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## The Vilnius University in the days of the Commission of National Education (1773—1794)\*

**Summary:** This article presents an outline of the Vilnius University's history in the days of the Commission of National Education (KEN). It presents an organisational pattern and educational objective that were defined in the essential document of the KEN — *Ustawy Komisji Edukacji Narodowej dla stanu akademickiego i na szkoły w krajach Rzeczypospolitej przepisane* [The Commission of National Education's Acts for the academic estate and the schools of the Commonwealth]. Moreover, it presents the process of converting the Vilnius Academy into a modern, enlightened university. It points to its functions, such as education, including teacher training, scientific research, promotion of knowledge and supervision over secular schools. It also presents the aspect of the professors' effort to provide for scientific resources for the development of mathematical and naturalist subjects and medicine. The author has also pointed to the pragmatic aspect of professors' lectures. Like in other KEN schools, the Main School's crucial educational objective was to form good, enlightened citizens who could be useful for the state.

**Keywords:** Commission of National Education, Vilnius University, Vilnius Academy, Lithuanian Main School, university reform

The history of the Vilnius University has already been significantly explored. In the Polish and Lithuanian historiographies, we can point to important publications revealing the university's work in the days of the Commission of National Education (KEN), i.e. in the years 1773—1794. In most of them, the KEN period is discussed in the context of a broader look at the University's history, e.g. for the years 1579—1803 or 1579—1831<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> M. Baliński, *Dawna Akademia Wileńska. Próba jej historii od założenia w roku 1579 do ostatecznego jej przekształcenia w roku 1803*, Petersburg, 1862; J. Bieliński, *Uniwersytet Wileński (1579—*

I first presented the work of the Vilnius University in the days of the Commission of National Education in 2004 in my study *Universitas Vilnensis. Akademia Wileńska i Szkoła Główna Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego 1773—1792*. In this book, I presented the way the KEN reforms were being introduced under the provisions of *Ustawy Komisji Edukacji Narodowej dla stanu akademickiego i na szkoły w krajach Rzeczypospolitej przepisane* [The Commission of National Education's Acts for the academic estate and the schools of the Commonwealth]. I characterised the work of particular departments paying special attention to the efforts by the rector, professors and KEN members to employ suitable professors at the Main School. I also concisely presented the students' community<sup>2</sup>. In connection with implementation of the National Programme for the Development of the Humanities' research project titled *Komisji Edukacji Narodowej model szkoły i obywatela. Koncepcje, doświadczenia i inspiracje* [*The Commission of National Education's model of the school and the citizen: Concepts, experiences and inspirations*], it is worthy of looking at the Vilnius University from the perspective of it being an organisational model to emulate and an educational objective.

In this article, I am going to present the process of converting the Vilnius Academy into a modern, enlightened university. I am going to point to its functions that were agreed within the core of the Commission's members. I am also going to present professors' lectures from the perspective of their pragmatic message and their role in forming good, enlightened citizens who would be useful for the state. The source basis for my research included, first of all, archives kept at the Manuscripts Division of the Vilnius University Library [Vil-

1831), 1—3, Kraków, 1899—1900; L. Tur [L. Janowski], *Uniwersytet Wileński i jego znaczenie*, Lviv, 1903; L. Janowski, *Ateny Litewskie. Zagajenie kursu pt. „Historia Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego”*, Kraków, 1912; L. Janowski, *Historjografia Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego*, 1, Vilnius, 1921; L. Janowski, *Słownik bio-bibliograficzny dawnego Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego*, ed. R. Mienicki, M. Burbianka, B. Zwolski, Vilnius, 1939; I. Szybiak, *Szkołnictwo Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim*, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1973; *Studia z dziejów Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego 1579—1979*, ed. K. Mrozowska, Warsaw—Kraków, 1979; *Z dziejów Almae Matris Vilnensis. Księga pamiątkowa ku czci 400-lecia założenia i 75-lecia wskrzeszenia Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego*, ed. L. Piechnik, K. Puchowski, Kraków, 1996; *Vilniaus universiteto istorija 1579—1803*, ed. J. Kubilius, Vilnius, 1976, 223—296; *Vilniaus universiteto istorija 1803—1940*, ed. J. Kubilius, Vilnius, 1977; *Istorija Vilniuskogo Uniwersiteta (1579—1979)*, ed. J. Kubilius, Vilnius, 1979, 42—64; A. Piročkinas, “The University of Vilnius 1773—1803”, in *A short history of Vilnius University*, ed. J. Kubilius, Vilnius, 1979; A. Piročkinas, A. Šidlauskas, *Mokslas senajame Vilniaus universitete*, Vilnius, 1984; *Alma mater Vilnensis. Vilniaus universiteto istorijos bruožai*, ed. A. Bumblauskas et al., Vilnius, 2009, 397—442; *Alma mater Vilnensis. Vilniaus universiteto turtai istorijos skersėjuose (XVI—XXI amžiai)*, ed. R. Petrauskas, Vilnius, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> J. Kamińska, *Universitas Vilnensis. Akademia Wileńska i Szkoła Główna Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego 1773—1792*, Pułtusk—Warsaw, 2004.

