

THE POLISH BRETHREN'S ENCOUNTERS WITH JOHN DEE AND EDWARD KELLEY IN CRACOW

RAFAŁ T. PRINKE

John Dee was certainly one of the most intriguing figures in Elizabethan England's intellectual landscape. Active in such diverse fields as mathematics, geometry, astronomy, navigation, but also political theory, alchemy, practical magic, occult philosophy, and – most famously – conversations with angels via his medium Edward Kelley, Dee can certainly be perceived as an epitome of the late Renaissance polymath, perhaps even the last one of the kind. Unsurprisingly, the multidimensional scientist-magus was largely forgotten by Europe's cultural memory of the following centuries, with only a few isolated publications by committed enthusiasts.¹ The one that, contrary to the publisher's intent, proved to have an enormous influence on the occult revival in Victorian England and many strands of esotericism that it initiated, was the edition of a large part of Dee's magical diary by Meric Casaubon in 1659.² The historical importance of the English magus was rediscovered in the 1960s by Frances A. Yates,³ who later made him the key actor on the Central European political stage, pulling down thrones and elevating new monarchs, thus changing the whole course of the turbulent history leading to the Thirty Years War.⁴ Although that thesis, along with other claims propounded by Yates, was harshly criticised by scholars⁵ and is no longer accepted, the charisma of the Dame

¹ Thomas Smith, "Vita Joannis Dee," in Thomas Smith, ed., *Vitae quorundam eruditissimorum et illustrium virorum* (London: D. Mortier, 1707); James Orchard Halliwell, ed. *The Private Diary of Dr. John Dee and the catalogue of His Library of Manuscripts, from Original Manuscripts in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, and Trinity College Library, Cambridge* (London: The Camden Society, 1842); Charlotte Fell-Smith, *John Dee, 1527–1608* (London: Constable, 1909).

² Meric Casaubon, ed., *A True & Faithful Relation of What Passed for Many Yeers Between Dr. John Dee [...] and Some Spirits* (London: T. Garthwait, 1659); for a modern annotated edition see: Stephen Skinner, ed., *Dr. John Dee's Spiritual Diary (1583–1608): Being a Completely New & Reset Edition of a True & Faithful Relation of What Passed for many Yeers Between Dr. John Dee and Some Spirits: Being British Library Cotton Appendix MS XLVI, Parts I & II with Additional Material from Bodleian Ashmole MS 1790* (Singapore: Golden Hoard Press, 2011).

³ Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964).

⁴ Frances A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

⁵ See for example: R. J. W. Evans, "Review of The Rosicrucian Enlightenment by Frances Yates," *The Historical Journal* 16, no. 4 (1973): 865–68.

evoked new interest in Dee (as well as hermeticism in general) which bore fruit in several monographs and a large number of papers published since then.⁶ While the Dee scholarship accumulated, embracing wider and wider ranges of topics and discovering new sources, most of it was written from the English perspective. The obvious reason was that most authors did not have the perseverance and determination of R. J. W. Evans to overcome the language barriers and penetrate the veil of relevant Polish, Czech and Hungarian literature and sources, as testified by his exemplary monograph of Rudolf II.⁷ Thus the peregrinations of John Dee and Edward Kelley in Central Europe were necessarily treated quite briefly, mostly based on the diaries and without proper contextualisation or identification of all people and places recorded by the English Doctor. Even the key and extraordinary figures, such as Olbracht Łaski (1536–1604), are often skimmed over without broader discussion that would surely change the perspective.⁸

Meanwhile, the scholars of Central Europe developed their own interest in the visit of the two magi and investigated it from their angle. Even today, it may come as a surprise to the Dee specialists in England that the very first book-length scholarly monograph (of 293 pages) on the spiritual séances and their political context appeared in Poland as early as 1888.⁹ Its author, Alexander Kraushar (1843–1931), also published a two-volume monograph on Olbracht Łaski six years earlier (and an addendum volume in 1906), in which Dee and Kelley are also briefly discussed.¹⁰ A scholar of the next genera-

⁶ Just to give some examples of book-length publications: Peter A. French, *John Dee: The World of an Elizabethan Magus* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972); Nicholas H. Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion* (London / New York: Routledge, 1988); Deborah E. Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels: Cabala, Alchemy, and the End of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Stephen Clucas, ed., *John Dee: Interdisciplinary Studies in English Renaissance Thought* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006); Glyn Parry, *The Arch-conjurer of England: John Dee* (New Haven / London: Yale University Press, 2012).

