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CHARITY OR SOCIAL WELFARE? SOCIAL ASSISTANCE  
IN THE REFORMED CHURCH'S COMMUNITY  
OF THE GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA  
IN THE 18TH CENTURY

The 18th century was a difficult period for the Protestant community in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The previous century had witnessed the success of the Counter-Reformation followed by a parallel antagonistic devoutness of both the Catholics and the Protestants and finally a wave of Catholic xenophobia which in the middle of the 17th century was strengthened by conflicts with the Commonwealth's non-Catholic neighbours. As a result, the Commonwealth's two Protestant communities, the Lutherans and the Reformed Church, were greatly weakened at the beginning of the 18th century and were viewed with increasing animosity by the Catholic majority<sup>1</sup>. Put outside the pale of the community which enjoyed full rights, the dissidents, especially those in Poland, isolated themselves from society and became ever more dependent on aid from their foreign co-religionists<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Feldman, *Sprawa dysydencka za Augusta II (The Issue of Dissidents under Augustus II)*, "Reformacja w Polsce", vol. III, 1924, pp. 89-116; W. Kriegseisen, *Ewangelicy polscy i litewscy w epoce saskiej, 1696-1763. Sytuacja prawna, organizacja i stosunki międzywyznaniowe (Polish and Lithuanian Protestants during the Saxon Period, 1696-1763. Their Legal Situation, Organisation and Interdenominational Relations)*, Warszawa 1996; J. Lukšaitė, *Die reformatorischen Kirchen Litauens bis 1795*, in: *Die reformatorischen Kirchen Litauens. Ein historischer Abriss*, hrsg. von A. Hermann, W. Kahle, Erlangen 1998, pp. 19-136.

<sup>2</sup> The literature concerning Polish Protestants' foreign contacts and the help extended to them is quite rich, though no monograph has been published on this subject. The following are some of the more important studies: N. Hans, *Polish Protestants and Their Connections with England and Holland in the 17th and 18th Century*, "The Slavonic and East European Review", vol. XXXVII, 1958, pp.

Especially difficult, but also interesting, was the situation of the Protestants in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, above all of the Reformed Church, a relatively numerous group there. After the fall of the Reformed Church's Community in Little Poland<sup>3</sup> and the serious weakening of Great Poland's Community — once an affiliate of the Bohemian Brethren<sup>4</sup> — this northeasternmost Church in Europe, a Church consisting of followers of the current instituted by John Calvin, was, on the whole, separated from the Reformed Church's main European centres in Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland. Contacts with Prussia, then ruled by the Reformed Hohenzollerns, were the only possibility, but by maintaining too close links with Prussia the Reformed Church would have run the risk of being suspected of a co-operation harmful to the Commonwealth's interests. Finally, in 1736, the Sejm forbade dissidents to maintain foreign contacts. Living far away from the Protestant centres, being scattered over the vast territory of the north-eastern Commonwealth and surrounded by ill-disposed Catholics, the members of the Reformed Church in what is now Lithuania and Belarus could not always rely on favourable co-operation with Lutherans and Orthodox believers<sup>5</sup>. They lived in what was believed to be the *ultima Thule* and could rely only on themselves<sup>6</sup>.

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196–220; W. Meyrat, *Die Unterstützung der Glaubensgenossen in Ausland durch die reformierten Orte im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, Bern 1941, pp. 233–243; G. Rhode, *Brandenburg-Preußen und die Protestanten in Polen 1640–1740. Ein Jahrhundert preußischer Schutzpolitik für eine unterdrückte Minderheit*, Leipzig 1941; T. Wotschke, *Aus der Berichten eines Warschauer Gesandten*, "Deutsche Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für Polen", 1926, VIII, pp. 49–92; *idem*, *Die Hilferufe nach der Schweiz*, *ibidem*, 1929, XV, Sonderabdruck, Posen 1929.

<sup>3</sup> M. Wajsbium, *Ex registro arianismi. Szkice z dziejów upadku protestantyzmu w Małopolsce (Ex registro arianismi. Essays in the History of the Decline of Protestantism in Little Poland)*, Kraków 1937–48.

<sup>4</sup> J. Bielecka, *Bracia czeszy w Lesznie. Organizacja i działalność, 1550–1817 (Bohemian Brethren in Leszno. Their Organisation and Activity, 1550–1817)*, "Rocznik Leszczyński", vol. II, 1978 (printed in 1979), pp. 154–173; J. Dworzaczkowa, *Bracia czeszy w Wielkopolsce w XVI i XVII wieku (Bohemian Brethren in Great Poland in the 16th and 17th Centuries)*, Warszawa 1997, pp. 165–191; *eadem*, *Reformacja i kontrreformacja w Wielkopolsce (The Reformation and Counter-Reformation in Great Poland)*, Poznań 1995, pp. 88–114, 343–362.

<sup>5</sup> U. Augustyniak, *Stosunek ewangelików reformowanych (kalwinistów) do innych wyznań w świetle akt synodów Jednoty Litewskiej z lat 1611–1686 (The Attitude of the Reformed Church (Calvinists) to Other Denominations in the Light of the Acts of the Lithuanian Community Synod, 1611–1686)*, in: *Stosunki międzywyznaniowe w Europie Środkowej i Wschodniej w XIV–XVII wieku*, ed. M. Dygo, S. Gawlas, H. Grala, Warszawa 2002, pp. 81–93.

It would therefore be interesting to examine the question of charity in that endangered community which, not without reason, regarded itself as a community deserving care and assistance *in corpore*<sup>7</sup>. Such an examination is possible for sources, especially the decisions of provincial and district synods as well as documents from the archives of individual churches, are, on the whole, well preserved. The source materials used below come mainly from the archives of the authorities of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's Reformed Church, now kept in the Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences in Vilnius. In the 19th century, as the activity of individual Reformed congregations was dying down, especially in Byelorussia, the Reformed Church's archives assembled a wealth of documents concerning not only the central authorities of the Church but also individual parishes<sup>8</sup>.

The parish materials are all the more valuable since — as in the whole of European Christendom — it was the parishes that were expected to provide social assistance, a function which was regarded as equivalent to pastoral and educational duties<sup>9</sup>. A well

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<sup>6</sup> The results of soundings seem to indicate that in the 18th century, in particular in its second half, the Protestant public opinion in Western Europe was much better informed about the Protestants in Poland than about those in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The latter were sometimes ignored in information surveys published in the press, handbooks and various kinds of almanacs brought out in the Protestant countries of Western Europe. W. Kriegseisen, *W oczach Zachodu. Ewangelicy polscy i litewscy w XVIII wieku a szwajcarska i niderlandzka opinia publiczna. Kontakty — inspiracje — publikacje (In the Eyes of the West. Polish and Lithuanian Protestants in the 18th Century and Public Opinion in Switzerland and the Netherlands. Contacts — Inspirations — Publications)*, in: *Między barokiem a oświeceniem. Nowe spojrzenie na czasy saskie*, eds. K. Stasiukiewicz and S. Achremczyk, Olsztyn 1996, pp. 85–95.