niaus universiteto biblioteka, Rankraščių skyrius] — Section F2: Czartoryskis' deposit (DC) and Section F16: Marcin Poczubut, as well as the Manuscripts Division of the Vrublevskių Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (BLAN) [Lietuvos mokslų akademijos Vrublevskių biblioteka (BLAN)] — Section F9: Bendrasis autografų Fondas and Section F151: Liucijono uziemblos kolekcija fondas (Lucjan Uziębło's collection). Besides, I have also used the resources of the Russian State Archive of Ancient Documents (RGADA) [Российский государственный архив древних актов (РГАДА)] — Section F1603: Educational Fund Committee [Комиссия эдукационного фонда]. The manuscripts stored in this archive had until recently been unavailable, and had not therefore been thoroughly examined<sup>6</sup>.

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In the years 1773—1794, the history of the Vilnius University was tightly tied to the work of the Commission of National Education. The Commission had assumed authority over all the Commonwealth schools and was implementing incremental changes. Initially, it did not possess any precise view of how the reform of the two universities, the Kraków Academy and the Vilnius Academy, should look. But everyone was in agreement that changes at the academies were necessary. It was because they were steeped in the rhetorical and theological teaching current, taking no account of mathematical or naturalist sciences. Such a programme failed to follow the Enlightenment ideology, or provide knowledge necessary to comprehend the surrounding world, and it did not teach the practical aspect<sup>3</sup>.

Until the Order was suppressed, the Jesuit Vilnius Academy had been a university with a traditional structure — a preliminary Section that prepared candidates for specialist study of philosophy, law and theology. Such an organisation had been set down for the Academy, as had been the case with all Jesuit schools, by *Ratio studiorum* regulations, laid down in 1599, which had since barely changed. It was not until the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that the Order authorities had accepted certain concessions in terms of the syllabus. The Vilnius of the 1750s had seen the origins of the development of mathematics, physics, astronomy, and shortly before the suppression, even the inception of medicine<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> J. Kamińska, E. Kula, “Źródła do dziejów Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w zasobach Rosyjskiego Państwowego Archiwum Akt Dawnych w Moskwie”, *Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty* 53, 2016, 135—147.

<sup>4</sup> R. Dutkova, *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej. Zarys działalności. Wybór materiałów źródłowych*, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1973, 6—12; I. Szybiak, “Z dziejów szkoły”, in *Sztuka nauczania. Podręcznik dla studentów kierunków nauczycielskich*, ed. K. Konarzewski, 2, Warsaw, 1991, 31—33.

The need for fundamental transformation of the Polish academies in terms of structure and syllabus coincided with the general European tendency to reform universities. Criticism began mounting in Europe at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century regarding the methods of higher education and owing to the lack of trust towards universities. It consequently led to the closing of many universities, and the scientific life had begun congregating outside academia: in private libraries, museums, botanic gardens and laboratories, as well as in scientific academies that had started forming since the 17<sup>th</sup> century (England's Royal Society was founded in 1660, Académie des sciences in 1666, Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin in 1700, Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen in 1751). Besides, a tendency was rising to subject schools to the authority of state government. Rulers believed that education had an enormous power, and the thriving of all walks of social, political and economic life relied on an educated people. Such tendencies were to be first observed in Prussia and the Habsburg Monarchy. New universities were coming into existence with the full support of monarchs: Halle (1693), Göttingen (1737) and Erlangen (1743), which were becoming a model for emulation for others in the formation of modern education. The University of Göttingen [*Universitas Regiae Georgiae Augustae*] enjoyed particularly great fame for its excellent teaching staff and ample research resources<sup>5</sup>.