⁷ R. J. W. Evans, *Rudolf II and His World: A Study in Intellectual History 1576–1612*, 2nd corr. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press [Clarendon Press], 1984).

⁸ It may be noted here that when Giordano Bruno came to England in 1583 (and then paid a much discussed visit to Oxford), he arrived there in the entourage of Łaski.

⁹ Alexander Kraushar, *Czary na dworze Batorego: Karta z dziejów mistycyzmu w XVI. wieku, jako przyczynek do charakterystyki króla Stefana* (Kraków: G. Gebethner, 1888); the book is adorned with beautiful imaginary portraits of Dee and Kelley (based on the crude woodblock images in Casaubon's volume) by the most prolific Polish nineteenth century illustrator Michał Elwiro Andriolli (1836–1893).

¹⁰ Alexander Kraushar, *Olbracht Łaski wojewoda sieradzki: Wizerunek historyczny na tle dziejów Polski XVI wieku*, 2 vols. (Warszawa-Kraków: Gebethner i Wolf / G. Gebethner, 1882); Alexander Kraushar, *Nowe przyczynki do dziejów żywota i spraw Olbrachta Łaskiego wojewody sieradzkiego (1533–1605)* (Kraków: G. Gebethner, 1906). Kraushar was also the author of a monograph on the Frankist Movement, which

tion, the classical philologist Ryszard Ganszyniec (Gansiniec, 1888–1958), conducted extensive research on crystalomancy, which included co-editing the so-called Prayerbook of King Vladislas,¹¹ and was concluded with his monograph on the topic, perhaps still the most complete ever written.¹² Needless to say, one of its chapters was dedicated to Dee and Kelley's practices, as was one in the book on the occult sciences in Renaissance Poland by the foremost Polish scholar of alchemy Roman Bugaj (1922–2009).¹³

Likewise, some Czech researchers contributed to the Central European view of Dee and Kelley's adventures in that part of the continent. Besides minor early articles and notices, the work of Ivan Sviták (1925–1994) is especially noteworthy. He was a notable Marxist philosopher and literary critic, forced to emigrate after 1968. While living in California, he wrote his *Rudolfínská trilogie* (1980–1989) on Dee, Kelley and the poet Jane Weston, Kelley's stepdaughter. The books were apparently written in English with full scholarly apparatus, but on his return to Prague in 1990 Sviták had them translated and privately printed without any references, which severely diminished their value.¹⁴ Another important publication in Czech appeared in 2010, authored by Petra Chourová. It was a book based on her thesis written under the auspices of the foremost historian of alchemy Vladimír Karpenko, in which she ably digested the Dee and Kelley literature in Czech and made numerous source findings of her own.¹⁵

All of the above mentioned books (and numerous smaller contributions) were written in Slavic languages and thus practically inaccessible to the international English-reading

remained fundamental for over a century and was only recently superseded by the work of Paweł Maciejko: Alexander Kraushar, *Frank i frankiści polscy 1726–1816: Monografia historyczna osnuta na źródłach archiwalnych i rękopiśmiennych*, 2 vols. (Kraków: G. Gebethner, 1895); Paweł Maciejko, *The Mixed Multitude: Jacob Frank and the Frankist Movement, 1755–1816* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

¹¹ Ludwik Bernacki, Ryszard Ganszyniec, and Władysław Podlacha, eds., *Modlitewnik Władysława Warneńczyka w zbiorach Biblioteki Bodlejańskiej z uwzględnieniem zapisków Józefa Korzeniowskiego* (Lwów: Koło Związku Bibliotekarzy Polskich, 1928); for more recent research on it see: Benedek Láng, "Angels Around the Crystal: The Prayer Book of King Vladislas and the treasure hunts of Henry the Bohemian," *Aries* 5, no. 1 (2005): 1–32.