<sup>7</sup> In the 17th century Protestants in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania appealed for help mainly to English, Scottish and Swiss co-religionists. W. Kriegseisen, *Podróże i projekty pastora Bogusława Jelitko Kopijewicza (The Journeys and Plans of Pastor Bogusław Jelitko Kopijewicz)*, in: *Ludzie — kontakty — kultura XVI–XVIII w. Prace ofiarowane Profesor Marii Boguckiej*, eds. J. Kowecki and J. Tazbir, Warszawa 1997, pp. 246–252; T. Wotschke, *Zwei schweizer Kollekte für Litauen*, "Deutsche Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für Polen", 1938, XXXIV, pp. 208–209.

<sup>8</sup> W. Gizbert-Studnicki, *Rys historyczny Archiwum i Biblioteki Synodu Ew.-Ref w Wilnie (Historical Outline of the Archives and Library of the Reformed Church's Synod in Vilnius)*, Wilno 1926; M. Kosman, *Archiwum Jednoty Litewskiej (Archives of the Lithuanian Community)*, "Archeion", vol. LXI, 1974, pp. 81–102.

<sup>9</sup> Ch. H. Parker, *The reformation of community. Social welfare and Calvinist charity in Holland 1572–1620*, Cambridge 1998, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern History, has examined the social and welfare activities of the Reformed Church's parishes, taking Holland as an example. As regards the Polish-Lithua-

organised Reformed Church parish was expected to have not only a church and a school but also an almshouse, that is, a hospice. The oldest information on a Reformed hospice foundation in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is the record of a bequest made by Piotr Bogatko in 1559 for an almshouse at Bielica<sup>10</sup>. The model of parish social assistance shaped in Western Europe during the great reform of social welfare in the 16th century was adopted in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as early as the first half of the 17th century, as is testified to by the foundation set up in 1638 by the Brześć country (Brest Litovsk) judge Piotr Kochlewski, a close collaborator of the Lithuanian grand Hetman and Voievode of Vilnius Krzysztof Radziwiłł, for the community at Nurzec, his hereditary estate. In 1631 Kochlewski founded there “a Protestant church, to the honour and glory of the triune God, with a presbytery, a school and a hospice”. What is more, the Protestant hospice at Nurzec in Podlachia was to consist of two separate buildings, each for a different social group, “one for the poor of a higher condition who live without begging and the other for common, ordinary beggars”<sup>11</sup>. The founder must have wanted to separate the inmates with adequate means at their disposal and give them better conditions than those provided for people who had to live on alms. Similarly, in 1630 the hospice (of the Reformed community) at Sidra received an endowment from Jan Hołowczyński, the Lithuanian Cupbearer, and his wife Helena née Wołowicz, who bequeathed to the hospice “a sum which would allow it all the time to sustain, feed and clothe six poor persons”<sup>12</sup>. It was assumed that the hospices would give a shelter

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nian Commonwealth, more attention has been paid to the Lutherans, see S. Salmowicz, *Życie religijne luteranów toruńskich w XVII-XVIII w. (The Religious Life of Lutherans in Toruń in the 17th and 18th Centuries)*, “Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce”, vol. XXXIV, 1989, pp. 115-130; T. Wotschke, *Die Liebestätigkeit für die Posener Gemeinden im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, Hamburg s.d., offprint in Warsaw University Library (henceforward referred to as WUL).

<sup>10</sup> According to the list of documents of the Bielica church, the register drawn up in 1692 by the Rev. Samuel Lutomirski contained a copy of the confirmation by the Mozyrz starost Jerzy Radziwiłł of P. Bogatko's bequest of 7.2.1559 for the Bielica hospice, MS in the Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (henceforward referred to as LLAS), ERS 848, p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> Bequest made by the country judge of Brześć Piotr Kochlewski for the church at Nurzec, Brześć Litewski (Brest Litovsk) 10.10.1638. *Akty wydawayemyye Vilen-skoyu Arkhieograficheskoyu Kommissiyeyu*, vol. XII: *Akty glavnogo litovskogo tribunala*, Wilna 1883, pp. 447-452.

<sup>12</sup> Słuck, 2.10.1630, *ibidem*, pp. 445-447.

not only for people without any means but also for those who had some means at their disposal but were compelled by fate to seek assistance. Catholic pressure, which kept increasing in the first half of the 17th century, may have induced the Protestant élites to set up places of refuge for poor co-religionists, who were most affected by this pressure.

If hospices were set up by Protestant congregations in such small places as Nurzec, Sidra and Bielica, it is obvious that efforts must have been made to have them in larger centres. An inventory made at Krzysztof Radziwiłł's request in 1627 shows that in addition to two Reformed churches and a school, Słuck also had a hospice endowed with plots in the town and a garden with meadow land on its outskirts. The existence of the hospice was secured by the bequests made by Ludwika Karolina née Radziwiłł in 1687 and 1693<sup>13</sup>. In the capital city, Vilnius, a Reformed hospice was founded before 1598 by the Vilnius Governor, Jan Bolesławowicz Świrski; it functioned thanks to the endowment made by him<sup>14</sup>. Wars and religious tumults interrupted the work of the hospice several times, but it always resumed its activity and existed until the end of the 18th century<sup>15</sup>. Of course not all bequests to hospices survived such a long time. We have mentioned the bequest made in 1687 by Ludwika Karolina Radziwiłł who secured the existence of the churches, schools and hospices of the Lithuanian Reformed Church in her hereditary estates, later called "Neuburg estates". Records concerning Zabłudów,

<sup>13</sup> A survey of the sites belonging to the church, school and hospice and lying on the shores of a pond in the Słucza river in Nowe Miasto, made by us, Stanisław Krzyżkowski, Hrehory Mirski and Daniel Naborowski on 20.7.1627 at the request of Krzysztof Radziwiłł for the superintendent of the Nowogródek district Andrzej Dobrzański of Dobojuw, *ibidem*, pp. 440-442; confirmation and bequest for Reformed churches at Słuck, Kopyl, Kojdanów, Lubcz, Bielica, Sielec and Doku-dów, Berlin 20.6.1687, *ibidem*, pp. 520-524. Bequest made by the Princess of Neuburg Ludwika Karolina née Radziwiłł for a hospice at Słuck, Brzeg 5.12.1683, *ibidem*, pp. 531-532.