Empress Maria Theresa (1717—1780) subjected the education policy to the state authority. Governing in the spirit of Enlightened absolutism, she took the University of Vienna [*Alma Mater Rudolphina Vindobonensis*] away from the Jesuits and entrusted its reform to Dutch physician Gerard van Swieten (1700—1772). The reform of 1749—1756 led to the modernising of the syllabi and the introduction of mathematical and natural sciences and medicine, as well as economic subjects, and a modification of theology classes<sup>6</sup>.

The reforming of European universities intensified when, still before the official suppression of the Jesuit Order by Pope Clement XIV in July 1773, the push had started to expel the Jesuits from many countries and the Order was being locally closed by royal orders, which was what transpired in Portugal (1759), Spain (1764) and France (1767). At the University of Coimbra [*Uni-*

<sup>5</sup> S. Bednarski, *Upadek i odrodzenie szkół jezuitkich w Polsce. Studium z dziejów kultury i szkolnictwa polskiego*, Kraków, 1933, 13—48; L. Piechnik, *Odrodzenie Akademii Wileńskiej 1730—1773*, Rome, 1990, 75—104, 149—152; L. Piechnik, *Powstanie i rozwój jezuickiej Ratio studiorum (1548—1599)*, Kraków, 2003, 146—151.

<sup>6</sup> W. Smoleński, *Towarzystwa naukowe i literackie w Polsce wieku XVIII*, Warsaw, 1887, 30—37; B. Leśnodorski, "Uniwersytety w epoce Oświecenia", *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 4, 1964, 893 and subsequent; M. Iłowiecki, *Okrety na oceanie czasu. Historia nauki polskiej do 1945 roku*, Warsaw, 2001, 108.

*versitas Conimbrigenis*], the changes were introduced by politician Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, 1<sup>st</sup> Marquis of Pombal (1699—1782). It was because of him and King Charles III of Spain (1716—1782) that mathematical and natural sciences were included in the programme of study at the universities of Salamanca, Santiago and Granada<sup>7</sup>.

Recommendations for university reform were also put forward by the French. Encyclopaedists examined the disastrous state of French universities and presented the need to transform them. Their proposals were innovative but they never moved beyond the proposal stage. The same fate awaited the interesting proposal put forward by the president of the Paris parliament, Barthélémy Louis Gabriel Rolland de Chambaudoïn d'Erceville (1730—1794), who saw schools of higher education as an element of a hierarchical school structure. All universities were to be subjugated to the Sorbonne as the central university. They were aimed at educating professionals including teachers and exercising supervision over schools of a lower rank<sup>8</sup>.

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Drawing from the experience of Western European universities, the Commission of National Education transformed the Kraków Academy and the Vilnius Academy into Main Schools which became new, enlightened universities with modern syllabi. The Kraków Academy was transformed into the Crown's Main School, and the old Jesuit-owned Vilnius Academy into the Main School of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. From 1783 onwards, it consisted of two divisions (Physics and Morality) in place of the old three divisions (Philosophy, Law and Theology)<sup>9</sup>.

The transformation of the Vilnius Academy into a modern university occurred in two phases. The first phase started in 1781 when, after the Draft Acts of the Commission of National Education were enacted, the transformation process began and the Main School of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania began forming<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> E. Rostworowski, *Historia powszechna. Wiek XVIII*, Warsaw, 1984, 898—899, 1058.

<sup>8</sup> E. Rostworowski, *Historia...*, 716.

<sup>9</sup> K. Mrozowska, "Rola uniwersytetów w hierarchicznych ustrojach szkolnych doby Oświecenia", in *W kręgu wielkiej reformy. Sesja naukowa w Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim w dwusetną rocznicę powstania Komisji Edukacji Narodowej*, ed. K. Mrozowska, R. Dutkova, Warsaw—Kraków, 1977, 106; K. Mrozowska, "Koncepcje pedagogiczne Oświecenia. Rolland d'Erceville, Denis Diderot, Komisja Edukacji Narodowej. Studium porównawcze", *Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty* 19, 1976, 4 and subsequent.