¹² Ryszard Ganszyniec, "Krystalomancja," *Lud* 41, no. 1 (1954): 1–83.

¹³ Roman Bugaj, *Nauki tajemne w Polsce w dobie odrodzenia* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1976).

¹⁴ Ivan Sviták, *Sir Edward Kelley: Český rytíř, 1555–1598*, trans. Miroslav Šubrt (Praha: self published, 1994); Ivan Sviták, *Kouzelník z Londýna: John Dee v Čechách, 1584–1589*, trans. Miroslav Šubrt (Praha: self published, 1994); Ivan Sviták, *Malostranská Sapfo: Opožděná recenze díla Elizabethy Johanný Westónové, 1582–1612*, trans. Miroslav Šubrt (Praha: self published, 1994).

¹⁵ Petra Chourová, *Alchymisté nebo šarlatáni? Edward Kelley a John Dee* (Praha: Libri, 2010).

scholarly community. They had to wait for the ground-breaking monograph on John Dee's occultism by György Szőnyi which appeared in 2004.¹⁶ The author studied in Warsaw under Lech Szczucki (1933–2019), a great authority on Polish Reformation and co-editor of the correspondence of András Dudith (1533–1589), and that was where he mastered the Polish language (which also gave him access to Czech literature). His very first published article was already devoted to John Dee and was written in Polish,¹⁷ but fortunately, he could also write excellent English and thus could get the Central European research on Dee (both that of his predecessors and his own) through to the Western colleagues. After the publication of his monograph, Szőnyi returned to various aspects of Dee several times in various papers, but essentially moved on to investigate other areas, such as the Book of Enoch.

Obviously, no scholarly pursuit can ever be exhausted. Discovering new sources indeed becomes more and more tedious and time-consuming, but there is always much space for new arguments and placing known facts in wider, unexpected contexts. Thus my own small contributions to the Dee and Kelley debate concentrated on identifying people and places mentioned or alluded to in the *Libri mysteriorum* when the two magi were on their way across Poland and during their sojourn in Cracow.¹⁸ In the present paper I propose to have a brief look at possible contacts between the two Englishmen and members (or at least ideas) of the religious community known as the Polish Brethren.

When John Dee and Edward Kelley, after a long and arduous journey finally arrived in Cracow in March of 1584, they found themselves in "one of the most tolerant cities in the Western Christian world [... where] political fragmentation, power and independence of the aristocracy, [...] and the profound influence of Erasmian humanism had made it a place of tolerance and religious coexistence [... with] the presence of Lutherans, Calvinists, Orthodox Christians, Antitrinitarians, Anabaptists, Jews and Muslims in a predominantly Catholic country."¹⁹ Indeed, throughout the sixteenth century numerous religious dissenters from all over Europe found refuge in the Polish capital where they could freely

¹⁶ György Szőnyi, *John Dee's Occultism: Magical Exaltation Through Powerful Signs*, SUNY Series in Western Esoteric Traditions (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004).

¹⁷ György Endre Szőnyi, "John Dee i jego związki ze Środkową Europą," *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 25 (1980): 99–111.

¹⁸ Rafał T. Prinke, "John Dee i Edward Kelley w Wielkopolsce (1583–1584): Epizod "magicznej" podróży," *Pamiętnik Biblioteki Kórnickiej* no. 29 (2009): 234–48; Rafał T. Prinke and Kamila Follprecht, "John Dee and Edward Kelley in Cracow: Identifying the House of Enochian Revelations," *The Polish Journal of the Arts and Culture* no. 13 (2015): 119–36.

¹⁹ Giorgio Caravale, *The Italian Reformation Outside Italy: Francesco Pucci's Heresy in Sixteenth-century Europe*, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 246 (Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2015), 96.

