland where humanists and churchmen were eager for intellectual stimulation from both domestic and foreign authors. The Church Fathers and modern scholars—orthodox and heterodox—were all popular. For Dantiscus, however, this initiative uniquely became part of his comprehensive reform program that he intended to impact conversations and religious developments across Warmia, Prussia, and Poland-Lithuania more broadly.

After becoming a bishop, one of Dantiscus’s first clear goals was to expand and enrich his diocesan libraries, in particular with texts espousing orthodox Christian belief and practice. Although he got off to a slow start in Chełmno Land, building up the library in the Prince-Bishop’s Castle in Lidzbark Warmiński after 1537 would eventually become one of his signature achievements. He even fostered a humanist salon there, as described at the beginning of this chapter, but how well attended his salon became is unclear. Furthermore, the broader impact of early modern libraries alone is not always self-evident. As Andrew Pettegree has shown, the acquisition and collection of books is no indication of their readership or use. It is not even proof that the collector read his own collected texts, despite their relative rarity and cost. A well-stocked library or the

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75 Ioannes Dantiscus to Cornelis De Schepper, February 24, 1536, Lubawa, CIDT&C.

trappings of a salon might simply have been a marker of prestige.\textsuperscript{77} Although Dantiscus certainly desired to enhance his dioceses’ assets and image, he also intended for his collections to inform, instruct, and sophisticate the clergy and laity, as will be discussed in Chapter 6. His collection and intentions for it thus earned him an impressive reputation, even outside of Warmia. It was his preference that any contents should espouse orthodox Catholic tenets and reinforce the role of the Roman Church in spirituality and religiosity.\textsuperscript{78}

The most famous contemporary figure whose works Dantiscus pursued as a bishop was undoubtedly Erasmus. As described in Chapters 3 and 4, Dantiscus became well acquainted with Erasmianism and befriended the great humanist during his diplomatic ventures in Spain, the Empire, and the Low Countries. Their mutual contacts such as Thomas More, Alfonso de Valdés, Maximilianus Transylvanus, and Piotr Tomicki reinforced their friendship and supplemented their exchanges of compliments, advice, and literary works. They exchanged likenesses during Dantiscus’s sojourn in the Low Countries, and Erasmus dedicated his translation of \textit{De Spirito Sancto} to Dantiscus in 1532.\textsuperscript{79} Meanwhile, enthusiasm for Erasmianism in educated circles of the Poland-Lithuania had been growing for years and indeed peaked around the time of Dantiscus’s return. Influential religious and courtly figures such as Andrzej Krzycki, Piotr Tomicki, and Stanislaus Hosius would become icons of international Erasmianism in sixteenth-

\textsuperscript{77} Andrew Pettegree, \textit{Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion} (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 156-9.


century Central Europe. Erasmian thought heavily influenced their engagement with other European intellectuals as well as their respective approaches to managing religious reform in Poland-Lithuania. They also created a vibrant cohort of Erasmianists at the highest levels of royal and ecclesiastical administration. Dantiscus was much a part of this group, and of them he could lay claim to the most prolific interaction with Erasmian debates in other parts of Europe. After he returned to Prussia in 1532, however, Dantiscus found Erasmus’ more recent works to be less accessible than he had hoped. Therefore he solicited Erasmian texts from colleagues and contacts both in Poland and abroad in order to increase their supply and impact throughout Crown lands, but particularly in Prussia.

The earliest extant example of bishop Dantiscus pursuing explicitly Erasmian texts appeared in his correspondence with Cornelis de Schepper. In late 1535, Schepper wrote to Dantiscus sharing his great satisfaction with the recent publication of Erasmus’ treatise on preaching, the famous Ecclesiastes. He regretted being unable to obtain the psalters formerly sought by the bishop, but he assumed that Erasmus’ Ecclesiastes had already made its way into the bishop’s hands. The ambitious text, which became a best-seller almost overnight, was one of Erasmus’ most significant, especially as his last great text. It was primarily an instructional discussion of preachers


81 Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, December 6, 1535, Brussels, CIDT&C.
and preaching. It accounted for the Church’s entire history of preaching, invoked the works and opinions of the Church Fathers, and responded to many of the criticisms of Protestants. It was a model of the humanist approach of ad fontes, but it worked within Catholic orthodoxy and refuted many of the positions of Protestant writers and preachers. Despite the text’s popularity and wide circulation, Dantiscus had not acquired a copy and asked Schepper to send one along. He also took the opportunity to request copies of Erasmus’ editions of both the works of St. Augustine and the Bible. He then piled on further solicitations for editions of the works of almost a dozen ancient writers, although he did not specify that those editions should be Erasmus’. 

Ecclesiastes and these other works were exactly the type of texts that Dantiscus sought more generally for his personal collections and diocesan library. They were impressive possessions per se, but they also provided resources for enhancing clerical efficacy in both ministry and diocesan administration.

In subsequent years, Dantiscus pursued his collection and application of Erasmus’ texts with other correspondents throughout Central Europe. In summer 1536 he wrote to his nephew, Kaspar Hannau, who was studying in Cracow, about the importance of the works of Erasmus and similar scholarly figures, mentioning also the high but worthy expense of acquiring texts from abroad. One of Dantiscus’s frequent exchanges was with the learned Jakob von Barthen, who also hailed from Gdańsk and served as a secretary of the archbishop of Riga. In October 1536, Barthen sent a letter


83 Ioannes Dantiscus to Cornelis De Schepper, February 24, 1536, Lubawa, CIDT&C.

84 Ioannes Dantiscus to Kaspar Hannau, July 22, 1536, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
to Dantiscus passing on a copy of Erasmus’ *Ecclesiastes*, likely the one transmitted by Schepper, their mutual friend. Barthen expressed great regret at the rumored passing of Erasmus and praised the virtue of the prolific scholar, who had died in July. Less than a month later, Barthen sent another letter to Dantiscus revealing a more ambitious request and arrangement. He wrote, “Because Your Highness deemed leniently to enjoin me to seek among our booksellers [in Gdańsk] what new books have arrived, I made ready and undertook this charge with a most eager spirit.” Identifying a few diamonds in the rough, Barthen purchased and sent what he could find. He acquired two volumes of Erasmus’ work on the life of Origen, as well as an edition of John Chrysostom’s Epistles of Paul, even though Erasmus had appeared to doubt their authenticity in his own version of the New Testament. Barthen explicitly praised these authors’ and Dantiscus’s close attention to the primacy Holy Scripture—perhaps a nod to the local evangelical embrace of *sola scriptura*—and was excited to contribute to the bishop’s collection. In May of the next year, Barthen again wrote to Dantiscus about his search for more of Erasmus’ works, this time with some frustration but a clear plan going forward. He had been unable to obtain an original catalogue of Erasmus’ titles due to various obstacles, but he had found a copy of the catalogue for future use, despite the fact that local booksellers were not carrying any of the listed works at that

85 Jakob von Barthen to Ioannes Dantiscus, October 30, 1536, Gdańsk, CIDT&C.


87 Jakob von Barthen to Ioannes Dantiscus, November 22, 1536, Gdańsk, CIDT&C. Concerning Erasmus’ own views and uses of Chrysostom’s work, which Dantiscus certainly would have acknowledged and taken into account if he was aware, the work of Erika Rummel is invaluable. See in particular her work on Erasmus’ recognition of certain patristic authorities. Erika Rummel, *Erasmus’ Annotations on the New Testament: from Philologist to Theologian* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).
time. Barthen was happy, though, that Dantiscus had received and enjoyed the *Ecclesiastes.* Years later as prince-bishop of Warmia, Dantiscus was still searching far afield for Erasmus’ texts. In July 1541, he wrote to Georg Hegel, a German banking agent working at the royal court in Cracow, relaying that he still wished to purchase parts of Erasmus’ collected works, a large number of which he had already acquired.

Reflecting the general attitudes of scholars and clerics across Poland-Lithuania, Dantiscus also pursued the works of the English humanist Thomas More, but somewhat less vigorously than those of Erasmus. The tragic story of More’s piety, stance against King Henry VIII, and martyrdom was well-known in Central Europe, but his works did not become popular in Poland-Lithuania until much later in the sixteenth century. In fact, Erasmus was responsible for generating a lot of More’s favor among Polish humanists and readers. Dantiscus had, of course, met More during his visit to London in 1522. He viewed the Englishman as an inspirational figure whose scholarship and piety should be models for Christians everywhere. He shared his high regard for More in multiple settings, but it showed most explicitly in his correspondence with Schepper. In October 1535, Schepper wrote to Dantiscus about the English King’s execution of More and John Fisher for refusing to recognize him as head of the Church of England.

88 Jakob von Barthen to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 30, 1537, Gdańsk, CIDT&C.
89 Ioannes Dantiscus to Georg Hegel, July 21, 1541, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
91 Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, October 27, 1535, Lüneburg, CIDT&C
followed up with a report of the King’s subsequent excommunication. Dantiscus responded with a heartfelt lamentation:

Who would not recoil in terror and suffer grief from the pitiable ruin of these most learned and truly holy men, [Bishop] of Rochester Cardinal John Fisher and Thomas More? It befell them, that which previously had brought varied sufferings and deaths to many holy and good men on account of their honesty.

It was around that time that more of More’s texts arrived in Poland and gained some popularity among humanist scholars there. Dantiscus’s direct participation in this development is unclear, but he certainly would have been a promotional voice for More, as both a humanist and a religious figure, when he was able. He did not, however, refer explicitly to More as a martyr, begging the question of what exact role he imagined More to have played in the Reformations.

A third foreign humanist figure whose work Dantiscus supported, lauded, and publicized both abroad and in Poland-Lithuania was Johannes Campensis, the famous scholar of Hebrew from Leuven whose acquaintance the bishop first made in the Low Countries in 1531. Their initial exchanges had revolved around Campensis’ work on the Psalms, drafts of which he continually sent to Dantiscus for review and comment, and which Dantiscus praised to third party colleagues. They also discussed other biblical texts, including Campensis’ commentary on the Epistles of Paul as well as editions of Scripture produced by fellow humanist scholars, both in the Low Countries and farther afield. Dantiscus appreciated Campensis’ work so much, and convinced his colleagues

92 Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, December 6, 1535, Brussels, CIDT&C.
93 Ioannes Dantiscus to Cornelis De Schepper and Godschalk Ericksen, December 23, 1535, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
in Poland of Campensis’ talents well enough, that Campensis even accompanied Dantiscus back to Cracow in 1532 in order to lecture at the university. The two humanists continued their correspondence and literary exchanges following Campensis’ departure from Poland in 1535 until late 1537, just before his own death.\textsuperscript{95}

Dantiscus’s discussions with a number of contacts about Campensis’ work provide several examples of his emphasis on orthodoxy within the texts he collected. One blatant example was an exchange with Cornelis de Schepper. In late summer 1535, Schepper wrote to Dantiscus a long letter in which he lamented being unable to send copies of Campensis’ most recent edition of the \textit{Psalms}, which also contained an abbreviated psalter by Ulrich Zwingli. The text had sold out.\textsuperscript{96} Dantiscus responded three months later, writing bluntly:

\begin{quote}
By no means should [Campensis’] otherwise exemplary text be sent to me, seeing that the author of the [included] abridged version was Zwingli, whom I have known from the other texts emerging under his name and who was revealed by those same texts…who through bold pursuit of war will lie dead with his companions on the dregs and piles of evil men, who together assaulted the Body of Christ.
\end{quote}

Even though Dantiscus formerly had requested Campensis’ text specifically, the inclusion of Zwingli’s work—deemed heretical—nullified the text’s value to his episcopal collection.\textsuperscript{97}


\textsuperscript{96} Cornelis de Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, September 16, 1535, Bruges, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{97} Ioannes Dantiscus to Cornelis de Schepper, December 23, 1535, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
In addition to patronizing these three famous individuals with whom he was personally familiar, Dantiscus also collected and promoted the texts of other humanist authors. His February-1536 letter to Schepper, referenced above, also contained requests for a number of texts by the recently-deceased Croatian humanist Marcus Marulus, known for his diverse literary production in both Latin and Croatian.\footnote{Axer and Skolimowska, \textit{Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Cornelis De Schepper}, 364; Neven Jovanović, “Marcus Marulus Spalatensis,” \textit{Colloquia Maruliana} 22 (2013): 201-7.}

Dantiscus asked specifically for Marulus’ \textit{Quinquaginta parabola} (Fifty Proverbs), \textit{De institutione bene vivendi per exempla Sanctorum} (On the Institutions of Living Well through the Example of the Saints), \textit{De imitation Christi} (On the Imitation of Christ), and his most famous piece, \textit{Evangelistarium} (The Gospels).\footnote{Ioannes Dantiscus to Cornelis De Schepper, February 24, 1536, Lubawa, CIDL.} These texts would have made impressive additions to his library and would have provided robust material for reforming the diocesan clergy and ministering to his population. Dantiscus also continued to request texts from his numerous colleagues and contacts that he had accumulated during his earlier sojourn in the Low Countries, who obliged him to varying degrees.\footnote{Vocht, \textit{John Dantiscus}, 136-417.}

As introduced briefly in Chapter 4, a crucial and somewhat ironic characteristic of many of the works collected and promoted by Dantiscus for the purpose of reform and counter-reform was their origin in or association with biblical humanism. Despite the Roman Church’s general disapproval of humanists reworking Scripture with modern literary techniques,\footnote{Erika Rummel, ed. \textit{Biblical Humanism and Scholasticism in the Age of Erasmus} (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 1-14, 167-226; Erika Rummel, \textit{The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance & Reformation} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 96-125.} Dantiscus saw such work as beneficial and as an innovative way
to engage evangelical reformers and draw them back to orthodoxy. After all, if evangelical reformers wanted to base their beliefs more completely on Scripture, and if retranslating Scripture was part of their agenda, why not have orthodox humanist linguistic experts bridge the gap between Catholics and Protestants by producing novel editions of Scripture that remained true to the Church’s teachings? Therefore, Dantiscus sought out the works of leading biblical humanists and incorporated their texts into his library. ¹⁰² Perhaps also in response to evangelical reformers’ desire to restore the Church’s original form, he pursued the works of Church Fathers—e.g. Origen, Chrysostom—through his engagement with these biblical humanists. These initiatives are vital indicators of the turn in Dantiscus’s literary sensibilities from classical humanism to Christian literature, which precisely mirrored the onset of his new professional responsibilities in the episcopate. In the embattled arena of the early Reformations, within which evangelical Christianity had become his primary foe, Dantiscus adopted an intellectual foundation of Christian authors ancient and modern.

The third important aspect of Dantiscus’s literary approach to reform was his dissemination of pointed religious propaganda that emanated not from his northern humanist colleagues but rather from papal contacts in Rome. The best example of this activity is his contribution to and promotion of the apologetic text *Christiana de fide et sacramentis contra haereticorum id temporis errores explanatio* (A Christian Exposition of the Faith and Sacraments against the Errors of the Heretics of this Age), composed by Vicar General of Rome Filippo Archinto and first published in Cracow in 1545. The production and dissemination of this work, written by a powerful theologian and official

serving closely under Pope Paul III just prior to the opening of the Council of Trent, involved multiple actors in Rome, Poland-Lithuania, and farther abroad, not least of whom was Dantiscus himself. It ensconced the prince-bishop in a critical moment of definition and reassertion across the Catholic world, and it further enhanced his notoriety and reputation on the eve of the early modern Church’s great council—Trent—his participation in which will be a main topic of Chapter 7.

Coordination on religious and political matters between Archinto and Dantiscus began in 1544, when Archinto wrote to the prince-bishop from Rome in order to reacquaint himself, noting that the two scholars and diplomats had become good friends years earlier at the imperial court:

If Your Most Reverend Lordship has not entirely forgotten the experience, which we enjoyed [together] on exceedingly friendly terms under the power of the Emperor as well as your King in Spain, there I was executing my duty as an envoy of my city Milan. Then perhaps you will enjoy receiving this letter, the contents of which will hardly be enough at present to show how greatly I wish for your health and, if it is in the power of the Pope or all the Curia, that I should prevail in your plea of your friends, as surely no other trouble will befall myself, being so pleasant and agreeable.

Dantiscus’s specific plea, either on behalf of or to Archinto in Rome, obviously delivered by a third party given the aloofness of Archinto’s letter, has been lost. It likely regarded, however, promotions within the Roman Curia. Six months later, Archbishop of Uppsala Olaus Magnus, who recently had succeeded his brother Johannes, wrote to Dantiscus from Rome about recent promotions to the cardinalate, and he confided in his letter:


104 Filippo Archinto to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 14, 1544, Rome, CIDT&C.
There are two reserves in mind, of whom one is believed to be Vicar Archinto, a great friend of Your Most Reverend Lordship. Those called to this honor will feel such a heavy burden that they should be compared to Hercules or vastest Atlas. I do not intend to assert, however, to any general member of the council, what cannot be rolled out except by Sisyphus.\footnote{Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, December 20, 1544, Rome, CIDT&C. For more on their relationship and its implications, particularly during the Council of Trent, see Chapter 7.}

Dantiscus likely had delivered his support for Archinto’s promotion through his nephew and canon of Warmia Kaspar Hannau, who was studying in Rome and with whom Dantiscus was very close.\footnote{Henryk Barycz, Polacy na studiach w Rzymie w epoce odrodzenia (1440-1600) (Cracow, 1938), 97.} Hannau kept Dantiscus up-to-date on matters in the city and with the Curia, including those involving Archinto.\footnote{Kaspar Hannau to Ioannes Dantiscus, July 25, 1545, Rome, CIDT&C.} Regardless of how their relationship was reignited, it culminated in 1545 when Archinto sent the final draft of the first edition of *Christiana de fide* to Dantiscus, who subsequently had the text published in Cracow through Hieronimus Wietor, along with the support of Stanislaus Hosius.\footnote{Nowak, Jan Dantyszek, 271; Cornelis de Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 12, 1546, Binche, CIDT&C. Interestingly enough, the printer Wietor earlier had been accused of multiple times and even arrested for producing evangelical works and disobeying the anti-Reformation edicts of the Crown. Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther, 61, 124; Alodia Kawecka-Grzycowa, “Hieronym Wietor,” in Drukarze dawnej Polski od XV do XVIII wieku, vol. 1 (Wroclaw: Ossolineum, 1983), 325-52.}

Archinto dedicated this first edition of the text to both Dantiscus and Hosius, thereby explicitly associating the prince-bishop with its production and proliferation in Poland-Lithuania and across Central Europe.\footnote{Filippo Archinto, *Christiana de fide et sacramentis contra haereticorum id temporis errores explanation*, 1545.}

*Christiana de fide* was a substantial polemical, catechetical, and apologetic work, enhanced by its publication by one of the pope’s most important and trusted theologians.
as well as contemporaneous with the opening of the Council of Trent (1545-1563).
Divided into thirty chapters and arranged in two parts, Archinto’s one-hundred-fifty-eight-page *Christiana de fide* systematically described various components of Catholic belief and practice, explicitly refuting the critiques and positions of different Protestant reformers. He addressed myriad topics including the Trinity and the dual nature of Christ, the role of free will in salvation, each of the seven sacraments, especially Baptism and the Eucharist, Apostolic Succession, the range of authorities of the Pope, and particular errors of the Protestants deemed to be heretical. He drew upon Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium as authorities, and he presented his positions alongside implications of earthly as well as eternal punishment for dissenters. He also expressed his appreciation for the support and assistance of fellow prelates in its composition, including Polish and Prussian colleagues. Dantiscus was obviously a leading candidate.¹¹⁰

Archinto’s text marked a significant milestone in the Reformations’ age of definition. Thereto, the Roman Church had been inconsistent and somewhat tepid in its formal and official responses to Protestant reform, and it had contested evangelical critiques quite laboriously. Most initial Catholic responses in the 1520s, in particular to the propositions of Martin Luther, had come only in the form of unofficial refutations written by independent authors and apologists, often called the Catholic Controversialists, as illuminated by the work of David Bagchi.¹¹¹ There were also

¹¹⁰ Archinto, *Christiana de fide*.

prominent scholars, such as Erasmus and others, who focused on fostering unity and agreement between Christians, often frustrating Catholic authorities and typically at the expense of productive doctrinal debates. In the 1530s and early 1540s, some of the onus for Christian reconciliation or negotiation shifted to imperial authorities, but even high-profile gatherings such as the 1530 Diet of Augsburg or the 1541 Colloquy of Regensburg failed to achieve resolution to the schism. Through all of this activity, part of the problem was that there was relative doctrinal uncertainty within Catholic circles. Many bishops struggled to use catechesis to address reform when doctrines were unclear. Several suddenly-contentious points of doctrine had been left moderately vague or subject to debate for centuries, and many Church leaders thought that any definition or resolution must come through an ecumenical council. The organization of a council, however, was a tremendous political challenge. Even when a pope decided that a council was necessary, debate about its timing, location, participants, and topics drew out for years. Thus, Archinto’s *Christiana de fide* was a response to some of these anxieties and one of the most notable formal attempts to define, explicate, and assert orthodox Catholic doctrine in systematic detail prior to the decrees of the Council of

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Trent, which would draw out over the course of the next eighteen years. Many of Archinto’s positions were being debated still, even among professed Catholics, and would only find final definition through the council.\textsuperscript{114} Dantiscus’s encouragement and facilitation of the text’s publication places him prominently in this moment of definition. It illustrates his wide-ranging efforts to engage in broad religious discussions and debates, formally counter Protestant reform, and define and reinforce Catholic belief and practice across Latin Christendom in coordination with the highest Church authorities. Producing literature for a wide audience was one of the best ways in which he knew how to pursue these goals on such a large scale, and he obviously welcomed a partner. His public activities toward these ends raised his profile considerably in this period of Catholic self-definition, but they also set the tone for his own local and regional reform efforts. *Christiana de fide* also formed an important literary and confessional link between Dantiscus and his younger Catholic colleagues in Poland-Lithuania, Hannau and Hosius, both of whom eventually would move into more important ecclesiastical roles in Prussia and particularly Warmia.\textsuperscript{115}

*Christiana de fide* attracted sizeable audiences in Poland-Lithuania and across Europe. As one indication of its widespread popularity, later Archinto had the text

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{114} The Council of Trent occurred in three short sessions between 1545 and 1563, each of which was intermittently attended by hundreds of bishops, canons, priests, heads of monastic orders, theologians, and diverse representatives of the Pope, Emperor, and other Catholic princes of Europe. Deliberating over current heresies and necessary internal reform, it took years for many key issues to be decided and even longer to procure acceptance from Europe’s princes. Archinto served as a papal representative during the council, where bishops debated many of the issues of belief and practice that he had already defined in his *Christiana de fide*. Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540-1770*, 10-25; O’Malley. For a more detailed discussion of the council’s first phase, see chapter 7.

\textsuperscript{115} Starnawski, “Związki umysłowe Warmii i Mazur,” 519-536.
\end{flushleft}
Dantiscus's association with the text in Poland-Lithuania and Prussia, and later farther afield, publicized his own comprehension of and commitment to multifaceted reform rather widely. This notoriety would recur throughout the last three years of his life in exchanges with both foreign and domestic colleagues. One of the most explicit recurrences came in a letter to Dantiscus from Cornelis de Schepper in late spring 1546. Among many other diplomatic matters, viewed from an imperial perspective of course, Schepper expressed great pleasure that:

…he, whom I celebrate greatly, to be sure the Most Reverend Lord Filippo Archinto, who is held as one of great theological erudition, should be able to publish such *libelli* of his own, which sent to you from Rome you arranged in turn to be printed in type in Cracow. Indeed, in this wonderful manner, [the *libelli*] satisfy the palate of our theologians and are embraced as if they were [the scholars' own] fixed approaches, by way of which we certainly see the work of a Christian [author]. Whereby for him I pray blessed outcomes; for should he be able to bring nothing else to bear, with him excluded there will be so great an interruption in these lands. Still I will give care to any evidence that should follow, from which I would be able to write a preface to him and congratulate him for his advancement.

*Christiana de fide* did not merely sate theologians’ appetites for proper Catholic doctrinal explication, although Schepper describes how such an outcome was well received. Nor did it merely supplement prior piecemeal attempts to refute evangelical ideas. Rather, its embrace by Schepper and his imperial colleagues suggests on the eve of the Council of Trent a degree of concord between ecclesiastical and imperial leaders, for whom finding agreement and cooperation in the face of Protestantism had

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116 Filippo Archinto, *Christianum de fide, & Sacramentis, Edictum* (Ingolstadt: Vueissenborn, 1546); *The Catholic Encyclopedia* 1, s.v “Archinto, Filippo.”

117 Johann Hannau Jr. to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 16, 1548, Frauenburg, CIDT&C; Johann Hannau Jr. to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 23, 1548, Frauenburg, CIDT&C.
been exceedingly difficult over the previous decades. Maintaining both papal and imperial contacts and sympathies, Dantiscus was a central figure in this concord. Schepper continued in his letter, “In Archinto’s *Libellus*, the interest of which you [Dantiscus] have served, I discovered that I hold goodwill on their account as well as on the account of the memory of my wife and children and progeny, all in the name [of Christ], by which they are all protected.”¹¹⁸ The European readers and listeners of *Christiana de fide* thus learned of Dantiscus’s name, rank, and contributions to transnational Catholic reform as he was utilizing the text to justify, support, and propagate his own reform initiatives locally. It tacitly linked his local efforts to general Catholic reform in Poland-Lithuania, papal lands, imperial lands, and indeed throughout Latin Christendom.

Dantiscus’s literary endeavors during his episcopacy certainly were an extension of his intellectual and political literary activity from his career as a diplomat. More importantly, though, they reflected his new priorities as a religious reformer and counter-reformer who located himself in a vast arena of reform that spanned Latin Christendom and especially Central Europe. Whether it was through his own compositions, his promotion of works by contemporary humanists or Church Fathers, or his contributions to the production of polemical theological tracts under papal authority, his use of literature as a reforming bishop was strategic, diligent, resourceful, and informed by intellectual exchanges from across Europe. This also was exemplified by Dantiscus’s occasional rejection of particular works of literature. In 1534, he received a Lutheran apologetic work written by Duke Albrecht, but he refused to send it before the imperial

¹¹⁸ Cornelis de Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 12, 1546, Binche, CIDT&C.
court in order to avoid it reflecting poorly on himself and the Crown of Poland. In his promotional work, though, Dantiscus took advantage of the resources and contacts at his disposal and targeted broad audiences with both rational and emotional arguments. His purpose was both to engage with ongoing Christian debates personally and to support his own practical reform in his dioceses with a polemical, literary framework informed by diverse perspectives. His focuses and methods fluctuated, but his use of literature in this way extended from early in his residence in Royal Prussia as bishop of Chełmno through his death as prince-bishop of Warmia in 1548.

A Cosmopolitan Episcopacy

The religious environment of Poland-Lithuania into which Dantiscus entered as a bishop-elect in 1532 was complex and fluid. It was influenced by numerous external diplomatic, economic, and intellectual pressures—e.g. Papal relations, conflicts with the Empire, activities of the Hansa, migration, humanist thought, print culture—but it also mirrored the polity’s own particular political and social characteristics, all of which were multifaceted and many of which were unique to Poland-Lithuania in Christendom. Dantiscus was aware of these pressures and characteristics, but having been absent abroad for eight years he needed to re-familiarize himself with all of them in order to serve the Crown and Church effectively in Royal Prussia. A substantial part of that service would involve slowing and reversing the rate of evangelical reform in his jurisdictions. As demonstrated in Chapters 2-4, he had been uniquely prepared and qualified for that task. And while his subsequent actions in that service, more of which will appear in Chapters 6-7, certainly reflected local and regional circumstances, they

119 Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther, 147.
also drew heavily from his prior experiences in Poland-Lithuania and across Europe, especially in his literary activity and exchanges.

From the beginning of his episcopacy, Dantiscus used literature to lay the groundwork for, inform, support, and defend his practical religious reform program and his suppression of Protestantism. Owing to his diverse prior experiences and continuing epistolary connections, this contextualizing literary activity and his general approach to addressing Protestant and Catholic reform in Prussia were naturally cosmopolitan. Throughout his episcopal tenures in Chełmno Land and Warmia, he employed numerous, eclectic works toward reforming ends. They included his own compositions, texts from fellow humanist scholars and through them the Church Fathers, and official responses to the Reformations from high-ranking authorities in the Roman Church. All of these had blatant foreign contributions, inspirations, or intended audiences, at least in part, to which his experiences and connections abroad were critical. In Dantiscus’s own compositions, he displayed his international humanist training, his history of encounters with evangelical reform and its offshoots, his erudite and ambitious political voice, his knowledge of Protestant leaders and theology, and his several polemical influences, almost all of which came arose during his diplomatic career abroad. Of other literary works that he promoted, most of them were composed in distant places or eras and reflected various transnational intellectual developments, only some of which were common in Poland-Lithuania. The major official Catholic refutation of evangelical reform that he helped to publish and proliferate in 1545 came from an Italian prelate high in the Papacy, Filippo Archinto. For Dantiscus, the availability and utility of such cosmopolitan literature could not be overlooked in light of the challenges facing the Church.
The literature that Dantiscus utilized to contextualize his practical reform efforts for a wide audience may have been naturally cosmopolitan based on his experiences and connections, but it was also intentionally cosmopolitan. Despite the intra-Prussian limits of his episcopal jurisdiction, he considered it both productive to continue to engage in broad Reformations discussions and obligatory for bishops to address the problem of evangelical reform transnationally, each for as wide an audience as possible. He also perceived engagement with the broader debates and contexts of contemporary religious reform to be crucial to the success of counter-reform and Catholic reform efforts in Prussia. He could not merely address local events and developments when the Reformations across Central Europe were intricately linked and mutually-influential, as both his literary activity and the reform efforts described in Chapters 6-7 demonstrate. For Dantiscus, to focus narrowly on reform in Royal Prussia or Warmia was to treat superficial symptoms but ignore the larger diseases plaguing religion and society across Latin Christendom, especially in Central Europe. International Catholic literary work could provide a remedy. These beliefs and his subsequent actions were generated, enabled, and propagated by his own cosmopolitan experiences. They could never have been as robust or applicable had he come from a more parochial background. In the end, Dantiscus’s cosmopolitan use of literature—not to mention his practical reform efforts—reflected and demonstrated how integral and interconnected each part of Central Europe was during the sixteenth century, even the territories considered remote, unimportant, or already lost to evangelical reform. The context of the Reformations and the development of evangelical and Catholic reform especially highlight this quality. His literary endeavors also began to illustrate how some
Catholic authorities were responding strategically to the evangelical reform movement in broad settings, even well before the Council of Trent. Dantiscus’s literary participation in this response was a key facet of his career, but his actual practical reform program would be what grounded him as a reforming bishop.
CHAPTER 6
A COSMOPOLITAN EPISCOPACY II: REFORMING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN PRUSSIA, 1532-1548

Riding southwestward from the Hanseatic port of Elbląg on a gray afternoon in May 1540, Prince-Bishop Johannes Dantiscus of Warmia and his entourage rounded a bend of the Nogat River and crested a bare, shallow ridge before coming into view of the sprawling, red-brick citadel of Malbork (Marienburg).¹ The massive Ordensburg boasted several layers of moats and ramparts, dozens of bastions, a fortified bridge spanning the Nogat, and a lofty upper castle that together commanded a mile-long stretch of the broad river and loomed over the delta lowlands to the west. A few months earlier, King Sigismund of Poland had dispatched the prince-bishop to the palatine—and former Teutonic—capital in order to investigate an accused heretic and former canon priest of Warmia, Alexander Sculteti.² As Dantiscus’s convoy skirted Malbork’s small town, passed under the shadow of the towering upper castle and Church of Our Lady, and rode through the Vorburg and labyrinthine outer walls, he wondered why one of his own clergymen had to be so problematic. In the past few years, Sculteti had taken publicly to calling his longtime mistress his wife and his illegitimate children his heirs. He also had begun preaching and promoting Reformed Christian ideas, particularly rejecting the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist.³ As a result, earlier that spring Dantiscus and members of the cathedral chapter had petitioned Sigismund to bring

¹ Ioannes Dantiscus to Albrecht I von Hohenzollern-Ansbach, May 19, 1540, Malbork, CIDT&C.
² Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, February 15, 1541, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
³ Ioannes Dantiscus to Tiedemann Giese, August 16, 1538, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Tiedemann Giese, March 19, 1539, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
charges against the renegade priest. After some of Sculteti’s seized possessions had
been collected at Malbork, Sigismund had summoned Dantiscus, Bishop Tiedemann
Giese of Chelmno, and Preposite Paweł Plotowski of Warmia there in order to examine
the items officially. Once inside the lower castle complex, Dantiscus’s carriage passed
the citadel’s vast workshops and stables, crossed an inner defensive ditch via a dark-
wood covered trestle, slowed through an intricate gate tower, and rumbled up a sloped,
cobblestoned passageway into the spacious middle-castle courtyard, where he
disembarked and greeted his fellow Prussian officials.

Dantiscus, Giese, and Płotowski gathered in Malbork’s elaborate Grand Master’s
Palace in order to examine Sculteti’s seized property, among which was a small, plain,
wooden chest. Inside the chest, the officials discovered a few mundane personal items,
but also several objects that they determined to be unforgivable possessions. They
found a trove of texts that criticized King Sigismund and proclaimed extreme evangelical
beliefs, including denying the sacramentality of the Eucharist, the intercessory power of
the saints, and the authority of Apostolic Succession. Most offensive among these texts
was a *libellus* printed in Zurich by Heinrich Bullinger, the successor of Ulrich Zwingli,
early champion of Reformed Christianity. Sculteti had annotated this *libellus* in the
margins, and Dantiscus recognized the canon’s hand. This discovery provided final,
irrefutable confirmation of Sculteti’s Protestant defection, which Dantiscus and his
colleagues had long acknowledged. Under their official seal, they sent the *libellus* and

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4 Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, May 5, 1540, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
5 Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, February 15, 1541, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
other items by royal messenger to King Sigismund with a full report. Even as they discussed the matter, in Cracow Sigismund already was drawing up a formal decree of Sculteti’s exile from the Kingdom of Poland, and the banished priest soon would flee to Rome. As Dantiscus rode back eastward toward his own castle in Lidzbark Warmiński some days later, he lamented how deeply evangelical reform had penetrated his jurisdiction and administration. He also began to reevaluate how scrupulously he ought to reform components of the Catholic Church in his territory, anxious to address the diocese’s mounting challenges as thoroughly and efficiently as possible.

