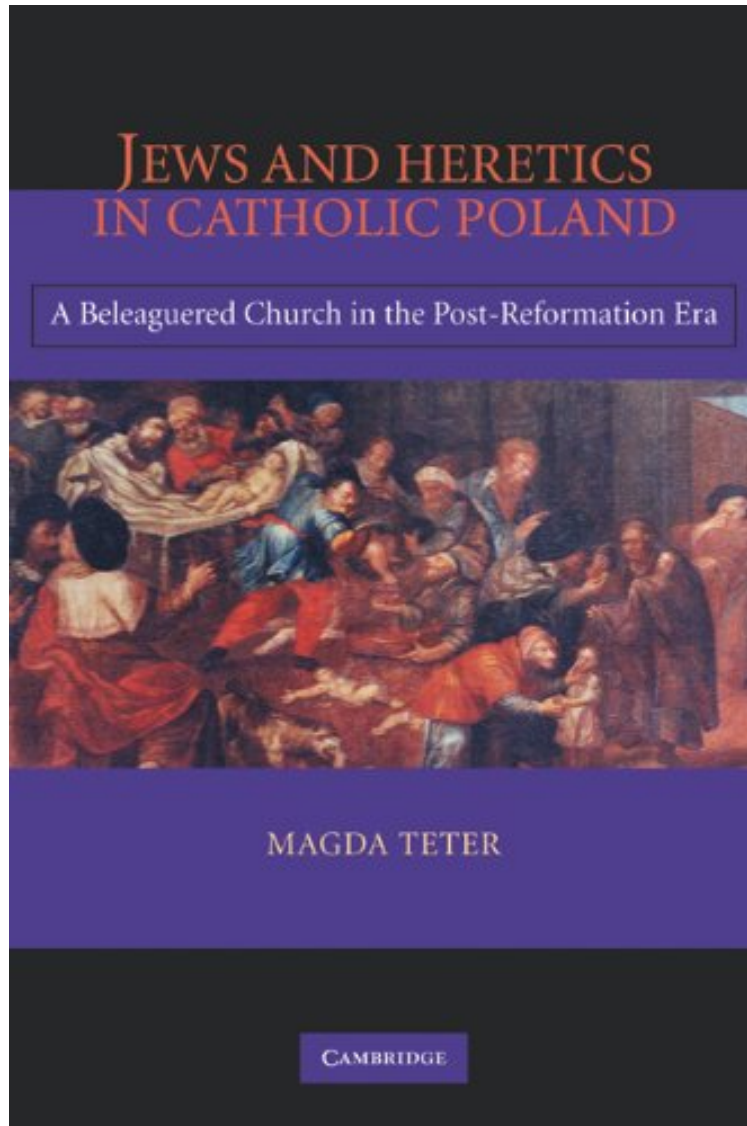


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# Jews and Heretics in Catholic Poland: A Beleaguered Church in the Post-Reformation Era

Magda Teter

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**Magda Teter : Jews and Heretics in Catholic Poland: A Beleaguered Church in the Post-Reformation Era**  
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jews and Heretics in  
Catholic Poland: A Beleaguered Church in the Post-Reformation Era:

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ThreatBy TomDuring the Reformation large numbers of the Polish nobility left Catholicism and converted to Protestantism. Much of this was motivated by the nobles' interest in increasing their independence from the monarchy and Catholic Church. However, following the 17th century invasions of Poland by Protestant Sweden (the Potop szwedzki) and through the efforts of the church's Counter-Reformation, the nobility gradually returned to Catholicism. The Polish Catholic Church was not content with this victory, but viewed the nobility's continuing symbiotic relationship with the Jewish population as a threat. Because of this insecurity the 18th century Polish Church was still using medieval anti-Jewish rhetoric that had been long abandoned further west. These circumstances shaped the Polish Church's strongly anti-Semitic attitude that survives to this day. Teter has scoured church archives to provide the reader with numerous examples of the church's militant position regarding Jews, Protestants, and Anti-Trinitarians in post-Reformation Poland. I would highly recommend this book to anyone interested in the shaping of Polish-Jewish relations.

Contrary to the common contention that the Catholic Church triumphed in Counter-Reformation Poland, this study reveals that from the rise of the Reformation and the rapid dissemination of its new ideas, the Catholic Church was overcome with a strong sense of insecurity. The beleaguered Church sought to separate Catholics from non-Catholics: Jews and heretics. This process helped form a Polish identity that led to racial anti-Semitism and to the exclusion of even most assimilated Jews from the category of Poles. The book portrays Jews not only as victims of Church persecution but as active influential participants in Polish society.

Teter makes a major contribution in illuminating the complexities of Poland's 18th century. Essential. --Choice "This volume not only fills a gaping hole in the historical literature on Polish Catholicism and Polish-Jewish relations, but it does so with admirable professionalism. Jews and Heretics in Catholic Poland will remain the standard work on Catholic Judeophobia in early-modern Poland for years to come. . . . Should be read not only by specialists in early-modern religious history, but by anyone interested in the history of antisemitism, Jewish- Catholic relations, or Polish history more generally. --Journal of the American Academy of Religion "Teter is correct in distinguishing the power of the Polish Church from that in many other European countries, especially given the power of the Polish nobility, which by the eighteenth century was basically a republic of the Magnates. Some nobles attracted to Protestantism returned to the Church to keep their political power. The Polish triangle of power, a system of checks and balances, included the Church, the nobles, and the monarch. She also correctly stresses the ebb and flow of the privileges of Jews depending on the vicissitudes of the Polish state at the time. She makes the good point that the Church would cooperate with other powers in so far as the outcome would be good for the Church itself." - Helena J. Czosnyka, St. Louis School of Pharmacy "Teter has touched on a very important problem and posed a challenging thesis. She provides a myriad of examples to illustrate her conclusions...This book should find its way to libraries and seminars dealing with religious issues of Commonwealth, as well as of Europe." Jakub Basista, American Historical Association  
About the Author Magda Teter is Assistant Professor of History at Wesleyan University. She is the recipient of the Koret Foundation publication prize and has been published in English, Polish and Hebrew in such journals as Jewish History, AJS and Gal-Ed.