discuss and disseminate their ideas. Unending debates on matters of religion, held both in Cracow and in many other Polish cities, as well as a network of correspondence that provided an influx of opinions from outside the country, created a veritable melting pot of radical religious ideas. As the Calvinist faith was gaining popularity among Polish nobility, one faction of it was converted to antitrinitarianism and eventually detached from their mother church to form a new one that came to be known as the Polish Brethren (even though they usually called themselves simply Christians).²⁰ The new denomination formally established itself in 1556, when Piotr of Goniądz (c. 1530–1573), a former Catholic priest and then a Calvinist pastor, publicly questioned the existence of the Holy Trinity at a dissident synod and proclaimed radical unitarianism. Their doctrine evolved through internal debates and only reached the final form in the *Racovian Catechism* published in 1602. One of the key moments in its development was the arrival of the Italian antitrinitarian Faustus Socinus (Fausto Sozzini, 1539–1604), who settled down in Cracow in 1579 and helped greatly to introduce theological order to the often chaotic and internally contradictory teachings of the Polish Brethren, hence sometimes also called Socinians (although Socinus became their de-facto leader, he never formally joined the community, as he refused to be re-baptised). The church survived the Counter-Reformation but was eventually banned by the Polish Parliament in 1658 and its members had to leave the country.

The teachings of the Polish Brethren embraced not only theological questions, sometimes quite involved and far-reaching, but also matters related to political and social life (which were likewise deduced from the Holy Scripture). They were mostly stark pacifists, proudly displaying wooden swords instead of the traditional Polish sabre, postulated equality of all men and women (some freed their serfs, while women were allowed to study and preach), and also developed a network of elementary schools.

John Dee's records do not mention any meetings that he had in Cracow with religious dissenters (except for Francesco Pucci, more about whom below). Quite the contrary, a year later (in April 1585), at the instigation of the angels, Dee re-converted to the Roman Catholic faith, having made confession to and received the communion from

²⁰ There is a large body of scholarship on the Polish Brethren and editions of their texts in Polish by such eminent authors as Karol Grycz-Śmiłowski, Ludwik Chmaj, Janusz Tazbir, Lech Szczucki and many others. For a good introduction in English, set in the context of other radical reformatory developments across Europe, see George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962). An older but quite detailed and still useful general history of Socinianism is: Earl Morse Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism: Socinianism and Its Antecedents* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1945).

Hannibal Rosselli (1525–1593) at the church of the Bernardines.²¹ Kelley did the same at the Jesuit church (or so he claimed). But otherwise Dee was only interested in getting access to the kings, emperors, and powerful magnates, who would accept the divine message he received and change the fortunes of the whole world. Kelley, on the other hand, was always on the lookout for new sponsors (or rather victims) who could be duped and thus change his own fortunes. He seems to have mingled with the locals everywhere he went but only occasionally informed Dee about it. Even when they first arrived in Cracow and stayed in a lodging by a church outside the city walls for a week, before Dee rented a house in Szczepańska Street and moved there with his family, Kelley lingered on for another week before joining his master and companion. Just a little later there are also longer gaps between the scrying sessions, like that of a whole month between 25 April and 21 May, and occasional notes of Kelley's independent activities, such as his visit to Olbracht Łaski at the Franciscan monastery on 24 June, where he had a vision afterwards reported to Dee. So he may have had some contacts with the Polish Brethren abiding in the city and frequenting the taverns to discuss theological questions. Witnessing such debates would certainly provide Kelley with excellent new material which could then be revealed to Dee by the "angels."

And indeed, there is a short passage in the *Libri Mysteriorum* which suggests it was actually what happened. On 8 June, after another gap of almost two weeks, Kelley expressed his penitence for dealing with evil spirits, who even advised him to leave Dee secretly nine or ten days earlier (i.e. during those two weeks). He swore solemnly, to Dee's rejoicing, that he would renounce those activities altogether and perhaps would write a book on "the manifold and horrible doctrine of theirs, whereby they [the 'wicked spirits'] would have persuaded him":

... That Jesus was not God.

... That no prayer ought to be made to Jesus.

... That there is no sin.

... That mans soul doth go from one body, to another childes quickening or animation.

... That as many men and women as are now, have always been: That is, so many humane bodies, and humane souls, neither more nor lesse, as are now, have always been.