This chapter will present several aspects of the wide-ranging, practical, ecclesiastical reform program that Dantiscus planned, assembled, and enacted in his Prussian dioceses between his consecration as a bishop in September 1533 and his death in 1548. The various measures that he undertook throughout this fifteen-year period were calculated, coordinated, and responsive to particular characteristics of Prussian religiosity and society that had fostered evangelical reform there since 1520. They also reflected distinctly, however, his vast experiences abroad with reformers and reform—both Protestant and Catholic—prior to his return to Prussia in 1532. They further reveal his continuing engagement with a prolific intellectual network of correspondence, which during his episcopacy spread across the western world from New Spain to Muscovy. They also illustrate, in part, the drastic turn toward the uncompromising regulation of strict Catholic belief and practice that he made during the second half of his career. All of these aspects were supported by the ambitious literary

6 Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, February 15, 1541, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.

7 Król polski Zygmunt skazuje na wygnanie z kraju kanonika Aleksandra Scultetiego, May 24, 1540, Eg.2, Episcopal Archive, Archive of the Archdiocese of Warmia in Olsztyn, Poland.
activity that he pursued throughout the same period, described in Chapter 5. An examination of Dantiscus’s reform program uncovers both the crucial role that the varied European Reformations played in informing religious reform in Prussia, and the vital contributions of Prussia’s Reformations to the religious and political history of Central Europe more broadly. His initiatives ultimately became an integral part of Central European religious, political, and diplomatic relations during the 1530s and 1540s, especially between Poland-Lithuania, the Duchy of Prussia, and the Holy Roman Empire.

Dantiscus’s practical reform program during his episcopacy took on several distinct and intentional forms, through each of which he intended a unique impact on Prussia’s population. First, in order to establish legal support for his institutional initiatives, he cooperated on or unilaterally released several edicts delimiting orthodox Christian practice and belief in his and neighboring territories and criminalizing certain “heresies.” These edicts typically had far-reaching implications, even if they were not entirely enforceable or effectual. Backed by those edicts, he attempted to reform, improve, purify, and enrich several institutional components of the Catholic Church, including the secular clergy, friaries and monasteries, and diocesan schools. These components recently had suffered from mismanagement, underfunding, understaffing, or internal corruption, and in some cases had never been very robust in the first place. Evangelical preachers and civic reformers across the region had challenged, removed, reformed, or influenced these components to varying effect beginning in the 1520s. Dantiscus sought to restore them along orthodox Catholic lines in order to strengthen both his administration and his ministry. Finally, and in a broader sweep, he led targeted
persecutions of evangelical sympathizers, supporters, and actors throughout the region, most notably among the clergy. Each of these efforts, all of which explicitly addressed particular local or regional concerns among Catholic officials, also demonstrates Dantiscus’s broader self-positioning in a religiously-complex and fluid Central Europe. He viewed the Catholic Church’s authority, stability, and ubiquity as paramount in such a turbulent environment and saw the Prussian Church’s role as critical.

**Strategic Edicts**

Throughout his episcopacy, Dantiscus used his political authority—particularly as prince-bishop—strategically to attempt to suppress evangelical reform and purify Catholic belief and practice. One crucial mechanism was the official edict. As a diplomat and in his lesser bishopric of Chełmno, he supported the decrees of his predecessors and superiors in the hierarchies of both the Crown of Poland and the Catholic Church. After assuming the role of the most powerful prelate and prince in Royal Prussia with his ascension to the position of prince-bishop of Warmia in 1537, he took on the responsibility of releasing his own edicts, all of which focused on purging the region of Protestantism. He then implemented these edicts via the practical reform of religiosity, ministry, and administration in his prince-bishopric and diocese. These decretal initiatives reflected, continued, and in some cases enhanced the efforts of his predecessors in Chełmno Land and Warmia. They also laid further groundwork for the more industrious measures taken by his successors after 1548. The anti-Protestant edicts released during Dantiscus’s episcopacy did not always have their intended effect, and by no means did they discourage or eliminate all of the region’s Protestant believers or sympathizers. They did, however, make up an important dimension of his
intentional and thorough attempt to restore the primacy of the Catholic Church in Prussia, both alongside and independent of the Polish Crown.

Throughout the 1520s and into the 1530s, Catholic officials had released multiple decrees to confine, control, and discourage Protestant reform in Royal Prussia and Poland-Lithuania more broadly. As described in Chapters 2 and 5, the early waves of evangelical reform in Prussia especially had been fervent and pervasive, particularly in urban areas and among German-speaking patricians. King Sigismund released seven different anti-Protestant edicts pertaining to Crown lands between only 1520 and 1524, substantially more than other Christian princes. The other major Catholic political figure in Prussia during this period, the prince-bishop of Warmia, similarly used official decrees to counter evangelical reform. As discussed in the Introduction and Chapter 5, jurisdictional peculiarities and inconsistencies gave him great power in the prince-bishopric but somewhat limited his efficacy in the rest of the Diocese of Warmia and in Royal Prussia. And despite holding the highest political position in Royal Prussia as the president of the Prussian Assembly, his strict administrative Catholicism became anathema to Royal Prussian urban leaders who were attracted to evangelical reform. Nonetheless, Dantiscus’s predecessor in Warmia, Mauritius Ferber, attempted to maximize his influence over reform in the region during the early Reformations. Ferber took steps to mitigate Protestant challenges and extend his influence into other parts of

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8 Natalia Nowakowska, *King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther* (Oxford: OUP, 2018), 119-24. Nowakowska has argued that this high number of edicts was meant to save face for the king rather than actually punish evangelical sympathizers, and that evangelical reform continued to grow unabated. Even if they were face-saving for the king, such severe decrees nonetheless became an important part of the bishops’ approaches to quelling evangelical reform.

Royal Prussia. He implemented anti-Protestant policies through several edicts in the 1520s, banning various evangelical texts and practices and explicitly supporting Sigismund’s related policies, especially during the years 1524-1526. Evangelical activity in the largest town in the Diocese of Warmia—Elbląg—was of particular concern. There he monitored locals who sought an education in Wittenberg and then returned home as erudite and inspired reforming leaders.

Prior to Dantiscus’s succession as prince-bishop of Warmia in 1537, he adamantly supported the initiatives and decrees of both Ferber and Sigismund, both from abroad as a diplomat and locally as bishop of Chełmno. From the imperial court during the 1520s, Dantiscus paid close attention to the religious situation in Prussia, staying in contact with family, friends, and colleagues there. He even collaborated with Ferber on a report to the Pope titled “On the Lutheran business arising in Prussia.”

Serving as the less powerful bishop of Chełmno from 1530 until 1537, Dantiscus was more in a position to uphold the edicts and policies of his superiors than to shape broader Prussian religiosity with proactive legislation. He openly supported Sigismund’s prior anti-Protestant decrees, working in conjunction with the Polish episcopate.

Officially, he also played a less ostentatious peacekeeping role between Poland, Royal Prussia, and Ducal Prussia. This role grew in importance as Ferber became sicker and

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13 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, February 21, 1533, Lubawa, CIDT&C; Nowakowska, 122-124.
less active toward the end of his life.\textsuperscript{14} When Dantiscus succeeded Ferber in Warmia in 1537, it seemed likely to observers that he would continue the late prince-bishop’s anti-Protestant policies and perhaps even more effectively, especially considering his well-known education and experience with evangelical reform abroad.\textsuperscript{15} Historian Marian Pawlak opined that Dantiscus, “better than his predecessors at the Warmian stool, seemed to understand how the activity of the various writers of the Reformation threatened the unity of the existing church.”\textsuperscript{16}

Although it has not become a prominent part of his historical legacy, prince-bishop Dantiscus attempted to uphold and expand upon his predecessor’s strict regulation of Catholic belief and practice through the passage of several official edicts targeting evangelical Christianity as a heretical and subversive practice. Part of his motivation was a combination of political goals: to maintain Ferber’s legacy, to strengthen administratively the Catholic Church in Warmia, and to support his royal patron King Sigismund. Dantiscus also genuinely pined to eradicate Protestantism, however, and these official edicts would support and legitimize his other wide-ranging efforts to do so. On 21 March 1539, in the Bishop’s Castle in Lidzbark Warmiński, he signed his first \textit{Edict against Heresy}, in which he banned owning books, reading books, or preaching principles derived from any approach to Christian worship that he deemed heretical, especially Lutheranism. All inhabitants of the diocese were required explicitly

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\textsuperscript{15} Borrmann, \textit{Ermland und die Reformation}, 56-57.

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to participate in the ceremonies, fasts, feasts, abstentions, processions, and traditions of the Catholic Church. The edict vividly distinguished “faithful”—in this case Catholic—Christians from the “unchristian heretics” and emphasized that true freedom was inherent to all good Catholics, a direct rebuke of the evangelical dismissal of free will. The *Edict against Heresy* explicitly operated in tandem with recent initiatives by both King Sigismund and Emperor Charles to regulate religiosity across Central Europe. Unfortunately for Dantiscus, its effectiveness locally was limited severely by the fact that two thirds of the Diocese of Warmia was ruled by the Lutheran Duke Albrecht, who of course would not enforce the decree. Just over a year later on 15 April 1540, Dantiscus released another edict in cooperation with King Sigismund that applied to royal territory widely, including Royal Prussia and Warmia. This second edict specifically targeted Lutheranism as heretical and forbade it—at least theoretically—within the edict’s purview. Together, these two edicts would articulate and define the legal foundation upon which Dantiscus would attempt to suppress evangelical reform throughout his ecclesiastical and political territory in the coming decade.

Narrower regional and local issues with Christian belief and practice also elicited specific authoritative decrees from Dantiscus during his episcopacy. He addressed such issues with thorough theological and practical consideration as well as appropriate deference to higher secular and religious authorities. Just after releasing his own edicts against heresy in 1539 and 1540, he pushed to negotiate the terms of Sigismund’s

17 Leopold Prowe, ed., *Nicolaus Copernicus* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1884), 540-5; Franz Hipler, ed. *Festschrift des historischen Vereins für Ermland zum vierhundertsten Geburtstage des ermländischen Domherrn Nikolaus Kopernikus* (Braunsberg: Eduard Peter, 1873), 329-33; Edict issued by Ioanne Dantiscus against heretics, March 21, 1539, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C; Edict issued by Ioannes Dantiscus against heretics and counterfeit coin, April 15, 1540, Smolajny, CIDT&C.
edicts banning subjects of the Crown from studying at supposedly disreputable, Protestant universities. The king was concerned by the number of Prussians traveling to study at universities in largely-Protestant areas, specifically in Wittenberg and Leipzig. He argued that the risk of these students returning to Prussia and invigorating evangelical reform there was far too great. In one of his more contrary positions, Dantiscus reiterated his disdain for Protestant beliefs but praised the benefit to Prussia of both the higher education received by its citizens at foreign universities and the lucrative bursaries that often made their education possible. It appeared that for him, in this case, the potential Protestant influence was a calculated risk, but in general he acquiesced to the King’s edicts. On another issue, however, Dantiscus more clearly dictated strict Catholic practice. In June 1544, he sent to Johannes Langhannius and the clergy of Lidzbark Warmiński his “Edict to the Pastors on the Reinstatement, Solemnification, and Celebration of the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin.” In this edict, addressed to the clergy and populace of the episcopal capital but applying to the rest of the diocese as well, he mandated that the Feast of the Visitation be celebrated with public festivities, processions, and the consecration of the sacraments, emphasizing the responsibility of priests to engage their entire congregations. Such a decree served to create and sustain a strategic display of the political and cultural strength of the Catholic Church in Warmia. Dantiscus meant it to impress and discourage local and regional Protestant populations, especially in the diocese’s larger

urban areas, such as Elbląg and Braniewo, where Prussian reformers continued to travel and preach.\textsuperscript{19}

Dantiscus’s major edicts during his tenure as bishop of Chełmno and prince-bishop of Warmia were not numerous, but their contents and his cooperation with other religious and secular leaders nonetheless demonstrate their significance to reform in Prussia and farther afield. He had supported others’ official bans on evangelical beliefs and practices in Prussia both from abroad and as bishop of Chełmno, even as Ferber’s chronic illness in the 1530s sapped some vigor out of counter-reform efforts in Warmia. After Dantiscus’s succession in 1537, however, strict edicts became an integral part of his own episcopal management of religious reform. The first two edicts, released within a couple of years of his succession, ambitiously targeted the behavior of Lutherans and other Protestants as heretical. They also explicitly invoked relations with the Crown of Poland and the Holy Roman Empire. Dantiscus clearly conceptualized his own reform initiatives as a part of the broader Central European effort to suppress evangelical Christianity. He recognized the common challenges faced by Central Europe’s complex Catholic polities and drew upon his experiences with reform from across the continent over the previous two decades to construct his decrees. He also continued to work within the mandates of royal edicts coming out of Cracow, which further strengthened these widespread counter-reforming connections. Finally, he used narrower edicts to define and direct acceptable Catholic practice on local levels in the Diocese of Warmia. He couched them, however, within his broader approach to negotiating political and

\textsuperscript{19} Ioannes Dantiscus to Ioannes Langhannius & Clergy of Warmia, June 14, 1544, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
religious power relations at all levels of society across Prussia. Dantiscus’s official
declares became essential pillars of support for his institutional reform initiatives. They
provided sweeping, intentional, and unambiguous justification for such efforts.

**Concerns with the Clergy**

The most obvious and urgent institutional component of the Church for bishop
Dantiscus to attempt to reform was the diocesan secular clergy, the behavior of which
long had been troubling for Prussian lay Catholics and prelates alike. During the late
middle ages, like in much of Europe, the priesthood in Prussia generally had become
distracted from serving the spiritual needs of the faithful and too focused on matters
such as accumulating income, pursuing professional advancement, securing the
political strength of the Church, and exercising local power. During the fifteenth century
in Royal Prussia and Warmia in particular, the administrative role of the Teutonic Order
and the infiltration of political conflicts into diocesan and parish life had exacerbated the
power, privileges, and abuses of the clergy. This development persisted even after the
Teutonic cession of Royal Prussia and Warmia to Poland in 1466. The political strength
of the clergy, combined with their typical lineage from wealthy urban patrician families
and the abuses of their station in local settings, had generated significant public
animosity in Prussia. Clerical privileges and inattentiveness to ministry became one of
the largest targets of evangelical reformers in the 1520s, many of whom were former
clergy members themselves. This was true even in districts where the Church
maintained firm administrative control, such as in Warmia. Therefore, when Dantiscus
returned to Prussia as a bishop in 1532, his subordinate clergy suffered from both entrenched internal corruption and penetrating external criticism.\textsuperscript{20}

In his efforts to restore the Prussian clergy, Dantiscus’s experiences in Chełmno Land and Warmia were quite distinct. Priests in the Palatinate of Chełmno Land did not have the access to political power enjoyed by priests in the Prince-Bishopric of Warmia. Therefore, clergy in the former succumbed to the influence of secular authorities, social movements, and external interests to a much greater extent than clergy in the latter, particularly in urban areas. The impact of evangelical reform was no exception. It attracted several clerical adherents in the towns of Chełmno and Grudziądz,\textsuperscript{21} as demonstrated by the priest-turned-evangelical who drew Dantiscus's ire in 1533, discussed in Chapter 5. Evangelical reform exploded especially in the much larger town of Toruń, the German-speaking citizens of which enjoyed close relations with Gdańsk and the Hanseatic League as well as significant administrative autonomy. In the early 1520s, urban clergy and civic leaders there quickly adopted evangelical ideas and efficiently reoriented much of the town's religious and political culture, causing conflict with both the Church and the Crown.\textsuperscript{22} Thus when Dantiscus arrived in Chełmno Land in 1532, his diocese's most significant problem among the clergy was not rampant

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\textsuperscript{21} Marian Biskup, \textit{Dzieje Chełmna i jego regionu} (Toruń: TNT, 1968), 155.
\textsuperscript{22} Marian Biskup, \textit{Historia Torunia} (Toruń: TNT, 1992), vol. II, part 1, 190-245.
\end{flushright}
abuse of privileges and power but rather the sympathy toward or defection to evangelical reform in urban areas, especially Toruń. Between 1533 and 1537, he used personal connections in Chełmno Land’s larger towns to attempt to win back the hearts and minds of both civic and spiritual leaders. While he found some success in the less affected towns of Chełmno and Grudziądz, there was none to be had in Toruń. Without formidable authority or leverage over the urban clergy there, he could impose little clerical reform, and so he focused on alternative initiatives in the diocese during those years.\(^{23}\)

Beginning in 1537, reforming the clergy of Warmia provided a stark contrast for Dantiscus. The greater, more centralized, but jurisdictionally-complex authority of the prince-bishop of Warmia presented him with different advantages and different challenges. Most appealingly, the political power of the prince-bishop, canonry, and clergy within the prince-bishopric had discouraged many priests from indulging in evangelical reform, which was also less prevalent and less concentrated than it had been in the urban centers of Chełmno Land. As a side effect, however, the corruption that had long troubled the clergy from within, which evangelical reformers both in Warmia and elsewhere had been highlighting for years, persisted in the diocese relatively unchallenged. Meanwhile, diocesan priests in lands governed by the Duchy of Prussia were much more susceptible to evangelical reform.\(^{24}\) Dantiscus’s predecessor Mauritius Ferber had attempted internal clerical reform in the mid-1520s, with only


\(^{24}\) Leśnodorski, *Dominium Warminskie*, 88-93.
moderate success. In order to fix the widely-acknowledged problems among Warmia’s priests, Dantiscus decided to address three practical issues in particular: clerical education, clerical celibacy, and proper administration of the sacraments. Although it is almost impossible to trace the actual effectiveness of his clerical reform efforts on the ground in the available sources, or to gauge the contemporary reactions of the clergy or the laity, his efforts nonetheless demonstrate important aspects of the thoroughness and cohesiveness intended for his Prussian reform program.

Dantiscus sought to improve and apply constructively his clergy’s education from the outset of his episcopacy in Warmia. Too often he found that priests had been poorly educated, taught by evangelical sympathizers, or not educated at all. He immediately began to encourage university training among diocesan priests. He emphasized that this training ought to be from acceptable Catholic instructors and institutions. Such an education was especially necessary for members of the cathedral chapter, who typically had come from noble or affluent families in Protestant-leaning urban areas. Eventually, he raised their formerly “recommended” higher education to a required three years of study at a Catholic university and installed discouraging repercussions for not meeting the requirement. In order to enable and encourage aspiring priests, Dantiscus also reduced some of the administrative impediments to clergy pursuing such lengthy study and accepted broad training in science, art, law, and medicine in addition to theology, so long as the training was deemed to be orthodox.

25 Nowakowska, *King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther*, 155.


Due to the prevalence of Protestant-influenced schooling and privileged noble lineage among his canons, Dantiscus did face some resistance to these policies. On occasion he dismissed priests who refused to comply.\textsuperscript{28} He also encouraged systematic backlash against clergy members who dissented or dissembled their education. In 1540, he sent a legal instruction to the cathedral chapter, in which he wrote:

\begin{quote}
...with vigor I declare it at present that by no means is a new entrant [to the canonry]to be received into the residence or determined fit to reside there, unless he should show that previously he sat in study, privileged with good [Catholic] materials, for an interval of three years, continually and without interruption. If he should be deficient in [these requirements]...he should be rebuked with zeal and should earn no other honors, and only thus should he should be allowed to reside [among you].\textsuperscript{29}
\end{quote}

Dantiscus did occasionally accept some credits from Protestant universities toward a priest’s education requirement, but only in rare cases. Jan Lubodzieski, for example, convinced Dantiscus to admit him to the canonry in 1547, even though two years of his study had been completed in Wittenberg. Dantiscus, however, monitored the activities of priests who invoked this leniency, with the assistance of their fellow canons.\textsuperscript{30}

The most prevalent problem among the clergy of Warmia, as throughout much of Europe, was the disregard for the requirement of celibacy.\textsuperscript{31} This issue appeared

\begin{footnotes}

\footnotetext{29}[1] Legal Instruction of Ioannes Dantiscus for Ermland Chapter, March 29, 1540, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.


\footnotetext{31}[1] Marjorie Elizabeth Plummer recently has explored this topic in the context of religious reform in the German lands of Central Europe. Her examination of clergy members’ battles with and against celibacy during the early Reformations has illuminated new crucial dimensions of the local process of evangelical reform in early modern Europe. Particularly at play were the diverse motivations, justifications, coping mechanisms, and appeals to public opinion seized by priests and pastors in local settings. Mistresses and wives became points of drastic confessional negotiation and important parts of Protestant cultural
\end{footnotes}
regularly in Dantiscus’s correspondence with both religious and secular leaders. King Sigismund took notice and discussed it with Dantiscus on several occasions, indeed even from the beginning of his tenure in Chelmno Land.\(^3\)\(^2\) It was also a point of contention in letters exchanged with Duke Albrecht, to whom Dantiscus complained frequently about priests adopting “secular lifestyles,” keeping mistresses, getting married, and fleeing the Church. Evangelical churches and principalities, which typically allowed pastors and ministers to marry, could attract Catholic clergy members who eschewed the Church’s requirement. Albrecht, who had converted to Lutheranism in the early 1520s, married in 1526, and welcomed priests turning from neighboring Catholic territories, expressed reserved sympathy for the administrative challenges Dantiscus was facing but could not support him on practical or spiritual religious terms.\(^3\)\(^3\) Despite a number of clergymen defecting from Warmia, more often the diocese had maintained its priests but simply had failed to prevent them from entertaining mistresses. Such behavior, however, had fostered public resentment of the clergy and distrust for their sincerity in ministry.\(^3\)\(^4\)

The issue of clerical celibacy generated significant personal anxiety for Dantiscus and ultimately drew tremendous ministerial and administrative concern. The source of his anxiety actually had emerged more than a decade earlier during his diplomatic missions, well prior to his episcopal nomination, ordination, and consecration. While


\(^3\)\(^2\) Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 13, 1533, Cracow, CIDT&C;

\(^3\)\(^3\) Stefan Hartmann, ed., *Herzog Albrecht von Preußen und das Bistum Ermland (1525-1550)* (Köl: Böhlau Verlag, 1991), 312-324.

\(^3\)\(^4\) Zins, „Początki reformacji na Warmii,” 53-90.
attending the imperial court in Spain, he had taken for a mistress the noblewoman
Isabella Delgada, who in the mid-1520s begot him a son and daughter—Juan and
Juana. Originally he had planned to bring the family back to Poland with him, but when
he realized his growing potential and affinity for a career in the Church, he decided to
leave them in Spain. This situation was not extraordinary among his peers, but it did
weigh on him. It also threatened substantial embarrassment for him, especially when his
financial obligations to his progeny began to mount. In the mid-1530s, when Dantiscus
was preparing to succeed Ferber as prince-bishop of Warmia, he received a series of
letters from Isabella and Juana requesting financial support for Juana’s dowry, as she
had come of age and was entertaining a respectable suitor in Spain. Dantiscus, who
had left his family very little money to begin with, resisted meeting this obligation, even
in the face of Isabella highlighting his acquisition of a lucrative prince-bishopric in
Warmia. When addressing problems with clerical celibacy in his own jurisdiction, he
could—somewhat hypocritically—draw on his own personal experience with the pitfalls
of being a cleric with unchaste attachments and commitments, even though his own
activities had taken place prior to his ordination and he thus far had resisted meeting his
corresponding financial responsibilities.

Informed by personal experience as well as frequent communications about
upholding clerical celibacy, Dantiscus resolved to address the problem as effectively as
possible. Upon ascending to the position of prince-bishop, he immediately began to
demand and enforce a celibate lifestyle for all priests. He diligently sought information

35 Nowak, Jan Dantyszek, 138.
36 Nowak, Jan Dantyszek, 200-2.
about particular offenders and excoriated those who were identified as having broken celibacy within his jurisdiction. He deemed them a threat to the integrity and stability of the diocese and indeed the entire Church. There were so many cases of promiscuous priests, however, that he often felt overwhelmed by the scandals radiating through his jurisdiction. Those who refused to comply with his regulations faced trial and banishment, and throughout his tenure as prince-bishop Dantiscus banished numerous offenders. He railed against an even greater number of priests who had taken it upon themselves to abandon their flocks and flee the territory for neighboring havens, such as Ducal Prussia, where they could keep or marry their mistresses but continue to minister.\textsuperscript{37}

Due perhaps to his own personal anxieties, perhaps to the prevalence of the problem in Warmia, perhaps to an unstated theological understanding, or perhaps to his conception of the authority of the Catholic Church, breaking clerical celibacy was a paramount violation of orthodoxy and embrace of Protestantism in Dantiscus’s perspective. As also appears in several later examples of his reforming activities, including especially his conflicts with Alexander Sculteti and Wilhelm Gnapheus, discovering that a problematic priest had openly broken celibacy was often a breaking point for the prince-bishop. Thereafter he rarely—if ever—shied away from punishment, let alone allowed the priest to maintain his station or continue to minister. Based on his voluminous correspondence, decrees, and literary work, Dantiscus’s implicit reasoning for this view of clerical celibacy seems to hinge on a single premise. While entertaining

\textsuperscript{37} Ioannes Dantiscus to Tiedemann Giese, March 19, 1539, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C; Nowak, \textit{Jan Dantyszek}, 190; Hartmann, \textit{Herzog Albrecht}, 312-24.
Protestant ideas and texts, disobeying ecclesiastical superiors, and even questioning papal decrees or canon law could be construed as acts against Catholic orthodoxy, in his view any priest who openly maintained a mistress, wife, or family was publicly and concretely defying and challenging the inalienable Apostolic authority of the Catholic Church, the structures, components, and rules of which he viewed as vital to stability, peace, and salvation throughout Christendom. For Dantiscus, any act of breaking clerical celibacy, especially publicly and particularly in environments rife with evangelical reform, alienated the faithful populace while violating the integrity of the Church and threatening its destruction. Thus he refused to overlook or soften the matter.

Another problem that had arisen among the clergy in Warmia and caught Dantiscus’s critical eye was the lackadaisical, incorrect, or corrupted celebration of the liturgy and the sacraments, as well as lapses in general Catholic practice. In recent decades, common worship practices throughout the diocese had undergone changes due to clerical inattentiveness, understaffing, and the influence of evangelical or radical reform, affecting the Mass, baptisms, and marriages alike. For example, the princebishop discussed with Duke Albrecht a pastor in Elbląg, who “in his homily referred to the Sacrament not as the Body of the Lord but rather as bad bread,” a claim offensive to both Catholics and Lutherans and drawing the ire of the both elite and common worshippers. Dantiscus and Albrecht agreed that the pastor needed to be punished and removed, and that the sanctity of the Sacrament was paramount.38 Dantiscus also needed to wade into disputes over matrimony when local priests were unable to settle

38 Hartmann, Herzog Albrecht, 321-322.
disagreements about the validity or sacramentality of marriage ceremonies.\textsuperscript{39} His previously-discussed “Edict to the Pastors on the Reinstatement, Solemnification, and Celebration of the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin” provided the clergy with explicit instructions and encouragement for properly celebrating a major liturgical feast.\textsuperscript{40} One of the most noteworthy indicators of his attention to strict regulation of the celebration of the sacraments was his association with and eagerness to publicize Filippo Archinto’s \textit{Christiana de fide et sacramentis contra haereticorum id temporis errores explanation}, discussed in Chapter 5. Priests’ attention to holiness and propriety in the liturgy and sacraments was essential to the efficacy and vitality of the Catholic Church everywhere, but for Dantiscus no more urgently than in Poland-Lithuania, Prussia, and Warmia.\textsuperscript{41} Further emphasizing proper liturgical practice, he also made sure that his fellow Prussian prelates, among whom he was first among equals, had vestments appropriately elegant for their station.\textsuperscript{42}

One of the most striking examples of Dantiscus working to reform Catholic belief and practice among the clergy and by extension the people of Warmia came in 1545, following the early death of Princess Elizabeth of Austria, the wife of the recently-crowned King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania Sigismund II Augustus. Upon learning of her demise, Dantiscus sent a forceful letter to the vicars of most major towns

\textsuperscript{39} Mandate for parish priest in Raunau, February 12, 1541, Dobre Miasto, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{40} Ioannes Dantiscus to Ioannes Langhannius & Clergy of Warmia, June 14, 1544, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{41} Filippo Archinto, \textit{Christiana de fide et sacramentis contra haereticorum id temporis errores explanation}, 1545.

\textsuperscript{42} Ioannes Dantiscus to Tiedemann Giese, August 16, 1538, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C; Tiedemann Giese to Ioannes Dantiscus, September 15, 1538, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
in the Diocese of Warmia, dictating the appropriate liturgical response to her death. He began by positing and justifying the Church’s teaching on praying for the souls of the dead, writing:

Holy Scripture has taught us and the tradition of the Church has confirmed this teaching, which is sacred and salvific and offered on behalf of our deceased Lord, that [all of His disciples] were freed from sin and found propitious judgment; on the other hand, we are obliged without question to pray on behalf of the spirits of the faithful departed, so that for them there is eternal salvation, perpetual health and blessedness, and everlasting rest.

The prince-bishop then emphasized the special importance of this practice upon the death of members of the royal family. He continued:

Initially and especially, it is necessary to ask [for intercession] on behalf of kings and those who were established in lofty station. Accordingly, in recent days the Most Fair Princess Elizabeth, sister of Ferdinand King of the Romans and dearest wife of our Most Fair Lord King of Poland Sigismund Augustus, paid back her natural debt, taken before her time in her youthful prime of age, and from this suffering valley of tears crossed over into the afterlife…

As a proud former member of the Polish royal court, as the man who negotiated in part the terms of the marriage between Elizabeth and Sigismund II, and as a prelate attentive to his people’s propriety in worship, Dantiscus greatly desired to ensure that his flock paid due and sacred respect to the princess, especially in public settings.

To that end, Dantiscus provided his priests with explicit instructions for how to lead the liturgy on behalf of Elizabeth. These instructions took into account the prior

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43 Ioannes Dantiscus to Iacobus Hermitz, a parish priest in Braniewo & Vicars, July 3, 1545, Lidzbark Warmiński, CID&T&C. Dantiscus sent the same letter to the vicars of Braniewo, Frombork, Pieniężno, Orneta, Olsztyn, Dobre Miasto, Lidzbark Warmiński, Jeziarany, Reszel, and Elbląg. This basically ensured that every priest and parish would hear or read the mandate and comply with the bishop’s instructions.

44 Nowak, Jan Dantyszek, 192.
failings of his clergy as much as the need for guidance among the common people. He directed:

I urge you with regard to the Lord and the virtue of sacred obedience, and I command that after you receive my letter, first you should announce it to the people and then on the following Sunday set up Vigils and Masses for the dead in your churches on behalf of [Elizabeth’s] soul; the magistrate and the people should act diligently as it pertains to these services; when the sacrifice is celebrated on behalf of her death, it should involve offerings, alms, prayers, invocations, and other pious obligations on behalf of the deceased soul with the appropriate devotion. You should urge with ringing bells the assembling of the brothers with candles and other regal things, and a solemn, customary funeral procession. With respect to your [vows of] obedience this is to be done no differently. I wish for this, my request, to be transmitted from neighbor to neighbor among the people with this written note, and in typical fashion returned to the chancellery [to ensure its safe and thorough circulation].

Dantiscus found it necessary to address both the vicars and the local populations of all of these towns in order to ensure proper practice at this particular moment. He instructed them in explicit detail not only in the appropriate liturgical observances for deceased royalty, but also in the Catholic theological certainty that good Christians ought to pray for the souls of the dead as they passed through Purgatory. This notion had been challenged by evangelical preachers, pastors, and theologians from the beginning of Martin Luther’s ministry. In light of Dantiscus’s directive, there must have been a pervasive problem for the prince-bishop with upholding this belief and practice among Prussian Christians, both lay and clerical. Elizabeth’s death created a moment during which the prince-bishop could monitor liturgical and theological propriety, instruct

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45 Ioannes Dantiscus to Iacobus Hermitz, a parish priest in Braniewo & Vicars, July 3, 1545, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C. As stated above (Footnote 42), this letter was also sent to Braniewo, Frombork, Pieniężno, Orneto, Olsztyn, Dobre Miasto, Lidzbark Warmiński, Jeziory, Reszel, and Elbląg.
his clergy and laity in proper Catholic praxis, and demonstrate to his royal and ecclesiastical patrons the progress—or at least intentions—of his reform program.