<sup>14</sup> Świrski bequeathed to the Vilnius hospice 1,200 *kopas* (1 *kopa* = 60 coins) of Lithuanian groschen which the grand Lithuanian Hetman Krzysztof "Thunderbolt" Radziwiłł owed him. The commitment was taken over by Krzysztof Radziwiłł Jr who turned over to the community a house, called Constantine house, in Zamkowa Street near St. John's church, on account of the debt. Record of the bequest made by Krzysztof Radziwiłł to the Vilnius Reformed community, Vilnius 3.8.1609, *ibidem*, pp. 431-433.

<sup>15</sup> John III's ordinance endorsing the royal commission's decree which ordered an examination of the Vilnius tumult of 2.4.1628 and allowed the ruined hospice of the Vilnius community to be reconstructed, *ibidem*, pp. 528-531.

Orla and Węgrów in Podlachia, and Słuck, Kopyl, Kojdanów, Lubcz, Bielica, Sielec and Dokudów in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania have survived. Of these places the hospices at Orla, Lubcz, Sielec and Dokudów no longer existed in the 18th century, and the hospices at Sidra and Nurzec were on the decline<sup>16</sup>.

The situation of other Reformed Communities in the Commonwealth was similar. A hospice naturally depended on its parish for its existence. In Poland, Protestant hospices were set up as early as the 16th century; in the Lublin region, for instance, six hospices were established in that century, but as Protestantism grew weaker and weaker and its churches in Little Poland declined one after another, the hospices existing there were liquidated too<sup>17</sup>. The situation was similar in Great Poland<sup>18</sup>, where Leszno was the only centre of the Reformed Church to keep a hospice almost without a break<sup>19</sup>. In Warsaw, where Protestant parishes had officially existed only since 1768, the Protestants

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 524–528 and 520–524. The hospice at Sidra must have declined when the land was taken over by the Lithuanian Deputy Chancellor Stanisław Szczuka, a Catholic, but it still existed in 1736 when Teodora Grothusowa née Gruzewska, wife of the Samogitian Castellan, bequeathed 1,000 złotys to it. Records of the provincial synod at Kojdanów, 21.8.1736, MS LLAS, ERS 103, unpaginated copy, canon VIII. The church itself survived until the end of the 18th century but its possibilities were restricted, cf. J. Łukaszewicz, *Dzieje kościołów wyznania helweckiego w Litwie (A History of Churches of the Helvetic Denomination in Lithuania)*, vol. II, Poznań 1843, pp. 66–69. The hospice of the Nurzec congregation still existed in 1694 under the direction of the Rev. Jan Krzysztof Kraiński and the patronage of Barbara Czyżowa, wife of the Smoleńsk Master of the pantry. J. K. Kraiński, *Diariusz różnych rzeczy*, MS WUL, SER 1178, p. 52.

<sup>17</sup> Z. Góralski, *Opieka społeczna i szpitalnictwo w dawnej Polsce (na przykładzie Lubelszczyzny) (Social Welfare and Hospitals in Old Poland, with the Lublin region serving as an example)*, "Zeszyty Historyczne UW", vol. III, 1963, p. 90. Cf. L. Wachholz, *O szpitalach innowierców w Krakowie. Szkic historyczny (Dissenters' Hospitals in Cracow. Historical Outline)*, in: *Archiwum Historii i Filozofii Medycyny*, vol. II, Kraków 1925, pp. 169–176; P. Gach, *Sieć szpitali w diecezji krakowskiej w połowie XVIII wieku (The Network of Hospitals in the Cracow Diocese in the Middle of the 18th Century)*, "Roczniki Humanistyczne", vol. XXI, 1973, pp. 231–259.

<sup>18</sup> M. Surdacki, *Protestanci a rozwój szpitali w Wielkopolsce Zachodniej w XVII i XVIII wieku (The Protestants and the Development of Hospitals in Western Great Poland in the 17th and 18th Centuries)*, "Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce", vol. XXXVI, 1991, pp. 193–208. Surdacki's later work cannot be used in research into the religious aspects of social assistance for it does not take denominational division into account; *idem*, *Opieka społeczna w Wielkopolsce Zachodniej w XVII i XVIII wieku (Social Assistance in Western Great Poland in the 17th and 18th Centuries)*, Lublin 1992.

<sup>19</sup> Records of the Protestant Hospice at Leszno, State Archives in Poznań, Documents of Bohemian Brethren N° 2375–2380.

managed to set up a modest hospice near their cemetery in Leszno Street as early as 1736<sup>20</sup>. This hospice, shared by Lutherans and the Reformed congregations, soon turned out to be too small; the Reformed Protestants set to organise their own hospice only in 1777, after officially stabilising the existence of their Warsaw parish and opening their church in Leszno Street. However, their work never left the stage of planning<sup>21</sup>.

It is characteristic that although the influence and significance of the Protestant community declined in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, as it did in Poland, the most important parishes of the Lithuanian Reformed Church managed to keep up their hospices until the end of the Noblemen's Commonwealth. This was probably due to the fact that the legal situation of non-Catholics was much better in Lithuania than in Poland. As late as 1801 there were still ten hospices in the four then existing districts (dioceses) of the Community. In the Samogitian district there were hospices at Birże, Kiejdany and Kielmy; the trans-Niemen district had a hospice at Bielica, the Byelorussian district had hospices at Kojdanów, Kopyl, Kopyś and Słuck, and the Vilnius district, at Vilnius and Żuprany<sup>22</sup>. In view of the fact that in 1754 the Reformed Church had only 24 regular parishes with their own churches and a permanent staff of priests<sup>23</sup> and that the enforced equality of rights under Stanislaus Augustus only slightly improved the situation, the maintenance of 10 hospices was undoubtedly a success.

I have managed to find information on some of the abovementioned hospices. Unfortunately, there are no data on hospices in such important centres as Birże and Vilnius. But fragments of records concerning the hospice at Kojdanów (now Dzierzynsk), 40 km south-west of Minsk, have survived. The town of Kojdanów, which lay on the Radziwills' "Neuburg estates", was the seat of the superintendents of the Lithuanian Community's Byelorussian district and in addition to an imposing fortified church, it

<sup>20</sup> W. Kriegseisen, *Ewangelicy warszawscy w epoce saskiej (Warsaw Protestants during the Saxon Period)*, "Rocznik Warszawski" 2000, vol. XXVIII, pp. 15–32.

<sup>21</sup> An ordinance of the Reformed Church's Warsaw congregation of 13.3.1777 said that the Church Board should try to obtain money and devote it, first and foremost, to buy "a suitable plot or a convenient building for a hospice". MS WUL, SER 1228, pp. 11–12.

<sup>22</sup> MS LLAS, ERS 833, unpaginated.