²¹ Early in his life Dee not only supported the Catholic theological interpretations (as already pointed out by Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy*, 34), but was actually ordained a Catholic priest, as recently discovered by Parry, *The Arch-conjurer of England*, 28–9. Hannibal Rosselli was a professor at the Cracow University and the author of a multivolume extended commentary on the Hermetic texts *Pimander* and *Asclepius*: Jan Czerkawski, "Hannibal Rosselli jako przedstawiciel hermetyzmu filozoficznego w Polsce," *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 15, no. 1 (1967): 119–40; Wiesław Murawiec, "Hannibal Rosselli – profesor Akademii Krakowskiej i autor 'Pymandra'," *Folia Historica Cracoviensia* 1 (1989): 33–53.

... That the generation of mankind from Adam and Eve, is not an History, but a writing which hath another sense.

... No Holy Ghost they acknowledged.

... They would not suffer him to pray to Jesus Christ; but would rebuke him, saying, that he robbed God of his honour, etc.²²

In his reworking of Dee's diaries, Edward Fenton observed briefly that "these heresies echo the rationalist teachings of Faustus Socinus [... who] denied the divinity of Jesus and the transmission of the original sin."²³ This is partly true, but with the stress on "echo", as besides these two tenets (and also assuming that "no sin" means "no original sin", rather than sin in general), the others listed by Dee do not reflect the beliefs of Socinus. He was a radical unitarian, of course, but accepted the Holy Ghost (interpreted as the power of God) and, most importantly, affirmed the necessity of praying to Jesus (so his stance was that of adorationism). Incidentally, on 14 May, at his residence in Pawlikowice (some twenty kilometers from the centre of Cracow), Socinus held a debate with the nonadorationist Christian Francken (1550–1611) on the topic "de honore Christi."²⁴ Francken, a former Jesuit, was a teacher at the Polish Brethren school in Chmielnik, but soon excommunicated by the fraternity, he left Poland for Transylvania, where the unitarian teachings of Ferenc Dávid (c. 1510–1579) and Jacob Palaeologus (c. 1520–1586) embraced non-adorationism. Right after the debate with Socinus, he had his theses immediately published in Cracow.²⁵ A lengthy refutation of Francken's heresies by Jakub Górski, a professor at the University Cracow, appeared in the same year and made the provincial of the Jesuits appeal to king Stefan Batory to intervene. The royal edict ordered the printer to

²² Casaubon, *A True & Faithful Relation*, 164; Skinner, *Dr. John Dee's Spiritual Diary*, 328; Edward Fenton, ed., *The Diaries of John Dee* (Charlbury, Oxfordshire: Day Books, 1998), 128–29.

²³ Fenton, *The Diaries of John Dee*, 136n18.

²⁴ Faustus Socinus and Christian Francken, *Disputatio inter Faustum Socinum Senensem, & Christianum Franken, de honore Christi: id est, utrum Christus, cum ipse perfectissima ratione Deus non sit, religiosa tamen adoratione colendus sit nec ne: habita 14 Martii Anno 1584. in aula Christophori Paulicovii* (Irenopoli [Amsterdam], 1688).

²⁵ Christian Francken, "Praecipuarum enumeratio causarum, cur Christiani cum in multis religionis doctrinis mobiles sint et varii, in Trinitatis tamen retinendo dogmate sint constantissimi [Cracoviae: Alekxy Rodecki, 1584]," in Lech Szczucki, ed., *W kręgu myślicieli heretyckich* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1972), 256–65. On Francken see Lech Szczucki, "Christian Francken," *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 8 (1963): 39–76; Mario Biagioni, "Christian Francken e la crisi intellettuale della Riforma," in Biagioni, ed., *Christian Francken: Opere a stampa* (Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2014), 3–150.

be imprisoned and the book burnt.²⁶ Although it is not certain if it was indeed publically burnt (which would have been the first such case in Poland), the book is extremely rare and only two copies are known to exist: one at the University Library in Wrocław and the other in the British Library. The latter may actually have belonged to John Dee, as he noted in 1592, already back in England, that he “exhibited to the Archbishop of Canterbury two books of blasphemy against Christ and the Holy Ghost [... one of which] was Christian Franken, printed anno 1585, in Poland.”²⁷ It was in fact printed in 1584, but the year does not appear on the title page, so Dee stated it from memory. Actually, we know that he owned (or at least knew) the book before 9 July 1587, when Francesco Pucci brought Christian Franken to Třeboň. The terse note in the diary states that Franken, according to Pucci, “had now recanted his wicked book against Christ: whereof I was glad.”²⁸ It is not clear from the wording, whether Dee had met Francken in Cracow and perhaps received the book from him personally, but it seems doubtful.