Reforming the secular clergy of Warmia required a multidimensional approach that would efficiently address as many problems as possible. By targeting clerical education, clerical celibacy, and sacramental ministry, prince-bishop Dantiscus sought to appease public concerns, actually make his priests more effective, and enhance his diocesan administration. Recognizing the importance of those ends, he took an uncompromising stance on all of these matters of reform. Throughout his tenure, he expelled from the diocese priests who continued to display institutional or ministerial abuses, professional corruption, evangelical tendencies, or outright “heretical” beliefs.46 Despite these initiatives and drastic measures that appear prominently in his correspondence, however, the success of his clerical reform initiatives in the historical evidence is at most uncertain and at least doubtful. Official records of prosecution, expulsion, defrocking, or reassignment are few, leaving his personal correspondence as the primary source of evidence for either his specific measures or their results. Furthermore, complaints about rampant clerical ineffectiveness, impropriety, abuses, and corruption in Warmia and Royal Prussia continued well after Dantiscus death in 1548, leading to the more famous Catholic reform efforts of Stanislaus Hosius.47

46 Nowak, Jan Dantyszek, 190.

47 R. Bodanśki, „Walka diecezji warmińskiej o niezależność od metropolii ryskiej i gnieźnieńskiej od 1426 do 1566 r.” Studia warmińskie 19 (1982): 123-146; Danuta Bogdan, Sejmik warmiński w XVI i pierwszej połowie XVII wieku (Olsztyn: 1994), 20-76; Borrmann, Ermalnd und die Reformation, 37-60; Zins, „Początki reformacji na Warmii,” 53-90. The reform efforts of Hosius, which included introducing Jesuit missionaries to Prussia and Poland, fit more neatly into the timeline of the „Catholic Reformation” or „Counter-Reformation” according to the traditional historiography of the Reformation. In contrast, Dantiscus’s reform came significantly earlier, beginning more than a decade before the Council of Trent opened.
Nevertheless, Dantiscus’s evident top-down reform initiatives, as well as the numerous moments of conflict and negotiation over reform that resulted episodically, demonstrate the intentional breadth and gravity of his reform program in Warmia.

One particular moment—or person—of conflict from Dantiscus’s tenure in Warmia illustrates the range and depth of problems among the secular clergy that he discovered, monitored, and attempted to resolve there, as well as the extensive transnational connections that pervaded his reform efforts. This person was Alexander Sculteti, the most famously subversive and scandalous priest under Dantiscus’s stewardship and the fugitive mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. During his career in the Church, Sculteti ultimately engaged with several Protestant reform currents that greatly disturbed many of his superiors, peers, subordinates, and even laity. Individually, his different dissentions from Catholic teachings or regulations were not uncommon. In their particular context and taken collectively, however, they were quite alarming for his contemporaries. Sculteti’s persecution and prosecution eventually became international issues that required coordination between royal, ecclesiastical, imperial, and papal authorities spread from Prussia to Poland to Austria to Rome.

Dantiscus and Sculteti actually had very similar upbringings, but their professional relationship eventually became publically problematic and culminated with this international incident. Sculteti was born in the same year as Dantiscus—1485—in Tczew, a small town on the western bank of the Vistula River, located about thirty miles south of Gdańsk. He similarly pursued his education and secretarial training first locally in Prussia, then at the university in Cracow, and then abroad in Italy, before returning to Poland. After serving as a priest and notary in the Roman Curia until 1516, he joined the
canony in Warmia in 1519. He was moderately popular and liked in Prussia and Poland, eventually ascending to chancellor of the cathedral chapter in Warmia. Tension between him and Dantiscus began during the process of Dantiscus’s election as bishop of Chelmno, the legality of which Sculteti contested openly in order to gain favor with Prince-Bishop Ferber, who preferred Tiedemann Giese for the post. The two men came into political conflict again during Dantiscus’s subsequent succession as prince-bishop of Warmia.\footnote{Nowak, \textit{Jan Dantyszek}, 186-9; \textit{Słownik Biograficzny Kapituły Warmińskiej} (Olsztyn:Wyższe Seminarium Duchowne Metropolii Warmińskiej, 1996), s.v. „Sculteti, Alexander.”; \textit{Słownik Biograficzny Warmii, Mazur i Poviśla} (Warszawa: 1963), s.v. „Sculteti, Alexander.”}

Sculteti’s most objectionable activities, at least in the eyes of Dantiscus and his Catholic patrons, were the religious ideas that he developed during the 1530s. Inspired by both local and foreign contacts, Sculteti steadily embraced evangelical reform and began to act in violation of his priestly vows and duties. Especially problematic were his flaunting of mistresses and his leniency toward evangelical adherents.\footnote{Słownik Biograficzny Kapituły Warmińskiej, s.v. „Sculteti, Alexander.”; \textit{Słownik Biograficzny Warmii, Mazur i Poviśla}, s.v. „Sculteti, Alexander.”} As reports and complaints of his activities accumulated for Dantiscus, the issue increasingly required a direct address. Holding firm to his lucrative post, in August 1538 Sculteti wrote to Dantiscus in order to defend himself against supposedly scurrilous accusations.\footnote{Alexander Sculteti to Ioannes Dantiscus, August 13, 1538, Frombork, CIDT&C.} Just a few days earlier, the new Bishop Tiedemann Giese of Chelmno, and through him Stanislaus Hosius, already had warned Dantiscus about Sculteti’s behavior and its potential consequences.\footnote{Tiedemann Giese to Ioannes Dantiscus, August 9, 1538, Lubawa, CIDT&C.} Dantiscus responded to Giese, placating the bishop by
reporting that “I wrote to [Sculteti]…[commanding] that he expel his illegitimate concubine, whom he boasts to be his legitimate wife, so that this public scandal, which has reached me, not expose itself to light.” Here for Dantiscus, the most egregious violation was Sculteti’s breaking of celibacy requirements. But the prince-bishop nevertheless wanted to perform his due diligence on the matter. He proceeded cautiously while Giese continued to lobby for more decisive action.

By winter 1538-1539, Dantiscus had made several disturbing discoveries about Sculteti and had accumulated substantial evidence of his violations of diocesan policy and Catholic orthodoxy, both in the discipline of celibacy and in the tenets of ministry and practice. Taking account of the gravity and disruptive nature of the issue, Dantiscus wrote to Giese:

On the business of Lord Alexander…I am able to suffer this public disgrace no further within our common Church; and especially on behalf of our other brothers who favor the honor of God and our Church…Therefore I must be encouraged, after this task was given to me on behalf of the [Warmia] Chapter…that if there are those who are burdened by this disgrace, the evil of which we hear everywhere, that they cast it aside from themselves and strive for the integrity of the Church.

Dantiscus emphasized the threat that Sculteti posed to the diocese and to the Church as a whole, and he saw it as his responsibility as prince-bishop of Warmia to respond. He addressed Sculteti’s violations explicitly and embraced his own role in finding a solution:

In contrast to many of [the canons], I have not spent time with Lord Alexander except in paternal affection and spirit; yet it is certain that these

52 Ioannes Dantiscus to Tiedemann Giese, August 16, 1538, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
53 Ioannes Dantiscus to Tiedemann Giese, August 23, 1538, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
54 Tiedemann Giese to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 16, 1539, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
things are spoken about him everywhere, for example: the shameless harlot publicly boasted everywhere about his marriage contract; he also has become an atheist and sacramentarian, although he is still proclaimed and held by many to be a priest, even without honoring the sacrifice [of the Eucharist]...In truth I asked the man zealously that he, mindful of his office and rank, which are well-known and conspicuous, cleanse himself of this low-born, mongrel prostitute and look after the health of his soul and the elegance of the Church. I promise, through God and my pressing conscience, that this dishonor, by which [Sculteti] has spat upon the Church, will be suffered no further.

Despite the laundry-list of clerical violations and Dantiscus’s clear, vividly-evaluative outrage, Sculteti was unapologetic and intransigent. Thus the prince-bishop determined that punishment needed to be severe but just. For that, Dantiscus required the cooperation of regional Church leaders. He promised to untangle the web of conspiracy and rumor by diligently seeking further testimony and evidence, relying on the juridical strengths of his clergy. He pledged that, “if [Sculteti] should descend into this arena with me, on account of this public scandal and disgrace which I refuse to suffer within the Church, in all matters his madness will be proven, as my lawful jurisdiction allows.”

Despite Sculteti’s evident violations of law, custom, and orthodoxy in Dantiscus’s view, any resolution to the matter would be complicated. He was still well-liked on a personal level, which caused internal conflict for the prince-bishop as well as many members of the prelacy and canonry. His situation became an international issue when officials realized that he still had personal and professional connections with individuals in Rome who could aid him or shelter him there. Dantiscus nonetheless made it clear that he would coordinate with King Sigismund and other contacts in high

55 Ioannes Dantiscus to Tiedemann Giese, March 19, 1539, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
56 Tiedemann Giese to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 16, 1539, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
places to ensure that justice was done. He wrote to Giese, “With no bitterness and before bawling advocates…I am compelled to pursue [Sculteti] further, whom once I had seized, in truth spurring myself on by means of my fear of God, my conscience, and my duty.” 57 During the next year, Dantiscus encouraged Sigismund to bring formal charges against Sculteti, centered around the chancellor’s disregard for clerical celibacy and his promotion of Protestant texts. With the support of the other canons, Dantiscus convinced Sigismund of the grave threat posed to the Church and Crown by the Sculteti’s crimes. 58 Members of the Warmia canonry preferred to see the accused priest flee than be prosecuted, however, and so they tricked him into departing for Rome before any arrest could be made. 59 He did not avoid capture for long, though, for in Rome he was seized, imprisoned, and brought before the Inquisition within a short time. 60 Meanwhile, in a severe but belated measure, Sigismund formally exiled Sculteti from the Kingdom of Poland in spring 1540. 61

Even after Sculteti’s flight, the bizarre incident continued to draw interest and conversation in Prussia and Poland-Lithuania. Some of the most detailed anecdotes emerged almost a year later in a report written by Dantiscus to Queen Bona Sforza. Discussing a new member of the cathedral chapter, the prince-bishop pulled no punches in describing the disgraced canon who was being replaced, chastising “the

57 Ioannes Dantiscus to Tiedemann Giese, March 19, 1539, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
58 Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, May 5, 1540, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
59 Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, February 15, 1541, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
60 Słownik Biograficzny Warmii, Mazur i Powiśla, s.v. „Sculteti, Alexander.”
61 Król polski Zygmunt skazuje na wygnanie z kraju kanonika Aleksandra Scultetiego, May 24, 1540, Eg.2, Episcopal Archive, Archive of the Archdiocese of Warmia in Olsztyn, Poland.
Roman sycophants, of whom the leader is Alexander Sculteti, the man outlawed most justly by His Most Fair Royal Majesty of my Most Merciful Lord [Sigismund] for the sake of averting heresy.” Dantiscus continued to rant about Sculteti’s crimes, summarizing his lamentable efforts during his brief Roman freedom. He wrote, “This past 22 October [Sculteti] departed for Rome, where about [his supposed injustice] he strained to stir up heaven and earth, yet not one stone stirred, but it disturbed to a great extent those who have entered my Church justly, nobly, or under Your Most Fair Majesty.” Continuing to lambast Sculteti to the Queen, Dantiscus presented the tale of his investigative visit to Malbork, described at the beginning of this chapter. In his own words:

In recent days, His Most Fair Royal Majesty, by means of [Sculteti’s] letters, brought the attention of the most reverend Lord of Chełmno [Tiedemann Giese], my Warmian preposite Lord [Paweł Plotowski], and me together upon a small chest owned by the same outlawed Alexander, which he had received and which was found among his things and delivered to the citadel of Malbork. Having convened, we discussed among ourselves and thoroughly examined all things that had been revealed by this discovery, which in most recent days we had brought about. We are discovering a great treachery among royal servants and even those of Your Majesty the Queen: a strength and treasure of disturbances, including many against His Most Fair Royal Majesty as well as the superiority of His Majesty, many established from afar against the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Fathers and against the authority of the Apostolic Chair, all found in a libellus from Zurich in Switzerland printed by Heinrich Bullinger, the prince of all sacramentarians. With the killing of [Ulrich] Zwingli [in 1531], [Bullinger] advanced in public opinion among the citizens of Zurich, and remaining for a long interval surpassed [Zwingli] by many laps in terms of his slander, impiety, and blasphemy. Along with our letters, through His Most Fair Royal Majesty’s own messenger I have sent this libellus, annotated here and there in various places in the margins by the hand of Alexander himself and discovered in the small chest, the contents of which having been seen by us and examined under our sigil, and which is sealed from above by official means.²

² Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, February 15, 1541, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
Clearly the Crown, the Church in Poland, and Dantiscus’s administration were concerned about the influences on and potential effects of Sculteti’s activities, even well after his banishment and flight.

The Sculteti episode, perhaps more than any other, illustrates how greatly Dantiscus worried about heresy among the clergy in his jurisdiction as well as how attentively he desired to persecute and remove dissenting priests. In the same letter to Queen Bona, he vehemently supported a severe indictment of Sculteti:

Whence, when the plainly guilty Alexander should first be found guilty of being a heretic through the testimony of witnesses, and condemned according to all laws by His Most Fair Royal Majesty, and with this libellus having been seen, the [Pope], according to the duty of his high office, will not be able to refuse to confirm and support this decree of proscription against Alexander, by which His Most Fair Royal Majesty thus establishes this position against such filthy heresy.…  

The case of Alexander Sculteti was extreme and full of extraordinary intrigue, but his various activities and their responses demonstrate the breadth and depth of issues that prince-bishop Dantiscus confronted among the secular clergy of Warmia. They also reveal the great lengths to which he intended to go in order to purify his clergy. He employed the full weight of the Prussian prelacy and canonry, and when necessary he welcomed the support of royal patrons in Cracow, for whom the stability of the Prussian Church was a critical bulwark. He also viewed local issues with reform through a broad religious lens, which certainly considered political relations with the Papacy, among other things. In Dantiscus’s unrelenting and uncompromising approach to eradicating Protestant reform in Warmia, his gaze extended to every section of the population, including especially his own clergy.

63 Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, February 15, 1541, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
Monastic Challenges

Somewhat unconventionally, Dantiscus also found it necessary to monitor, reform, and redispose individuals and communities of regular clergy within his jurisdiction, for which he occasionally acquired special permission. In typical circumstances, the cloistered and mendicant brothers from a variety of orders in his dioceses would have operated outside of episcopal administrative authority. Events during his episcopacy brought about some exceptions, though. In some cases, Dantiscus’s reform initiatives among the regular clergy modified long traditions of monastic reform from across Christendom. In other cases, they reflected unprecedented issues that had arisen during the Reformations, for which he used appropriately novel approaches. One notable tradition with which he engaged was the Observant reform movement, which extended into the sixteenth century from the late middle ages. As with his official edicts and his reform of the secular clergy, the effectiveness of Dantiscus’s reform of the regular clergy is difficult to quantify, and in general it may have been only minor. His efforts nonetheless further demonstrate the intended breadth of his episcopal reform program. He strove simultaneously to combat Protestantism and revitalize Catholicism in Royal Prussia and Poland-Lithuania, and problems concerning belief and practice among the regular clergy became a vital issue.

Dantiscus’s attention to the monks and friars of his diocese was unusual and compelling, especially considering that it gave him cause to interfere with, relocate, or even close particular monastic communities. This facet of his reform program was contrary to the typical behavior and treatment of religious orders in Central Europe during the Reformations. Some monastic communities had entertained evangelical reform during the mid-sixteenth century, but for the most part the opposite occurred.
Loath to give credence to monastic vows, frequent Masses, celibacy, or penitential lifestyles, Protestant reform leaders frequently closed Catholic monasteries and forced non-conforming brothers into exile, particularly in urban areas. Thus Dantiscus’s challenges confronting evangelical ideas within monasteries and struggling to purify this pillar of Catholic religiosity were atypical. Even in his ecclesiastical stronghold of Warmia, numerous monks and friars chose to adopt evangelical reform and drew the ire of both the Church and the Crown. The brothers in violation could be from multiple orders, causing significant administrative complications. Dantiscus would address problems forcefully but strategically, showing little leniency for accused heretics but striving to keep monastic traditions alive and fruitful. He also would operate under the advisement of his royal and ecclesiastical patrons.

The religiosity of Prussia’s monks and friars concerned Dantiscus from the beginning of his episcopacy, particularly because of the rapid conversion to Lutheranism of many brothers of the Teutonic Order after the secularization of 1525 and their subsequent attempts to spread evangelical reform throughout the region with the encouragement of Duke Albrecht. In 1533, Dantiscus wrote to King Sigismund and included vivid complaints about the pervasiveness of Protestantism in Royal Prussia, even among the regular clergy:

When Your Most Fair Majesty out of divine will deemed to place me in this position, however unworthy and undeserving, it was agreed that Your Most Fair Majesty should support and protect me in this, especially in these dangerous times and among such neighbors [in formerly-Teutonic Lutheran Ducal Prussia] by whom I am surrounded, and prop me up by your authority against my insurgents, who nourish and foster among them apostate monks and preachers of the damned [Lutheran] sect, about

which I have written extensively to Bishop of Cracow [Piotr Tomicki]…Our Royal Prussia is infected in no small part by this pestilential scourge. Your Most Fair Majesty has lopped off some branches, but the root remains uninjured, from which innumerable other branches are sprouting. Would that we were to see the end of this tragedy.  

Throughout his episcopacy, Dantiscus would acknowledge the importance of monks and friars to the Catholic Church’s survival and ministerial success in Prussia, but he also would identify potential vulnerability to corrupt practices, tribal-like doctrinal disputes, and even inclinations toward local evangelical reform. Of particular concern would be Warmia’s various mendicant orders. Their communities had undergone some internal reform in previous decades, but their members were tied strongly to the urban patrician class, for which evangelical reform had been most attractive and effective in Prussia. Dantiscus’s unease would extend from his return to Prussia in 1532 through to his death in 1548. He also would share it with fellow diocesan clergy, for example when several canons debated the danger posed by the ex-monk Radike, who had left his monastery and taken to wandering around Warmia, perhaps in support of Luther.  

One Catholic reform current in the monastic communities of Royal Prussia with which Dantiscus also contended was the Observant movement among the region’s Franciscans. Persisting from the early fifteenth century, Observant brothers throughout Europe had sought to live in closer observance of their avowed monastic rules, and the Observant Franciscans became most notorious for their strictness and subsequently their ministerial effectiveness. Their extreme approaches to regular lifestyles on

65 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, February 22, 1533, Lubawa, CIDT&C.  
67 Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther, 68, 162.
occasion even drew criticism from wary Church officials. Observant reform continued during the early Reformations, and in areas where adherence to Catholicism or Protestantism remained contested, Observant brothers often provided some of the stiffest opposition to evangelical Christianity in their sermons and public preaching. They also occasionally fell subject to Protestant reform, either being eradicated by powerful evangelical reform leaders or adopting evangelical sympathies themselves. Observant brothers, as well as the friars of a number of other mendicant orders, had remained an important part of the religious landscape in Royal Prussia and Warmia after the cession of territory by the Teutonic Order to Poland in 1466. Their internal reform and conflicts continued there, both in the late fifteenth century and into the mid-sixteenth.

Dantiscus’s approaches to managing monks and friars within his jurisdiction frequently took into account the traditions and reputations of Observant brothers from across Central Europe. They impacted not only the development of religious reform in Prussia, but also monasticism more generally in the context of the Reformations.

In terms of his efforts to reform the religiosity of his diocese’s brothers, Dantiscus would push the limits of his authority throughout his episcopal tenure. His official capacity to regulate and organize monks and friars was not always consistent, but several episodes illustrate his intention and ability to do so, regardless of official

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69 Bert Roest, “The Observance and the Confrontation with Early Protestantism,” in *A Companion to Observant Reform in the Late Middle Ages and Beyond*, James D. Mixson and Bert Roest, eds (Boston: Brill, 2015), 285-308.

limitations. He was emboldened, in part, by official mandates from his superiors, such as that indicated in a 1540 letter to Queen Bona. Dantiscus wrote, “…[you] clearly commanded me to install the other monks—those who deserted the orders that require close observation [for heresy]—among the Franciscans in my towns, and to verify that there are not merely two or three, just as [Preposite] Plotowski reported to me.”

At the very least, in some instances Dantiscus bore a royal directive to reorganize some of the troublesome monastic communities in his jurisdiction and wielded a significant level of independence in following that directive. His own actions would speak most loudly, though. During Dantiscus’s and his predecessor’s tenures in Warmia, several monasteries would be closed on account of supposed Lutheran practices or preaching. He would redispose around the diocese those brothers determined to be loyal or sufficiently repentant. He then would use the transplanted monks and friars to supplement diocesan clergy in a variety of settings. All of this will be illustrated in more detail below.

Dantiscus’s efforts to reform among monastic communities developed as part of a larger initiative on the part of Polish bishops to regulate the behavior of monks and friars in Crown lands. One exchange toward the end of his career exemplified this context. Seeking to learn about his colleagues’ experiences with managing monastic communities, in 1546 Dantiscus sent an inquiry, along with Tiedemann Giese and Voivode Stanislaus Kostka of Pomerania, to Bishop Andrzej Zebrzydowski of

71 Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, May 5, 1540, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
Włocławek. They received a forceful response explaining the Polish bishops’ intended role in regulating monasteries. Zebrzydowski wrote:

In these letters, Your Lordships asked me what I accomplished and what reasoning I used in my instruction among the Carthusian and Zarnovian monasteries... I respond that the Lord ordained me, just as [he did] Your Most Reverend Lords, as a shepherd and entrusted me with his sheepfold, which he commanded should occupy our [main] concern, such that one should look out for his own flock and not another’s, and carry concern for only this. And therefore, were I to have discovered religion to be so collapsed in this part of my sheepfold that one is not able to speak of it without tears, in my office of bishop I would act; already I would advance to erect the collapsed religion. A mandate was added to the obligation of our Most Fair King, the highest protector of all Church matters in his domain, made openly and widely known through these letters, and charged in earnest to [me] the Bishop of Włocławek, that [Your Lordships] properly and seasonably monitor these monasteries, lest through negligence they fall back into their [former] mischief. Indeed what has been commanded even now has been confirmed by apostolic authority.73

Royal, ecclesiastical, and papal authorities reportedly had empowered Polish bishops—including those in Prussia—to monitor and regulate the activities of monks and friars within their jurisdiction, without deference to the heads of the various orders. Where corruption, abuses, and supposedly-heretical reform continued to create problems within monastic communities in the mid-1540s, the local bishops were best situated and equipped to negotiate solutions. Dantiscus had been operating in this way for almost a decade, but Zebrzydowski’s letter confirmed the approval and encouragement of such behavior by his superiors.

The first significant reform issue concerning monks or friars that Dantiscus would face arose even before his succession in Warmia. It involved a community of

73 Andrzej Zebrzydowski to Ioannes Dantiscus, Tiedemann Giese & Stanisław Kostka, October 21, 1546, Sobków, CIDT&C.
Augustinian hermits in the castle-town of Reszel, walled in on a squat hill and protected on three sides by the ravine of the Sajna River, located in the easternmost corner of the prince-bishopric. In the 1520s, several members of this community had begun to display and promote evangelical beliefs and practices. Disgruntled brothers steadily abandoned the hermitage. By the mid-1530s, the Augustinian community in Reszel had collapsed altogether, significantly disrupting religious life in the town. It also had contributed to the spread of evangelical ideas there and in the surrounding villages. Prince-bishop Ferber responded authoritatively, with the support of Dantiscus, redistributing the property and responsibilities of the hermits. This response portended Dantiscus’s later approach to dealing with other monastic evangelical sympathizers after Ferber’s death. Upon succession to the prince-bishopric, Dantiscus would address lingering Reszel issues in congruence with the more general goals and approaches of his episcopal reform program.

In particular, prince-bishop Dantiscus reassigned the few unoffending hermits and dispersed the hermitage’s precious possessions among favorable religious communities. One of the communities to which Dantiscus entrusted some of the Reszel hermitage’s prized objects was the chapter at the collegiate church in Dobre Miasto. This small settlement, centered around the cloistered, brick-gothic Church of the Most Holy Savior and All Saints, occupied a long, shifting island between two branches of the serpentine Łyna River about fifteen miles upstream from Lidzbark. Dobre Miasto’s

75 Oesterreich et al., Kronika Lidzbarska, 15-6.
76 Poschmann, ”Das Augustinerkloster in Rössel,” 119-20, 158-9.
canons held extensive land holdings and special privileges in the surrounding area, and were in Dantiscus’s favor. In May 1538, just a few months after his as promotion, he sent a legal instruction to the chapter, writing:

In the year 1538 on this Feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross, which occurred on 3 May, in accordance with ecclesiastical custom through the Most Reverend in Christ Father and Lord Johannes Bishop of Warmia, one pacificale (Pax Tablet), weighing—without the sapphires or relics contained in it—1 Mark and 9 Schot of silver, must be given from the treasures of the monastery of the eremite brothers of St. Augustine in Reszel to the collegiate church of Dobre Miasto. And placed before the altar of the Lord in this church, one pacificale, of silver and gilded, weighing 17 Schot. And for the parochial church in Głotowo subordinate to the chapter of Dobre Miasto, one gilded chalice with a shallow dish weighing 2 Marks and 4 Schot of silver. This is all on the condition that, if in future times I restore the aforesaid monastery and in its condition it may be inhabited, then at that time these remembered treasures of the aforesaid churches in Dobre Miasto and Głotowo should be offered to be brought back to that same monastery [in Reszel] without any delay.77

Although this directive does not reveal much about the hermitage itself or its closing, other than its current state of physical disrepair, the instructions reveal characteristics of Dantiscus’s mindset and approach to reform. First, they illustrate his assumed responsibility for managing monastic communities and property in the diocese, particularly those supposedly straying from Catholic orthodoxy or authority. They also demonstrate his confidence that errant monastic communities could be reformed and restored in short order for the benefit of the Warmia faithful. Furthermore, rather than showing vindictiveness and rigidness in regulation, his letter suggests how important he considered compliant monastic communities to be to the spiritual health of Warmia.

especially in more remote towns like Reszel. The abandonment or closing of a monastery exhibiting Lutheranism was not predetermined to be a permanent solution.

Dantiscus’s oversight of individual brothers and monastic communities also took into account the transnational problems with reform that were affecting the regular clergy of Central Europe. In the same letter to the Queen mentioned above, he described some of his methods for managing monks and friars—including Catholic refugees from Protestant regions—in the context of combatting evangelical reform.

Referencing a particular episode and defending his own actions, he wrote:

Those two [Franciscan brothers] whom I had determined to be sent to Barczewo, however, proven to be decent and of a life of virtue, were neither deserters nor fugitives [from the Church] but rather adherents to the rule of Saint Francis, clearly recognized for their observance of his rule and driven out of the land of Meißen by Lutherans. Considering this, I decided that with such a sizeable monastery occupying so much space within the town walls, our threadbare sacred observances and number of priests could be restored, and our pastors, of whom in my domain each is compelled to protect and direct three or four churches on account of the shortage of priests, would find helpful colleagues among these brothers in preaching and administering the sacraments to the people. Thus I dispatched these two, that they and perhaps others should live within their rule and obey the leaders placed before them, and that they should have all things in common and live and eat off of alms. If I bore this out unjustly, I abandon myself to the justice of God.\(^{78}\)

Repeating a trope common among Church officials but likely true in some part, Dantiscus described his assignment of these Franciscans in the context of clerical shortages in the diocese. Seeing the number of brothers displaced from their communities both in Prussia and farther abroad due to evangelical reform, he recognized the opportunity for supplementing his native clergy. The plight of dedicated monks and friars, particularly due to the spread of Lutheranism, combined with the

\(^{78}\) Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, May 5, 1540, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
freedom of monastic oversight wielded by the prince-bishops, created new ministerial opportunities. Franciscans especially could serve the dispersed, rural population of Warmia, a region that already had substantial Catholic infrastructure—churches, monasteries, chapters—but too few preachers to maximize its natural advantages. Thus Dantiscus simultaneously acted to restore monastic communities and reform diocesan ministries. He was wary of the potential for harboring refugees with evangelical sympathies, but he was also diligent in vetting those brothers whom he accepted into Warmia.

Occasionally, Dantiscus exercised his ability to manage monasteries or individual brothers to such an extent that he drew the critical eye of superiors, both royal and ecclesiastical, who tracked such matters of authority and jurisdiction. The most prominent example of a conflict along these lines was actually the basis for Dantiscus’s May-1540 letter to Queen Bona. In this letter, the prince-bishop was reacting to an accusation against him of ambitious mismanagement of monastic property and personnel in his territory. He appealed to the Queen:

…[it has been claimed] that in Barczewo there are 14 or 15 Franciscan brothers, and that I added to them 8 brothers of another profession who were expelled from Germany, and that I usurped authority over these brothers for myself. Your Most Fair Majesty the Queen judges me to have done this unjustly and commands that in placing [the other brothers] among [the Franciscans] I should refrain myself from [overstepping] monastic jurisdiction, as with the other [orders] within the domain of a bishop. Should Your Most Fair Majesty the Queen be [reprimanding me] justly, as if I had conducted myself in this manner, I announce myself to have earned this harsh punishment…In truth, however, my Most Fair Prince, whoever it was who made this accusation made a mistake, when at present on this day in my town of Barczewo, there are not more than two Franciscans, and two whom I do not know [familiarly] on account of their constant work with the crippled and in the infirmary. I know of no other brothers of whatever order being among or with these two. Of these
14 others or the 8 of another profession whom I am supposedly to have joined [in Barczewo], many seem to be lacking.\textsuperscript{79}

According to Dantiscus at least, and suggested by the lack of further investigation of the matter, someone had grossly exaggerated his administration of the monks and friars in the diocese. They not only accused him of gathering an impressive number of brothers under his own direction; they also accused him of supplementing these ranks with unaffiliated persons from foreign lands. These acts would have been egregious overreaches of his authority, but they appear not to have been true. Nevertheless, for the Queen they seemed to have been within the realm of possibility, which reflects the extraordinary nature of and potential for abuse within the prince-bishop's administrative role during these turbulent times, particularly in the context of the Reformations in Prussia.

Apparently, these most recent complaints about Dantiscus overstepping his authority were not unique. The prince-bishop felt obliged to reference a pattern of unsubstantiated accusations for the Queen, as well as his past vindication from those accusations. He welcomed a formal investigation, which he guaranteed would establish his loyalty and propriety. He wrote:

Hereafter, that Your Most Fair Majesty the Queen should realize the truth of this matter, and free herself from this conceived opinion about me—I who still, so often, and at every point am accused of this sin of defection in this unjust manner, but thanks be to God have never been a convicted defendant—I humbly and profoundly invite and implore Your Most Fair Majesty before God that you be willing to bring anybody (perhaps the noble Lord Stanislaus Kostka of the Castle Malbork and Treasurer of these lands) to visit my towns of Braniewo and Barczewo at my expense, and to look again at the Franciscan monastery, and to search everywhere accurately for how many brothers of whichever order are held in the

\textsuperscript{70} Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, May 5, 1540, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
monastery and how many of other professions I have thrust among them and what violation or offense you have suffered from me, and to describe in a message to Your Most Fair Majesty the Queen each whom he should discover. Then, if I were to be recognized to have failed in this matter, I should place my entire self under the justice and reproach of Your Most Fair Majesty the Queen and endure, without appeal to mercy, whatever you decide for me. With this test done, Your Most Fair Majesty the Queen will observe clearly my purity and innocence, which with regard to so many false prior accusations always has appeared and remained untouched and unstained.

Dantiscus admitted having used his authority to manage the regular clergy within his diocese, including receiving displaced brothers from abroad. He resented, however, the accusation that he did so irresponsibly, ambitiously, illicitly, or beyond what authority he maintained by the explicit and consistent mandate of the Church and the Crown. He trusted fellow officials in Warmia and Royal Prussia to support his claims, both through honest investigation and because of the obvious benefits brought to the diocese.80

As demonstrated by the 1546 letter to Dantiscus from Andrzej Zebrzydowski, this episcopal management of monastic communities was part of a broader approach to ecclesiastical administration within Crown lands amidst the turmoil of the Reformations. Zebrzydowski also provided a vivid example of why such oversight was deemed necessary when he described his recent activities at a Carthusian monastery twenty miles west of Gdańsk that had been plundered by some of its own monks who had succumbed to ideas of evangelical reform. He relayed to Dantiscus the steps he had taken to restore and protect this particular monastery, reporting:

I discovered the possessions of the monastery to be torn apart, with no small amount of silver dragged out from the church and a great debt brought upon the monastery. In place [of these items] I ordered [my overseers] to take items from my own [collection] and to serve the local

80 Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, May 5, 1540, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
congregations; I did not occupy [the monastery], as it has been conveyed to Your Lordships, but lest a plunderer attack it hereafter, I closed the road and urged that [my overseers] seize him, but thus I have avoided it in case a plunderer is still there. Then, because I saw that I was not able to restore [the monastery] exactly on account of the defective religious cult of its monastic pretenders, I added my own priests, who assisted in holding sermons and administering the sacraments, two of which had been utterly omitted in that place to the great anguish for the entire population. Could it be possible that three brothers (three in fact I found, and not ten), and one of them one nearly decrepit with age, were able to attend to these duties in such myriad places?81

This plundering of the Carthusian monastery was more violent than a lot of the monastic issues with which Dantiscus dealt in Warmia, but it illustrated a threat that Church officials throughout Prussia, Poland, and indeed Europe dreaded and attempted to prevent. It hearkened to episodes of iconoclasm and monastic dissolution that accompanied evangelical reform across Europe during the mid-sixteenth century.82

Despite the obvious reasoning for Zebrzydowski to engage the situation, the bishop nonetheless defended his actions and his authority, as well as promoted continued episcopal support for afflicted monastic communities. Commiserating with Dantiscus and his fellow prelates, Zebrzydowski concluded:

In these matters I followed first the advice of the canons of my church, and then the advantage of those local congregations, and thus rightly I disregarded my own [advantage], so that beyond this [episode], which I have consumed on this long journey, even now at present I support them at my own expense. If I appear unjust to someone, he will be able to

81 Andrzej Zebrzydowski to Ioannes Dantiscus, Tiedemann Giese & Stanisław Kostka, October 21, 1546, Sobków, CIDT&C.

82 In widespread efforts to eliminate “idolatry,” often identified by the veneration of or use of material objects to worship God, evangelical reformers—especially in Switzerland but elsewhere as well—targeted sacred objects in churches and monasteries for removal or destruction. Iconoclasm could occur in official raids sanctioned by princes or city councils or as a facet of spontaneous public violence. In territories where Protestant beliefs and worship practices came to dominate Christian religiosity, often monasteries were forcibly dissolved and physically dismantled, leading noncompliant monks and friars to flee to Catholic territories. Cameron, The European Reformation, 222-4, 252-5.
approach me in his own time and place. May Your Lordships believe me to have surpassed my duty in no way.\textsuperscript{83}

Although they were a part of the ecclesiastical landscape that under normal circumstances maintained some independence from diocesan authorities, monasteries and individual monks and friars in Poland increasingly drew required episcopal administrative attention, which the bishops felt justified in providing.