<sup>23</sup> W. Kriegseisen, *Ewangelicy polscy i litewscy*, p. 107.

also had a Protestant school and hospice. We do not know when the Kojdanów hospice was set up; it may have been founded by the founder of the local church, the Lithuanian Grand Hetman Mikołaj Radziwiłł the Red, as early as the 16th century. The 1663 description does not mention the hospice<sup>24</sup> but we know from records of the church's board that it was in operation in 1700<sup>25</sup>. The 1728 inventory of the church's immovables mentions a hospice building; it burned down soon afterwards but was rebuilt and had to be repaired in 1749. At that time this was a wooden building; it stood before a gate to the church grounds which were surrounded by a defence wall. The hospice had two rooms, each with a recess; they were equipped with tile stoves and simple furniture (benches, wardrobes). The small bedroom adjoining the entrance hall also had a stove and an open fire. The rooms and recesses had glass windows<sup>26</sup>. The inmates seem to have had decent conditions; it is known that three persons lived in this building in 1728–1733. The church's records of 1746 mention two "hospice women", Kurnatowska and Zdanowiczowa, both noblewomen, who in addition to accommodation, fuel, etc. received 60 zlotys a year each<sup>27</sup>. The last description of the Kojdanów hospice known to us comes from 1794; it was then a different, much larger building for eight lodgers. It was called the old building; it must therefore have been built in the 1770s, when new life was infused into the Community by the restoration of equal rights. The Kojdanów hospice erected at that time must have been meant for a greater number of inmates. It had eight rooms heated by four stoves in the main corridor as well as a separate kitchen and a bakery with two clay ovens. The building was well equipped: there were locks on the doors of all rooms, the rooms were floored in wood and had glass windows. The inventory

<sup>24</sup> J. Łukasiewicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 37–38.

<sup>25</sup> On 31.5.1700 the Church Board, composed of Teofil Żarnowiec, Mikołaj Cedrowski, Jan and Albrycht Karmanowski, Aleksander Miłośnicki, Józef Świda and the Rev. Michał Trzebicki-Taubmann, adopted a decision to set the financial matters of the hospice in order, *Sesyje zboru kojdanowskiego 1700–1775*, MS LLAS, ERS 456, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Inwentarz zborowy kojdanowski, 16.10.1749*, Records of the Kojdanów Reformed Church community, MS LLAS, ERS 40, pp. 189–192.

<sup>27</sup> Three inmates were paid 50 zlotys a year each. *Sesyje zboru kojdanowskiego 1700–1775*, MS LLAS, ERS 456, p. 10. Resolution of the synodal commission after an inspection of the Kojdanów church, 21.4.1746, Records of the Kojdanów congregation, MS LLAS, ERS 69, pp. 63–65.



also mentions furniture: a trestle-table, a small table with a drawer, etc.<sup>28</sup>

A similar hospice for Protestant widows may have existed at Sluck as early as the 17th century. According to the inventory of 1685, this largest Protestant centre in Byelorussia had two hospice buildings, "a small old house for hospice inmates in the school square" with only two rooms and "a large house at the corner in front of the church, which had been erected for widows". The latter, obviously destined for wealthier clients, had many rooms with fireplaces, stoves, glass windows, wood-covered floors and similar conveniences<sup>29</sup>. However, the two Sluck hospices were liquidated in the 18th century, for the inventory of the Reformed church's immovables of 1791 says that Sluck lacked hospice buildings. The beneficiaries of the church, that is persons maintained by the community, lived in private houses built on plots offered free of charge by the parish<sup>30</sup>.

At the end of the 18th century the situation was a little better at Bielica, 30 km south of Lida. The hospice there functioned throughout the 18th century and in 1791 the new Reformed church built by the Zakroczym cupbearer Bogusław Mniński in 1773 had not only a presbytery and houses for "auditors", that is, parishioners, but also a hospice built in traditional style. Although this wooden building had a porch, its entrance hall had a dirt floor and the house had only one room with a recess, a pantry and a malt-chamber. It also had a small kitchen garden<sup>31</sup>.

Throughout the 18th century there was also a Protestant hospice attached to Poland's easternmost Protestant church at Kopyś, on the eastern bank of the Dnieper between Orsza and Szklów. In the first half of the 18th century this was a wooden building standing just behind the church; in 1745 the hospice was moved "into an old house of the late Mrs. Żarnowcowa" near the church, in a street which led to the Dnieper. It had only one room, a kitchen and housekeeping quarters<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> Inventory of 30.6.1794, Records of the Kojdanów congregation, *ibidem*, pp. 7–8.

<sup>29</sup> Inventory of 1685, Records of the Sluck congregation, MS LLAS, ERS 91, p. 76.

<sup>30</sup> Inventory of 1791, *ibidem*, p. 49.

<sup>31</sup> *Inwentarz wszelkiego na placach zboru bielickiego zabudowania zboru samego (Inventory of all buildings on the property belonging to the Bielica Reformed Church community)*, 9.3.1791, MS LLAS, ERS 848, pp. 1–14.

<sup>32</sup> *Inventories of immovables from the years 1718, 1730, 1745*, Records of the Kopyś Reformed Church congregation, MS LLAS, ERS 516, pp. 179, 185, 208.

A similar building existed also at Kopyl between Nieśwież and Sluck. The church founded there by the Radziwills in the 16th century maintained a hospice which is frequently mentioned in 18th century synodal records. In the second half of the 18th century the building must have been dilapidated, for a member of the church board, Major Marcyan Petrozelin, declared in 1781 that he wanted "to erect *de nova radice* a proper hospice at Kopyl at his own cost". Petrozelin died in 1782 and in 1783 his heirs announced that construction work had been started and the hospice would soon be finished. But we have no information on what it looked like<sup>33</sup>.

Throughout the 18th century the Reformed congregation at Birże maintained a "bereaved persons' house" (for widows). In 1751 the house was so dilapidated that the inmates were transferred into a school, and in 1757 the house underwent capital repair<sup>34</sup>.

The community at Żuprany, which functioned under the constant efficient care of the Wołk-Łaniewski family, ran a hospice which was founded in 1703 by Andrzej (?) Kuncewicz. In 1720 the hospice had three inmates: Mrs. Daniel Czyżowa from a well known noble family, Mrs. Rodziewiczowa and Mrs. Winkiewiczowa<sup>35</sup>.

This information brings us to another question we would like to present here in brief. Who were the inmates of the Protestant hospices in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania? Fortunately, a great deal of information on this subject has survived, for in the 18th century admission of an inmate to a Reformed hospice required the consent of the Community's authorities, and expressions of consent can be found among what is known as memoranda, that is, less important synodal decisions.

In the 18th century an overwhelming majority of inmates in the hospices of the Reformed Church were women, especially widows. It is interesting that synodal documents frequently provide information on candidates' civil status and state of health

<sup>33</sup> Records of provincial synods held at Kiejdany in 1781 and at Vilnius in 1783, MS LLAS, ERS 1055, pp. 174, 197.