Returning to the Francken-Socinus debate “de honore Christi”, if we notice that it was held during the above mentioned one month gap in the scrying sessions and that the last assertion of Kelley’s evil spirits recorded by Dee refers to “the honour of God”, the correlation becomes even more meaningful. The possibility that Kelley (or even Dee) actually witnessed the debate cannot be ruled out, but it is likewise possible that he heard about the nonadorationist stance from members of a more radical wing of the Polish Brethren, such as the followers of Szymon Budny (1530–1593), who preached firmly against the adoration of Jesus. Budny also produced for the Brethren a new translation of the Bible from original Hebrew and Greek (the so-called Bible of Nieświerz, published in 1572), with a highly critical attitude to everything that did not look rational (e.g. he modified all references used by other Christians to prove the divinity of Jesus, treating their earlier renderings as mistranslations), so the statement about the generation of mankind from Adam and Eve not being history may well derive from Budny’s circles.

The most surprising, however, are the two statements clearly referring to the concept of reincarnation, decidedly alien to the Polish Brethren or any other Christian denomination, as far as we know. Thus the only surroundings where such unheard of heresies may have been discussed would have been a closed circle of extremely radical thinkers, informally speculating on the possibility of and rational basis for the doctrine of transmigration of souls (known to them from ancient pagan authors like Pythagoras, Vergil or

²⁶ Henryk Merczyng, “Domniemanie pierwsza w Polsce książką spalona przez kate. (Racyonalista Chrystyan Francken i jego działalność w Polsce za Batorego),” *Przegląd Historyczny* 16, no. 2 (1913): 187–99.

²⁷ Halliwell, *The Private Diary of Dr. John Dee*, 42; Fenton, *The Diaries of John Dee*, 257.

²⁸ Fenton, *The Diaries of John Dee*, 229.

the Hermetica). And it seems that Kelley may have had an opportunity to enter such an informal circle.

When John Dee was preparing for leaving England and going with Olbracht Łaski to Poland, his former mentee Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586) suggested he could stay in Cracow at the house of Paweł Pernus (d. 1599/1600), where the great poet lodged during his brief visit to the city at the invitation of Marcin Leśniowolski (1548–1593) ten years earlier.²⁹ Pernus was a wealthy patrician, who studied in Heidelberg and owned perhaps the largest library in Cracow. He inherited the collections of his father Walerian (d. 1568), humanist and Hebraist, and his wife's uncle Jost Ludwik Decjusz (d. 1545), diplomat, historian, and economical writer. Although eventually Dee and Kelley rented another house, they were in contact with Pernus throughout their stay, as witnessed by several mentions in Dee's diaries. One of those mentions suggests that Kelley was in even closer relations with Pernus, as he corresponded with Łaski (who was away from Cracow) through his intermediation, independently of Dee. On 19 April 1584, he confessed to his master that "he had written to my Lord (by Pernus) that he took our teachers to be deceivers, and wicked, and no good creatures of God."³⁰ Thus he certainly frequented the house of Pernus in Floriańska Street (now number 11). On the other side of the same street, only slightly to the right, there was a very large four-storey house (now number 16) which belonged to Prospero Provana (d. 20 September 1584), a very rich merchant and banker, who converted to Calvinism and became a friend and patron of Antitrinitarians, Anabaptists and all other sorts of free-thinkers and religious dissenters. In his spacious house, he hosted many religious refugees from Italy, including Faustus Socinus and Francesco Pucci. The former lived there before February 1583 and then again from March 1586, but between those dates visited the city frequently, coming from Pawlikowice to participate in religious debates (held in Provana's house) or arrange for his writings to be printed.³¹ Pucci became Provana's resident at the end of 1583 and in March 1584 (when Dee and Kelley arrived) informed his brother in Italy that he was very friendly received.³² Christian Francken also arrived in Cracow in 1583 and it is more than likely that he likewise took advantage of Provana's hospitality.