Whether they were refugees from abroad, local sympathizers with evangelical ideas, or victims of religious violence, some members of the regular clergy in Poland and Prussia fell subject to greater diocesan management during the 1530s and 1540s. Such episcopal control came largely at the behest of the highest secular and religious authorities. Prelates like Dantiscus, however, recognized the advantages and embraced this assumed duty. He unabashedly incorporated such authority into his broader reform program and used it to attempt to eradicate Protestantism more thoroughly in his diocese. Despite such privileges, Dantiscus and his peers nonetheless fiercely debated how best to regulate monastic institutions properly, as demonstrated by several letters sent between Zebrzydowski, Dantiscus, and Giese during the next few years. New privileges to reform and manage the regular clergy, combined with the already-powerful roles of bishops in Poland-Lithuania, challenged common notions of jurisdiction within the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The political relationship between the Crown of Poland and Royal Prussia further complicated matters. For Dantiscus, though, such oversight of monks and friars was a necessary and welcome addition to episcopal authority if the

\textsuperscript{83} Andrzej Zebrzydowski to Ioannes Dantiscus, Tiedemann Giese & Stanisław Kostka, October 21, 1546, Sobków, CIDT&C.
prelacy truly wanted to rid the region of Protestantism, so long as he personally avoided controversy.84

Schools for the Laity

Beyond reforming both the secular and regular clergy, Dantiscus attempted to enhance Catholic belief and praxis more directly among the laity by establishing, restoring, invigorating, or purifying educational institutions throughout his dioceses. This was a strategic response to the evangelical reform efforts that he observed in numerous locations across Prussia, which often employed lay education to evangelize and which the prince-bishop dreaded allowing to dominate intellectual life in his jurisdiction. With a greater number of well-equipped schools providing an education informed by strictly Catholic theology, he would attempt to supplement the ministry of the diocesan clergy and encourage proper worship more thoroughly among the laity. Dantiscus’s success in this endeavor was mixed. His efforts, though, garnered attention from his colleagues at home and abroad, as well as reflected the tremendous intellectual arena in which he had thrived during his foreign travels and continued to operate through extensive correspondence. They enhanced the ambition, substance, and notoriety of his broader reform program in Prussia and provided new avenues for limiting Protestantism throughout the region. The success of his efforts is difficult to measure and certainly was not as robust as later Catholic educational initiatives, such as those put in place by the Jesuits, but his activities became a crucial part of the environment of reform in Prussia during the 1530s and 1540s.

84 Ioannes Dantiscus to Andrzej Zebrzydowski, December 7, 1546, CIDT&C; Andrzej Zebrzydowski to Ioannes Dantiscus, January 13, 1547, Włocławek, CIDT&C; Andrzej Zebrzydowski to Ioannes Dantiscus & Tiedemann Giese, January 13, 1547, Włocławek, CIDT&C.
One significant difference between Dantiscus’s reform of diocesan schools and his reform of the clergy is that his educational program began vigorously during his first episcopacy in Chelmno Land and then continued in Warmia. In fact, it began before he even had been ordained. In his February-1533 letter to Piotr Tomicki about problems with evangelical reform in Grudziądz, Dantiscus argued that one way to combat Protestantism was to restore various neglected institutions, including schools:

In [Grudziądz], the church and school, which was the first for me as a boy, and even the vast house of the pastor, are ravaged and liable to collapse. Therefore I should desire to restore all into their appropriate order and in turn establish a commissary in that place before Lent begins, which is not lawful without the permission of His Most Fair Royal Majesty…

Dantiscus promised his unrelenting devotion to making such efforts a success. As presented in Chapter 5, he wrote, “If Your Most Reverend Lordship will make your support available to me in this, especially with regard to God Almighty and His Holy Church, it will be well deserved and in the duty of my office [the Church] will be rendered more steadfast.” As described earlier, the bishop was unable to contend with the evangelical fervor among the clergy of Toruń during his tenure in Chelmno Land. He would, however, be able to focus effectively on restoring and reforming diocesan schools and local institutions, particularly in mid-sized towns such as Grudziądz and Chelmno, where religious reform was still being contested.

The most ambitious reform project in Chelmno Land under Dantiscus’s leadership was the reestablishment of an academy in Chelmno. As problems with evangelical reform among the secular clergy persisted in the mid-1530s, the bishop increasingly saw the value of maintaining a proactive, orthodox gymnasium under

85 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, February 21, 1533, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
diocesan control. Such a school would employ a modern humanist approach to education but would strictly adhere to Catholic teaching. He intended it to support and inform Catholic reform in the region. Toward this end, he sought the cooperation of his beloved colleague Hieronymus Aurimontanus, a humanist scholar from Silesia who had kept Dantiscus abreast of different religious matters in Chelmno Land during his diplomatic activity abroad and currently was teaching at the humanist academy in Toruń. As Dantiscus and Aurimontanus discussed various possibilities, they settled on reestablishing the gymnasium in Chelmno, which had closed prior to Dantiscus’s election and which Aurimontanus himself had attended in his own youth. They petitioned the royal court in Cracow and the Royal Prussian Council, and in 1536 the project was approved. The Chelmno gymnasium reopened in spring 1537, intended to reinvigorate Catholicism in the territory, especially in urban settings.

Although the Chelmno gymnasium consistently faced financial and administrative hurdles, as well as operated precariously in a multi-confessional environment, it made an important impression on the region. It notably served several visible reform and counter-reform purposes for the diocese: educating, employing, modeling orthodoxy, stimulating intellectual life, and monitoring urban populations. It also created a greater episcopal presence in the western part of Chelmno Land that was more urban, commercial, and distant from the bishop’s capital in Lubawa. Coincidentally in 1537, with the project still in its adolescence, Dantiscus succeeded Mauritius Ferber in the

86 Hieronymus Aurimontanus to Ioannes Dantiscus, April 24, 1530, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
87 Nowak, Jan Dantyszek, 178-9.
88 Nowak, Jan Dantyszek, 178-9.
Prince-Bishopric of Warmia. His successor in Chelmno Land, however, Tiedemann Giese, immediately devoted himself to building up the school and would be quite effective.\(^{89}\) Two decades later, the institution was famous for its role in supporting and even driving counter-reform in Royal Prussia, if somewhat from the margins.\(^{90}\) Eventually, Jesuit academies in Royal Prussia and Warmia would overshadow the gymnasium in Chelmno, but it had been an early keystone of Dantiscus's reform program and inspired his continued focus on education throughout his episcopacy.

The Chelmno gymnasium was so important to Dantiscus that both its director Aurimontanus and the new bishop Giese frequently informed him about its progress and standing after his relocation to Warmia. In mid-May 1538, Giese reported to Dantiscus that “The School of Chelmno is in my heart, and with it already I have influenced several lords to return to the institution, the effects of which in short time I will explore when it should wish that fortune.”\(^{91}\) Just a few days later, Aurimontanus sent his own commentary, in which he described the ongoing debate over what privileges gymnasium ought to have in different Prussian cities. He also lauded the invaluable collaboration on the project between Aurimontanus and Giese, inspired by Dantiscus:

> About the Chelmno School, to which I paid heed with the highest testimony, one should understand that nothing is to be done [yet] at the Royal Prussian Assembly [in Malbork]. For the citizens of Elbląg in private asked the Most Reverend Lord Bishop of Chelmno [Giese] whether he preferred their gymnasium and resources, and to support their position, and they wished to arouse the majority of the region over this issue. To this, His Most Reverend Fathership answered them that he was obliged to

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\(^{89}\) Tiedemann Giese to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 16, 1538, Malbork, CIDT&C.


\(^{91}\) Tiedemann Giese to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 16, 1538, Malbork, CIDT&C.
the *gymnasium* in Chelmno by his wise and learned forefathers. And thus the Most Reverend Lord was anticipating a petition from the citizens of Elbląg in the public session, of which they composed none, in light of which His Most Reverend Fathership was unwilling to move on this issue. On the contrary, he commanded to the highest degree possible that when he should divert to Starogród, I should come to him with regard to these matters of encouraging studies in Chelmno, contrived by Your Most Reverend Fathership [Dantiscus].

Giese confirmed this report and reaffirmed his own commitment to making the school successful in a letter sent to Dantiscus less than a month later. The *gymnasium* in Chelmno would become as much of a priority for Giese as it had been for Dantiscus. They would continue to enhance its role in strengthening Catholicism among the population of Chelmno Land and Royal Prussia, even as its competing Protestant schools achieved their own successes.

Dantiscus publicized his early educational initiatives rather widely and solicited input from a variety of outside parties. He also took an active interest in other educational institutions that could serve religious purposes, even those over which he could not exercise any control. One of these schools belonged to the Brethren of the Common Life, a Catholic pietist group that Geert Groote had founded in the Low Countries in the fourteenth century, based on the *Devotio Moderna*. The Brethren community based in Rostock, which in recent years had its own extraordinary encounter with evangelical reform, had maintained a large satellite community in Chelmno

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92 Hieronymus Aurimontanus to Ioannes Dantiscus, May 22, 1538, Toruń, CIDT&C.

93 Tiedemann Giese to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 21, 1538, Starogród, CIDT&C.


through the beginning of the sixteenth century, but it recently had fallen on hard times. In early 1536, Dantiscus wrote to the Brethren about their dwindling assets in Chełmno. He described how their school and community had declined, but he suggested that they restore and reinvigorate it by bringing in new teachers and students.96 Dantiscus also sought advice from agents abroad, particularly men who demonstrated strengths in humanism and education. One of his contacts, Johann Lehmann, had been living and studying in Wittenberg, despite the university’s Lutheran base. Lehmann knew both Philipp Melanchthon and Matthäus Lang, and was well acquainted with evangelical reform as well as effective ways to counter it. He grew very excited about Dantiscus’s project to rebuild the gymnasium in Chełmno, seeing it as a great benefit to the people of Prussia. Lehmann wrote:

Regarding what you have written about your desire, if it can be achieved properly, to erect and restore the school, which should be useful and necessary on account of the scarcity of learned men, I consider it pleasing, that with the greatest care in this matter you pressed on for the honor of God and for the advantage of this whole province of Prussia, so that a good school will be raised.97

Dantiscus’s efforts to reform Catholicism through educational institutions became an important part of his legacy in Prussia, and it was well known among his disparate contacts from early on. His initiatives began during his tenure in Chełmno Land, but they carried over strongly into his episcopacy in Warmia as well.

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96 Ioannes Dantiscus to Brethren of the Common Life in Rostock, January 6, 1536, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
97 Johann Lehmann to Ioannes Dantiscus, September 8, 1536, Wittenberg, CIDT&C.
After his succession in Warmia in late 1537, Dantiscus quickly built up this same emphasis on Catholic education in his new diocese. There he implemented educational reform goals in tandem with his reform of the secular and regular clergy and under the protection of his anti-Protestant edicts. Those goals also coalesced with the instructions of King Sigismund, who viewed Lutheran schools both in Prussia and abroad as a terrible influence on the population and the primary sowers of heresy in the realm. In 1540 the King sent several directives to the prince-bishop to limit his people’s attendance at foreign and domestic evangelical gymnasium and universities. In order to meet the King’s expectations and develop more of his own reform program, Dantiscus carefully evaluated the educational situation in Warmia and put together a strategy for enhancing his diocese’s schools and using them to challenge Protestantism.

One advantage that Dantiscus had in Warmia was that when he arrived, there was decent educational infrastructure already in place, despite its recent mismanagement, which historian Marian Borzyszkowski explored in an article several decades ago. With the Church and clergy holding so much power in Warmia, the diocese had built a strong parish school system by the early sixteenth century. This system included a collegiate school in Dobre Miasto, a cathedral school in Frombork, and a castle school in Lidzbark Warmiński. Unfortunately for Dantiscus, however, many of these institutions had begun to decline after the onset of the Reformations, and particularly when prince-bishop Ferber fell into poor health during the 1530s.99

98 Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 3, 1540, Vilnius, CIDT&C; Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus, July 24, 1540, Vilnius, CIDT&C.

Restoring their strength and impact thus became one of Dantiscus’s great priorities and he wasted little time. After some negotiation about what type of partners and instructors would be allowed to contribute to the cathedral school in Frombork, over which the canons had considerable influence, 100 by 1540 Dantiscus was confident enough in its orthodoxy and sustainability to reaffirmed its statues and pledge his continued support. Meanwhile, he reinvested in the diocese’s others schools over which he would have more personal influence. The collegiate school in Dobre Miasto rebounded to run well, supported by the small settlement’s lively chapter. The pride of Dantiscus’s educational reform program, though, was the castle school in Lidzbark Warmiński, which under his direction maintained a good library, impressive instructors, and stable attendance. This institution in particular produced several notable graduates, including Eustathius Knobelsdorf, 101 who eventually pursued an impressive academic career in Wittenberg, Leuven, and Paris. 102 The school also benefited from the vibrant intellectual and artistic environment that Dantiscus attempted to foster in Lidzbark—his effort to create his own Renaissance court and humanist salon through his extensive contacts with foreign scholars. 103

While Dantiscus was reforming diocesan educational institutions in Warmia, he also monitored schools that lay either just beyond his jurisdiction or under someone else’s direction in order to strengthen fruitful intellectual networks and influence those

100 Ioannes Dantiscus to Ermland Chapter, November 26, 1540, Lidzbark Warmiński.
other schools when possible. He continued to play an advisory role in the management of the Chelmno gymnasium. Through the years Giese requested counsel, political backing, and financial support for the school from a variety of parties, and Dantiscus remained a willing contributor to its success. Giese often expressed gratitude for the prince-bishop’s advice and connections. On occasion they jointly petitioned King Sigismund for patronage and support, and the king found their endeavor worthy of it. Dantiscus also discussed different schools with Stanislaus Hosius, the canon of Warmia who was rising through the ranks of prominent diplomats and theologians in Sigismund’s service. Various gymnasia in Prussia, as well as the potential for heretical teachings to emanate from the more evangelical schools depending on their patrons or directors, came up in correspondence between Hosius and Dantiscus on several occasions. Hosius compared Dantiscus’s efforts in Prussia to similar situations regulating education that he observed elsewhere in Poland.

One of the most famous conflicts over the reform of an educational institution during Dantiscus’s tenure in Warmia revolved around the gymnasium in Elbląg and its prolific director, Wilhelm Gnapheus. Gnapheus had been a popular humanist scholar and priest in the Low Countries, where in the 1520s he adopted evangelical Christianity and became one of the region’s leading promoters of reform, highly critical of the Catholic Church. In 1531 in a rather aggressive action, Duke Albrecht invited Gnapheus

104 Tiedemann Giese to Ioannes Dantiscus, February 20, 1543, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
105 Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus & Tiedemann Giese, March 13, 1542, Vilnius, CIDT&C.
106 Stanisław Hozjusz to Ioannes Dantiscus, September 20, 1542, Cracow, CIDT&C; Stanisław Hozjusz to Ioannes Dantiscus, October 13, 1543, Sandomierz, CIDT&C; Stanisław Hozjusz to Ioannes Dantiscus, February 6, 1545, Cracow, CIDT&C.
to minister in Elbląg—in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Warmia—where there was a burgeoning Protestant population. There the avid preacher quickly became quite popular, and in 1535 the Lutheran mayor of the town asked him to organize a *gymnasium*. Gnapheus leaped at the opportunity. He established the institution based on the educational principles of Philipp Melanchthon and served as headmaster and lead instructor. He attracted students from across Northern Europe and rapidly built up the school's reputation. The *gymnasium* provided Gnapheus with a highly influential platform from which he began to spread evangelical ideas more systematically and widely throughout the town and surrounding region. He also was active as a reformer outside of his duties at the school. He preached publically and published several texts, both classical humanist and Lutheran, including some popular dramatic works. He became a leading voice for evangelical reform along the Baltic coast and accumulated followers in several urban centers, including Gdańsk and Königsberg.¹⁰⁷

When Dantiscus became prince-bishop of Warmia in 1537, at first he was willing to tolerate Gnapheus' role in Elbląg because of the instructional strength of the *gymnasium* and its notoriety abroad, even if the education provided there was more Lutheran than Catholic. The *gymnasium* in Chełmno had been approved, so the school in Elbląg was no longer a direct threat to his own educational initiatives. Dantiscus even helped Gnapheus to edit some of his texts during this early period, but throughout their contact he attempted to bring Gnapheus—a former priest—back to Catholicism. Eventually however, Dantiscus came to acknowledge his counterpart as a theological

dissident. As such, he was a danger to both the laity and the clergy of the diocese. The final straw for prince-bishop, as it was in many cases, was when Gnapheus—still technically ordained—began to flaunt publicly his disregard for clerical celibacy requirements, ultimately finding a wife in Elbląg and living a married life. For Dantiscus, this was an irrevocable defection and conversion to Protestant heresy and could not go unpunished. In 1541, he banished Gnapheus from the Diocese of Warmia for both breaking his vow of celibacy and apostatizing. Gnapheus would flee to Ducal Prussia, from which he would again flee several years later after being accused of sacramentarianism and excommunicated. Meanwhile, however, the gymnasium in Elbląg continued to thrive and pose challenges to Dantiscus’s Catholic reform program in Warmia and farther afield.108

Throughout his fifteen years as a bishop in Prussia, Dantiscus went to great lengths to restore and reform educational institutions in strict Catholic adherence both within and beyond his jurisdiction. In both Chełmno Land and Warmia, he inherited an educational infrastructure that was not operating at peak effectiveness but boasted potential for being revitalized. He viewed diocesan schools for the laity as an invaluable weapon with which to combat Protestantism in Prussia, in part modeled on the corresponding success of evangelical schools that had sprung up in several Prussian towns. The effectiveness of Dantiscus’s educational initiatives is impossible to quantify, but those initiatives constituted an integral part of his broader reform program and greatly supplemented his work among the clergy.

Aggressive Persecutions

When Dantiscus’s legislative and institutional reform targets—official edicts, the secular clergy, monks and friars, diocesan schools—did not sufficiently discourage or eliminate Protestant beliefs or practices, he employed a more autocratic and targeted approach to suppressing evangelical reform. By means of his political-ecclesiastical authority and myriad personal connections throughout Prussia and Poland-Lithuania, as well as with the tacit—and occasionally explicit—support of his secular and religious superiors, Dantiscus directed aggressive individual persecutions of suspected and accused Protestants. When possible, he defrocked, incarcerated, or expelled priests, lay preachers, evangelical ministers, and even civic reform leaders whom he deemed to be a threat to the Catholic Church. Polish historians have addressed this matter in only a limited fashion. They have highlighted Dantiscus’s public animosity toward and pursuit of accused Protestants as somewhat of a bridge between early responses to evangelical reform throughout Crown lands and later official, sweeping counter-reform measures.¹⁰⁹ My research demonstrates rather that these persecutions were a subsidiary component of his already robust reform program in Prussia.

From early in his episcopacy, Dantiscus received implied support and even explicit encouragement in these endeavors by his patrons at the Polish court. Piotr Tomicki, with whom Dantiscus frequently discussed religious matter in detail, did not dissemble Dantiscus’s responsibility to pursue Protestants vigorously. Even before Dantiscus had been ordained or consecrated as bishop of Chełmno, Tomicki was

already warning him about the extent to which certain Prussian ecclesiastical jurisdictions were “contaminated by this damned heresy,” and suggesting that any responsible shepherding of Prussian Christians must include rooting out evangelical reformers.¹¹⁰ Thereafter, Tomicki and Dantiscus collaborated on identifying and removing Lutheranism both in Prussian lands and in Poland proper, including in the royal capital of Cracow. Tomicki was especially concerned about the Lutherans’ ability to worship clandestinely and avoid detection, even as their numbers increased. He posited that separating them from loyal Catholics would be even more difficult in Prussia, where stronger evangelical currents had created a more fluid and contested religious environment.¹¹¹ King Sigismund also encouraged Dantiscus—albeit less explicitly—to persecute Lutheran worshippers, especially those who flouted royal decrees. After Dantiscus had succeeded to the Prince-Bishopric of Warmia, Sigismund lauded their combined royal and ecclesiastical efforts to eradicate Lutheran texts and recommended harsh punishments for violators of anti-Lutheran legislation. He suggested that any punishments should come in a timely manner, in part to discourage other reformers or sympathizers more effectively.¹¹²

Dantiscus’s active persecution of evangelical reformers followed suit. Especially during his tenure in Warmia, when his political and judicial authority reached its height, he sought to seize and punish or banish a multitude of local accused offenders. Many of these were ex-priests who supposedly either violated the clerical reform he was

¹¹⁰ Piotr Tomicki to Ioannes Dantiscus, January 18, 1533, Piotrków, CIDT&C.
¹¹¹ Piotr Tomicki to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 15, 1535, Kielce, CIDT&C.
¹¹² Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus, April 2, 1540, Cracow, CIDT&C.
implementing or had begun their own evangelical ministries. Occasionally there was personal animosity involved as well. Dantiscus, however, frequently came into conflict with Duke Albrecht and other regional Protestant leaders, who often protected as refugees those reformers being persecuted. In particular, Albrecht’s open arms regularly prevented the bishop from seizing his intended quarry. Two ultimately successful cases were the banishments of Alexander Sculteti and Wilhelm Gnaphus, as described earlier. There were many other pursuits, though, several of which did not achieve the desired results.

In spring 1540, a frustrated Dantiscus sought the rogue priest Jacob Lewe, who had fled to Ducal Prussia from Reszel, the same town in which the Augustinian hermitage had closed due to claims of Lutheranism. Writing to Duke Albrecht about a lawsuit against Lewe from the Reszel burgher Michel Schultz, Dantiscus also included several ecclesiastical accusations:

[I have] another complaint about the priest Jacob Lewe who has escaped from Reszel, who has called [me] an alms-eater...[Schultz and his wife] have allegedly accused Lewe of having a marriage-like relationship with his cook. In the case of Schultz, which concerns the authority of the Bishop, please order the judge [in Ducal Prussia] “to stand still” and punish Lewe for his slander.

Dantiscus attached a report from the aggrieved Schultz that, “The escaped priest Lewe visited fairs in the Duchy of Prussia [disguised as a] merchant.” Schultz also alleged that witnesses were gathering “about the assertion that [Father] Lewe lives with his cook in dishonor.” Albrecht responded dismissively, however, writing that he “had not yet received a detailed account about the incident with the poor man Jacob Lewe, whom

113 Bischof Johannes von Ermland an Herzog Albrecht, May 31, 1540, Lidzbark Warmiński, in Hartmann, Herzog Albrecht, 368.
[you] the bishop may forgive.”\textsuperscript{114} The matter with Jacob Lewe did not come up again. Based on later correspondence between Dantiscus and Albrecht, it is unlikely that the prince-bishop received the kind of justice he sought, but rather that Albrecht allowed Lewe to reside in Ducal Prussia unmolested.

Several other individuals in Prussia found themselves at the center of sectarian political conflicts between Dantiscus and Prussian officials after having drawn the prince-bishop’s ire. One was Bartholomew Vogt (or Voigt), another ex-priest from Dantiscus’s diocese. For several years, Vogt preached evangelical ideas in Elbląg under the protection of the town council.\textsuperscript{115} He consistently eluded prosecution from prince-bishops Ferber and Dantiscus. According to Dantiscus, Vogt had been a priest in Reszel before his defection. The prince-bishop wrote in 1541 that Vogt finally was “expelled from Elbląg and sent to Königsberg by the town council,” only to be employed insultingly as Duke Albrecht’s envoy to Crown lands.\textsuperscript{116} Jurisdictional and political conflict arose when Vogt tried to reclaim ownership and management of an inherited property in Reszel, a concession that Dantiscus thought would have made the prince-bishopric and the Church look soft on apostates and weak against defectors to Ducal Prussia.\textsuperscript{117} In order to ease the tension, however, eventually Dantiscus allowed Vogt to manage the property in Reszel, but in return he demanded that the ex-priest stop

\textsuperscript{114} Herzog Albrecht an Bischof Johannes von Ermland, June 17, 1540, Königsberg, in Hartmann, \textit{Herzog Albrecht}, 370.

\textsuperscript{115} Nowakowska, \textit{King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther}, 58.

\textsuperscript{116} Bischof Johannes von Ermland an Herzog Albrecht, May 20, 1541, Braniewo, in Hartmann, \textit{Herzog Albrecht}, 400.

\textsuperscript{117} Bischof Johannes von Ermland an Herzog Albrecht, May 29, 1541, Braniewo, in Hartmann, \textit{Herzog Albrecht}, 402.
chastising the diocese and the Catholic Church. Under Albrecht’s protection, Vogt nonetheless would continue to be an influential political figure throughout Prussia, including in opposition to Catholic authorities.\textsuperscript{118}

Another of Dantiscus’s cases almost drew royal investigators from Cracow. In late 1543, he was in the process of a complex prosecution of several accused heretics and apostates when Crown officials attempted to step in. He petitioned King Sigismund and Queen Bona, who eventually reconfirmed his sole authority. After expressing his gratitude, Dantiscus emphasized that clarifying the evidence, resolving the matter, purifying the Catholic Church, and fortifying orthodox belief and practice among all Christians were his great priorities:

I will not stand for this muddled issue to go on as such, because justice requires purity. In these most recent times, [the culprits] believed themselves to have been released from the chains of conscience and the observance of religion, in which manner many revered neither God nor men, and there were so many perverse minds that it was difficult to discern who was able to be trusted without risk. Nevertheless in this matter, although things seem to be quite obscured, there are no doubts that [the case] should result in [sufficient] evidence and justice, for whatever has been suppressed at any time, must always burst into the light.\textsuperscript{119}

For Dantiscus, the violations of orthodoxy in this case were not only intra-Christianity, but rather they included some of his subjects’ apathy in worshipping God at all. Thus, identifying the suspects’ crimes and assigning appropriate punishments were difficult tasks, but they demanded thoroughness in order to discourage such behavior across the diocese.

\textsuperscript{118} Bischof Johannes von Ermland an Herzog Albrecht, June 3, 1541, Braniewo, in Hartmann, \textit{Herzog Albrecht}, 405.

\textsuperscript{119} Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, March 27, 1544, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
One final example of Dantiscus’s persecutions came in 1544. This case involved another ex-priest, Jacob Stolle (or Stoll or Stolte), and resulted in some success for the prince-bishop, insofar as his extant correspondence reveals. Stolle was born in Orneta, a Warmian castle-town located on a hill above the placid Drwęca Warmińska River, about halfway between Lidzbarк Warmiński and Elbląg. Stolle had become the parish priest in the nearby village of Bessaw, a post that he fled some years later.\textsuperscript{120} Although most of the details of these activities now are unknown, he became the cause of some conflict in spring 1544 when Duke Albrecht sent letters to the town council of Orneta and to Dantiscus requesting that Stolle—presumably living in Ducal Prussia at that point—be repaid civil debts that were owed to him from his time in Warmia.\textsuperscript{121} Perhaps Stolle then boldly ventured into Warmia to collect those debts, because in July Albrecht sent another letter to Dantiscus with a “Plea by Appolonia Tischer of Livonia for the release of her husband, Jacob Stolte, who was imprisoned in Warmia.”\textsuperscript{122} Dantiscus responded with the same contempt that Albrecht had shown in the Lewe and Vogt cases, writing, “There is a charge against the fugitive priest Jacob Stoll by the episcopal magistrate (see attachment); please refrain from your objection against his duty to handle the case under ecclesiastical law.” The referenced attachment included the magistrate’s own contribution, reporting “a charge against the priest, former pastor of

\textsuperscript{120} Bischof Johannes von Ermland an Herzog Albrecht, July 17, 1544, Lidzbark Warmiński, in Hartmann, \textit{Herzog Albrecht}, 505.


\textsuperscript{122} Herzog Albrecht an Bischof Johannes von Ermland, July 12, 1544, Königsberg, in Hartmann, \textit{Herzog Albrecht}, 504.
Bessaw Jacob Stoll (born in Orneta), because of the abandonment of his priestly office and the public waste, with a request for jurisdiction.”

Again there was only scant further mention of Stolle in their correspondence, and so in this case perhaps Dantiscus was able to prosecute his quarry successfully.

Throughout his episcopacy but especially during his tenure in Warmia, Dantiscus used his authority and resources to persecute Protestants whom he deemed a threat to the Church. Exposing and punishing dissident clergymen in particular became a priority for him, especially when it provided any advantage over Duke Albrecht. Dantiscus continued this pursuit through the very end of his life, maintaining collaboration with fellow royal and ecclesiastical officials. In a long 1547 letter to the aged King Sigismund, the prince-bishop highlighted some key political issues across Central Europe, among them the notion that Poland-Lithuania was unable to manage Prussian political matters effectively because of the plague of Lutherans there. He argued that the only solution would be harsher suppression of evangelical reformers, which the royal court ought to sponsor but which episcopal leaders could handle judicially. His vitriol and resolve even surprised his successor Bishop Tiedemann Giese of Chelmno, who found prosecutions and excommunications for heresy to be an extreme reaction by the Church and who could not believe Dantiscus’s support for bishops who took such

123 Bischof Johannes von Ermland an Herzog Albrecht, July 17, 1544, Lidzbark Warmiński, in Hartmann, Herzog Albrecht, 505.

124 Bischof Johannes von Ermland an Herzog Albrecht, July 20, 1544, Elbląg, in Hartmann, Herzog Albrecht, 506.

125 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, August 19, 1547, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
Exactly two months before his own death, Dantiscus was still pursuing diocesan priests accused of corruption, most notably one whom he lambasted for supposed simony. The prince-bishop recruited another Royal Prussian official, Stanislaus Kostka, to collect the priest’s resignation and ensure his removal. Ultimately, persecuting Protestants and ex-priests became an important component of Dantiscus’s reform efforts in Chełmno Land and Warmia. It often sufficed for him personally when institutional reform was not purifying the administration and ministry of the Church in his jurisdiction as completely or effectively as he desired.

A Cosmopolitan Episcopacy

When ambassador Johannes Dantiscus returned to Prussia in autumn 1532, elected as bishop of Chełmno and awaiting his ordination and consecration, he was prepared and motivated to establish a wide-ranging reform program that would rid his jurisdiction of evangelical reform. It did not take him long to get started. When he ascended to the Prince-Bishopric of Warmia in 1537, unfettered from the practical limitations of the Bishopric of Chełmno and equipped with a pervasive ecclesiastical infrastructure, he augmented this program to take maximum advantage of his authority. For the next decade, he dedicated time, resources, and political capital to purging his lands of Protestantism. He supported his reform program with official edicts declaring which Christian beliefs and practices were either required or forbidden. Then he implemented institutional reform of the secular clergy, the regular clergy, and diocesan schools within his jurisdiction. When these measures were insufficient, he aggressively

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126 Tiedemann Giese to Ioannes Dantiscus, August 8, 1547, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
127 Ioannes Dantiscus to Stanisław Kostka, August 27, 1548, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
persecuted Protestant actors and sympathizers, focusing especially on current and former priests of the dioceses. Dantiscus developed these initiatives in concert with other Prussian officials, the Polish episcopate, and the Polish royal court, but they progressed under his authority in response to particular Prussian issues. His efforts had inconsistent and often immeasurable results during this period, both in Chełmno Land and in Warmia, but he pursued reform within the Catholic Church as a primary episcopal responsibility and a personal contribution to the Church’s stability.

Dantiscus’s practical reforming activities throughout his episcopal tenure had critical cosmopolitan dimensions that highlight the interconnectivity of the early European Reformations, especially in Central Europe. At a foundational level, his inspiration and preparation for addressing evangelical reform as an ecclesiastical authority developed almost entirely during his diplomatic career abroad, during which he encountered diverse manifestations of and responses to religious reform in a variety of social, cultural, and political settings. Therefore, his construction and implementation of initiatives to expose and eliminate evangelical reform in Prussia inherently were informed by his numerous, eclectic prior experiences traversing Latin Christendom. Even when limited to his official jurisdiction in practice, though, rarely did his reform initiatives not draw from or resonate much farther afield. His own edicts and those he supported secondarily were couched in anti-Protestant politics from across Central Europe, in most cases quite explicitly. His efforts to educate his secular clergy and restore the integrity of their ministry clearly reflected his worldly, humanist approach to education and religiosity. His discussions about the redisposition of monks and friars explicitly referenced the plight of Catholic brothers in Protestant territories throughout
Central Europe. And his reform of diocesan lay educational institutions drew from his intellectual maturation abroad and imported many of its underlying principles and resources. All of this occurred within an intellectual environment shaped in part by Dantiscus’s prolific, reforming, cosmopolitan literary activity—described in Chapter 5—and his continual, vibrant correspondence with princes, courtiers, clergymen, and scholars from across Europe. He consciously remained engaged with the development of religious reform in much wider arenas, and he worked to ensure that his colleagues abroad were aware of the sizeable effects of religious reform efforts in Prussia.