<sup>34</sup> Post-synodal session of the trans-Wilia (Neris) district, Birże 4.9.1757, *Księga dystryktu zawilejskiego 1736-1781*, MS LLAS, ERS 1132, p. 172.

<sup>35</sup> Records of a provincial synod held at Żuprany, June 1703, MS LLAS, ERS 103, unpaginated copy *Sesycja we zborze żuprańskim odprawowana, 8.4.1720*, *Księga sesyjnalna zboru żuprańskiego 1720-1791*, MS LLAS, ERS 826, p. 2.

but pay less attention to their financial situation. One gets the impression that persons unable to work because of illness, age or social situation (e.g. pastors' widows) qualified for admission. Poverty as such does not seem to have been an adequate qualification for receiving permanent church assistance, even when the applicant was reduced to poverty through no fault of his/her own.

It was the secular authorities of the Church which, in agreement with the district superintends who supervised the parish hospices *ex officio*, decided who would be enrolled for a permanent benefit and placed in a hospice. The number of applicants for permanent assistance usually exceeded the Community's possibilities and the decision had often to be put off until information was obtained on the Church's financial resources<sup>36</sup>. Frequently the reply consisted only of a promise that "the first available" place would be allocated to the applicant<sup>37</sup>. Such a decision of the Church authorities did not always mean that the applicant had to wait for some one's death; inmates of hospices sometimes vacated their room of their own free will. They moved to another hospice which probably offered better conditions<sup>38</sup>. It can be imagined how many conflicts must have arisen in those closed communities over a better place in a hospice and better services.

In addition to widows, another group of permanent inmates of hospices consisted of disabled persons, mainly women, who, being disabled, could not count on getting married. There is not much information on this subject in synodal documents for, as

<sup>36</sup> Session of the Kojdanów church board 2.1. 1752, *Księga zboru kojdanowskiego 1700–1775*, MS LLAS, ERS 456, pp. 35–36.

<sup>37</sup> In 1747 the Kojdanów church board promised to place two widows in the hospice: "Mrs. Bukrabina is hereby promised to be given the first vacancy ... a promise is hereby also given to Mrs. Kozarynowa, recently widowed, that she will be admitted to the hospice in due time. Mrs. Bukrabina is to be given accommodation *sine beneficio*". The latter got an allowance in 1747 after the death of Mrs. Pawłowiczowa, *ibidem*, pp. 34, 45.

<sup>38</sup> In 1772 the above-mentioned Judyta Winckiewiczowa moved from the Żuprany hospice to the hospice in Vilnius and the allowance she was receiving in Żuprany was awarded to Mrs. Raniszewska, Records of the Żuprany provincial synod kept from 20.6. 1722, MS LLAS, ERS 103, unpaginated copy, memorandum 10; in 1756 the allowance Mrs. Kurnatowska was receiving in the Kojdanów hospice was taken over by Mrs. Wilamowiczowa, and her allowance was in turn given to the Konarski brothers, when Mrs. Bukrabina was expelled from the hospice her place was given to the sister of the deceased Mrs. Pawłowiczowa, *Księga zboru kojdanowskiego 1700–1775*, MS LLAS, ERS 456, pp. 62–63.

a rule, it was the duty of the family to look after their sick or disabled members, but poor widows, especially pastors' widows, were regarded as the natural wards of the Church. However, we know of some handicapped women from prosperous noble families who, for reasons unknown to us, found themselves at the mercy of their community, e.g. Miss Glińska, who in 1720 was under the care of the Vilnius congregation, received a 50 złoty disability benefit a year<sup>39</sup>. Similarly, the trans-Wilia (Neris-Birże) district paid at first 60 and then even 80 złotys a year to "Miss Mejerówna, because of her disability"<sup>40</sup>. Miss Mejerówna came from a relatively prosperous family of patrons of the diocese who at that time held church property on lease, most probably not without benefit<sup>41</sup>.

Orphans were the last category of the inmates of hospices. It is surprising that they are not frequently mentioned in synodal and church records; the synod of the trans-Wilia (Neris) district complained in 1737 that alongside other persons, there were three orphans in the Birże hospice who were receiving no benefits<sup>42</sup>. This seems to indicate that orphans were placed in hospices together with widows. It is worth pointing out that the documents accessible to us do not mention foundlings. But we do not know the most numerous documents, those of peasant congregations from, for instance, Birże, Popiel and Szwabiszki, where the problem must have been conspicuous.

In the 1720s attempts were made to solve the problem of care of orphaned children by persuading wealthy co-religionists to make bequests for this purpose. The most characteristic example was the foundation set up in 1724 by 17-year old Rachela Rychlicka, daughter of a Troki equerry, who "being an orphan, felt compassion for orphans, and assisted by her honourable guardians, deposited a promisory note at the Archivum Vilnense, bequeathing 1,000 florins to the orphanage of the Żuprany

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<sup>39</sup> Records of the Sluck provincial synod, kept from 10.7.1720, MS LLAS, ERS 103, unpaginated copy, memorandum 65.

<sup>40</sup> Records of the trans-Wilia (Neris) district's synod, Birże 28.5.1760 and 24.4.1767, MS LLAS, ERS 1132, pp. 184 and 227.

<sup>41</sup> The best known representative of the family was Jan Mejer (Meier) who signed himself "de Wolda" and used the title of Starodub guardian and later Sanok Steward (d. 1788), S. K o n a r s k i, *Szlachta kalwińska w Polsce (Calvinist Nobility in Poland)*, Warszawa 1992, reprint, p. 188.

<sup>42</sup> Records of the district synod, Birże 12-13.6.1737, MS LLAS, ERS 1132, p. 10.

church"<sup>43</sup>. However, there is no further mention of the orphanage at Żuprany in the synodal documents. It can therefore be assumed that either the foundation did not materialise or the money was put at the disposal of the local hospice which, like the other hospices mentioned by us, was a refuge for both adults and children.

Nor have we managed to find out what happened to the special foundation for the maintenance and endowment of 12 poor Protestant girls, a foundation announced in 1729 by Anna Oskierczyna née Grabowska, wife of the Nowogródek Castellan. In 1730 the foundation was mentioned (in the name of the donor) by Tomasz Wolan, the Oszmiana cupbearer, but it was not heard of later<sup>44</sup>. As a rule, the problem was solved extemporaneously by allocating benefits to the orphans of persons rated high by the Church; for instance, the synod at Bielica which discussed the foundation for indigenous girls decided that an allowance should be paid to "the little daughter of Mrs. Konstancja Pokornowa, granddaughter of a pious collator"<sup>45</sup>.