²⁹ Rafał T. Prinke, "Mit o kandydaturze Sir Philipa Sidneya (1554–1586) do tronu Rzeczypospolitej i okoliczności jego wizyty w Polsce," *Pamiętnik Biblioteki Kórnickiej* 33 (2016): 85–114.

³⁰ Casaubon, *A True & Faithful Relation*, 91; Skinner, *Dr. John Dee's Spiritual Diary*, 252–53; Fenton, *The Diaries of John Dee*, 119.

³¹ Socinus was certainly in Cracow in July and August 1584, and then from mid-September to mid-February; see the chronology of his life in: Ludwik Chmaj, ed., *Faust Socyn: Listy*, vol. 1 (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1959), 344.

³² Caravale, *The Italian Reformation Outside Italy*, 98.

We do not know if Paweł Pernus frequented the informal discussions of the bunch of heretics in the house next door, but for a well-educated man with a large library and keen mind it must have been intellectually attractive to listen to (and perhaps participate in) the unending debates and quarrels that certainly went on among the numerous residents of Provana's house. In a closed circle like that, in strictly private circumstances, even such otherwise horrifying religious concepts as metempsychosis may have been deliberated. Edward Kelley, always eager to make new acquaintances and exercise his keen intellect, must have learned about the "horrible doctrines", which included those of Socinus, Francken, the Polish Brethren, and even reincarnation of souls, from the religious free-thinkers abiding at Provana's house rather than the "wicked spirits", as he told Dee.

Thus it now seems pretty certain that Kelley had contacts with the Polish Brethren and other religious extremists in Cracow, and that he then used some of their ideas to manipulate Dee. But were Socinians also aware of the two English magi and their dealings with angels going on in Cracow? Here we are on a much better-documented ground, as there is a long letter written on 8 January 1586 from Cracow by Faustus Socinus himself to Mateusz Radecki (Radecius, 1540–1612), a member of the radical wing of the Polish Brethren and an ardent nonadorationist from Gdańsk, in a short fragment of which he relates what he knows about the two Englishmen and their relations with Pucci.³³

Francesco Pucci (1543–1597), already mentioned several times above, was another religious dissident and adventurer, wandering around Europe from London to Poland. He knew Socinus from Basel, where they held a public debate in 1577 (also in print), which they continued in Cracow in the autumn of 1584. Pucci did not share antitrinitarian views with most Italian reformers of the time, but preached other heretical ideas, chiliastic and Pelagian, which in turn were not acceptable to Socinus or the Polish Brethren.³⁴

It is not clear when Edward Kelley and then John Dee first met Pucci. The earliest mention in Dee's records comes from a note in his copy of Magini's *Ephemerides* (Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 488) dated 12 July 1585, which the English Doctor received from Pucci (perhaps via Kelley), concerning astrological advice to the Polish wife of a Florentine named Montelupi.³⁵ She was certainly Urszula (1551–1586), a daughter of Wojciech Baza, a doctor of medicine and patrician. Her husband, Sebastian Montelupi (d. 1600), was like-

³³ Faustus Socinus, *Ad amicos Epistolae in quibus variae de rebus divinis questiones expediuntur* (Raków: Sternacius, 1618), 72–172; for the Polish translation see: Chmaj, *Faust Socyn: Listy*.

³⁴ For more on Pucci in English see the excellent monograph: Caravale, *The Italian Reformation Outside Italy*.

³⁵ Evans, *Rudolf II and His World*, 224n6.

wise a patrician and a great friend of both Provana and Pucci.³⁶ Because the *Libri Mysteriorum* records for the whole preceding month are missing, Pucci's acquaintance with Dee may have started some weeks earlier, while Kelley presumably met him through Pernus soon after their first arrival in Cracow (as argued above).³⁷ Later the same month or at the beginning of August (records are missing until 6 August, when they were already in Prague) they allowed Pucci to participate in the séances of communication with angels and then went to Bohemia together. The final result of the companionship was rather unexpected for both Dee and Pucci. The latter was first convinced by the "angels" to convert back to Roman Catholicism (as were Dee and Kelley earlier in Cracow) and seeing in Dee the expected God's messenger from his own millenarian visions, he reported upon their activities to the papal nuncio Filippo Sega (1537–1596), hoping to find in him a promotor of the "angelic" message coming through Kelley and interpreted by Dee. But it did not happen. Quite to the contrary, the nuncio was not only unimpressed, but decided they were dealing with diabolic magic and spreading heresy, and eventually, the two Englishmen were expelled from the Czech Kingdom by the order of Emperor Rudolf II.