<sup>10</sup> M. Chamcówna, *Uniwersytet Jagielloński w dobie Komisji Edukacji Narodowej. Szkoła Główna Koronna w okresie wizyty i rektoratu Hugona Kollątaja 1777—1786*, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1957, 157, 211; R. Dutkova, *Komisja...*, 71 and subsequent; J. Kamińska, *Universitas Vilnensis. Akademia...*, 71 and subsequent.

This task was to be completed by former Jesuit Marcin Poczobut Odlanicki (1728—1810), an astronomer and university rector. He was an outstanding personality of the Vilnius Academy's staff. In the Jesuit period, he had acquired extensive humanist, philosophical and theological education. He was particularly interested in mathematical and physical sciences which he studied under the guidance of Tomasz Żebrowski (1714—1758), the mastermind of the Vilnius astronomical observatory. He had also studied at the universities of Vienna and Prague. His studies in Prague under the supervision of Joseph Stepling (1716—1778), a mathematician, physicist and astronomer, and a member of the Royal Society in Great Britain<sup>11</sup>.

After those extensive studies, Poczobut began his observations in Vilnius and had been appointed head of the Observatory. He expanded the study premises, augmented the laboratory equipment and contributed to its increased importance and the development of astronomy. Poczobut conducted observations and maintained extensive international contacts with other astronomers, such as Nicolas-Louis de Lacaille (1713—1762), Joseph-Jérôme Lefrançais de Lalande (1732—1807) and Roger Joseph Boscovich (1711—1787). In honour of his achievements, in January 1767, King Stanislaus II Augustus (1732—1798) awarded him the title of the Royal Astronomer, and in 1770 he became a member of the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge. He retained his position in the scientific world even after the Jesuit Order was suppressed, which was evidenced by the fact that he was awarded the *Bene Merentibus Laudi* Medal with his bust engraved on it and admitted as a member-correspondent of the French Académie des sciences in August 1778<sup>12</sup>.

On embarking on the reform of the Vilnius Academy in 1781, in accordance with the Draft Acts, Poczobut had to organise four university colleges, i.e. departments of physics, medicine, law and theology. He was making sure

<sup>11</sup> *Projekt Ustawy Komisyyi Edukacyi Narodowej dla stanu akademickiego i na szkoły w kraiach Rzeczypospolitey przepisane*, 1781, D2—D2v <polona.pl/item/projekt-ustawy-komisyyi-edukacyi-narodowej-dla-stanu-akademickiego-i-na-szkoly-w-kraiach,MTE3MDIyNDk/4/#info:metadat a> (seen: 16 June 2018).

<sup>12</sup> J. Śniadecki, *Żywoć uczoney i publiczny Marina Poczobuta Odlanickiego*, Vilnius, 1810, 79 and subsequent; M. Odlanicki-Poczobutt, A. Odlanicka-Poczobutt, "W 250. rocznicę urodzin Marcina Odlanickiego-Poczobuta (1728—1810)", *Urania* 50, 1979, 23—24; E. Rabowicz, "Poczobut (Poczobut Odlanicki) Marcin", in *Polski słownik biograficzny*, ed. E. Rostworowski, 27, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1982, 52—54; V. Zubovas, *Tomas Žebrauskas ir jo mokiniai*, Vilnius, 1986, 270 and subsequent; J. Kamińska, "Dzieciństwo i młodość Marcina Poczobuta-Odlanickiego", in *Z dziejów edukacji w Polsce XVIII wieku*, ed. I. Szybiak, Warsaw, 1995, 7—40; J. Porzecki, "Książdz Marcin Poczobut-Odlanicki (1728—1810). Szkic biograficzny", in *Europa orientalis. Polska i jej wschodni sąsiedzi od średniowiecza po współczesność*, ed. Z. Karpus, T. Kempa, D. Michaluk, Toruń, 1996, 315—316.

to employ good specialists and, specifically, find professors of the new sciences: mathematics, physics, natural history, chemistry and medicine. He looked for them at home and abroad. He succeeded in setting up three colleges: Collegium Phisicum, Collegium Medicum, Collegium Juridicum, but he failed to form the Collegium Theologicum<sup>13</sup>.