Throughout the 18th century several dozen zlotys a year were spent on each widow or orphan in a hospice. At the beginning of the century a benefit sometimes amounted to no more than 20 zlotys but, as a rule, the synods allocated allowances worth 50 zlotys<sup>46</sup>. The amount paid probably depended in each case on factors unknown to us. For instance, we do not know why Mrs. Zabłocka, an old woman admitted to the hospice at Żuprany in 1750, was allocated a 60 zloty allowance while ten years later a poor widow with two children, Mrs. Piasecka, placed in the Kojdanów hospice, was given only 50 zlotys<sup>47</sup>. Of all hospice

<sup>43</sup> Records of the Żuprany provincial synod, 1724, MS LLAS, ERS 103, unpaginated copy, canon VI. The daughter of the Troki equerry Aleksander Rychlicki from Korewizski and Zuzanna née Wolk was baptised on 17.5.1707; in 1732 she married Jakub Czerski. It can be assumed that the donation for the orphans of the Żuprany hospice was initiated by the Wolk-Laniewski family, protectors of the church and most probably Miss Rychlicka-s guardians, S. Konarski, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

<sup>44</sup> Records of the provincial synod, Bielica June 1730, MS LLAS, ERS 103, unpaginated copy, memorandum 79.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, memorandum 51.

<sup>46</sup> In 1702 the inmates of the Bielica hospice — Bierkowa and Biegańska — were to receive 20 zlotys each. Records of the Bielica synod, 30.7.–9.8.1702, *ibidem*, memorandum 47; however, the widows Mrs. Stefan Pawłowicz (in 1709) and Mrs. Prakseda Bukowska (in 1730) received a 50 zloty allowance, *ibidem*, memorandum 8 of 1709 and memorandum 17 of 1730.

inmates it was Joanna Nerlichówna from the Szwabiszki hospice who in 1766 was awarded the highest permanent benefit known to us (80 złotych)<sup>48</sup>.

In return for accommodation and maintenance money the inmates of Protestant hospices in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were obliged to attend religious services regularly and sometimes to carry out ancillary work in churches. In 1740 female inmates of the Kojdanów hospice were placed under the obligation not only to recite hymns and psalms regularly (under the direction of persons able to read) but also to come to services as early as possible and sit on the benches assigned to them<sup>49</sup>. A year before, these women also had the obligation to keep the church tidy. This must have been resisted, for a decision taken by the community's board contained the warning that benefits would be suspended in case of insubordination<sup>50</sup>.

The inmates were also used to keep watch over churches, especially in places where the congregation was very small. In the first half of the 18th century, the state of the church at Dubinki, where Mikołaj Radziwiłł the Red and the Vilnius Castellan Janusz Radziwiłł were buried, gave the Community's authorities cause for concern. At the beginning of the 18th century there was no permanent pastor at Dubinki and there were no believers there either. In 1709, the aged Jan Dyjakiewicz, who lived near the church, was allocated 100 złotych a year to look after it<sup>51</sup>. A few years later another elderly Protestant, Marcin Czapracki, was sent to Dubinki. In return for accommodation and 50 złotych a year, he was to look after the church. The services were to be conducted by the Reverend Bogusław Kopijewicz, who was expected to commute between Vilnius and Dubinki<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> Records of the provincial session at Żuprany, 18–21.5.1750, MS LLAS, ERS 904, p. 125; Session of the Kojdanów community, 11.6.1764, *Księga zboru kojdanowskiego 1700–1775*, MS LLAS, ERS 456, pp. 87, 90.

<sup>48</sup> Records of the trans-Wilia (Neris) district's synod, Birże 2.5.1766, MS LLAS, ERS 1132, p. 219.

<sup>49</sup> Session of the Kojdanów community, *Księga zboru kojdanowskiego 1700–1775*, MS LLAS, ERS 456, p. 15.

<sup>50</sup> Session of the Kojdanów community 28.12.1739, *ibidem*, p. 13.

<sup>51</sup> Records of the provincial synod held at Bielica, 4.7.1709, MS LLAS, ERS 103, unpaginated copy, memorandum 1. In 1708 Katarzyna Grabowska née Oborska, wife of Vitebsk's master of the pantry and judge at Wilkomierz, bequeathed 1,000 złotych for the maintenance of the Dubinki church, Records of the Kiejdany provincial synod, kept from 4.9.1708, *ibidem*, canon 16.

The inmates of the Lithuanian Reformed Community's hospices gave their guardians all sorts of trouble. The documents contain general complaints about the misbehaviour of inmates, about inmates leaving their hospice, about the admission of unauthorised relatives, about drunkenness, scandal-mongering and disobedience to the supervising pastors. In 1702, in the wake of such complaints, the provincial synod at Bielica adopted a canon concerning "Admission of widows to hospices", which decreed that the parish hospices would only admit persons who could guarantee they would lead a good life and observe the rules, and persons "who really have no other means of keeping alive"<sup>53</sup>. But these resolutions only confirmed the helplessness of the Church authorities in this matter. This is testified to by a resolution adopted by the synod held at Bielica in 1718 in which the inmates of the local hospice were exhorted "not to receive guests of the opposite religion (Catholics — W.K.), not to turn hospices into inns and guest-houses, not to engage in gossip and useless occupations and to behave as befits honest women"<sup>54</sup>.

When in 1768 the Żuprany community came across "disgraceful excesses" in its hospice, it asked the provincial synod to lay down rules for the hospices. However, we do not know if such rules were established<sup>55</sup>. In practice, the only effective punishment was to deprive inmates of their benefits. Sometimes inmates were warned they would be expelled from the hospice, but this punishment does not seem to have been resorted to. In 1748, Mr. Piątkowski, an inmate of the hospice at Kojdanów, was deprived of his benefit for his scandalous drinking habits. A similar punishment was soon administered to Mrs. Bukrabina, Piątkowski's drinking companion<sup>56</sup>. The lack of information about expulsions from hospices may be attributed to humanitarian considerations but also to the fact that expelled inmates could be offered

<sup>52</sup> Records of the provincial synod held at Bielica, kept from 25.6.1713, *ibidem*, memorandum 34.

<sup>53</sup> Records of the provincial synod held at Bielica, 30.7.-9.8.1702, *ibidem*, canon 16.

<sup>54</sup> Records of the provincial synod held at Żuprany, 26-27.6.1718, *ibidem*, memorandum 7.

<sup>55</sup> Session of the Żuprany Reformed Church community 22.5.1768, *Księga sesyjonalna zboru żuprańskiego 1720-1791*, MS LLAS, ERS 826, p. 24.

<sup>56</sup> Session of the Kojdanów community, 1748, *Księga zboru kojdanowskiego 1700-1775*, MS LLAS, ERS 456, p. 46.

protection by Catholics if they agreed to convert, or, what would have been even worse, if they provided information on the problems and inner conflicts of their hospice.