Still before leaving Cracow for good, Pucci informed Socinus about the remarkable Englishmen and the spiritual workings they were engaged in, which Socinus in turn related to Radecki:

While Pucci was thus awaiting the coming of Elijah, hoping that he would also get his share in that divine legation, as his book likewise clearly indicates, he met by some accident two Englishmen, who either accompanied or followed palatine Łaski, returning home from England. One of them is a physician, the other one was a magician for some time. Both belong to the adherents of the Papist religion and claim that they have been chosen to carry out the reformation of the Christian world, soon to be begun by God. They boast of having visions (as they call them) of God's angels and holding conversations with them, or actually only one of the two, namely that one who earlier dealt with magic and practiced communion with evil spirits, sees and hears all that, as he claims himself, and informs his companion. That other one diligently notes down and transcribes everything. Pucci joined those two men as their companion when they were leaving here for Prague. He could not be prevented from taking that step by austere and forceful admonishments, which his friends – especially myself – offered to him abundantly. Almost immediately after arriving in Prague, he became a Papist. [...] He wrote lengthy letters to his friends – especially to me – informing about his, as he said, return to the bosom of the Catholic and Holy Church of God and claim-

³⁶ Rita Mazzei, *La trama nascosta: Storie di mercanti e altro secoli XVI–XVII* (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2005), 207–9.

³⁷ Caravale states that their first meeting took place "in the spring of 1585" but does not give a precise source reference: Caravale, *The Italian Reformation Outside Italy*, 102.

ing that he did that on account of the words of admonition and encouragement, unmistakably directed unto him by one of those God's angels, who usually answer the questions of those companions of his.³⁸

This brief relation generally reflects the lengthy report on Dee and Kelley which Pucci wrote for the nuncio Filippo Sega in 1577, discovered and published by Giorgio Caravale.³⁹ It is clear from it that he sincerely believed in the angelic messages, especially when the spirits (or rather Kelley) indicated that he was chosen by God to accomplish the true Reformation of his visions within the Catholic Church, not outside it. Pucci was trying to defend the two magi and their "actions" but the nuncio remained unconvinced. The report also contains one chronological detail of interest to us here, where Pucci states that after he met Dee for the first time, he "did not get to know him well, as they were soon called to Prague", and only when the two magi returned to Cracow, he began to "visit him and consult him more often."⁴⁰ Because Dee and Kelley went to Prague and returned twice, the first acquaintance with Dee must have taken place either in late November or early December 1584 (when they came back for only about a month but Dee's records for this period are missing) or perhaps even before 1 August of the same year, when they left for Prague for the first time. In any case, they must have met at least over half a year (or possibly even a year) earlier than was assumed by scholars before Caravale's discovery.

Summing up, it seems certain that Edward Kelley had some contacts with the Polish Brethren and other heretical thinkers (even secret believers in reincarnation) in Cracow and that he communicated their ideas to Dee as those of "wicked spirits", constructing another one of his many traps to manipulate the credulous Doctor. Also some Polish Brethren, including Faustus Socinus himself, were aware of the presence of the English magi in the city and the nature of their activities. However, unlike Francesco Pucci, they did not express particular interest in the "angelic messages", treating them as evil or at least false, especially since Dee and Kelley were perceived by them as Papists.

³⁸ Socinus, *Ad amicos Epistolae*, 110–11; Chmaj, *Faust Socyn: Listy*, 261–62.

³⁹ Giorgio Caravale, "Autobiografia di un visionario: John Dee e Edward Kelley nel racconto di Francesco Pucci," *Bruniana & Campanelliana* 17, no. 2 (2011): 473–90; Caravale, *The Italian Reformation Outside Italy*, 100–12, 231–35.

⁴⁰ Caravale, *The Italian Reformation Outside Italy*, 104.