The academic year 1781—1782 at the Main School saw primarily former Jesuits teaching the following subjects: mathematics (Tadeusz Kundzicz, Mikołaj Tomaszewski), physics (Józef Mickiewicz), astronomy (Andrzej Strzecki), speech, Latin and Greek (Kazimierz Rogowski) and domestic law (Michał Olechnowicz). Moreover, there was one Piarist (Bernard Siruć) teaching Roman and civil law. The teaching staff included also foreign professors providing instruction in medicine (Stefan Bisio, Mikołaj Regnier, Jakub Briôtet) and natural history (Jean-Emmanuel Gilibert). That group of professors was fairly small. There was no success in finding specialists in advanced mathematics, chemistry and the humanities: international history, literature and theological sciences<sup>14</sup>.

The academic years of 1781—1782 and 1782—1783 were a period of internal organising of the Main School and gradual unfolding of all of its functions: educational and supervisory over schools of a lower rank in Lithuania, the role of research, its scientific cooperation and promotion of knowledge. That was also the time of verifying the provisions of the Draft Acts of the Commission of National Education. This verification pointed to the need to change the university's internal structure. The Commission of National Education Acts of 1783 ordered that two departments, of physics and morality, be organised out of the existing four departments. That way, the Collegium Phisicum was combined with the Collegium Medicum, which resulted in the formation of the Physics College, and the combination of the Collegium Juridicum with the Collegium Theologicum gave rise to the Morality College. Such a structure was in keeping with the prevailing division of science formulated by philosopher Francis Bacon (1561—1626) and adopted by Christian Wolff (1679—1754). It was also reflected in the French *Encyclopédie*. Thus, both of the Commonwealth universities had come closer to the group of new and recovering European universities. Their advantage was the fact that they took into account the country's economic needs and the necessity to prepare a cadre that would reform the Commonwealth<sup>15</sup>.

Once the Commission of National Education Acts had been enacted in 1783, the second phase of reform began concerning the Main School of the

<sup>13</sup> J. Śniadecki, "Żywot...", 88; M. Odlanicki-Poczobutt, A. Odlanicka-Poczobutt, "W 250. rocznicę urodzin...", 24; E. Rabowicz, "Poczobut...", 55.

<sup>14</sup> J. Kamińska, *Universitas Vilmensis. Akademia...*, 71.

<sup>15</sup> J. Kamińska, *Universitas Vilmensis. Akademia...*, 72—75.

Grand Duchy of Lithuania that involved organising two Colleges: of Physics and Morality, and complying with the Commission of National Education Acts. Rector Poczobut continued his efforts to employ the best specialists. The Physics Collee employed mainly secular foreign professors who taught medicine, natural history and chemistry. Former Jesuits taught mathematics and astronomy. The professors at the Morality College were Polish: former Jesuits, Piarists, missionaries and secular professors. The professors of both colleges were well prepared for their work, they provided information that was compliant with the existing knowledge, emphasising its functional and national significance<sup>16</sup>.

In the years 1783—1794, the Main School of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania operated in line with the provisions of the Acts. Its primary responsibility was to educate which included teacher training. The candidates for the profession were selected out of the best students of secondary schools (department or sub-department schools) who were encouraged to pursue teaching studies at university. Educated at the Main School, they were secular teachers who took over the posts from clerical teachers, especially the ex-Jesuits. They taught the young generation in Polish and used new textbooks prepared by the Society for Elementary Books and printed at the University's print shop in the teaching process<sup>17</sup>.

Aside from the teachers, the Main School also educated lawyers, measurement engineers, physicians and even midwives. The education of physicians was particularly significant. The KEN entrusted them with the mission to disseminate the knowledge about keeping healthy. A professional medical knowledge was aimed at being a weapon in the fight against ignorance and prejudices of the Lithuanian population. The training of midwives was conducted at special courses and it was a valuable move as it helped raise awareness of women (so-called *babki*) receiving births and increased the chance of survival for the woman and her child<sup>18</sup>.

Among the graduates of the Main School were also future university professors. The first graduates included Szymon Malewski (1759—1832), who had begun his studies as a candidate for the profession of teacher, became a teacher, a vice-professor (assistant to the professor) and a professor of law of nature at the Main School. During the Imperial Vilnius University period, he was the dean of the Department of Morality and Political Sciences, and in the years 1817—1822, the rector<sup>19</sup>. The focus of his interest was the law of nature which

<sup>16</sup> J. Kamińska, *Universitas Vilnensis. Akademia...*, 113—114, 159—163.