Another form of aid, which however was more rarely applied by Lithuanian Protestants in the 18th century, was allocation of a permanent allowance without forcing the person in question to live in a hospice. Such aid was given to persons regarded as fully trustworthy who, though in a bad financial situation, had accommodation and some income. This kind of aid was usually extended in various forms to clergymen's families and impoverished patrons; for instance, in 1704 Mrs. Trzeciakowa was awarded 250 zlotys and put under the care of Dorota Ottenhauzowa née Oziembłowska, wife of the Chamberlain of Derpt<sup>57</sup>. In 1711 the senior of the Nowogródek district was told to find assistance for Mrs. Bochwicowa from the Słuck community, a widow from a family which had rendered great services to the Community<sup>58</sup>. In 1712, the widow of pastor Bulkowski got a single benefit of 100 zlotys; she was also to receive 50 zlotys a year until she re-married<sup>59</sup>. Similarly, in 1717 Bogusław Hulewicz, a landowner in straitened circumstances, obtained an allowance of 120 zlotys a year; it was to be paid from the Community's incomes "until God gives him succour"<sup>60</sup>. Sometimes an intermediate form of help was given; for instance, in 1740 the widow Pawłowiczowa, who was ill but lived with her children, was granted an allowance by the Kojdanów hospice; she was released from the duty of living in the hospice but was obliged to attend church regularly<sup>61</sup>.

The least expensive form of help a community could extend to one of its members was to agree to the construction of a house in the territory belonging to the church, free of charge. Since the network of Protestant parishes was not dense in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 18th century, Protestant church

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<sup>57</sup> Records of the provincial synod held at Bielica, kept from 3.6.1704, *ibidem*, memorandum 36.

<sup>58</sup> Records of the provincial synod held at Kiejdany, kept from 17.6.1711, *ibidem*, memorandum 16.

<sup>59</sup> Records of the provincial synod held at Kojdanów, kept from 7.6.1712, *ibidem*, memorandum 82.

<sup>60</sup> Records of the provincial synod held at Bielica, kept from 6.6.1717, *ibidem*, memorandum 75.

<sup>61</sup> Records of the provincial synod held at Kojdanów, 7.6.1740, *Księga zboru kojdanowskiego 1700-1775*, MS LLAS, ERS 456, p. 16.



ches were located in larger centres, and in their neighbourhood the more prosperous parishioners built houses and manors which they used as residences during church holiday meetings, church and synodal sessions and Communion services held four times a year. More prosperous widows and elderly people also liked to settle near churches for devotional reasons; they were helped by being given a plot free of charge. Settlement near the church and presbytery seems to have sometimes been the proper form for the more prosperous persons of seeking the community's care. In fact this was the case not only of poor people. For instance, in 1704 Mrs. Kuncewiczowa, widow of the patron of the Dokudów Reformed church, settled near the church, and Mrs. Kraińska, a pastor's widow, followed the example of other widows and moved into her own house near the Kojdanów church<sup>62</sup>. In 1791, the following residents lived on church grounds in Słuck: Joanna Ciechańska née Reczyńska, widow of the Starodub quartermaster, Mrs. Mnińska, Mrs. Inglisowa and Mrs. Fiszerowa as well as three Hazler girls, who must have been daughters of the Kovno quartermaster Hieronim Hazler, who died in 1765<sup>63</sup>.

Whereas the last-named form of aid did not cost the Community much, the previously mentioned forms were a serious burden for the Reformed Church of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and its parishes. To conclude, let us briefly characterise the source from which the Reformed Church financed its welfare activity. Let us state at the outset that assistance was based mainly on contributions from the faithful. The fines imposed on clergymen for various kinds of misdeeds were of marginal significance<sup>64</sup>.

The documents of the Community's synods that have survived contain many records of small and large foundations and contributions for members of the Reformed Church. Let us focus

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<sup>62</sup> Records of the provincial synod held at Bielica, kept from 3.6.1704, *ibidem*, canon 18; records of the provincial synod held at Kojdanów, kept from 7.6.1712, *ibidem*, memorandum 16.

<sup>63</sup> Records of the Słuck community, MS LLAS, ERS 91, p. 49.

<sup>64</sup> For instance, pastors who absented themselves from synods were fined and the revenue was transferred to hospices, records of the trans-Wilia (Neris) district's synod, Birże 20–21.5.1739, MS LLAS, ERS 1132, p. 22. In 1705, a 300 zloty fine, which was to be transferred to the Żuprany hospice, was imposed on pastor Dunkien who, being drunk, had slashed pastor Samuel Bythner, a senior, with a sabre; records of the provincial synod held at Bielica, 4–7.6.1705, MS LLAS, ERS 103, unpaginated copy, canon 29.

on great charitable foundations from the first half of the 18th century and leave out donations for schools and bequests for church purposes in general, though these, too, could have been used to help the needy, as was the generous bequest made in 1740 by the Grabowiec Cupbearer's wife, Elżbieta Jarzynina née Młocka, who offered 20,000 zlotys for the needs of the Podlachia district<sup>65</sup>. Contributions for charitable purposes were smaller. The largest donation we have found was the one made by the Courland Landhofmeister Krzysztof Henryk Puttkamer, who bequeathed 1,000 thaler to the Community's hospices at Szydłów and Greże<sup>66</sup>. The smallest contribution, 50 zlotys, was made in 1712 by Krystyna Sławińska née Kostrowska, wife of the Oszmia-  
na Cupbearer, for the hospice of the Vilnius community<sup>67</sup>.

The synodal records from the first half of the 18th century which I have examined contain notes on 19 large charitable donations, the average value of which amounted to about 1,700 zlotys<sup>68</sup>. Among the most generous donors were: Dorota Ottenhauzowa née Oziembłowska, wife of the Chamberlain of Derpt (two contributions, in 1701 and 1704); Adam Izbicki (1704); Albrycht and Joanna (née Rymwid) Karmanowski (1720); Colonel Piotr Konarski (1704); Elżbieta Korfowa née Gruzewska, wife of the Bailiff of Korszew (1746); Zofia Krasieńska née Sienicka, wife of the starost of Homel (1740); the Wilkomierz High Steward Jan Lukiański (1701); Father Samuel Lutomirski, a Church dignitary in Nowogródek (1703); the Mińsk Cupbearer Jan Mężyk (1706); Zofia Oborska née Mirska (1702); Captain Jan Pakosz (1736); cavalry captain Russel, leaseholder of Szwabiszki (1703); (Jan?) Sistrzencewicz (1728); Master of the pantry Aleksander Zwiartowski from Lublin (1709); Jan Wołk-Łaniewski, Cupbearer from Troki (1707); and Michał Wołk-Łaniewski, a Kovno Steward

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<sup>65</sup> Records of the provincial synod held at Kojdanów, kept from 4.9.1740, MS LLAS, ERS 904, p. 36.