Such cosmopolitan institutional reform was integral to the nature and impact of Dantiscus’s role in the Reformations, both for his contemporaries and in the view of modern historians. His career not only exemplifies tangible, intentional, transnational links between intellectual, observed, and practical conceptions of religious reform, particularly in a Catholic context during the early Reformations; it also demonstrates that such links could transcend social and cultural distinctions—urban and rural, noble and common, royal and ecclesiastical, commercial and agricultural, confessionally-Lutheran and confessionally-Catholic, etc.—spanning and permeating a broad, more easterly Central Europe, in both obscure and well-known settings. Dantiscus had evaluated these factors during his diplomatic career abroad and then utilized them strategically in his Prussian reform program. His intellectual and practical framework for eradicating Protestantism and internally reforming the Catholic Church—regardless of how effective—was overtly and unapologetically cosmopolitan, perhaps uniquely so and certainly uniquely within pre-Tridentine Early Modern Catholicism. It fostered a Catholic reforming environment in Royal Prussia and Warmia, the intricacies of which were
inextricable from the broader European Reformations. Such interconnectivity also would shine through his extensive, epistolary exchanges about different foreign arenas of the Reformations, which he pursued avidly alongside his practical reform program throughout his episcopal career.
In late spring 1535, Bishop Johannes Dantiscus of Chełmno concluded a three-month journey touring his diocese’s western strongholds by visiting Starogród Castle, set on a spur overlooking the wide floodplain of the Vistula River. After celebrating morning Mass in the brick castle’s small chapel on 19 June, the bishop settled into an upper chamber in order to dictate a report on current events to be sent to Piotr Tomicki, Vice Chancellor of the Crown of Poland and Bishop of Cracow. As he gazed through a narrow window across misty patchwork fields and the distant river’s broad silver channel, a recent episode of horrific religious violence in Amsterdam occupied his thoughts and much of his dictated letter. The perpetrators were Anabaptists, for him a “demonic and stupid sect that has infected no small number of residents, who preserve themselves in secret there and only for now fear to emit their venom in public.”

Dantiscus described in vivid detail the armed midnight riot, which supposedly was bolstered by Anabaptist infiltrators from Amsterdam’s neighboring villages, who had snuck through the city gates after dark. According to Dantiscus, the rebels:

…slaughtered the city’s guards and sentries, shattered the bars of the double doors to the town hall…tortured some lesser [administrators] who had been stationed for the defense of the town hall…and hurled frightful sounds out of the windows together with the noises of the torture devices and the booming of the public bell.

He wrote that only a daring counter-attack led by the city’s proconsul was able to clear the market square of supporters and retake the town hall, but not before many men died and part of the building was destroyed. For Dantiscus, this riot was an eventuality of
Protestant reform to be feared and prevented, even as he sat comfortably in an episcopal castle across the continent.\footnote{Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, June 19, 1535, Starogród, CIDT&C.}

Dantiscus actually had embellished his description of the Amsterdam riot based on more succinct accounts sent to him from colleagues in the Low Countries, which in part reveals how urgently he sought to bring attention to the matter.\footnote{Adolphus de Scornaco to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 3, 1535, Rome, CIDT&C.} Introducing class prejudices, he referred to the rioters as the “dregs of society…for no one of this [Anabaptist] sect is affected or united, and they are most destitute of all things and greedy for plunder: those who are unwilling to work with their hands, who by birth are wicked, insolvent, spendthrift, and licking [the ground].” Consoling himself as much as his royal and ecclesiastical patron, though, Dantiscus concluded his report to Tomicki with gratitude and cautious relief about the episode:

> And thus, by the grace of God, this matter ended happily on behalf of our religion. Because if these wretched and insane [Anabaptists] had achieved victory in that rich and distinguished city [of Amsterdam], it would not be difficult to reason what [tragedy] would have followed [there and elsewhere].\footnote{Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, June 19, 1535, Starogród, CIDT&C.}

This report was one of many similar accounts of foreign religious matters that Dantiscus circulated through his epistolary network during his episcopacy. It speaks not only to his vitriol toward Anabaptists and other radical reforming groups, but more importantly to his fervent efforts to monitor Protestant reform throughout Christendom on behalf of his diocese, his metropolitan, his King, and indeed the entire Catholic Church. His ambitious drive to eradicate Protestantism cut across ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and
political boundaries, and it only increased after his 1533 ordination and consecration as a bishop. His main hindrance, though, was his weariness of travel and his desire to reside permanently in Prussia. As Dantiscus rode eastward from Starogród back to his capital in Lubawa late that June, he ruminated on how he could actually contribute to suppressing Protestant reform abroad from his Prussian residence.⁴

By the mid-1530s, bishop Dantiscus already was entrenched in his royally-instructed yet strongly-personal mission to eradicate evangelical reform in Prussia, particularly in the towns and merchant communities of Royal Prussia. He had begun to address problems of administration and ministry in his diocese, and he would widen his efforts upon succeeding to the Prince-Bishopric of Warmia in 1537. But his conception of and ambitions for orthodox Catholic reform never ended at the boundaries of his diocese or his political jurisdiction. For Dantiscus, one of the most vital responsibilities of a Catholic bishop during the Reformations was to recognize the transnational threat that Protestant reform posed to all of Christendom and to confront it boldly. This meant utilizing his intellectual network to stay as informed as possible about broader currents in religious reform. When possible, he would then contribute to Catholic or counter-reform efforts abroad through that same network. More practically, however, he would modify his own ambitious domestic reform program in the light of developments, observations, and evaluations of Protestant and Catholic activities from across Latin Christendom. His own corner of the Christian world would come to reflect events, resources, and information collectively accessible to very few other sixteenth-century

⁴ Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, June 29, 1535, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
This chapter will explore three different international facets of the early Reformations—both Protestant and Catholic—in terms of how Dantiscus engaged with them from his episcopal positions in Prussia and how they in turn influenced his approaches to reform both domestically and abroad. The first facet is one delineated primarily by geography—that is the first decades of the English Reformation. The second comes through a more confessional lens. In particular, it comprises Dantiscus’s approaches to preventing the spread of radical reform, especially the Anabaptist movement. The third facet is also more confessional, but it hinges on a specific event. This was the early formal stirrings of Catholic reform culminating with the first phase of the Council of Trent in 1545-1547. These three examples will demonstrate both the breadth and depth of Dantiscus’s engagement with transnational reform movements during the course of his episcopacy. Such engagement complemented and indeed informed his domestic reform initiatives. It was central to the integral links between Prussia, Poland-Lithuania, the rest of Central Europe, and the western world during the early modern period, and it further enhanced the cosmopolitanism of his wide-ranging episcopal reform program.

**Unwelcome Turns in England**

One foreign reform issue that continuously occupied the mind of bishop Dantiscus, and about which he recorded some of his strongest and most explicit opinions, was the development of the Reformations in England. His attention to the English Reformation derived from his relationships with prominent English politicians from earlier in his career, his exchanges with English Church leaders beginning in the
1530s, and his longer view of the potential impact of English reform in a broader Baltic context. Like most Protestant reform, he would come to vilify changes made in the Anglican Church under King Henry VIII. Dantiscus’s affinity for the English had developed midway through his diplomatic career, particularly during his two-month tour of southern England in 1522. As described in Chapter 3, on that trip he fostered personal connections with Thomas Wolsey, Thomas More, and Henry, among others. He also visited iconic religious sites such as Thomas Becket’s shrine at Canterbury Cathedral and St. Michael’s Mount in Cornwall, as well as won support from English officials against the Teutonic Order.\(^5\) His appreciation for the English had been rekindled in summer 1532 when he befriended Thomas Cranmer at the Diet of Regensburg, as described in Chapter 4.\(^6\) Around that time, however, Dantiscus also began to evaluate English reform as a worrisome threat to the authority of the Roman Church and the religiosity of Christians across Northern Europe. His relationship with Cranmer would become central to his evaluation of and efforts to slow this reform.

Dantiscus began to monitor religious developments in England quite early, both in his own episcopal tenure and in the English Reformation itself. As early as May 1531, as an ambassador still living abroad in the Low Countries, he wrote to King Sigismund about the precarious state of Roman authority in the English Church, particularly in light of Henry’s incredulous reaction to the Pope’s refusal to grant him an annulment for his

\(^5\) Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 12, 1522, London, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, October 29, 1522, Plymouth, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, October 29, 1522, Plymouth, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, November 10, 1522, Plymouth, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, November 10, 1522, Plymouth, CIDT&C.

\(^6\) Thomas Cranmer to Ioannes Dantiscus, October 6, 1532, Vienna, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Thomas Cranmer, September 1, 1540, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
marriage to Catherine of Aragon. He reiterated his concerns a couple of months later, set against the backdrop of wider European political conflicts. So when Dantiscus met Cranmer in Regensburg in 1532, he was already wary of religious and political currents in England, enough to spar cautiously about papal authority and clerical celibacy. He became much more critical of English reform once he realized the scale of the impact that a possible English break from Rome would have on Northern European peoples.

In particular, Dantiscus worried that Protestant sympathies in England would further enable, encourage, and exacerbate evangelical reform throughout the Baltic region, within which he considered his native Royal Prussia to be an integral and susceptible part. Evangelical reform had spread rapidly across and around the Baltic littoral during the 1520s, aided by strong internal connections. In Denmark and Sweden, preachers educated in Germany coalesced with accelerating state-led reform, which eventually resulted in Lutheran churches closely allied with their respective monarchies. Along the southern Baltic coast from Holstein to Mecklenburg to Pomerania, Lutheran beliefs and practices came to predominate and proliferate outward through commercial exchanges. They were even stronger farther south in Brandenburg and Saxony. Meanwhile in Prussia, evangelical reform initially traced Hanseatic connections and then grew in a variety of urban and rural settings, buoyed by immigrants and traders from around the Baltic basin. Teutonic Grand Master Albrecht secularized his territory in

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8 Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund I Jagiellon, July 20, 1531, Brussels, CIDT&C.


1525 and consolidated Ducal Prussia, an evangelical anchor within the composite but largely-Catholic Polish-Lithuanian state.\textsuperscript{11} It is no wonder that Dantiscus viewed the Baltic as an intimately-connected region in which evangelical reform was making growing and hardening inroads, if not already becoming dominant. Merchants, diplomats, scholars, and preachers traveled easily and fluidly, and they often bore evangelical ideas along with them.

This concern about evangelical reform in the Baltic region reached a tipping point for Dantiscus in the mid-1530s, and England played a critical role. On 10 April 1533, King Frederick I of Denmark, who since his election in 1523 had remained Catholic but nonetheless oversaw significant evangelical reform of Christianity throughout his Kingdom, died and left a power struggle between the traditionalist Danish episcopate and his Lutheran son Christian. The resulting succession crisis sparked The Counts’ War, which lasted until summer 1536.\textsuperscript{12} Dantiscus viewed the Danish Crown as a crucial pillar for Catholic stability in Northern Europe, and the integrity of that pillar would require England to support Denmark’s Catholic bishops. In December 1534, however, Dantiscus did not like what he was observing. He wrote to Piotr Tomicki about the lamentable and unpredictable marital troubles of King Henry VIII, whom he identified as rallying supporters “against the ordinances of the [Catholic] Church and the holy fathers.” This could portend doom for the Church in the Baltic region, as Dantiscus advised that:

\textsuperscript{11} For more detail on this process in Prussia, see Chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{12} Cameron, \textit{The European Reformation}, 275-6.
If the Kingdom of Denmark, which we consider to be a neighbor, is entrusted to the truly wealthy and powerful King of England, this matter of reform must not be overlooked and in fact must be feared, lest in these dangerous times, when Lutheranism operates openly, every shore of our [Baltic] Sea even up to the mouth of the Vistula [River] should be overtaken and infected by this same pestilence.13

For Dantiscus, Christianity in the Baltic basin was in a perilous position. A Protestant England would ensure a Lutheran Denmark, and a Lutheran Denmark would enable evangelical reform to overwhelm the Catholic Church along the Baltic shores and up its tributary rivers. Therefore, mitigating Protestant reform in England should be a paramount concern for Catholics across Northern Europe, even in Prussian localities where the Catholic Church remained strong for the moment. Dantiscus’s warning, though, frustratingly did not prevent the support for Christian’s Lutheran faction provided by both the Polish Crown and Duke Albrecht.14 Nor did it prevent ultimately a victory for the Protestant side in the Danish conflict.15 Nonetheless, Dantiscus continued his commitment to monitoring developments in England, lobbying his contacts there, and preparing for potential fallout from an English break with Rome.

One of the most dramatic events in both the English Reformation and Dantiscus’s views of its broader impact came in late 1535, before the Counts War in Denmark had concluded. When Bishop John Fisher of Rochester and former Lord Chancellor Thomas More refused to support the Act of Succession and Act of Supremacy, which recognized the lawful queenship of Anne Boleyn and King Henry’s position as the head of the Church of England, respectively, Henry had the two men

13 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, December 18, 1534, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
14 Natalia Nowakowska, King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther (Oxford: OUP, 2018), 137-8.
15 Cameron, The European Reformation, 275-6.
tried for high treason and executed after guilty verdicts. Dantiscus learned about this event from Cornelis de Schepper, his Netherlandish colleague who conducted a number of critical diplomatic missions on behalf of the Holy Roman Empire to states such as England, Poland-Lithuania, and even the Ottoman Empire. Schepper wrote to Dantiscus in autumn 1535 with news of the trials and executions, as well as of the subsequent excommunication of Henry by the pope and the official break of the English Church from Rome. Dantiscus responded with sadness and horror, writing:

> Who would not recoil in terror and suffer grief from the pitiable ruin of these most learned and truly holy men, [Bishop] of Rochester Cardinal John Fisher and Thomas More? It befell them, that fate which previously had brought varied sufferings and deaths to many holy and good men on account of their honesty. 

Clearly Dantiscus deeply lamented these events, which he essentially—albeit not explicitly—characterized as martyrdom. His humanist and ecclesiastical colleagues in Poland responded with similar grief. Many of them learned about the executions from Erasmus, who maintained notable correspondence with a number of Poles during the 1520s and 1530s, including Dantiscus. The news of the loss of More and Fisher concerned all of them.

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17 Cornelis De Schepper & Godschalk Ericksen to Ioannes Dantiscus, October 27, 1535, Lüneburg, CIDT&C.

18 Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, December 6, 1535, Brussels, CIDT&C.

19 Ioannes Dantiscus to Cornelis De Schepper & Godschalk Ericksen, December 23, 1535, Lubawa, CIDT&C.

News of these troubling events also came to Dantiscus from other contacts. Canon of Meißen Johannes Cochlaeus sent a letter in which he explicitly cautioned the bishop about the activities of Dantiscus’s friend Cranmer, who as Archbishop of Canterbury had been a key member of the team that interrogated and charged Fisher and More on King Henry’s behalf. He portentously reminisced:

[In Regensburg] I approached the ambassador of the King of England a number of times, who at present is Archbishop [Cranmer] of Canterbury, the torch [lighting] all of these [heretical] fires and the inciter of evils [in England]. I should have preferred to be in his presence less often, for I observed his trustworthiness to be not nearly adequate. Such a warning was difficult for Dantiscus to receive. While he agonized over Henry’s actions, he had overlooked Cranmer’s participation in church reform for years, not wanting to vilify a friend. His relationship with Cranmer thenceforth would become the nucleus of his engagement with English reform, but that relationship would not remain stable. And although Dantiscus did not hold much hope for the salvation of King Henry’s soul, he did hope that the princes of Europe could cooperate and find a unifying resolution to the crisis, as he shared with Schepper.

Despite Dantiscus’s unwillingness to acknowledge Cranmer’s complicity in English reform, it was a significant part of Cranmer’s life and career throughout the 1530s. During the tenure of Thomas Cromwell as vicegerent of the English Crown (1532-1540), Cranmer generally did not direct much official church reform, but his personal religious development was substantial. Prior to 1532, he had been a lead actor in justifying the claims for and attempting to procure King Henry’s annulment. As such,

21 Johann Dobneck to Ioannes Dantiscus, December 30, 1535, Meißen, CIDT&C.
22 Ioannes Dantiscus to Cornelis De Schepper, February 24, 1536, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
he already questioned the religious authority of the Pope. As a part of his efforts he made numerous contacts with continental reformers, including Simon Grynaeus, Martin Bucer, Reyner Wolfe, and several Swiss leaders. Thus his knowledge of and sympathy for reform was already strong in 1532, when his visit to Lutheran Nuremberg powerfully shaped his views of evangelical reform and when he met Dantiscus in Regensburg that summer. Their discussions and disagreements were surprisingly cordial, however, perhaps because Dantiscus was still hopeful about the fate of the English Church. Quite shockingly though, Cranmer took the drastic step of getting married in Regensburg that same July,\textsuperscript{23} within just weeks or even days of seeing off Dantiscus, an outspoken advocate of clerical celibacy.\textsuperscript{24} Thereafter, their perspectives would diverge for a variety of reasons.

Following Cranmer’s appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1533, his reforming tendencies spiked. While his main rival, Bishop Stephen Gardiner of Winchester, worked diligently to reinforce King Henry’s conservative Catholic sympathies, Cranmer steadily placed evangelical reformers in impactful roles throughout England. He augmented his contacts with reformers abroad and led ecclesiastical judicial proceedings on the basis of evangelical arguments and goals for reform. He also began to sever ecclesiastical connections to Rome. The pope fumed after Cranmer’s implicit approval of Henry’s marriage to Anne Boleyn. Meanwhile, Gardiner attempted to undermine Cranmer in the royal court. Beginning in 1535, Vicegerent Thomas Cromwell—Vicar-General of the Church of England—took over

\textsuperscript{23} MacCulloch, \textit{Thomas Cranmer}, 41-73.

\textsuperscript{24} Ioannes Dantiscus to Sigismund von Herberstein, July 16, 1532, Sitzendorf an der Schmida, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Thomas Cranmer, October 15, 1536, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
principal leadership of official reform, including planning the famous “dissolution of the monasteries,” and Cranmer generally accommodated him. During the next few years, though, Cranmer also increasingly fostered Reformed Christianity in the Church of England, with one notable theological exception. Through his connections to Swiss reformers such as Heinrich Bullinger, Cranmer began to implement initiatives toward establishing vernacular liturgies, increased lay participation, and reduced material splendor in public worship. He maintained, however, a firm belief in the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Later in the decade and especially after Cromwell’s execution in 1540, Cranmer assumed leadership over the official reform measures within the Church of England. In particular, he attempted to temper Henry’s veering back toward conservative Catholicism by maintaining evangelical approaches to the clergy and the sacraments: i.e. allowing clerical marriage and limiting sacramentality to baptism and the Eucharist, as well as promoting the authority of the king and bishops removed from any foreign or universal power, such as the pope. Thus between his visit to Germany in 1532—including his befriending Dantiscus—and the late 1530s, Cranmer became an outspoken proponent of a modified Reformed Christianity and one of the most powerful and active reformers of the Church of England. The evolution of his relationship with Dantiscus would reflect this shift.

Perhaps naïve to Cranmer’s role in English reform, or perhaps optimistic about the potential to revert the Archbishop, Dantiscus attempted to renew their friendship in 1536 by sending a letter containing an extraordinary proposal. The essence of this proposal was the suggestion that King Henry, following the execution of Anne Boleyn, should take for his next wife the princess Isabella, daughter of King Sigismund and Queen Bona of Poland. Strangely, Dantiscus wrote this letter five months after Henry already had married Jane Seymour, an event about which the bishop surely would have known. In a 2007 article, Diarmaid MacCulloch explores some of the possible explanations for this proposal, which likely included a discrete test of Cranmer’s loyalties. In the same letter, Dantiscus addressed the reform reportedly sweeping through the English Church, about which his concern was growing monthly. He sought candid answers and explanations from Cranmer in order to learn the truth of the matter, and it is clear that he still struggled to acknowledge the Archbishop’s own complicity or contributions:

Meanwhile, of the type and number of changes that have advanced [in the English Church] since I departed from Your Most Reverend Lordship [in 1532], none are unknown; but the whole world in these dangerous times is full of tumult, from these disturbances just as from others, which are carried and spread everywhere by many varying rumors, such that only with difficulty are [the rumors] able to be drawn out from those [reports] that are true. Out of your Britannia these [rumors] concerning religion, which are scattered to be suffered among us and are brought about

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27 Diarmaid MacCulloch, “Thomas Cranmer and Johannes Dantiscus: Retractions and Additions,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 58, no. 2 (April, 2007): 273-86. The most likely reason for this overture was that Dantiscus was attempting to test the religiosity of both Cranmer and Henry and push for a reunion with the Roman Church. Cranmer’s lack of a response could suggest a range of reactions, most likely the Archbishop’s hesitance to engage with a Catholic bishop during a precarious moment for the English Crown and Church.
mostly by your king’s marriage, nearly go beyond all trustworthiness, and I would not lead anyone to believe in the spirit of any of these [rumors] before I should be made more certain of even one of them [directly] from Your Most Reverend Lordship.\textsuperscript{28}

Despite Dantiscus’s vagueness in this request, it is clear that he was astounded by the reports about the Church coming out of England. Perhaps sensing a conflict or potential self-incrimination, Cranmer never responded to this letter in 1536. MacCulloch speculates that the lack of response was a result of tensions between English political and ecclesiastical leaders over the Pilgrimage of Grace. Popular objections to Anglican reform recently had helped to stigmatize Catholic loyalty to Rome in the royal court. Thus Cranmer might have avoided divulging too much to or appearing too friendly with a foreign Catholic prelate.\textsuperscript{29}

Dantiscus was not acting unilaterally in this pursuit of information about English reform, though, because he reported on his lack of progress with Cranmer to the Polish queen some months later. Even to her, he continued to question Cranmer’s complicity. He wrote:

Thus far from England there has been no response. I am somewhat fearful that for the Archbishop [Cranmer], to whom I wrote, all things have fallen back into calamity; he who, on account of Lutheranism being imported or even defended by the common people, among other agreements, by means of a calm rebellion has been forced beneath some punishment. Yet, if with time I receive anything from him, no matter what it is, I will be undertaken with all eagerness to transmit it to Your Most Fair Majesty.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{28} Ioannes Dantiscus to Thomas Cranmer, October 15, 1536, Lubawa, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{29} MacCulloch, “Thomas Cranmer and Johannes Dantiscus,” 273-86.

\textsuperscript{30} Ioannes Dantiscus to Bona Sforza, March 16, 1537, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
The Queen responded to Dantiscus with little optimism about the fate of the Church of England, but she still wanted to hear any report from Cranmer that the bishop might receive.\(^3\) Within a year, she would also inquire about the role of Henry’s actual wife Jane Seymour and the future of their young son Edward.\(^2\) Thereafter and throughout the late 1530s, Dantiscus observed through secondhand accounts how much his friend Cranmer was embracing reform in England.

It was a friendly initiative by Cranmer in 1540 that eventually renewed their direct engagement, and religious matters again came to the fore. In 1532, Dantiscus had entrusted a Lithuanian boy to accompany the Archbishop from Regensburg back to England in order to receive an English humanist education. When Georgius Rogenellus came of age in 1540, he requested to return to his native land and Cranmer granted the request. Regenellus boarded a Baltic ship bound for Prussia and carried a letter from the Archbishop to Dantiscus, in which Cranmer apologized for not writing sooner—he had, in fact, thought Dantiscus to be dead. Cranmer was enthusiastic about rekindling their friendship.\(^3\) Dantiscus, however, although appreciative of Cranmer’s generosity, compliments, and past friendship, would prove to be too gravely concerned about the Archbishop’s leadership in English reform. Colleagues like Cornelis de Schepper had continued to inform Dantiscus about developments—labeled as heretical—in the

\(^{31}\) Bona Sforza to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 27, 1537, Cracow, CIDT&C.

\(^{32}\) Bona Sforza to Ioannes Dantiscus, February 7, 1538, Piotrków, CIDT&C.

\(^{33}\) Thomas Cranmer to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 20, 1540, Lambeth, CIDT&C.
English Church, and the prince-bishop would recognize evidence of those developments in Cranmer’s own words.

Candidly revealing his disappointment in his old friend, Dantiscus replied to Cranmer in September 1540 with one of the most scolding and reproachful passages of his entire literary and epistolary corpus. At first he offered a warning and heartfelt plea, writing:

…since the false rumor [of my death] has faded with God’s grace, gladdened we must return to our former obligation of mutual goodwill in spirit and in correspondence. Yet, lest the duty of the salamander [to quench the flames of heresy] seize you were you to be met by these [reforming] conditions, none of which ever formerly existed in the realm of Christendom, you should beware: I would have [written to you] much more were I not dreading your own future for your offense, if [while you are] in such a state [that fate] should fall into your hands.

Dantiscus clearly had turned a corner in his view of Cranmer’s activities. He descried the religious conditions in England and recognized the role that his friend had played. In fact, he evaluated the Archbishop’s supposedly unprecedented reform efforts during the late 1530s as heretical. He still offered hope that Cranmer would come back around to Roman obedience, but cautioned him sternly and concernedly against the fate at the end of his current path.

Writing more specifically about the state of the Church in England, Dantiscus explicitly questioned the orthodoxy and propriety of the setting, education, and influence that Cranmer had provided for the Lithuanian ward Rogenellus. Addressing

34 Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, August 18, 1540, Vienna, CIDT&C.
35 Thomas Cranmer to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 20, 1540, Lambeth, CIDT&C; MacCulloch, 273-286.
36 Ioannes Dantiscus to Thomas Cranmer, September 1, 1540, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.
reprehensible behaviors rumored to be rampant in England, including in particular the
dissolution of the monasteries, the frustrated prince-bishop wrote:

Certainly [other kingdoms] do not have so much plundering of the goods
of the Church in such manner and number, nor a common punishment for
either sex, nor that which by magic leads all into astonishment and
detestation, nor so many wives and so many repudiations against all laws
human and divine, all of which are doubtful in my view, regardless of how
they may be scattered everywhere among the common people or held as
truth.\textsuperscript{37}

In his view, England had become unruly, immoral, and dangerous, and Cranmer was
part of the problem. Indeed according to Dantiscus, even the most erudite and well-
meaning men could not be trusted to live well in or benefit from such an environment.

Although Cranmer had not raised religious matters explicitly in his June 1540
letter, some of his word choices had incited Dantiscus and drew a fiery, reactionary,
personal rebuke couched in a broader critique of evangelical and English reform.
Primarily, Cranmer had undersigned as “Thomas, Minister of the Church of Canterbury”
rather than “Archbishop of Canterbury.”\textsuperscript{38} Or according to Dantiscus, “you, when you
would be an archbishop and principal of your king, tediously signed ‘Minister of Your
Church’ ahead of your name.” Apparently, this was a blatant declaration of English
ecclesiastical challenges to Roman authority and hierarchy. Dantiscus thus aggressively
and derisively posited:

Indeed, we who are bishops are all ministers of churches, yet we must not
misuse this title of which Saint Paul made such good use. And indeed, he
who observes this [propriety] is not without ministry, and yet is not being
deprived of his [episcopal] vocation. Here, far off [in Poland], we are
carrying on beneath our Most Christian and Most Dutiful King, like Aulus

\textsuperscript{37} Ioannes Dantiscus to Thomas Cranmer, September 1, 1540, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{38} Thomas Cranmer to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 20, 1540, Lambeth, CIDT&C.
Gellius under Favorinus’ teaching that “we enjoy modern words, and we live by ancient customs,” according to which even you [Cranmer] were not unhappy among us other mortals once.39

Cranmer’s word choice, which Dantiscus read as an insult to both the Roman Church and his own vocation, brought forth a torrent of criticism that eventually touched on numerous topics beyond just the Archbishop’s supposed willful and harmful self-deprecation.

Dantiscus continued with an emotional plea for English rectification, albeit one laced with his own insults to the kingdom’s reformers as well as passive-aggressive prayers for divine intervention. He wrote:

No one considers to be of healthy mind the wicked and violent one who has emerged among you with so many [religious] transformations, whose cruelty so wickedly will grasp so many people, so long as divine wrath proceeds with sluggish step. I eagerly pray that this your richly supplied island, which to me is most dear on account of the great culture secured there and from all of you most dear to me, the Lord God may sustain for a long time, and indeed never exercise. [Your church] is now so distant [from orthodoxy] that I pray for any reversal whatsoever.40

The prince-bishop also found it necessary to renew their long-term debate about clerical celibacy. The harshness of his critique was little masked by his claims of jocularity when he asked whether Cranmer was:

…leading a single life like the Apostle Paul? “With us [Polish clergy] nothing is more pleasant and delightful than a celibate bed. I must have a joke; for while I write this I fancy that I am conversing with you, either at the table, as was our habit, or in a boat on the Danube, to which in former years you have so kindly escorted me when I was leaving Regensburg.”41

39 Ioannes Dantiscus to Thomas Cranmer, September 1, 1540, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.

40 Ioannes Dantiscus to Thomas Cranmer, September 1, 1540, Lidzbark Warmiński, CIDT&C.

41 Ioannes Dantiscus to Thomas Cranmer, September 1, 1540, Lidzbark Warmiński in MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, 73.
Despite his fond memories of their friendship that blossomed in Regensburg, Dantiscus’s letter back to Cranmer in 1540 clearly demonstrated his great disappointment in and lamentation of the religious reform mounting in England, especially that led or embodied by the Archbishop. He found individual reform initiatives to be egregious but also lambasted the cumulative reform of the English Church. And as his earlier exchanges with Piotr Tomicki revealed, Dantiscus viewed the acceleration of the English Reformation as a tremendous blow to the Catholic Church in the Baltic region and overall. Therefore it was a threat to his corner of Christendom as well. Cranmer never responded to Dantiscus’s 1540 letter, and so their direct relationship seemingly ended that autumn. The prince-bishop continued, however, to monitor English reform and evaluate its threat level regarding his own work in Prussia.

Later exchanges between Dantiscus and other colleagues abroad, in particular Cornelis de Schepper, even yielded some optimism about the Church in England. In 1545, Schepper personally observed the persistence of Catholic theology and worship, even as the Church of England had severed itself from Rome and King Henry’s advisors—Cranmer especially—pushed for more evangelical reform. He described at length to Dantiscus the situation in England, highlighting the laudable actors and their contributions. Schepper wrote:

Indeed living on the northern shores there is Cuthbert Tunstall, formerly [Bishop] of London but now Bishop of Durham, a man of venerable life through his great age, erudition, and sanctity, but who conducts himself outside of the royal court and does not, or so I hear, have any exchange with [heretics]. And there also remains Lord Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, a pious man and of the highest authority before His Royal Majesty…In him, besides the admirable expertise in sacred literature that he brought to bear in profusion against the [heretic] Martin Bucer, there lies the wonderful zeal of our ancient religion, observed by him in this kingdom to such a point that he strengthened His Royal Majesty in this
practice, so that none of the heresy of Zwingli or Oecolampadius—much less the Anabaptists—has crept into this kingdom, and if by chance one should be infected with this contagion, one will be afflicted by extreme punishment without regard to mercy.  

According to Schepper, even within the Church of England there still appeared to be some good Catholics in high places, whose only violations were that they could not prevent Henry’s break with Rome, despite their great effort. Nonetheless, they continued to uphold the ancient doctrines and fight nobly against the weight of the Crown and Church.

In the same letter, Schepper’s description of actual religious practice in England was encouraging but less convincing. He continued:

Wisely and reasonably, thanks to [Gardiner], only the aforementioned [Catholic liturgical] traditions appear to be found in [England], in that the magistrates equip themselves against the common people and with their advantages they prevail, although they have not yet induced an enduring [religious] uniformity. This [orthodoxy] is to such a degree that you would see nothing changed in the ceremonies of the Church. They perform holy prayers of the morning, daytime, evening, and nighttime, as from antiquity; processions even more abundantly than before; meticulous confessions, without which it is not permitted to approach for the Eucharist and such that one who is not confessed by [the local] priest carries a letter of witness.

Apparently the liturgy, the divine office, and the sacraments persisted in England to an acceptable degree, at least in the dioceses led by more loyal prelates. Somewhat disappointed, though, Schepper also admitted that “there are hardly any monks in this kingdom and the Pope is no more than another bishop. In processions, prayers are made in the native language.” Schepper further worried that should royal authorities not regulate religious practice so effectively, and should Henry not be so feared by his

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42 Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, September 1, 1545, London, CIDT&C.
subjects and administrators, both the laity and clergy would embrace heresies quite openly. He advised Dantiscus that the English Reformation, regardless of how conservative or drastic it became going forward, would exacerbate religious conflicts in Northern Europe rather than resolve them.  

Dantiscus was not convinced by Schepper’s optimistic presentation of religiosity in England. He responded quickly and argued that regardless of the aesthetic and theological continuity of certain practices in England, the break with the Pope and the disregard for a centralized Roman authority were egregious violations that undermined the entire legitimacy of the Church of England. In the end Schepper agreed, although it saddened him greatly. Dantiscus did continue to pass on greetings to the admirable bishops Tunstall and Gardiner, and even to his now-estranged friend Cranmer, who even in 1545 had not replied—and in fact never would—to the stinging letter from 1540. Schepper gave Tunstall and Gardiner Dantiscus’s regards but unfortunately did not meet with Cranmer, who according to the diplomat lived an even less agreeable or admirable lifestyle than he had five years earlier.

Of the numerous foreign conflicts over religious reform that Dantiscus monitored and reported on to his royal and ecclesiastical patrons in Poland-Lithuania, the Reformation of the Church of England held special significance for him. From early in his diplomatic career, Dantiscus had built and maintained relationships with prominent Englishmen, and he felt a personal connection to the country. Top-down reform in England began around the issue of King Henry’s marriage and resulted in a direct

43 Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, September 1, 1545, London, CIDT&C.
44 Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 12, 1546, Binche, CIDT&C.
challenge to the Pope’s authority, which for Dantiscus was central to the primacy and orthodoxy of the Catholic Church. English reform also created an obstacle to his friendship with Thomas Cranmer, eventually leading Dantiscus to chastise a fellow prelate whom previously he had respected greatly. Most importantly, though, England was an integral part of a broad but intimate Baltic world that Dantiscus saw as increasingly destabilized and threatened by evangelical reform. His Royal Prussia was another integral part of that world and came under immense pressure as the Baltic principalities one-by-one adopted evangelical Christianity. The survival of the Catholic Church in Prussia required fewer Protestant Baltic states, and Dantiscus had hoped that England would come to his and the Church’s aid, at least indirectly. This example only begins to show how bishop Dantiscus, who concurrently was establishing his own wide-ranging reform program in Royal Prussia and Warmia, meanwhile paid close attention to reform movements across Christendom. It was not merely to keep track of current events. Rather he intended to work with myriad agents to discourage Protestant reform and pursue Catholic reform with broad geopolitical goals in mind, in this particular case to restore the primacy of the Roman Church in the extended Baltic region.

**The Anabaptist Threat**

Another major current within the wider European Reformations that drew Dantiscus’s attention during his episcopacy was Anabaptism. His exposure to Anabaptist reform came both secondhand from his correspondents abroad and through direct contact with the growing number of Anabaptists in Prussia. He also exchanged a series of letters with his royal patrons about the presence of radical reform in general across Poland-Lithuania. During the 1530s and 1540s, he therefore monitored Anabaptism as a transnational threat as well as persecuted its adherents in local
settings. He perceived Anabaptists permeating political and cultural boundaries, violently challenging fundamental Christian doctrines, and undermining the Catholic Church throughout Christendom. In Dantiscus’s view, Anabaptism posed one of the gravest dangers to good Christians and Christian states. Suppressing it both locally and regionally became a vital part of his episcopal reform efforts.

Anabaptism developed as part of what historians have called the radical reformation, which is important context for understanding the significance of Dantiscus’s own reforming activities. The radical reformation was characterized by its overt rebellion against traditional church, state, and local authorities in favor of extreme interpretations of Scripture and subsequently radical religious practices, political ideas, and social organization. It included a broad spectrum of leaders, followers, and communities. It stood in contrast to the magisterial reformations, which included Luther’s, Zwingli’s, and Calvin’s reform movements and were characterized by their varying degrees of respect for traditional structures of authority. The radical reformation began in the 1520s simultaneously in pockets spread across Central Europe. Leaders such as Thomas Müntzer, Andreas Karlstadt, Conrad Grebel, Hans Hut, and Hans Denck led offshoot evangelical movements in Germany and Switzerland that appealed to large numbers of rural and urban Christians and eschewed traditional authorities, sometimes quite violently. During the mid-1520s, the Anabaptists of the Zurich canton would spread and become notorious across Central Europe for a number of their unconventional ideas and actions.⁴⁵

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⁴⁵ The literature on the radical reformation is great, but the works of a few prominent authors have defined and redefined the field over the last several decades. Some longer, foundational works as well as some more recent reevaluations stand out. George Huntston Williams, The Radical Reformation (Philadelphia:
The original Anabaptist communities first coalesced in villages outside of Zurich in the 1520s, as offshoots of Zwingli’s reform movement within the city. Calling themselves the Swiss Brethren, reform leaders encouraged a purely biblical lifestyle, promoted communal property ownership, eschewed the Catholic sacraments, and preached that baptism should only be undertaken by consenting adults. Their practice of re-baptizing willing adult members who already had been christened as infants was the source of the pejorative label “Anabaptists,” applied by their opponents and critics. Multiple groups espousing similar ideas to different degrees sprung up or spread throughout Central Europe during the mid-1520s. Their general repudiation of established political, social, economic, and religious structures drew persecution from various authorities. The composition of the Schleitheim Articles in 1527 gathered many of these groups into closer orbit. Moravia in particular became a center of immigration as persecuted Anabaptists fled oppressors across the continent. Communities developed throughout the Empire, in the Low Countries, and in states to the east such as Poland-Lithuania.  

Catholics and Protestants alike throughout Europe vilified and condemned Anabaptists. On theological grounds, their rejection of traditional sacraments and their

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baptismal practices were unacceptable deviances from orthodoxy for many Christians. More practically, however, some Anabaptists not only rejected the authority of existing governments but declared government itself to be un-Christian. They also challenged the notion of private property. Their beliefs and practices thus threatened Christian and European society altogether. Both Catholic and magisterial Protestant leaders were terrified that Anabaptists would upset permanently the established political and social order, in which these leaders perceived both church and state authorities to be absolutely necessary. The alignment of different “Protestant” groups—not including the Anabaptists—at the Diet of Speyer in 1529, as well as the agreement of Catholics and Protestants at the Diet of Augsburg to combat radical reform, led to the widespread persecution of Anabaptists by church and state authorities beginning in the 1530s and 1540s. As Anabaptist refugees from across the continent sought safer havens, traditionalist Christian leaders both Catholic and Protestant feared that Anabaptist cells would appear in their territories. Dantiscus’s own activities would reflect this fear, condemnation, and persecution.47

Just as Dantiscus had developed a widely-inclusive, critical construction of “Lutheranism” in the 1520s, as discussed in Chapter 2, in the 1530s and 1540s he fostered a similar, highly-polemical construction of “Anabaptism.” During the first decade of the Reformations, he had lumped under the pejorative label “Lutheran” any and all reformers who questioned papal authority, threatened or undermined the priesthood, or disrupted social and political order. After the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, however, the

47 MacCulloch, _The Reformation_, 161-6; Brady, _German Histories_, 201-6; Cameron, _The European Reformation_, 327-36; Clasen, _Anabaptism_, 358-422; Goertz, _The Anabaptists_, 118-31; Haude, “Anabaptism,” 248-50.
label “Lutheran” became associated with a more specific, self-defined Christian sect adhering to particular doctrinal beliefs, mostly as conceived by Melanchthon’s Augsburg Confession. As a bishop in Prussia, Dantiscus also entered into more consistent contact with established Lutheran leaders and communities. They were numerous and influential, as seen in Chapters 5-6, but many of them openly self-identified and were not as disruptive or rebellious as he would have assumed. His experiences in Augsburg and Prussia thus chiseled away at the alien monolith of “Lutherans” that he had begun to construct a decade earlier, even if he continued to view them as a foe. In its place arose the “Anabaptists.” They would assume the role of Dantiscus’s nebulous, pervasive, and threatening Protestant foe for much of his episcopacy, while “Lutherans” became much more familiar and distinguishable.

For bishop Dantiscus, the “Anabaptists” were a large, diverse, and radical group defined by a few common characteristics and representing the most heinous of Christian reformers. As his exchanges will reveal, he and several of his contacts often conflated Zwinglians (Reformed followers of Zwingli), Sacramentarians (a general term for evangelical reformers who denied the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist—often equated with Calvinists), and actual Anabaptists. For him, this conflation was based on their common denial of the Eucharist. Based on that fact and the violence that occasionally resulted from their various reform efforts, he perceived all of them to be radical. He believed that they could suddenly appear anywhere in menacing number, but that they were less identifiable, more clandestine, and much more malicious than their Lutheran cousins. Many of his colleagues’ reports from abroad reinforced these
beliefs. Johannes Cochlaeus of Meißen, who in 1535 would warn Dantiscus about Thomas Cranmer, recognized his Prussian colleague’s scorn for the Reformed and radical Christians alike and blatantly appealed to it. He wrote a dedicatory letter to Dantiscus in which he decried the evangelical reform begun by Martin Luther, but he also grouped together Lutherans, Zwinglians, and Anabaptists as plainly heretical if only for their disregard for the authority of the Pope, never mind their thoughts on the Eucharist. Dantiscus would not have objected.

Anabaptists were not merely a distant, ill-defined threat for Dantiscus, though. Their actual, various reforming activities across Central Europe directly informed his views. The most iconic episode of the Reformations involving Anabaptists, on which Dantiscus fixed a wary eye early in his episcopacy, was the Münster Rebellion of 1534-1535. Protestant beliefs and practices swept through Westphalia in the Holy Roman Empire in early 1533, and shortly thereafter some of the wealthy burghers of the episcopal city of Münster began installing evangelical urban reform. Their success attracted displaced Anabaptists from the Low Countries and other parts of the Empire. Through a series of political reactions to public religious conflicts, these Anabaptists took over several seats on the city council. Eventually they seized enough control to expel the city’s bishop and reform city governance. At first their leader was Bernhard Rothman, and later the tailor Jan of Leiden. Eventually Jan installed a kingship in what he believed to be the New Jerusalem, which the Münsterites had inherited for the

48 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, shortly after July 11, 1534, Lubawa, CIDT&C; Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, December 18, 1534, Lubawa, CIDT&C; Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus & Georg von Baysen, January 2, 1535, Vilnius, CIDT&C; Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 3, 1540, Vilnius, CIDT&C; Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, July 20, 1545, Trent, CIDT&C.

49 Johann Dobneck to Ioannes Dantiscus, April 27, 1534, Dresden, CIDT&C.
coming of the Last Days. The Anabaptists then ruled Münster as a revolutionary kingdom for sixteen months. They expelled dissenters, abolished private property, eliminated all traces of former episcopal governance, implemented forced polygyny, strictly controlled women, and rationed provisions for the greater population. Meanwhile, they resisted a siege from an army led by expelled bishop Franz von Waldeck, who had solicited military contributions from several neighboring principalities, both Protestant and Catholic. In June 1535, though, the ecumenical besiegers broke through Münster’s defenses and occupied the city, levying severe punishments on the rebellion’s orchestrators. This episode terrified religious and secular leaders across Europe, and the Anabaptists’ brief success demanded harsh deterrents for radical reformers in the future.\footnote{MacCulloch, \textit{The Reformation}, 199-206; Brady, \textit{German Histories}, 201-6; Cameron, \textit{The European Reformation}, 331-2; Williams, \textit{The Radical Reformation}, 362-86.}

Already concerned about the threat of Anabaptism and well into suppressing Protestant reform in his own diocese, Dantiscus monitored the situation in Münster through his contacts across Europe. His exchanges revealed mutual disdain for Anabaptists and a tremendous fear of the Münster episode reoccurring elsewhere. They also revealed his lack of effort to distinguish between different radical reform groups, among which the Anabaptists were only one. As early as April 1534, Dantiscus’s colleague Daniel Mauch, a bishop’s secretary in Ulm, reported to him from Hamburg that:

\begin{quote}
On the route we have seen nothing new concerning those people of Münster who, devoted to the sect of the Anabaptists, seized the city this past February by removing and scorning the bishop. Others, for whom this was not agreeable, have fled voluntarily. For those who have remained, all
\end{quote}
possessions were to be divided between the rich and the poor and there was tremendous upheaval in the ranks of the citizens. Their seducer is named Bernard Rothmann, a most wicked man but eloquent and learned enough. Now they are besieged and attacked fiercely by the bishop, who has joined together many generals from Cleves and Gelderland. We hope they will be conquered shortly.\footnote{Daniel Mauch to Ioannes Dantiscus, April 16, 1534, Hamburg, CIDT&C.}

From the outset, Mauch candidly insulted the movement’s leaders and criticized its more outlandish social practices. As a bishop himself, Dantiscus would have sympathized with the deposed Franz von Waldeck and dreaded a similar fate befalling his jurisdiction or capital.

Dantiscus stayed abreast of the rebellion in Münster throughout the entire episode, but the coverage of the event in his correspondence increased substantially during the siege’s final stages in mid-1535. Even with an impending victory for the Catholics and magisterial Protestants, the Anabaptists inspired great fear, particularly of their potential to spread elsewhere. In April, Cochlaeus wrote to him warning that, “There is now much concern about the Anabaptists—no trifling fear—and likewise there will be an enormous severity in punishing them, especially in Lower Germany. They have multiplied far more than we should wish.”\footnote{Johann Dobneck to Ioannes Dantiscus, April 16, 1535, Dresden, CIDT&C.} Six weeks later, a Dutch colleague Adolphus de Scornaco residing in Rome reported to him that, “The citizens of Münster are refusing to surrender, but they are reduced and despairing for their extreme scarcity [of provisions].”\footnote{Adolphus de Scornaco to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 3, 1535, Rome, CIDT&C.} These reports encouraged Dantiscus that there was substantial opposition to the Anabaptists, but they also illustrated the resolve of this radical reform
group and revealed how difficult it would be to expel them should they enter his own territory.

Beyond addressing Dantiscus’s personal concerns about radical reform, such accounts also satisfied his responsibility to report on foreign religious affairs to his royal and ecclesiastical patrons in Poland, and the siege at Münster was of great note. In June 1535, he sent to Piotr Tomicki one of the longest explicit discussions of religious reform of his entire corpus. The focus of this report was the swarm of Anabaptists seemingly sweeping across Northern Europe. Its centerpiece was the Münster episode, which Dantiscus viewed as a tragedy for Christendom and an illustration of the inevitable result of unchecked Protestant reform. Alongside other examples of Anabaptist activity, which are presented below, he recounted the rebellion for Tomicki. He began by introducing its new leader as a man of terrible and destructive influence:

In Münster] there is the [supposed] restorer Jan of Leiden, who proclaimed himself to be king of Israel and the whole world, to be [his Anabaptist supporters’] highest prophet, who became both that and their executioner. Whatever act in their judgment is determined to be worthy of death, it is decided by that same prophet, who himself afflicts the condemned with punishment.

After establishing the fearsome reputation of the rebellion’s leader, Dantiscus detailed what Jan of Leiden had compelled his subjects to do. He portrayed their fate as a great calamity brought about by their overlord’s arrogance, ambition, and ruthlessness.

He continued:

From him it came to pass that the Münster citizens came together to give all their possessions into common [ownership]. Afterwards, in desperation, some men begged the prophet for some of their possessions to be returned to them, so that they would be able to feed their wives and children and protect them from starvation, or [if denied] so that they could send [their families] away from the city to search for provisions elsewhere. To them the prophet claimed that, “the Father commanded that for those
of you who oppose His will, I should cut off your heads,” and he mutilated them on the spot.  

Dantiscus made it clear to Tomicki how frightening and destabilizing he perceived the Anabaptists to be, in terms of both the reform they intended for Christian society and the audacity and violence of their leaders. He explicitly intended this report as a warning.

Further demonstrating his intent to solidify the Anabaptist threat for Tomicki, Dantiscus moderately exaggerated one specific part of his account of the Münster episode: the treatment of women. Although women were controlled strictly, abused, and forced into polygynous relationships during the rebellion, he nonetheless further embellished their plight. He wrote:

Then the prophet assembled the wives of those wretched men [who had been executed], hearing their great wailing, to whom he claimed that “the Father commanded that I ought to marry you to new spouses.” When those weeping [widows] responded, “we do not want other [husbands]; why have you slaughtered us? Return our possessions to us and send us from the city to the free world, for us to seek provisions in another place,” he immediately claimed, “the Father commanded that I slaughter you,” and after binding the miserable wives of those executed men, he cut off their heads. Have you ever heard of such a crime?

Jan of Leiden did indeed force widows, women, and girls into polygynous relationships, claiming that it was for their protection. He also controlled their property. He did not, however, generally execute the ones who resisted, as women had no autonomy or choice anyway. The one example of such brutal and ruthless behavior toward women was when he had one of his own wives beheaded in the marketplace for criticizing his rule.  

Dantiscus either assumed this practice was more widespread or inflated it for

54 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, June 19, 1535, Starogród, CIDT&C.
55 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, June 19, 1535, Starogród, CIDT&C.
56 Williams, The Radical Reformation, 368-81.
dramatic effect. Regardless, he made it plain for Tomicki that the Anabaptists were guilty of unspeakable crimes. According to the well-informed Prussian bishop, this report was only a small glimpse into the chaos and terror that the Anabaptists were instigating and spreading throughout Latin Christendom.  

The eventual destruction of the Anabaptist kingdom in Münster and the punishment of its leaders in summer 1535 was welcome news among Dantiscus’s peers, but it remained a cautionary tale far afield. In August, Cochlaeus declared to Dantiscus that, “The city of Münster, royal court of the Anabaptists, recently has been seized [by its Catholic besiegers]. May God grant that in light of this disaster all of the other cities of Germany are deterred from such wickedness.” Two months later, Cornelis de Schepper reported to the bishop that:

Jan of Leiden, king of the Anabaptists in the city of Münster, has been captured but still lives, and in a sign of victory an iron cage is being prepared for him, in which he will be imprisoned up to his head, and thus from the highest tower he will be exposed still alive, as meat for the ravens and birds in this unnatural cold. And if the extent of a year passes, he will be thickly smeared with honey and exposed to the bees and flies. And lest he advance alone and unaccompanied to Hell, joined to him will be those wicked scoundrels Bernhard Knipperdolling and Bernhard Krechtinck, the princes of [the Anabaptists’] notorious sedition. In time we will arrive in Münster to be spectators [of the proceedings].

Both Schepper and Dantiscus reveled in the fall of Münster and they supported severe punishments for the rebellion’s leaders. Writing to Archbishop Andrzej Krzycki of Gniezno—Primate of Poland—in 1536, Dantiscus explained, “Earlier I wrote to Your  

57 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, June 19, 1535, Starogród, CIDT&C.  
58 Johann Dobneck to Ioannes Dantiscus, August 7, 1535, Meißen, CIDT&C.  
59 Cornelis de Schepper & Godschalk Ericksen to Ioannes Dantiscus, October 27, 1535, Lüneburg, CIDT&C.
Most Reverend Lordship about the king of the Anabaptists, what had been transmitted to me from Vienna by lord de Schepper...Already I have learned that it is settled that the miserable king with all of his prophets has met his end, which he deserved.” The bishop could only hope that a similar event would not occur again or in his own territory.60

Despite their animosity toward Anabaptists of Münster, Dantiscus and his colleagues nevertheless considered it an obligation to bring them back into the fold of the Catholic Church, if possible. In December 1535, Schepper wrote about his visit to Münster that autumn, during which he viewed the fortifications built by the rebels and the cages built to incarcerate the leaders after the bishop’s victory. During his brief sojourn, he attempted to reconvert the surviving rebels Bernhard Knipperdolling and Bernhard Krechtinck prior to their executions.61 They refused to consider such an overture, but Dantiscus still lauded Schepper’s compassionate efforts. He pleaded with Schepper not to be discouraged, as evidently the evil possessing those men was intractable. The bishop wrote, “Satan does not easily relinquish to be separated from himself those men whom once he grasped entirely under his power.”62 For Dantiscus, the Anabaptists were pawns of Satan, whose goal of course was to pull men away from God and destroy Christendom altogether. Even having been vanquished, these men were difficult to redeem.

Following the tumultuous events in Münster, Dantiscus even more attentively monitored the activities of Anabaptists throughout Europe, but one area that concerned

60 Ioannes Dantiscus to Andrzej Krzycki, January 7, 1536, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
61 Cornelis de Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, December 6, 1535, Brussels, CIDT&C.
62 Ioannes Dantiscus to Cornelis De Schepper, February 24, 1536, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
him more than any other was the Low Countries. A number of factors contributed to this focus, but it became an important part of his general approach to suppressing Protestant reform in Central Europe. First, many of his foreign contacts were either from the Low Countries or spent considerable time there in the 1530s and 1540s, so the territory’s conflicts came to the fore of their reports from abroad. Second, there was substantial growth of Anabaptism throughout the Low Countries, which drew the attention of him and his peers for years. Third, there were strong commercial and social connections between the Low Countries and Prussia throughout the early modern period, including a heavy presence of Dutch merchants in Gdańsk and a strong knowledge of eastern Baltic societies in the Low Countries. Fourth, Prussia exhibited characteristics similar to those of the Low Countries, including a diverse society supported by commerce and powerful urban centers, a sense of independence within a large composite state, a religiously progressive population ruled from afar by a conservative Catholic prince, and a complex system of disjointed political authorities. The combination of these factors led to waves of Anabaptist refugees fleeing the Low Countries to Prussia during the 1520s and 1530s, as will be discussed further below. This prospect terrified Dantiscus, his fellow Catholic and Lutheran bishops, and royal authorities throughout Poland-Lithuania. When possible, Dantiscus thus intended to

63 Williams, The Radical Reformation, 341-61, 404-16.

stay abreast of the situation in the Low Countries and prevent as much of this migration as he could.\footnote{Williams, \textit{The Radical Reformation}, 404-16.}

Even before the Münster affair had concluded, news of struggles with Anabaptists in the Low Countries inundated Dantiscus. In June 1535, his Dutch colleague Scornaco wrote to him:

The governor of Frisia recently enclosed in a blockade, captured with a violent hand, and annihilated with an avenger’s sword all of 600 Anabaptists, who in this same part of Frisia had seized and fortified a monastery.

Not eight days later, in Amsterdam, the most fortified town in Holland, by night those same Anabaptists violently seized the town hall and killed all the guards and the consuls serving watch and killed the Burgermeister; but immediately with the [counter-]attack of many good Christians, [the Anabaptists] were all destroyed; if the Anabaptists had not hastened too much in the execution of their crime, or had waited for one hour, or had used as accomplices the 800 men who [earlier] had killed all of those remaining [in the monastery], by their strength they would have seized the whole town; but the omnipotent and eternal God provided for us.\footnote{Adolphus de Scornaco to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 3, 1535, Rome, CIDT&C.}

Dantiscus received similar reports from other contacts at around the same time, and the news of these violent events at the hands of seemingly anarchist Anabaptist groups horrified the bishop.\footnote{Dantiscus also discussed similar issues with Gemma Frisius of Leuven at around the same time. Gemma Frisius to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 13, 1535, Leuven, CIDT&C.}

Compelled to prepare his own diocese, Prussia, and Poland-Lithuania for similar uprisings, Dantiscus turned around and reported on these same incidents to the royal court. As introduced at the beginning of this chapter, he vividly described the events and
even embellished the accounts for Piotr Tomicki. In a long passage, he recounted the uprising in Amsterdam:

Recently I received further horrifying news about the Anabaptists, [that same group that] has taken the city of Münster in Westphalia. In Amsterdam, the principal city of Holland, this demonic and stupid sect has infected no small number who preserve themselves in secret in that place and for now fear to emit their venom in public. Recently these same [adherents], who drive to markets in neighboring towns where dwell fellow conspirators, under twilight took into their houses in the city 150 audacious and hardy men from those towns, before the gates of the city were closed, none of whom they did not trust [as fellow Anabaptists]. The men marched out armed in the middle of the night, leaving their native confederates in their homes, so that they could hurry vigorously to the town hall for the first sounding of the bell; after first slaughtering the guards and sentries of the city and shattering the bars of the double doors to the town hall by force, [the raiders] gathered inside; while torturing the lesser [administrators] who had been stationed for the defense of the town hall, immediately they went to the windows and [opened them] and hurled out frightful sounds together with the noises of the torture devices and the booming of the public bell. Against this cacophony and persisting through this same commotion, the proconsul—an energetic man, prudent and industrious—after calling together some elites and a great number of citizens, gained the market square and beset the gates of the town hall; meanwhile the dregs of the [sympathetic] commoners, who were aware of the conspiracy and had hastened to the sound of the bell, seeing and recognizing themselves to be unequal to the strength of the [loyal] citizens, withdrew from the doorstep and in that way concealed themselves lest they be recognized. Therefore I call them the dregs, for no one of this sect is affected or united, and they are most destitute of all things and greedy for plunder, those who are unwilling to work with their hands, who by birth are wicked, insolvent, spendthrift, and licking. Consequently the proconsul, along with the citizens who roused by the sound of the bell had flocked in great multitude, assaulted the town hall and conducted their great schemes, all to provide for its recovery; the Anabaptists were defending themselves from the town hall in final desperation, hurling spears and throwing stones in their attack; when this combat had prolonged itself up until daybreak, and nothing was able to be accomplished through words or negotiations extended to the besieged, the people gathered to attack in even more earnest, and with greater torment sounding from the town hall they destroyed part of it; with this done, men burst by force in upon the blockaded [raiders] and captured most of them alive, after which they afflicted the several who had been preserved alive with various tortures, and from them extorted the names of the other conspirators. And thus, by the grace of God, this matter ended happily on behalf of our religion.
Because if these wretched and insane [Anabaptists] had achieved victory in that rich and distinguished city, it would not be difficult to reason what [tragedy] would have followed [there and elsewhere].

Dantiscus also relayed the account—again embellished and lengthened—of the monastery in Frisia being seized and occupied:

Another 800 of the same Anabaptists occupied a monastery or abbey in the region of the Belgians, which they intercepted well defended and abundant in all provisions and overran in great cruelty. As prince of this territory, Lord Georgius Schenck—in Frisia a man most skillful in matters of war and known by me to be of the highest degree—was sent by the Emperor to assault this location. After not a long siege he seized the wretched raiders by force and not one of them was left standing in the place. The Bishop of Münster allowed many to be afflicted with torture and not a few of them became informants. From them many things were recorded, and alongside myself I should persuade Your Most Reverend Lordship to hear many of them directly.

The bishop’s own words plainly reveal the harsh judgment, vitriol, and fear of the Anabaptists that he willingly fostered and attempted to pass along to his patrons in an effort to prevent the sect from being allowed to grow in Prussian and Polish lands. His animosity was based on religious, social, and political criticism, all of which informed his approaches to convincing others of the Anabaptists’ menace. For him, these “dregs of the commoners,” these “wretched and insane men,” these “wretched raiders,” together constituted a “demonic and stupid sect” that “emitted venom” and brought only tragedy everywhere it spread.\(^{68}\) The principal source of this threat for Prussia continued to be the Low Countries, and Dantiscus would remain vigilant.

Through the years, Dantiscus and his correspondents did discuss some of the nuances between different evangelical reform groups in the Low Countries, but they consistently lumped various reformers together and identified them as radical, led by the

\(^{68}\) Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, June 19, 1535, Starogród, CIDT&C.
Anabaptists. The clearest example of this took place in the mid-1540s in an exchange with Schepper. In 1545, the imperial diplomat wrote to discuss the great crisis of religion that he was observing in the Low Countries, in which Poland was actually integral. He began by describing his foremost concern—the success of Jan Łaski, the famous Polish reformer who had established a Reformed community in East Frisia under the protection of Anna von Oldenburg. Schepper decried Łaski’s followers “crawling away” from the Catholic Church:

…the provinces neighboring these regions begin to believe nothing after such a long separation [from the true faith]. Under Jan Łaski’s command the Mass has been abolished along with the rest of our sacred observances, although we on the other side of the Ems [River] cry out in protest and admonish the men of that province; on this matter the law of the Emperor and [Emperor Charles] himself agree, which is evident to the majority of us, that [the reformers] should cease this madness. How could one man [Łaski] so bewitch an entire region?  

Again the primary offense for Schepper, and through him Dantiscus, was the reformers’ abolition of the Mass and the sacraments, which made Łaski’s Reformed Christians appear as bad as the radicals. Schepper also found the continued success of the reformers to be bewildering. It seemed to progress despite the tremendous weight of their opposition in the Low Countries, which included especially imperial authorities.

Schepper then expanded his report explicitly to compare the Reformed and radical Christian leaders and communities that he had observed. He admitted that they were distinct but ultimately determined that worrying about their differences or looking for redeeming qualities was a futile exercise. He wrote:

Clearly heresy has been produced in this place to bring forth not just one evil but also many others, for example for Łaski there is a battle with

69 Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, July 17, 1545, Harderwijk, CIDT&C.
Menno Simons of Frisia, and between them and David Joris of Holland, another [proponent] of the wickedest and most pestilential doctrine; but among these masters there is great disagreement. Simons and Joris are converging in Anabaptism and by embracing it together they impose it here, yet they disagree on many things, for Joris calls himself the third [King] David and the savior promised by Scriptures and [claims that] the Scriptures and all future burdens will be extinguished in himself. On the contrary, Menno dwells in Scripture while the irreverent one proclaims himself to be David, but due to all of [Menno’s] foulness and detestations he in no way leads a better life.

For Schepper and Dantiscus, these men were corrupting Christendom; thus their differences of opinion on theology were irrelevant. Their common and cumulative effect was what threatened Christian society and the Catholic Church, and they merited persecution. Schepper continued:

How greatly and zealously they should be sought by us for an appropriate punishment, by no means easily I would say, as truly no diligence and no proclamation would be useful. Their many disciples are intended to be amazed by their magic, to plunder our sacred shrines, to lead a common life, to elect a magistrate among themselves, to assume the power of life and death for themselves, to move all stones for the many [followers] they are summoning into comradeship-in-arms, by which enhanced power they are finally able to loose and draw their sword (by which they imagine to subjugate the whole world for themselves). They are rapidly adding many [followers] from far off and from particular [places already] captured by us; a deserved punishment should be afflicted through a thousand tortures, lest the hydra that we seem to be fighting return the fury in another way.

Here Schepper stated in plain terms why most Christians, including himself and Dantiscus, were terrified by the spread of Anabaptism and radical reform, and in this case also Reformed Christianity. They expected the Anabaptists to trick people into discipleship, undermine existing authority structures, and wage war—literally—against good Christians and Christian society. This was heresy leading to treason leading to revolution, and this “hydra” would only grow unless it was destroyed and discouraged
completely.\textsuperscript{70} This threat was what Dantiscus desperately wanted to keep out of Prussia, but by the mid-1540s his outlook was not good.

Anabaptism had begun to arrive in Prussia and Poland-Lithuania in the late 1520s via the very channels that Dantiscus increasingly feared a decade later. Many of the region’s first Anabaptists were Dutch and arrived there as refugees from persecution in the Low Countries, but they also came from German lands and Silesia. The full spectrum of Anabaptism was represented among these migrants: violent revolutionaries, sacramentarians, spiritualists, Mennonites, and even early antitrinitarians. At first, they settled primarily in the Prussian Hanseatic cities of Gdańsk, Elbląg, and Toruń, but ultimately they spread through rural and urban communities all along the Vistula River from the Baltic coast up to Toruń and the borders of Greater Poland. Beyond Royal Prussia, many Anabaptists also answered Duke Albrecht’s advertisements for evangelical ministers after he made Ducal Prussia Lutheran in 1525. He rarely tolerated sacramentarianism in his territory, but his search for preachers attracted numerous Anabaptists who spread and strengthened these growing Prussian communities. In the early 1530s, Anabaptists in Prussia drew concern and repressive edicts from both King Sigismund and Prince-Bishop Mauritius Ferber of Warmia. Dantiscus complied with these edicts as bishop of Chełmno and indeed faced the brunt of this Anabaptist immigration: his first diocese—Chełmno Land—bordered half of the affected stretch of the Vistula. Royal and ecclesiastical leaders, however, simultaneously permitted toleration of and even invitation to some of these refugees, in particular Mennonites. Migrants from the Low Countries greatly benefited the Prussian

\textsuperscript{70} Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, July 17, 1545, Harderwijk, CIDT&C.
economy and contributed valuable knowledge about maximizing the productive capacity of delta lowlands. Therefore during the 1530s and 1540s, Anabaptists in Prussia actually multiplied and diversified, especially influencing urban reform in towns such as Gdańsk, Elbląg, and Königsberg.\textsuperscript{71}

Dantiscus’s attention to Anabaptism domestically began early in his episcopacy, carried through to its end, and often pertained to all of Prussian and Polish territory, not merely his own ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Anabaptists became a leading target of his wide-ranging reform program as he worked to purge all evangelical reform from Prussia. In July 1534, he wrote to Piotr Tomicki about the obstacles to suppressing such radical reform in Gdańsk—outside of his own jurisdiction—in particular the need for King Sigismund to continue royal efforts to outlaw Protestant beliefs and practices there. The growth of Anabaptism among susceptible populations was a primary concern. The bishop shared his hope that “there be made [another] public edict [against such heresies], lest public professors of that [Lutheran] sect, or even Anabaptists or other men of that sort, be permitted to abide in the city as citizens or be received by its actual citizens.”\textsuperscript{72} Only five months later, Dantiscus appeared even more desperate, but he had acquired a lay of the land regarding the influx of Anabaptists to Prussia. He wrote to Tomicki again in December:


\textsuperscript{72} Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, shortly after July 11, 1534, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
Here we have begun to hear about Anabaptists and Zwinglians, who attribute nothing to the sacrament of the Eucharist and who even now pass and reside among us; they are certainly within the realm of Duke Albrecht and among his leading advisors. Men of these sects are coming to this region, to Gdańsk and to Königsberg, and so many infected men, who were driven out and banished from Lower Germany and other regions, will also infect us, unless some severe remedy should be employed according to the authority of His Most Fair Royal Majesty, or “this latest error will be worse than the first.”73 We are falling into a dangerous time; may God be our helper and have mercy on us.74

Again Dantiscus’s incredulity at these reformers’ rejection of the Eucharist stands out. For him, it was the most important characteristic for determining how radical and dangerous a Protestant group was. He also displayed accurate knowledge of the progress of Anabaptist immigration—both the migrants’ origins and where they were settling in Prussia. This would be critical to his wider efforts to eradicate Protestant reform, particularly reform enacted by sacramentarians.

Already considering further decrees against Protestants and Anabaptists,75 King Sigismund responded directly to Dantiscus about this issue, and he offered encouragement and enablement. The King wrote:

We wish in our present authority, for which you yourself have been an advisor, that in the upcoming seasons and years you should restrain and prevent [these heresies] through a public edict and under heavy punishment, lest those public professors of the Lutheran or Anabaptist sect, or another sort of men or those imitating new sects, dare to remain in our city of Gdańsk as citizens; on the contrary, in no way should they be permitted by the consuls to dwell in that place. Let all of these restrictions, as well as others given by us, be diligently preserved and observed hereafter in future times; Your Strenuousness will do this work with zeal,

73 Mt 27:64
74 Ioannes Dantiscus to Piotr Tomicki, December 18, 1534, Lubawa, CIDT&C.
75 Williams, The Radical Reformation, 404-16; Williams, “Anabaptism and Spiritualism,” 222-7.
as confirmed by these firmer instructions, and will attend to accomplishing these ends. Let it be done in accordance with your office and our grace.\(^7\)

Sigismund identified all of these Protestant groups as heretics and commanded that they not become established or accepted as citizens within royal territory, even semi-independent Gdańsk. He instructed Dantiscus to prevent their growth by various means under royal authority. As Anabaptists from around Europe spread through the already precarious religious environment in Prussia, Dantiscus would take advantage of this leeway in identifying and pursuing them, especially after his ascension to Warmia in 1537. His anti-heresy edicts of 1539 and 1540 were one significant step, followed by his clerical and educational reform as well as his more personal approaches to persecuting Protestant reformers, as described in Chapter 6.