<sup>66</sup> The money in thaler was in 1702 deposited by the Samogitian senior, the Rev. Jan Paterson, with the Courland prince, Ferdynand Ketler; records of the provincial synod held at Bielica, 30.7.-9.8.1702, MS LLAS, ERS 103, unpaginated copy, canon 15.

<sup>67</sup> Records of the provincial synod held at Kojdanów, kept from 7.6.1712, *ibidem*, memorandum 65.

<sup>68</sup> This is an estimate, for donations were listed in various currencies and it would be difficult to check and compare their actual value. Donations were most often listed in zlotys, tynfs, thaler and Lithuanian groschen. Smaller donations, not mentioned here, were also made in Prussian and Russian currencies.

(1707). This list of the most important donations shows that the Lituianian community's charitable activity was financed, in any case in the first half of the 18th century, by the secular élite, the nobility. It is not surprising therefore that the people receiving assistance were also recruited from the nobility, rarely from the townspeople. Since the documents of the Reformed Church usually do not say what estate the persons mentioned by them belonged to, our hypothesis is based on the surnames of the hospice inmates, among which we have not found a single typically peasant surname; though let us recall once again that we did not have documents of large peasant communities at our disposal.

The donors' motives recorded in synodal documents were rather stereotyped. Charity was regarded as an obligatory virtue for Christians, as a kind of confirmation of faith. Charitable deeds were proof of faith, and faith guaranteed mercy and salvation. But a donation for the poor and sick was usually defined as an expression of "devotion to the glory of God". The whole 1738 canon of the provincial synod of Żuprany was devoted to the pious bequests made by the above-mentioned Elżbieta Jarzynina and by Joanna Stryjeńska, wife of a Grodno country official, who donated 5,000 zlotys to the Church. The canon said: "Just as it is commendable when someone uses the fortune given him by God and multiplied by himself in order to do good God's glory, it is no less commendable when a person's generosity is accepted with gratitude and inscribed in public books for the sake of remembrance"<sup>69</sup>. This is hardly an original social or theological thought.

The sources we have examined lack a broader reflection on the significance of contributions or the sense of practising charity. What interested people was how the money bequeathed in last wills was spent. Understandable protests arose when it was used for purposes incompatible with the will of the testator or legatee. The provincial synod held in 1720 passed a canon banning such outrageous practices<sup>70</sup>. But there is absolutely no evidence that the money donated for special assistance was

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<sup>69</sup> Records of the provincial synod held at Żuprany, kept from 31.8.1738, MS LLAS, ERS 904, p. 21.

<sup>70</sup> Records of the provincial synod held at Sluck, kept from 9.7.1720, MS LLAS, ERS 103, unpaginated copy, canon 5.

embezzled, though it was sometimes used for church purposes having nothing to do with charity, e.g. for the maintenance of clergymen or construction of a church<sup>71</sup>.

In the second half of the 18th century donations for the poor became increasingly rare. Sums offered for this purpose by the more prosperous members of the Reformed Church are hardly perceptible in the regularly prepared budgets of the Community's districts, endorsed by the synods. General specifications of the Lithuanian Community's revenue and expenditure appear as early as the beginning of the 1730s, but at that time they still contained detailed information on what each donated sum was meant for<sup>72</sup>. The extant synodal documents from the end of the 18th century are professionally made financial specifications in which the sums for social assistance are put together with the outlays on clergymen's salaries and repairs of buildings. As a result of this improvement in Church accounts, not much can be said about their real structure<sup>73</sup>.

Of course charity continued to be the duty of the Reformed Church communities. It can however be assumed that the rules binding on the Reformed Church's middle class congregation in Warsaw as early as the 1770s were adopted more slowly, if at all, in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The Warsaw community distributed alms only after checking whether the applicant had not fallen into distress through his own fault, "by leading disorderly life, through laziness, sluggishness in work and wantonness". Such people did not deserve assistance; they could receive it only if they fell ill<sup>74</sup>.

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<sup>71</sup> We know of two cases of donations having been misused. In 1704 the interest on Puttkamer's donation was used to construct a church at Krasnogolizski; records of the provincial synod held at Bielica, kept from 6.6.1704, *ibidem*, canon 6; in 1708 the interest on the sum offered for the poor of the Stuck Reformed Church community was used to maintain pastor Gnatowski at the church in Żejmele and the chapel at Ponatry; records of the provincial synod held at Kiejdany, kept from 4.9.1708, *ibidem*, canon 20.

<sup>72</sup> For instance, the 1773 budget mentions the following contributions: "For the poor of the trans-Wilia (Neris) district, the widow Bułkowska, Staszkievicz in Nowe Miasto and Mr. Jawgiel — 60 zlotys. For the clergy, hospices and orphans — 600 zlotys", but sums to be paid to individuals are also mentioned: "for Mr. Pawłowicz *subsidiium charitativum* — 12 talars", "for Miss Lipska — 60 zlotys", "for Mr. Stefan Gordon a *subsidiium* — 45 zlotys"; records of the provincial synod held at Żuprany, June/July 1733, *ibidem*.

<sup>73</sup> For instance, the Community's budget adopted at a synod in Izabelin in 1788, MS LLAS, ERS 862, pp. 55-63.

Such principles could not be applied in the Reformed Church's specific, rather closed community in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, a community which was still dominated by the nobility. The idea that charitable activity should be compatible with economic rationalism, an idea imported from Great Britain, appeared as early as the 1720s, but it was simply ignored<sup>75</sup>. Although Enlightenment educational ideas penetrated into the Lithuanian Protestant Community, the traditional model of social assistance continued to function there for a long time. The activity based on a system that had been tried out in the first half of the 18th century was not losing momentum, being based on rationally invested resources.

The charitable activities conducted in the 18th century by the Reformed Church communities in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were, of course, inspired by religious and humanitarian motives, but their most interesting aspect seems to be the clearly visible, understandable and rational defensive reaction of a threatened minority. Compassion, ambition to cultivate the virtue of charity and humanitarian philanthropy were combined in these activities with concern for the salvation (and temporal security) of co-religionists. There was no such thing as an official "conversion fund" for Protestants in inter-denominational relations in the 18th century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but many Protestants could have been tempted into a not fully disinterested conversion. All this shows that in the 18th century, in particular in its first half, the Reformed Church in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania not only practised charity but also organised a system of social assistance which in some respects was a kind of insurance against adversity: against poverty, illness and also against conversion to Catholicism.

*(Translated by Janina Dorosz)*

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<sup>74</sup> Ordinance of the Reformed Church community of Warsaw, 13.3.1777, MS WUL. SER 1228, pp. 14-15.

<sup>75</sup> W. Kriegseisen, *Podróże i projekty Bogustawa Jelitko Kopijewicza, op. cit., passim.*