Within this systematic, institutional reform, one of Dantiscus’s main targets in his fight against Anabaptism was a familiar foe—Wilhelm Gnapheus, the headmaster of the gymnasium in Elbląg. After migrating from the Low Countries to be an evangelical minister, Gnapheus steadily revealed sacramentarian beliefs in both his catechetical instruction and his preaching. Nevertheless, he continued to receive support from officials highly placed in Ducal Prussia, including tacitly Duke Albrecht. His teachings against the Eucharist, however, drew widespread criticism from more conservative Christians—both Catholic and Protestant.\(^7\) In a letter written to Dantiscus in 1539, Gnapheus defended himself against his critics, arguing that:

> They consider the Gospels in their preaching, and they spread the Gospels by hand, but none of them put sense to the test or put forth proof.

\(^{76}\) Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus & Georg von Baysen, January 2, 1535, Vilnius, CIDT&C.  
I am compelled to refuse to be called a fanatic and Anabaptist, accusations that on the contrary are merely chatter, with which they unjustly and at length endeavor to twist into me, and not one example of which I can reasonably inform, unless through [the biases of the Catholic] religion the patience of your ears has demeaned its rank [by listening to] these trifles.78

Dantiscus, of course, banished Gnapheus from Warmia and Royal Prussia for his beliefs and practices under the accusation of Anabaptism. The minister fled to Ducal Prussia, whence eventually even Albrecht banished him for sacramentarianism.79

While Dantiscus spearheaded Catholic reform and counter-reform in Prussia on behalf of his royal and ecclesiastical patrons in Poland-Lithuania, Anabaptism remained a leading threat both in his eyes and the eyes of his superiors. Thus he was expected to inform them of his progress combatting the movement. Weighing in on the Gnapheus conflict, King Sigismund reemphasized to Dantiscus the dangers posed by radical reform and reformers in Prussia, including especially Anabaptism and sacramentarianism. He informed his Prussian bishop:

Your Paternity remembered that we do not know enough about the aforementioned school teacher [Gnapheus] of Elbląg, in which our citizens pertain to the diocese of Your Paternity; we understand him to be not even Lutheran but rather, which must be detested to an even great extent, to be a sacramentarian and Anabaptist and to be in great conflict with other scholars. It is the duty of Your Paternity to provide for resolving this matter, lest the place of such a man in the diocese become too great.80

Sigismund, Tomicki, and Dantiscus all vilified evangelical reform as heresy, but they singled out Anabaptism, in particular sacramentarian Anabaptism, for special attention

78 Gulielmus Gnapheus to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 23, 1539, Elbląg, CIDT&C.


80 Sigismund I Jagiellon to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 3, 1540, Vilnius, CIDT&C.
and eradication. As with his wider reform program, it is difficult to assess how successful Dantiscus was in actually prosecuting or discouraging Anabaptists in Prussia. They likely were far less numerous in Warmia than in Chełmno Land, but they nonetheless consistently were a target of his reform efforts and persecutions. Regardless, it is evident that their population in Prussia continued to grow during Dantiscus’s episcopacy, if only through immigration, despite his efforts.81

As he monitored the progress of evangelical reform abroad and contested it in Prussia, especially radical reform and in particular Anabaptism, Dantiscus later drew praise from his Catholic colleagues and further ensconced himself in broader conversations about reform. In the mid-1540s, Schepper encouraged him to continue fighting religious dissent as a leader in the field, writing, “Lest this plague of varying opinions crawl farther away from the sacred faith, it is most sound for there to be another [counter-reformer] pressing on with all force, which we altogether hope to come about in your work and that of men like you.”82 Olaus Magnus, the Archbishop of Uppsala living in exile in Rome, provided him with an optimistic report about the treatment of Anabaptists, as well as Reformed Christians, from the opening phase of the Council of Trent. He wrote, “It was relayed [to Trent] from Worms that a meeting is to be assembled by Martin Luther himself within a month, in order to excommunicate and condemn sacramentarians, Zwinglians, and Anabaptists, just as Beelzebub in his power cast out the demons.”83 Looking for positive signs in the English Reformation,

81 Williams, The Radical Reformation, 404-16; Williams, “Anabaptism and Spiritualism,” 222-7.
82 Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, July 17, 1545, Harderwijk, CIDT&C.
83 Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, July 20, 1545, Trent, CIDT&C.
Schepper praised the conservative Bishop of Winchester Stephen Gardiner for convincing King Henry VIII to suppress staunchly any incursion by Zwinglians or Anabaptists. Six months later, he returned to the topic of radical and Reformed Christians accumulating in the Low Countries. He agreed with Dantiscus’s vilification of the transplanted reformer Jan Łaski and described several noblemen who chose to be burned alive rather than renounce the Anabaptist teachings of Menno Simons. He even explicitly warned Dantiscus that many “apostates,” particularly Anabaptist ones, were fleeing oppression in the Low Countries and Lower Germany and traveling directly to Prussia. There they took advantage of the leniency of Duke Albrecht, whom Schepper called “a snake raised by the Poles who endangered Catholic and German nobility abroad.”

Whereas Dantiscus mostly speculated about the impact of the English Reformation on Christianity in and beyond his ecclesiastical jurisdiction, Anabaptism posed a direct transnational threat that he monitored abroad and personally confronted in Prussia and Poland-Lithuania. During the 1530s, he observed and recorded how Anabaptist reform diversified and spread violently across Central Europe, and then he witnessed how it reached deeply into Prussia and sprung influential Protestant leaders throughout the region. Along with his royal and ecclesiastical patrons, his colleagues in Prussia, and his contacts abroad, Dantiscus dreaded the growth of Anabaptism for both

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84 Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, September 1, 1545, London, CIDT&C.
85 Cornelis de Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 12, 1546, Binche, CIDT&C; Jerzy Axer and Anna Skolimowska, eds. Ioannes Dantiscus’s correspondence with Cornelis De Schepper (Warsaw: Wydział Artes Liberales, 2015), vol. 2 of Amicorum sermones mutui Corpus, part II of Epistolarm Ioannis Dantisci, 518.
its destructive destabilization of political order and its heretical denial of the Eucharist, for which he lumped Anabaptists together with all Reformed Christians. This sacramentarian block for Dantiscus, as well as for his superiors, represented the worst of Protestant reform and an inexcusable, evil departure from orthodoxy. Thus, accused Anabaptists and sacramentarians in Prussia became a special target of his reform program and a focus of his persecutions, but he acted in concert with his extensive knowledge of Anabaptist reform from across Central Europe. Dantiscus’s reforming and counter-reforming activities concerning Anabaptism became a crucial link between religious reform in Prussia and the wider Reformations, both integrating the small territory more intricately into Latin Christendom and bringing diverse notions of reform from across the continent into his small realm.

Catholic Reform via Council

While Dantiscus was monitoring various Protestant reform movements abroad throughout his episcopacy, he also remained engaged with transnational efforts to reform the Catholic Church from within. As a result, he participated actively in widespread Catholic reform both as a benefactor and a beneficiary, without ever leaving Prussia. For Dantiscus and many of his peers, the most effective way to respond to Protestantism, achieve substantial reform within the Catholic Church, and reunite all Christians seemed to be convoking an ecumenical council, which would become a leading cause in his correspondence. Internal calls for a council during the early Reformations ultimately culminated with the Council of Trent, which the Papacy convened first in 1545. Although Dantiscus—as well as most of his Polish and imperial colleagues—did not attend the council during its first phase (1545-1547), his rich correspondence with notable attendee and fellow prelate Archbishop Olaus Magnus of
Uppsala demonstrates how informed, connected, and influential he was in its broader environment. Their exchanges also reveal important dimensions of religious reform in the Baltic region and the great significance of Poland-Lithuania and Prussia to the stability of the Catholic Church universally, at least in the eyes of Catholic prelates in Central Europe.

Convening an ecumenical council was not an easy task in the mid-sixteenth century, and church leaders debated the likelihood that it would happen at all, despite their general agreement on its necessity and their enthusiasm for potential determinations. As Catholic authorities struggled to contest Protestant reform across Europe and sought a more systematic approach to healing the rifts among Christians, disagreements over the timing, location, participants, authorities, topics, and general politics of a council prevented successful proposals for decades.86 A number of Dantiscus’s diplomatic colleagues, however, were optimistic about conciliar efforts. In spring 1535, the French diplomat Claude Dodieu de Vély wrote to Dantiscus from Barcelona and predicted that the two friends would meet again soon under the auspices of an impending council, which Christendom’s most influential bishops should attend.87 Several months later, Dodieu sent another letter in which he lamented the bishop’s absence from Italy and posited that influential churchmen must dedicate themselves to rebuilding the Church cooperatively for the good of Christendom. Such churchmen must come from many kingdoms and be willing to make great personal sacrifices.88


87 Claude Dodieu du Vély to Ioannes Dantiscus, April 3-May 5, 1535, Barcelona, CIDT&C.

88 Claude Dodieu du Vély to Ioannes Dantiscus, December 5, 1535, Naples, CIDT&C.
de Schepper also wrote to Dantiscus about the potential for a council—either papal or imperial—to achieve peaceful resolutions to Christian schisms.\textsuperscript{89} Their exchanges about modern religious challenges were not always idealistic, however. Schepper deplored the seemingly insurmountable threats facing Christendom, many of them from within the Church. He especially chastised the Christians of Denmark, the Low Countries, and German lands, most of whom it seemed were intent on destroying the Roman Church and having all Christians fend for themselves.\textsuperscript{90}

Dantiscus also discussed a potential ecumenical council with fellow clergymen abroad. In 1537, he wrote to Prussian canon Dietrich von Rheden in Rome about current challenges facing the Church and the urgent need for a council:

All is tranquil with us, in accordance with Divine Grace, except that Lutheranism is supported tenaciously among our neighbors, but defeat has not yet taken hold in this matter. If a council had been or were to be assembled before long, we would be able to hope for something good, but without it – I fear that this plague and monstrous scourge will advance much further.\textsuperscript{91}

Rheden could not offer much immediate consolation, but commiserated about how important a council would be for the general health of Christendom.\textsuperscript{92} Archbishop Johannes Magnus of Uppsala informed Dantiscus about conciliar initiatives being discussed in Rome. First there must be peace in Italy between the princes and armies

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{89} Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, September 16, 1535, Bruges, CIDT&C.
  \item \textsuperscript{90} Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, September 13, 1536, Brussels, CIDT&C.
  \item \textsuperscript{91} Ioannes Dantiscus to Dietrich von Rheden, October 1, 1537, Grudziądz, CIDT&C. In this letter, Dantiscus also included disturbing news about the treatment of Catholic bishops and priests in Scandinavia, which he had learned through his Swedish contacts Johannes and Olaus Magnus, who had been living primarily in Gdańsk for the past decade, as described below.
  \item \textsuperscript{92} Dietrich von Rheden to Ioannes Dantiscus, January 28, 1538, Rome, CIDT&C.
\end{itemize}
of the Habsburg and Valois dynasties. Only then could Church leaders address reform more effectively. Magnus was not optimistic, though:

> Just as Your Most Reverend Lordship has heard nothing gladly about any good hope for restoring our most sacred Christian religion, thus I have written nothing gladly, for thus far matters stand very much against us. The urgent rebuilding of this our collapsed religion is obstructed by such great faults [of men], as I should have revealed sufficiently, unless Your Most Reverend Lordship understands [the matter] better by reason of your own prudence.

Magnus and his younger brother—and later successor—Olaus had been exiled from Sweden following the Lutheran reformation there led by King Gustav Vasa. They had extraordinary reason to be discouraged about countering Protestant reform systematically, but they would dedicate their lives to that cause, as discussed further below.

When an ecclesiastical council seemed out of reach, Dantiscus and his peers also looked to imperial authorities for support, initiative, or resolution. In particular, Schepper expected his friend to attend the theological colloquy at the Diet of Regensburg in 1541 due to the bishop’s expertise in ecclesiastical and imperial politics, familiarity with leading reformers, and dedication to healing Christendom’s rifts. Schepper acknowledged that the journey would be a hassle, but he argued that the prelate’s participation and dialogue with reformers in Regensburg was exactly what Christendom needed:

93 Ioannes Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, January 28, 1538, Rome, CIDT&C.
94 Ioannes Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, December 20, 1538, Venice, CIDT&C.
I would bear your objections easily, and I know that you would be angry only light-heartedly. Nevertheless, I would say what I feel, with distant affections: if there must be [deliberations on reform] for the cause of a solid and firm religion, [they] ought to be led by someone like you. That is to say: what other men, who move forward so persistently, obstinately, and perseveringly as bound by their own personal passions, would better put to the test the universal republic and from it procure such concessions? What you should be able to procure appeared right before my eyes as I was writing to you, while I myself could not imagine what should happen in the face of so many other men’s idleness and ignorance of things.\(^{96}\)

Unfortunately, Dantiscus remained in Prussia, but as Schepper expected the Colloquy of Regensburg became a critical moment in the Reformations. A number of rather conciliatory representatives of the Catholic Church, the Empire, and Protestant groups met at the colloquy, and most held genuine desires to reunite western Christians through theological and practical negotiations. The leaders even came to a preliminary agreement on the doctrine of justification, but eventually they realized that their differences of opinion on the Eucharist, penance, and the Pope were irreconcilable, and the colloquy devolved into conflict. This was a disaster for political relations in the Empire and the Italian states, and as a result the contests between Catholics and Protestants in Central Europe intensified for years.\(^{97}\)

The culmination of this conciliar push and the central pillar of early modern Catholic reform would come a few years later, toward the end of Dantiscus’s own life, when Pope Paul III finally managed to convene the Council of Trent. Since Paul’s election in 1534, calling an ecumenical council to address both necessary reform within the Church and the treatment of Protestants had been a priority for the Papacy and

\(^{96}\) Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, August 18, 1540, Vienna, CIDT&C.

much of the Catholic episcopacy. Various political, military, and diplomatic obstacles, however, delayed any serious attempts for almost a decade. Finally in spring 1542, the Pope convoked the long-awaited general council to be opened in Trent, an Italian city within the southern reaches of the Holy Roman Empire. Unfortunately, another outbreak of the Italian Wars delayed its opening for more than three years until December 1545. Even then, however, its organization, participation, procedure, deliberations, and determinations remained highly contentious.

Even before the Council of Trent opened, it was clear that the priorities of many participants and onlookers were at odds with each other and may preclude productive discussions. Most intense was the conflict between imperial and papal interests. Emperor Charles V wanted to focus first on matters of behavior and discipline in order to entice Protestant reformers to participate, while Pope Paul III wanted to clarify Catholic doctrine in order to lay solid theological foundations for any practical reform. As with the location of the council itself—a town in the Italian-German borderlands—leaders compromised and agreed to alternate topics of doctrine and reform. Still, political and religious doubts discouraged many prelates and envoys from attending the opening sessions, leading to disappointing attendance with an over-representative contingent from Southern Europe and hardly any participants from Northern and Central Europe. Of the four cardinals, four archbishops, twenty-one bishops, and five mendicant superior generals present at the council’s opening, only one hailed from German lands and none from Poland-Lithuania or Prussia. Olaus Magnus represented Uppsala, but he served only in exile from Lutheran Sweden, which he had not visited in almost two

98 O’Malley, Trent, 49-76.
decades. From the beginning of the council, royal and ecclesiastical leaders from Poland—as well as many other kingdoms—harbored substantial doubts about its goals and potential for solving Christendom’s problems. It opened, nonetheless, on 13 December 1545—*Gaudete* Sunday—and its first phase would last until 1547, when a severe plague scare forces its relocation and ultimately suspension for several years.\(^99\)

The Council of Trent garnered some support among Dantiscus’s correspondents even during its contested proceedings. In January 1546, Chełmno clergyman Samson Worein passed on a detailed report about the different states and regions represented there, about which he wanted to ensure that Dantiscus was aware.\(^100\) Two months later, Cornelis de Schepper updated Dantiscus from London with what information he had gathered at the English court about Trent, which according to him, in its early stages:

> …very happily is succeeding beyond its expectations. There is an inquiry—initially not doctrinal—about how the behaviors of the Church ought to be reformed. On both sides there is great argument and what can be done has been brought to bear; nevertheless these behaviors, which have grown accustomed to the worst [condition] even if [led by] good and honest men, will suffer to be reformed only with great difficulty.

This report would have pleased Dantiscus, whose concerns lay overwhelmingly with administrative and behavioral issues rather than doctrinal issues, as made evident by his reform program described in Chapter 6 and his myriad epistolary exchanges about reform topics. Schepper also displayed a perspective on episcopal authority and


\(^100\) Samson Worein to Ioannes Dantiscus, January 12, 1546, Toruń, CIDT&C.
leadership that certainly would have pleased his Prussian friend. The Dutchman continued:

Meanwhile, do we poor laymen, who depend on you prelates, who are bound to lean on sail and oar, in order for these things to be done cast the anchor of our hope on these [conciliar] gains? God must be worshipped in this way, so that He inspires in you [bishops] a mind for commanding [the means of] salvation, while in us [laymen] as well as in you [clergy] a mind for submitting to [the means of] salvation through your teachings.\textsuperscript{101}

Schepper, who typically wrote quite candidly to Dantiscus, here posited that the prelacy must discern God’s intended doctrine and practice, and the laity must abide. Thus, a congenial council of bishops was an absolute necessity. Such a claim might have shamed Dantiscus for not attending Trent himself, but he certainly would have supported Schepper’s position. Schepper later prayed, “May the Lord God keep safe and make firm His Church, so that in the end by extinguishing the corrupt doctrines with which it is infected—causing much anguish—it may return to pure and genuine piety with its instigators cleared away.” He was optimistic that toward this end, the Council of Trent would proceed efficaciously.\textsuperscript{102}

Because Dantiscus could not travel to Trent and because no Polish prelate attended the council’s first phase, the prince-bishop very intentionally and closely engaged one of his familiar foreign contacts in order to stay abreast of the council’s proceedings and decisions. This contact was his friend, colleague, and fellow well-traveled humanist-diplomat-bishop Olaus Magnus, the Archbishop-in-exile of Uppsala. The careers of Olaus Magnus and his older brother Johannes—which were very similar

\textsuperscript{101} Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 24, 1546, London, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{102} Cornelis De Schepper to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 12, 1546, Binche, CIDT&C.
to that of Dantiscus himself—constitute a fascinating, compelling, invaluable, albeit entirely underrepresented dimension of the Reformations in Central and Northern Europe. The Magnus brothers had been born in a cathedral town in central Sweden in 1488 and 1490, educated in northern Germany, traveled widely in Central Europe, and spent their robust early careers in the service of the Swedish Church and Crown. They both received strong humanist educations and put their lessons to work in diplomacy, literary activity, and religious reform. They were highly dedicated to upholding, maintaining, and strengthening the authority of the Roman Church, though, so the Lutheran reformation of Sweden in the 1520s under King Gustav Vasa did not bode well for them. While pursuing diplomatic missions abroad, the Swedish royal seizure of Church property and the limbo status of Johannes’s appointment as Archbishop of Uppsala eventually discouraged them from returning at all, and they settled into a life of politically-active permanent exile, initially in Gdańsk beginning in late 1526.103

Already pursuing prolific intellectual, political, and ecclesiastical careers and now residing in Gdańsk, the Magnus brothers quickly attracted Dantiscus’s attention upon his return to Prussia in 1532. They both ceaselessly lobbied papal, imperial, Polish-Lithuanian, and Prussian authorities for support against the Lutheran reform sweeping Sweden and the supposed tyranny of King Gustav. They also worked to combat Protestant reform throughout Christendom, and they frequently traveled south to Rome to discuss reform at the highest levels of the Church. After they left Gdańsk permanently for Italy in 1537, the Magnus brothers and Dantiscus maintained regular

correspondence and remained strong mutual supporters and informants on religious and political issues, especially matters pertaining to Sweden and the Baltic region. When Johannes died in spring 1544, Olaus succeeded him as Archbishop of Uppsala, by that point a mostly symbolic title. Thereafter, Olaus became one of Dantiscus’s closest allies at the papal court, just in time for the opening of the Council of Trent.\footnote{Johannesson, \textit{The Renaissance of the Goths}, 24-140; Magnus, \textit{Description}, xxix-xxxiv. In addition to working tirelessly on Swedish political and religious issues, as well as combatting Protestant reform more broadly, the Magnus brothers earned great renown for their monumental literary compositions about their native Scandinavia. During their exile in Gdansk and thereafter, Johannes wrote his great account of the Swedish people and their kings, \textit{Historia de omnibus Gothorum Sveonumque regibus}, while Olaus wrote his \textit{Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus} (Description of the Northern Peoples) and created his magnificent \textit{Carta Marina}, a remarkable woodcut map of Scandinavia and the surrounding seas, most notable for its extraordinary detail and abundant images of mythical creatures. Edward Lynam, \textit{The CARTA MARINA of Olaus Magnus, Venice 1539 & Rome 1572} (Jenkintown: Tall Tree Library, 1949); Magnus, \textit{Description}; Joseph Nigg, \textit{Sea Monsters: A Voyage around the World’s Most Beguiling Map} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).}

Olaus and his brother were dedicated supporters of papal authority and vigorous opponents of evangelical reform almost from its inception. Olaus himself claimed to have preached incessantly against Lutheran reform from his post at the Great Church in Stockholm from as early as 1520. His diplomatic activity throughout the 1520s and 1530s was focused on securing his brother’s place as Catholic Archbishop of Uppsala and gathering support from Catholic princes with which to pressure King Gustav to eschew evangelical reform and remain Catholic. He even claimed that his incredible \textit{Carta Marina} map was intended to demonstrate to Catholic leaders how much wonderful territory was being lost to Protestantism in Scandinavia.\footnote{Johannesson, \textit{The Renaissance of the Goths}, 23-42; Magnus, \textit{Description}, xxix-xxiv.} Upon succeeding his brother as Archbishop in 1544, though, Olaus’s devotion to securing a Catholic victory over Protestantism became even more pronounced, as Johannes encouraged
even from his deathbed. Thereafter Olaus championed Catholic supremacy and harshly vilified and condemned all religious dissenters, but particularly Lutherans. His disgust with the Protestant Reformations and urgency in countering evangelical reform across Northern Europe leapt from the pages of his subsequent texts and from his rhetoric at the Council of Trent.

Both Magnus and Dantiscus would benefit from their relationship during the council. Magnus had great expectations in Trent and held an honorable place as one of only four archbishops present at its start. The mostly symbolic nature of his episcopacy, however, considering his exile and lack of income, limited his impact. Despite pressing for a solution to the Nordic problem, staunchly supporting Christian unity and liberty through papal authority, and tactfully negotiating with both papal and imperial parties, he was not able to accomplish much personally. One of his most significant roles, though, developed through his relationship with Dantiscus. Through their correspondence, Magnus offered detailed information and supportive representation at the council to the absent prince-bishop, and therefore to the Polish Crown and Church, in exchange for information about where the Polish prelates stood on certain issues. So few representatives from Northern and Central Europe had arrived that Magnus wielded a lead voice speaking on behalf of the Church there. His epistolary exchanges with Dantiscus became paramount. Those exchanges reveal the perspectives of the two

107 Johannesson, The Renaissance of the Goths, 139-63; Magnus, Description, xxxiv-l.
108 Johannesson, The Renaissance of the Goths, 141-9; Magnus, Description, xxxiv-xxxvi.
men, the role that Central European and particularly Baltic states continued to play in negotiations over religious and political reform, and the Christendom-wide resonance of the council’s debates, regardless of geographical representation. They also reveal how attentively Dantiscus monitored Catholic reform through the end of his life.

Archbishop Magnus began reporting to his Prussian friend even before the representatives of Pope Paul III had officially departed Rome for Trent in spring 1545. He was optimistic but wary of the obstacles still facing a successful council. In March, he wrote:

Since at present nothing is being investigated more frequently than a general council, but on the other hand nothing is marked as more uncertain than [a council’s] passing or progress, on that account Your Most Reverend Lordship recently accepted that [such an initiative] must be accomplished by only a few men. Toward this end, on the first Sunday of Lent, with all the bishops of Rome gathered in the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, under pontifical instruction it was related that immediately they should prepare to convene in Trent.

After relaying all of the subsequent and somewhat hectic preparations the cardinals were making, Magnus concluded his letter with a heavy but not unreasonable expectation, “A most happy farewell to Your Most Reverend Paternity, and with this letter received may you visit me in Trent or Venice among the Patriarchy.” Dantiscus in fact would not attend the council, which disappointed his Swedish friend greatly, but their continued exchanges would prove vital to Magnus’s participation in Trent and later in Bologna.\footnote{Johannesson, The Renaissance of the Goths, 144.}

\footnote{Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, March 27, 1545, Rome, CIDT&C.}
Magnus arrived in Trent on 29 May, and soon after he began sending detailed reports to Dantiscus.¹¹² In July, he took the time to describe much of the early preparations and comings and goings, as well as the matters to be deliberated and the severity with which they were being treated. He counted the dozens of legates, learned men, bishops, archbishops, heads of orders, teachers of theology, and even medical doctors, all of whom would gather “because here the [Protestant] affliction, which overpowers their [individual] means and causes public lament for the Church, must be cured.” Despite Magnus’s harsh and vivid condemnation of Protestantism and his dedication to eradicating it, he was aware also of the failings of the Roman Church and open to an ecumenical approach to deliberation, at least theoretically. He continued:

...everyone has been led by the vow that because we all worship one God in genuine unity, a truth shared even with the adversaries of our [Catholic] faith, there should not be any question about the sin of these [Protestant] personalities as long as we all work to reform the religion with equal labor. If [our own] sins should be shown opposite [theirs], no one will dare to cast the first stone.

Humanist criticism of the Church had been a substantial component of Dantiscus’s intellectual career, and so he certainly agreed that Catholics ought to acknowledge their own failings and corruptions and pursue internal reform. That was why the explicit agenda at Council of Trent would be so important. Magnus admitted, though, that even self-awareness, humility, and penitence became competitive among the participating factions in Trent. He wrote, “Nevertheless, we disagree so much that even when we [Catholics] sin we cry out loudly, demanding pardon, where perhaps [the Protestants] rejoice in the wickedest things, boasting about their more distinguished fault.” Such an

environment did not seem conducive to effective reform, but nonetheless Magnus and Dantiscus hoped for constructive progress.\(^{113}\)

Protestants from the Empire especially drew Magnus’s criticism leading up to the council. He emphasized the peril facing Central European states due to rebellious evangelical reformers as well as the centrality of those states to the forthcoming debates. Perhaps he was attempting to inspire Dantiscus to participate more fully or to convince other Polish-Lithuanian and imperial colleagues to do so. Magnus reported:

It was relayed [to Trent] from Worms that a meeting is to be assembled by Martin Luther himself within a month, in order to excommunicate and condemn sacramentarians, Zwinglians, and Anabaptists, just as Beelzebub in his power could cast out other demons. This has incited and at present is inciting Protestants to refuse to acknowledge the Emperor in his rank or name until he permits Lutherans to propagate freely through Catholic society, short of which [the Protestants] will instruct and threaten that no congregation of their followers should recognize him, in order to compel the Emperor himself to declare their confirmation all around. We eagerly hope to learn which, or rather what sort, of solution to this crisis may be achieved. Otherwise, His Imperial Majesty will be compelled to vindicate these most displeasing men by granting leniency from his [normally] pointed strictness, even though he finds nothing in them other than fraud and deceit, and he will discover nothing else even if they wait through ages and the longest eternities. Formerly, Luther called the Emperor “a sack of worms,” (as [Johann] Eck recalled in the response of the Catholic princes at the Diet of Regensburg) with similarly disgraceful names and many other most scandalous accusations. I do not believe His Imperial Majesty in his honor to be able to forget this…”\(^{114}\)

From his own earlier diplomatic travels and experiences, Dantiscus was quite familiar with the circumstances of these sectarian issues and the challenges facing the emperor. He similarly saw evangelical reform as threatening the stability and authority of the Holy Roman Empire and the Church, as described in Chapters 2 and 4. The council’s

\(^{113}\) Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, July 20, 1545, Trent, CIDT&C.

\(^{114}\) Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, July 20, 1545, Trent, CIDT&C.
determinations thus would be a most welcome response, even if religious and secular leaders alike doubted its potential for success.

Later in the summer, Magnus began to discuss the nature and processes of the upcoming deliberations and indeed predicted that Protestants would be disappointed by the council. Both he and Dantiscus favored Catholic positions, but they also desired unity among Christians. Based on the materials and authorities rumored to be in place to underlie the council’s debates, though, Magnus doubted the likelihood of a process or result that would please evangelical reformers. In particular, he questioned the Protestants’ willingness to accept the council’s official selected authorities from the outset. Referencing the texts to be invoked, he wrote to his Prussian friend:

All of these [texts] are received [by us Catholics] with a most burning desire, that through discussion they reveal the truth to the adversaries of our Catholic faith. But I cannot see in what way this path would satisfy [our Protestant adversaries’] desire, seeing that heretics modify themselves with all cunning and sophistry and thus far have hindered such a conference by these means. Indeed at first [those Protestants] attending the debate were most fervent, and now they are much more tepid—totally ironically—lest by this process they are ever led to the uncovered truth…

It did not seem to surprise Magnus or Dantiscus that the Protestants might not submit to the authoritative texts proposed. As a matter of fact, dissention from traditional authorities was the prelates’ main criticism of evangelical reform in the first place. Should the council not bring reconciliation, however, both Magnus and Dantiscus believed that persistent evangelical reform and Protestant organization would require alternative responses in their respective lands and across Christendom.

115 Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, August 1, 1545 or shortly after, Trent, CIDT&C.
Magnus proposed potential severe measures to be taken by Catholic authorities, should the council not be effective in reining in Protestants. His initial suggestion was harsh, but not beyond what either he or Dantiscus considered appropriate or necessary. He wrote, “Perhaps by another path there will be progress, of what kind formerly the most Christian princes demonstrated to their successors by means of severe laws, lest they allow such criminals to live.” Severe laws enforced by strong states might be necessary, and he believed they had worked in the past. He wrote that the whole situation might have been prevented, but that once the Reformations began only a drastic response by Catholic powers would suffice to save Christendom, especially considering the nature of “heretics.” He posited:

If the counselors of His Imperial Majesty would have considered more acutely the book about heretics and Manicheans, about bishops and the clergy, about the highest Trinity and the rest, along with the other infinite laws, then they safely would have avoided these long circuits and would have discovered a bright and all-encompassing truth. It will out that [the Protestants] were able to be led to debate, and thus by reason it will emerge that, just as John Chrysostom said: “heretics are able to be conquered, but they do not acknowledge themselves to be conquered. Therefore they cannot be reconciled.” Rather by many lies and plots they boast themselves as victors, and this is for their own cause…

Should there be no formal reconciliation, Magnus nonetheless remained optimistic about the council’s prospects for reforming and purifying the Church from within. He even referenced other promising reports about counter-reform coming out of Italian states, German lands, the Low Countries, and Poland-Lithuania.\textsuperscript{116} Church officials hoped that such promise would spread to Trent, where on 13 December Magnus

\textsuperscript{116} Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, August 1, 1545 or shortly after, Trent, CIDT&C.
described in great detail for Dantiscus the council’s opening processions and ceremonies.\textsuperscript{117}

Following the council’s official opening, Magnus and Dantiscus exchanged a number of letters discussing its procedures, debates, and determinations over the next few years. Unfortunately, only the letters received by Dantiscus are extant, but they are quite informative regarding the prince-bishop’s likely positions. Magnus’s lengthy letter from June 1546, in particular, provides a wealth of information and perspective. It recounted the council’s momentous fourth session during which actual religious reform came to the fore.\textsuperscript{118} Magnus described in detail some of the official processes, numerous participants, grave matters discussed, and broader impact of those discussions. His topical emphases differed slightly from the emphases of the council session’s speakers and decrees, however, and thus his choices of what to report to Dantiscus are revealing. Specifically, he tailored his report to appeal to Dantiscus’s own interests, especially regarding the institutional reform of the prince-bishop’s diocese in Prussia. Their exchange therefore constitutes an example of how two prelates from an underrepresented part of Christendom attempted to apply broad Catholic reform efforts to their own local circumstances and vice versa. The variety, nuance, and intentionality

\textsuperscript{117} Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, December 13, 1545, Trent, CIDT&C.

\textsuperscript{118} The Council of Trent contained both “Sessions”—ceremonial gatherings for the reading of finalized decrees—and “General Congregations”—the working meetings in which the bishops, abbots, theologians, and ambassadors debated selected matters. During the first three sessions, delegates essentially only determined the procedures, scope, and authority of the Council in preparation for debating urgent matters of theology and administration, including establishing that the Pope’s three legates would preside over the Council’s deliberations. Thereafter the general congregations intensified and resulted in more sweeping doctrinal decrees. All of these processes were witnessed by representatives of princes throughout Europe, as well as myriad other observers, all of whom relayed pertinent information back to their home states. O’Malley, \textit{Trent}, 77-89.
of this personal application of information, even from the removed party Olaus Magnus, is evident.

The Swedish archbishop began his June report with a vivid description of the fourth session’s ceremonial opening amidst the celebrations for Pentecost. Referencing the liturgical components of the feast’s High Mass, Magnus relayed that “after the litanies and the hymn Veni Creator [Spiritus] but before the Veni Sancte Spiritus, with the usual collections and prayers, two decrees were read.” He glanced briefly over the first of these decrees, writing only, “The first concerned defining the limitations of Original Sin, from the influence of which the Most Blessed Virgin was preserved and removed, adjoining two extraneous [clauses] on the relics and veneration of the saints.”  

Perhaps he viewed these matters as either too obvious or not urgently pertinent enough in a practical reforming sense to merit further explanation. They were, however, crucial doctrinal elements that distinguished Catholic teaching from that of many evangelical leaders, including Martin Luther. Luther had insisted that Original Sin persisted in humans despite baptism and that man’s nature was entirely corrupt, incapable of doing good by one’s own will. In contrast, at Trent the bishops proclaimed that baptism washed away Original Sin, although individual concupiscence remained, and that man was capable of doing good works through his own free will. Coming to a decision on this doctrinal matter had been a critical first step for many of those attending or observing the council.

119 Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 18, 1546, Trent, CIDT&C.
120 O’Malley, Trent, 102-8.
Most of Magnus’s June letter focused on the second decree of the council’s fourth session and the deliberators’ plan going forward. He continued, “The other decree contained many sections in distinct parts, clearly concerning the explication of theological matters in visible places, wherein there appeared especially the multitude of clergy.”¹²¹ This part of his letter covered several theological, practical, and disciplinary issues that either had been decided already or would be decided at the following session—not to be held until January 1547—including Sacred Scripture, preaching, justification, the Sacraments, clerical residence, and ecclesiastical hierarchy.¹²² Magnus tailored this section to Dantiscus in order to address topics that the prince-bishop found relevant to the reform of his own ministry and administration. Generally, they related to the practical reform of Church institutions rather than doctrine. Dantiscus was not nearly as concerned about theological clarification as he was about how the clergy and laity ought to behave under the Church’s authority. Thus, the council’s decisions on practical matters became an important metric in his continuing episcopal fight against Protestant reform from without and clerical corruption from within.

One issue that Magnus referenced only cursorily was the abuse of residential privileges among the clergy and especially the bishops. He explained:

Concerning the delimitation of [clerical and episcopal] residence, to be made publically (although it was included in the [current] statement [only] tacitly), it will be established more strictly at another time and in a customary decree; indeed the wretched matter has been lamented with perpetual moaning, because the majority of the bishops perhaps for years or whole generations have not seen or taken the trouble to acknowledge

¹²¹ Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 18, 1546, Trent, CIDT&C.

their own churches and flocks...This is about the proclamation of the common people and the other souls who have concerns. 123

This issue had peculiar dynamics in Prussia where Dantiscus was serving as prince-bishop. As described in Chapter 6, it was mostly the secular clergy in Chełmno Land and Warmia whom residents accused of being absent or negligent in their responsibilities. Dantiscus had taken several steps to remedy this problem in Warmia, including addressing priestly education, residency, celibacy, and the celebration of the sacraments. The primary locational problem among the bishops of Prussia, most of whom were born Prussian and did not travel widely outside of their jurisdictions, was that their capitals were not near their cathedrals, and so over time their roles became much more administrative than ministerial. Dantiscus did not break with this trend and spent very little time in his cathedral seats—Chełmża in Chełmno Land, Frombork in Warmia—or with the cathedral chapters. 124 The relative proximity of him and his Prussian colleagues, however, was more than many dioceses across Christendom could boast. 125

The longest treatment in this section of Magnus’s letter, and appropriately the most relevant matter for Dantiscus as a reformer, concerned the use of Scripture, preaching, and administrative hierarchy among the clergy, especially regular monks and mendicants. Magnus first described the council's decrees about clerical proficiency with Scripture, reporting that:

123 Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 18, 1546, Trent, CIDT&C.

124 For longer descriptions of these arrangements, see the section on war and reform in Prussia in Chapter 2 and the section on reforming the clergy in Chapter 6.

125 O’Malley, Trent, 116-21.
...an ordinary and fit reader of Sacred Scripture should be fostered through his endurance, while the first one revealing himself to everyone to be idle should be nullified with resignation and grace. As far as in the monasteries, certainly those of Saints Benedict and Bernard and the like, where ingenious [novices] appear to lead an idle life, there should be [enhanced] reading of sacred texts. It has been determined that likewise this should apply to the regular brothers...  

As made evident by his literary endeavors (Chapter 5) and his clerical reform (Chapter 6), Dantiscus agreed wholeheartedly and was already enacting similar regulations within his jurisdiction. He had disseminated texts and commentaries written by Church Fathers as well as modern scholars, and he had required a high degree of education and study among the clergy of his diocese. He also had interfered in monasteries in which literacy and orthodoxy were becoming problematic.

Magnus continued his report on the second decree of the fourth session by describing how the council’s members intended scriptural literacy to reinforce or revitalize good preaching habits among the clergy. Secular and regular priests should be familiar with Scripture and traditional Church texts in order to:

...administer appropriate [catechetical] discipline by means of preaching and diligently examining confessions. The liberty to uncover their speech has been given [even] to the [normally silent] Carthusians in this case, so that they preach effectively...[this also concerns] the regular [brothers] of the mendicant orders, because they by no means will preach without requesting and obtaining the liberty [given to non-mendicant] orders...

Dantiscus also already had taken multiple initiatives along these lines, as well. He had moved around mendicant brothers in order to supplement his secular clergy, both in preaching publically and in administering the sacraments. He also had persecuted severely evangelical preachers who were delivering public sermons illicitly according to

126 Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 18, 1546, Trent, CIDT&C.
127 Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 18, 1546, Trent, CIDT&C.
his edicts. Finally, among the texts he had introduced to the dioceses and circulated among his clergy, he had championed Erasmus’ *Ecclesiastes*, the great treatise on preaching. The prince-bishop likely would have been encouraged that the council was promoting such measures, but he also would have recognized that they were well underway in his own jurisdiction. Magnus would have been aware of this as well, already having spent years living in Prussia and communicating with Dantiscus.

Another issue among these systematic—and for Dantiscus, highly relevant—reforms of the fourth session concerned the local authority of bishops, even over regular clergy members. In this case, Magnus would not have benefited much directly, due to his exile from his own archdiocese in Sweden, but he nonetheless supported the council’s decree that:

…should [mendicant brothers] sow errors and inducements to sin [through their preaching], the bishop should rebuke their extravagance, particularly where the general or superior of such a preacher was negligent in rebuking him. On this issue (on account of [potential] exemptions and the like), challenges were brought forth but nevertheless were endured, so that with no opposing hindrance, in favor of faith, these sins should not abide unpunished or boast in malice and the rest.128

The ability of a bishop to rebuke and by implication regulate friars who were preaching and ministering in one’s diocese was a significant advantage for the Church in ensuring orthodox practice and belief. Magnus clearly supported the council overturning any objections and proceeding without hindrance to ensure this episcopal privilege. It was also a liberty that Dantiscus had been employing for years, as revealed by his treatment of and discussions about Franciscans, Augustinians, and Carthusians in Royal Prussia and Poland. He already had been monitoring and regulating the monks of his diocese to ___________________________

128 Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 18, 1546, Trent, CIDT&C.
great benefit in his efforts against evangelical reform. Finally in this section, Magnus described briefly the council’s determinations about profit-seekers among preachers. He relayed, “Concerning those profiting [from preaching] in open spaces, of whom there is an enormous and perhaps insolent number in Spain, it has been established that they should not preach in any manner, like the mere laity who use open spaces for means of profit.” Clearly if someone was profiting from their public activity, they should not also be claiming to be a religious authority. Here also the bishops were given implicit power over such actors, regardless of their origin. Again, Dantiscus would not have disagreed.

Concluding this detailed report about the fourth session’s decrees, in particular the second decree, Magnus provided a preview of what the council would address next. He also applied some pressure on Dantiscus to reconsider abstaining from the council. Magnus wrote:

The fifth and the following [sixth] session have been declared publically for the Thursday after the Feast of St. James [25 July]. The obstinacy of the absent bishops, who [still] hide in their houses without legitimate excuses, must be reprimanded severely, just as is the case for laborers. Hereafter more swiftly, such as it can be done, here the issue concerning the justification of the impious will be resolved, as well as preparations for other necessary discussions, evidently the most sacred use of the seven sacraments along with other codependent matters, and also the reformation of behaviors, just as was promised in the [Council’s] initial opening and session.

Clearly Magnus considered it to be the professional duty and responsibility of the Church’s bishops to attend the council, and it is unclear whether or not he considered Dantiscus’s “excuse” to be legitimate. Perhaps he thought he could lure the prince-

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129 Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 18, 1546, Trent, CIDT&C.
130 Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 18, 1546, Trent, CIDT&C.
bishop with promises of discussions about the sacraments, practices, and behaviors, all of which were of the utmost importance to Dantiscus for defining orthodoxy. Dantiscus would not take the bait, though.

Following Magnus’s letter from June 1546, these informative exchanges between him and Dantiscus—at least those currently extant—waned. The archbishop sent another letter each from Trent, from Venice with a brief rundown of the Church’s leaders in the fight against heresy, and from Bologna with a reference to renewed imperial efforts to eradicate “heresiarchs,” but they were not quite as robust or revealing about Dantiscus’s participation in reform. Nonetheless, their collective exchanges during this three year period crucially demonstrate Dantiscus’s continuous engagement with Catholic reform efforts abroad as he instituted reform in Prussia, as well as these two prelates’ efforts to apply the council’s determinations in underrepresented parts of Christendom, in particular those most affected by evangelical reform. Ultimately, Dantiscus’s own domestic reform program preceded many of the decrees of the Council of Trent, even if its success had been limited. Through his exchanges with Magnus and others, Dantiscus thus was both a benefactor and a beneficiary of the Church’s internal reform movement. Either way, the tenor of broad Catholic reform was vital to his goals, policies, and activities in Prussia. Especially important were regulations for the behavior of the clergy, the use of Sacred Scripture, the expansion of episcopal authority, and what beliefs and practices of Protestants were deemed most egregious and heretical by

131 Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, August 20, 1547, Venice, CIDT&C.
132 Olaus Magnus to Ioannes Dantiscus, September 27, 1547, Bologna, CIDT&C.
the Church. All of these factors Dantiscus addressed to some extent in his ecclesiastical territories during the 1530s and 1540s.

Olaus Magnus was Dantiscus’s primary and most informative correspondent regarding Catholic reform and the Council of Trent, but the prince-bishop’s attention to these issues radiated widely and authoritatively during his episcopacy, right until his death in 1548. In particular, he became one of the leading informants on conciliar issues in Prussia and Poland. His extensive knowledge and determined activity also related strongly to and informed his own reform program in Prussian territories. In June 1547, he discussed the suspension and relocation of the Council of Trent due to plague with a member of the court in Ducal Prussia. In his letter, he referenced the several deliberative successes—for Catholics at least—that the council already had achieved and its promise of more to come.\footnote{Ioannes Dantiscus to Wilhelm von Hohenzollern, June 8, 1547, Lidzbars Warmiński, CIDT&C.} He received several letters praising the instrumental role of Archbishop Magnus in channeling information about the council to the people of Prussia in a timely and effective manner. This was also, of course, implicit praise of Dantiscus himself.\footnote{Wilhelm von Hohenzollern to Ioannes Dantiscus, June 5, 1547, Königsberg, CIDT&C; Unknown to Ioannes Dantiscus, July 4, 1547, Hasenpoth, CIDT&C.} In 1548, the last year of the prince-bishop’s life, he still maintained discussions about the council’s impact. In February, Stanislaus Hosius wrote to Dantiscus about the many obstacles preventing the council’s resumption and the several other crises threatening peace or unity in Christendom.\footnote{Stanisław Hozjusz to Ioannes Dantiscus, February 6, 1548, Piotrków, CIDT&C.} Generally throughout his episcopal career, Dantiscus avidly sought information about how the universal Church was responding to Protestantism and attempting to reform itself internally,
especially through conciliar efforts. He remained enthusiastic about pursuing Catholic reform both at home and abroad, and his connections to and exchanges with foreign reform leaders provide invaluable context for how he developed his own reform program in Prussia.

**A Cosmopolitan Episcopacy**

In drastic contrast to his earlier diplomatic career, Dantiscus’s fifteen years as an ordained bishop were remarkably sedentary. Unlike many of his peers across Europe, he spent the vast majority of those years physically within his dioceses focusing on diocesan administration and ministry. His episcopal tenure, however, also included some of his most conscious, active, and fruitful efforts to engage with, learn from, support, and quell various religious reform movements spread throughout Christendom. Those efforts equipped his own reform initiatives—both at home and abroad—with substantial transnational connections, resources, information, and models. They drew diverse experiences, opinions, ideas, and strategies from numerous settings across Europe into his wide-ranging yet targeted reform program in Prussia, which simultaneously constituted the practical foundation upon which he engaged with remote leaders of Catholic and counter-reform.

The inspirations for this far-reaching engagement and participation were numerous. Dantiscus’s concern about the negative influence of English reform in the wider Baltic region led him to approach leaders in the English Church directly, with the explicit intention of preventing a wave of leniency toward Protestantism that could sweep through less stable Christian territories and ultimately impact Prussia. His interactions with men such as Thomas Cranmer covered religious topics of belief, practice, and authority and bore political and military implications that could impact all of
Europe. Meanwhile, together with a strong network of scholars and churchmen, he monitored the growth of the Anabaptist movement across Central Europe. Their shared anxiety over the influence of Anabaptists and other radical reform groups spread from England to the Low Countries to the Holy Roman Empire to Prussia. It starkly affected both local counter-reform efforts and broader international attempts to suppress Protestant reform, and Dantiscus was a knowledgeable and crucial player. English reform and the Anabaptist movement were only two of several urgent international Protestant reform issues that he addressed in his correspondence during this period. Others included the Scandinavian reformations, Luther’s continued activity in Wittenberg, the Swiss reformations, persecutions of Protestants in France, and the Schmalkaldic War. Through all of this, as he was tracking the development of Protestant reform across Europe, he remained attentive to the increasingly organized efforts of Catholic leaders to muster coordinated internal Church reform. For Dantiscus personally, this process culminated with the first phase of the Council of Trent, about which he sought detailed information and participated in discussions that were vital to Catholic reform, both throughout Latin Christendom and within his own diocese. Given his curiosity about, engagement with, and professional application of such diverse transnational developments in the Reformations, he could not help but maintain cosmopolitan connections and exchanges as a bishop.

Although Dantiscus’s relentless engagement with foreign and domestic contacts about the English Reformation, Anabaptism, and the Council of Trent is a blatant, hallmark example of his cosmopolitan reform efforts, it was in fact subsidiary to his general approach to suppressing Protestantism and restoring the dominance of the
Roman Church as a bishop. Throughout his episcopal tenure, he consciously combined robust literary activity, official decrees, practical institutional reform, despotic persecution, and engagement with transnational reform movements in order to restore Catholic order in Prussia and indeed throughout Central Europe. All of these components were informed by both local circumstances and widespread religious and political currents. Thus Dantiscus’s reforming approach and subsequent impact was anything but parochial. He viewed distant, alien reform efforts as essential to any proper, useful perspective on religious reform, even when merely punishing a dissident rural priest. Similarly, he recognized that evangelical reform efforts in a small town in central Prussia could hold substantial implications for much broader religious, political, and social developments. This approach persisted from when Dantiscus first received word of his episcopal election and nomination in spring 1530 until his death in 1548. In his view, it was an indispensable characteristic of an effective Catholic bishop in the midst of the Reformations. As his particular discussions in this chapter illustrate, Dantiscus was convinced that Protestant ideas, motivations, strategies, and communities were transnational phenomena with identifiable patterns. Opposing them successfully required a similarly transnational but coordinated Catholic approach. For Dantiscus, constructing an informed, grounded, cosmopolitan reform program that reflected local, regional, and continent-wide developments was essential to his fulfilment and success as a Catholic humanist, diplomat, and bishop in Reformations Central Europe.
CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION

Based merely upon where he traveled, whom he met, and what events he observed during his life, Johannes Dantiscus was one of the most intriguing historical figures of the early modern western world. Yet those experiences only hint at his significance to historical developments of his time and how historians ought to view him in the context of the early modern period. Ironically, though, due to some persistent historiographical trends, most scholars have been unaware of even his existence, let alone his significance. Contempt for lands and peoples east of Germany, artificial barriers between scholarship on the Renaissance and Reformations in Poland-Lithuania and elsewhere, and the general pigeonholing of Dantiscus’s career as predominantly humanist and diplomatic all have obscured heavily what insight his corpus of materials can provide to modern scholars. This dissertation begins to identify, clarify, and analyze some of his more noteworthy experiences in the context of several important historiographical discussions, especially concerning the European Reformations.

The most basic function of my research is simply to highlight crucial aspects of Dantiscus’s career that formerly have gone overlooked, undervalued, or misunderstood. As the previous six chapters have demonstrated, generally he experienced the early Reformations as did very few other Christians, if any, and the effects were key to the development of his life and career. His travels, encounters, and personal contacts, and the major events he witnessed, were unparalleled. In their midst, he pursued matters of religious reform in myriad, evocative settings out of both curiosity and duty, and then instrumentalized his experiences for diplomatic and political purposes, especially for personal advancement and in opposition to evangelical reform. Then as a Catholic
bishop, he became uniquely situated and empowered to respond to Protestant reform. Upon returning to Poland-Lithuania permanently, he was widely informed, advantageously connected, placed in a turbulent and malleable religious environment, and essentially given free rein to address issues of religious reform on his own terms. He implemented a strategic, wide-ranging, cosmopolitan, Catholic reform program in Prussia—an epicenter of religious, political, social, and economic conflict in Europe—intended both to eliminate Protestantism and to restore what he saw as the historical integrity and strength of the Catholic Church. All of this developed with the support of an extensive, transnational, intellectual and political network that he continuously constructed and reinforced through correspondence. The Reformation became a predominant factor and setting of Dantiscus’s career that motivated and shaped him as much as—if not more than—his better-known humanistic and diplomatic pursuits. What scholars can learn from his reforming career, though, extends much further.

Beyond filling out the historical narrative of Dantiscus’s life, my research examines his experiences as critical new evidence in several historiographical discussions. At a basic level, it challenges and provides counterexamples for the traditional narrative of the early Reformation in Prussia and Poland-Lithuania, which historians have assumed featured only lax or light Catholic responses to evangelical reform. It demonstrates that during the 1530s and 1540s, particularly in Prussia, there were informed, concerted, systematic, and intricate efforts by some of the polity’s ecclesiastical officials to suppress Protestantism and strengthen the Catholic Church. It seems to be true that those efforts received minimal support from leading members of the royal court and garnered only limited confessional success in areas with large
Protestant populations. Nonetheless, they vividly illustrate the nuance of the Church’s early responses to Protestant reform in Poland-Lithuania. They also display the highly contested nature of early-Reformations religiosity throughout the polity, even in areas typically shaded heavily as “Lutheran” or “Protestant” on traditional confessional maps of the region. My research also serves as an important link between scholarship on the Polish Reforms and the Polish Renaissance, which has been limited by an artificial historiographical divide between the two movements. Among modern scholars, Dantiscus is known for his impressive humanistic and diplomatic activities and achievements, and in fact he is an exemplar of the domestic and international Renaissance in most Polish historiography. Work on the Reforms in Poland, however, barely acknowledges him. This dissertation reveals how his “Renaissance” activities connected integrally and deeply to his participation in the Reforms, both in Poland-Lithuania and abroad. His intent observation of various manifestations of early evangelical reform across Central Europe was a direct—but largely coincidental—result of his diplomatic activity abroad on behalf of the Polish Crown. The flowering and refinement of his literary activity and polemical political voice, both of which became central to his approach to religious reform in Poland-Lithuania, occurred within the community of Europe’s great humanist scholars, who simultaneously sought him out as an experienced, intellectual authority on evangelical reform. Much like the “Counter-Reformation” versus “Catholic Reformation” debate, any hardline historiographical distinction between the Renaissance and the Reforms in terms of Dantiscus’s career is more problematic than useful, and in fact the two movements were mutually-influential and historically inseparable. Even if based on only a few historical figures
such as Dantiscus, scholars in the Polish historiographical tradition must foster more mutual recognition between these two simultaneous movements that defined the Polish Golden Age. Such recognition will benefit both Polish historiography and international historical research.

More broadly, my research challenges how historians conceive of early modern religious reform in Catholic contexts. It illuminates a robust, unknown example of a rare—in current scholarship at least—occurrence: a Catholic bishop implementing a wide-ranging, practical, internal reform program in his dioceses prior to the Council of Trent (1545-1562). In most historical narratives, the council serves as the beginning of formal Catholic reform activity during the Reformations, with a few notable exceptions.¹ Dantiscus’s work stands out either as indicative of a crucial but overlooked facet of the early Reformations—at best—or as an intriguing anomaly worthy of examination in regional settings and comparison abroad—at worst. And that is before considering the historiographical implications of the setting of this reform. The reformer Dantiscus was operating in a relatively obscure—for modern scholars—easterly part of Central Europe, albeit one that was multicultural, multi-confessional, and linked integrally to the rest of the western world. It had its own unique characteristics, to be sure, but its experiences within the Reformations appear as compelling and informative as those of any other part of Latin Christendom. Therefore, my analysis of Dantiscus’s career reveals two things. First, clearly such formal, pre-Tridentine, Catholic reform did occur during the early Reformations. In Dantiscus’s case, it was driven by one individual and achieved

¹ The reform efforts of Archbishop Ximénes de Cisneros of Toledo are perhaps the best example of an exception to this trend, although they occurred mostly prior to the onset of the Protestant Reformations c. 1517. See Chapter 3 for more discussion of Cisneros’s work in Spain.
uncertain success, but it also was demonstrably linked, known, discussed, and
evaluated quite widely by means of his prolific network of correspondence. Second, the
world of Catholic reform was more diverse, nuanced, and interesting if historians
consider more fully and openly Europe’s easterly lands and peoples. Their experiences
cannot be ignored or taken for granted. The reform program described in this
dissertation thus suggests that the typical chronological and geographical parameters of
the “Counter-Reformation” or “Catholic Reformation” are far too generalized and rigid,
even as historians for decades have acknowledged the need for more flexible approaches.² Formal Catholic reform occurred earlier than is typically assumed as well
as throughout a genuinely broadly-defined Latin Christendom. Based on Dantiscus’s
career, a reevaluation of the assumptions implicit in “Early Modern Catholicism” could
generate a much more open approach to examining the reforming education, intentions,
and activities of bishops, priests, scholars, princes, diplomats, and courtiers during the
early Reformations. Such an approach may unearth other examples of the type of
reform initiatives promoted by Dantiscus.

Of these types of reforming actors, Dantiscus’s experiences speak most directly
to the variety of activities among Catholic bishops during the early Reformations, a
subject that surprisingly has received little scholarly attention.³ As Luther’s and Zwingli’s

² For a detailed description of the evolution of this discussion, see footnote 104 in the Introduction.

³ In the traditional historiography of the Counter-Reformation or Catholic Reformation, bishops have
played an important role in the narrative of Catholic reform following the Council of Trent, when they were
given guidelines for how to reform their administration and ministry and were expected to be the vanguard
of the Church’s efforts to purify and restore itself. Michael A. Mullett, “The papacy and the episcopate of
the Catholic Reformation,” in The Catholic Reformation (New York: Routledge, 1999), 111-141; Peter
Burke, “How to Become a Counter-Reformation Saint,” in The Counter Reformation: The Essential
Priests,” in The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540-1770, second edition (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 111-
reform movements developed in the late 1510s and 1520s, prelates and priests became leading targets of evangelical criticism. For many reforming preachers, the clergy’s worldliness and corruption was inextricable from the Roman Church’s emphasis on works-based justification and its various related institutional abuses. In the absence of an official papal policy for responding to early evangelical reform at a diocesan level, however, from the 1520s into the 1540s bishops were left to their own devices to refute these evangelical criticisms and attempt to curb Protestantism in their dioceses. Prior to 1517, various minor councils and reform initiatives based in Rome had addressed corruption among religious orders, the college of cardinals, and the curia; but Northern and Central European bishops facing swells of evangelical reform after 1517 could draw little support, structure, or inspiration from these earlier measures. Centralized, Church-directed support and instruction for episcopal reforming initiatives would emerge only after the Council of Trent was well underway in the late 1540s. This three-decade period of uncertainty and turmoil for the Catholic episcopate is rarely a topic of deep discussion, though. Reformations historiography still begs the question: how did Catholic bishops in their authority respond to evangelical reform between 1517 and the mid-1540s, if they responded at all? What were their trainings, motivations, ideas, activities, and support structures? How did their responses reflect local, regional,

126. Hardly any work has been done, however, on the reforming activities of the Catholic clergy prior to the Council of Trent. Certainly any internal reform was much lighter than during later decades, but was it practically nonexistent?


5 Mullett, The Catholic Reformation, 7-20.
continental, or even global contexts and connections? And were any of their responses effective or noteworthy for later Church officials?

The case study at the center of this dissertation—Dantiscus’s reforming career—suggests some possible answers to these questions. He may have been unique in many respects, but this exploration of his personal and professional development underscores the need to examine his contemporary peers more closely. His career demonstrates that at least one Catholic bishop could, would, and did combat Protestant reform formally and systematically prior to the Council of Trent. He drew his ideas and inspirations from domestic, foreign, local, and regional encounters and observations. He was informed and motivated by an extraordinary collection of personal experiences with religious reform, and his growth was supported by an extensive network of prelates, humanist scholars, diplomats, and royal officials. When given free rein to contest Protestant reform, he used literature, official decrees, institutional reform of the secular and regular clergy, educational reform, persecutions, and engagement with reform issues abroad to attempt to restore the Catholic Church and suppress Protestantism. Meanwhile, he remained engaged with a vast, widespread network of correspondents. As a result of all of these activities, Dantiscus developed a range of characteristics pertinent to his role as a bishop in the early Reformations. He was locally grounded but internationally connected, highly educated but trained via experience, personally driven but ensconced in several overlapping communities, royally and ecclesiastically empowered but independently authoritative, and hostile to Protestant reform but willing to engage with Protestants cordially and productively. In himself he displayed numerous possibilities for episcopal identities and activities during the early Reformations. The
necessary follow-up question is whether he was unique or representative of his peers. Any answer will require a broader, more comparative study. Even without such a study, though, Dantiscus’s career is illustrative of the categorical nuances and variety found within the episcopate. It ought to be the basis for a reevaluation of Catholic bishops’ roles and activities during the early Reformations, especially those bishops whose jurisdictions were riven by political, cultural, and religious divisions.

One of the most salient aspects of Dantiscus’s entire career and indeed his episcopal reforming activity was its cosmopolitanism, a thematic topic that is still in its adolescence in early modern historiography. As Allison Games argued, early modern travelers of all stripes were necessarily cosmopolitan, a quality that facilitated their success and survival abroad and upon returning home. Their formation could come in various circumstances. Some travelers even learned to detach themselves strategically from national affiliation.⁶ Dantiscus boasted all of these characteristics, which enhanced his diplomatic success but also led to the tremendous accumulation of experiences, responsibilities, and activities related to the Reformations. As Robert Schneider would have assumed, Dantiscus also clearly was among his society’s elite, both at home and at foreign courts.⁷ That did not stop him, however, from disseminating eclectic ideas, texts, and practices down through society by means of social transgressions and authoritative prescriptions, as also seen in the work of Jacob.⁸ Even Dantiscus’s

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mechanisms for utilizing his own cosmopolitanism in Prussia were similar to those described by Marneff: official literary promotions, an education system, strategic edicts, the book trade, and others.⁹

Dantiscus’s reforming career also exhibits intriguing departures from these models, though. His experience with cosmopolitanism was environmentally, confessionally, and geographically unique in the context of the early Reformations. First, he did not display cosmopolitanism while residing in diverse, commercial, tolerant foreign cities only to revert to localized prejudices and restrictions upon returning to familiar, rural settings. Rather, he consciously honed a permanent, personal cosmopolitanism abroad and then maintained it throughout his career. He utilized it to comprehend and target particular characteristics of the population of his native Prussia, and it was foundational to his reform program. Second, Dantiscus’s cosmopolitanism did not inherently foster sympathy for Protestants or outright support for evangelical reform, as cosmopolitanism did in urban settings across Central Europe, most notably in Antwerp.¹⁰ Instead, he employed it to promote and implement Catholic reform. The two concepts were not mutually exclusive, as is commonly assumed. Third, his main base of operations was Warmia, a principality and diocese that both early modern and modern observers—at least those familiar with it—dismissed as a rural, Church-held backwater. His immediate setting was not itself prototypically cosmopolitan. Dantiscus accommodated this fact in several ways, though. He maintained strong political, social, and cultural ties to contacts in large, nearby towns such as Gdańsk, Toruń, Elbląg, and

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¹⁰ Marneff, *Antwerp.*
Königsberg, and he continuously engaged with diverse contacts throughout Latin Christendom via his correspondence. Thus he fostered cosmopolitanism within his intellectual arena and tapped into it in order to construct and implement his reform program.

The reforming activity at the center of Dantiscus’s episcopal career thus illuminates compelling new aspects and historiographical applications of early modern cosmopolitanism. It illustrates how a motivated and informed individual could apply a cosmopolitan approach to religious reform in environments that otherwise might be rather parochial, whether in terms of political, religious, social or economic characteristics. It also reveals that in addition to the well-established narrative that urban cosmopolitanism fostered Protestant reform, early modern actors could utilize cosmopolitanism intentionally for Catholic reforming purposes in both urban and rural settings. Therefore, Dantiscus’s reforming career demonstrates even more about early modern Catholic reform than merely its formal manifestation prior to the Council of Trent. It also demonstrates that early Catholic reformers’ responses to evangelical reform could simultaneously reflect local factors, regional issues, far-flung political and religious developments, and diverse personal experiences, not only in a metahistorical sense—as is obvious—but quite consciously, intentionally, and actively on their part. Early Catholic reformers’ subjects throughout Latin Christendom could feel the intended impact of specific experiences and broad currents from across the western world without leaving their parishes, and the intended beneficiary could be Catholic Church. The example of Dantiscus’s career perhaps raises more questions than answers. It certainly suggests, though, that much more research on the nature, appearance, and
application of cosmopolitanism in the sixteenth century is necessary, particularly in the context of the Reformations.

Most importantly, Dantiscus’s career speaks to the nature of early modern Central Europe. He came from what many people today would relegate as “Eastern Europe” or “East Central Europe,” but in the sixteenth century there would have been no such “eastern” designation. Prussia and Poland-Lithuania were as whole and unqualified a part of Latin Christendom as France, Italy, or England. For modern analytical purposes, though, it is important to acknowledge his representativeness of a broadly-defined, more easterly, early modern Central Europe. As described in the Introduction, this region roughly comprised the area from the territories of the modern Baltic states, Belarus, central Ukraine, the northwestern shores of the Black Sea, and the northern Balkans westward across the continent to the Swiss cantons, the Rhineland, and the Low Countries. This definition is based on the common diversity, fluidity, and interconnectedness of the region’s polities, societies, ethnic groups, cultures, languages, religious identities, and economic activities. Early modern residents certainly did not use the term “Central Europe,” but they operated within its milieu.

Dantiscus’s career demonstrates this Central European diversity, fluidity, and interconnectedness better than most. During his life, he traveled throughout much of Europe and around the eastern Mediterranean. His most significant Reformations experiences, though, all occurred within and across this heterogeneous Central Europe. For decades, he seamlessly traversed its polities of all sizes, met people of its myriad cultures and societies, and discussed a great range of political and religious matters with a cross-section of its politicians, bureaucrats, scholars, and clerics. He felt notably
comfortable in its cities—from Cracow to Vienna to Wittenberg to Regensburg to Frankfurt to Antwerp—as well as in the smaller towns and rural environments in between. He encountered evangelical reform there in numerous different manifestations, each of which made a distinct, stark, and lasting impression on him. He came to view these manifestations as part of a monolithic “Lutheranism”—detailed in Chapter 2—and a monolithic “Anabaptism”—detailed in Chapter 7—that were infecting peoples across Central Europe indiscriminately. They were not problems to which only particular Central European lands or peoples were susceptible. The presence of “Lutheran” and “Anabaptist” reform beyond Central Europe, though, for example in Spain, England, and Scandinavia, appeared in his texts and correspondence as of concern but not nearly as worrisome. As he constructed his episcopal reform program in Prussia, he made use of contacts, knowledge, and resources from throughout Central Europe especially. He believed his own approaches to reform to be widely applicable, and that secular and religious authorities across the region ought to coordinate and respond with similar reactions, strategies, and resources. His reforming view was never limited to Warmia, Prussia, or Poland-Lithuania, even when they were his primary or permanent settings. The heterogeneous characteristics of Central Europe became a natural component of his outlook as a student, royal secretary, diplomat, scholar, churchman, and reformer.

Despite the elite status and privilege that Dantiscus obviously enjoyed during his career and his travels across Central Europe, his experiences nonetheless illustrate the region’s common diversity, fluidity, and interconnectedness. Early modern Central Europe contained an often-untraceable web of political boundaries that shifted
frequently, but for the most part they were quite permeable for travelers. The dominance of the Habsburg and Jagiellonian monarchies helped to ensure such permeability in most areas. The region’s urban—and sometimes rural—societies blended numerous cultures, ethnicities, and languages. A man could always find something familiar alongside something new, both in his home town and on a distant sojourn. Architecture and urban planning from territory to territory could be noticeably different but also intuitively familiar. And an astounding mix of religious identities and expressions, especially in the easterly part of the region and following the onset of the Reformations, both diversified the peoples of Central Europe and provided a sense of commonality.

Recognizing these features of a broadly-defined early modern Central Europe will help historians immeasurably. It is key both to understanding the development of the Reformations better and to conceptualizing how Central Europe fit into the rest of Latin Christendom, as well as alongside Orthodox Christendom, the Ottoman Empire, and the Atlantic world. Johannes Dantiscus’s reforming career is an exemplar. It provides an invaluable and fascinating vehicle for accessing early modern Central Europe and the Reformations, one whose emergence from the shadows of both the Renaissance and anachronistic “eastern” qualifiers is long overdue.
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