<sup>17</sup> I. Szybiak, *Szkolnictwo...*, 148—181; J. Kamińska, *Universitas Vilnensis. Akademia...*, 113—114, 159—163.

<sup>18</sup> I. Szybiak, *Szkolnictwo...*, 182—194; I. Szybiak, *Nauczyciele szkół średnich Komisji Edukacji Narodowej*, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1980, 109 and subsequent.

<sup>19</sup> VUL, F2 DC 126, 88, 98v; E. Waszyński, *Historia położnictwa i ginekologii w Polsce*, Wrocław, 2000, 107; J. Kamińska, *Universitas Vilnensis 1793—1803. Od Szkoły Głównej Wielkiego Księstwa*



he explored under the guidance of Hieronim Stroynowski (1752—1815). The basis for his analyses was his teacher's *Nauka prawa przyrodzonego, politycznego i prawa narodów* of 1785<sup>20</sup>.

Priest Stanisław Bonifacy Jundziłł (1761—1847) was a professor of natural history, who was interested in natural sciences, and in 1792, he became a vice-professor of Natural History, and in the period of the Imperial Vilnius University, a professor of this discipline and the genuine host of the Botanic Garden<sup>21</sup>.

Among others, August Ludwik Bècu (1771—1824), Andrzej Matuszewicz (ca. 1760—1816) and Jan Fryderyk Nizzkowski (1774—1816) went on to become professors of medicine. Roman Symonowicz (1768—1813) became a vice-professor of anatomy and physiology, but during his foreign studies, he became interested in mineralogy. Eventually, he undertook to teach it and conducted geological research in Lithuania, Volhynia and Podolia<sup>22</sup>.

In the period of the Commission of National Education, the Lithuanian Main School constituted a research base for scientific work. The professors expanded the supplies in the existing study rooms (library, astronomical observatory and physics study room) and created new ones (anatomical theatre, chemistry and natural history study rooms and botanic garden). This work consumed lots of work and no significant research progress occurred in the KEN period, even in the promising field of astronomy. Professors were publishing their works, but their publishing activity was not impressive. It was, however, their promotional work that was reflected in public speeches and shows of various experiments which were very popular with common people.

The astronomical observatory, which under the management of Marcin Poczobut multiplied its facilities, was arguably the Main School's showpiece. The rector placed orders with Europe's most refined craftsmen and producers of astronomical, mathematical and navigation equipment, such as Jesse Ram-

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*Litewskiego do Imperatorskiego Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego*, Warsaw, 2012, 184—185; M. Stawiak-Ososińska, "Kształcenie akuszerki w Wilnie w czasach Szkoły Głównej Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego i Szkoły Głównej Litewskiej (1780—1803)", *Rocznik Andragogiczny* 22, 2015, 326, 328.

<sup>20</sup> I. Szybiak, *Szkolnictwo...*, 182, 189; I. Szybiak, *Nauczyciele...*, 124, 146.

<sup>21</sup> Hieronim Stroynowski wrote *Nauka prawa przyrodzonego...* in 1780, and it was first published in 1785 in Vilnius at the Academic Printshop. In the days of the KEN, it was again published in 1791, and next during the partitions in 1805. The manuscript is stored by the AGAD, Archiwum Potockich, Archiwum Branickich, 6844 II.

<sup>22</sup> W. Grębecka, "Stanisław Bonifacy Jundziłł — wybitny uczony polskiego Oświecenia (1761—1847)", in *Wkład pijarów do nauki i kultury w Polsce XVII—XIX wieku*, ed. I. Stasiewicz-Jasiukowa, Warsaw—Kraków, 1993, 240; W. Grębecka, *Wilno—Krzemieniec. Botaniczna szkoła naukowa (1781—1841)*, Warsaw, 1998, 7, 107 and subsequent; J. Kamińska, *Universitas Vilmensis 1793—1803*, 199—202.

sden (1735—1800) and Pierre Dollond (1730—1820). He also purchased equipment for sky observation and precise measurements which were to be used for making the map of the Commonwealth. His greatest undertaking involved bringing from England a mural quadrant — a brass astronomical device of a large size used to make measurements in assessing the altitude of stars and the Sun. It was ordered from Ramsden's craft workshop. The new device required the existing observatory to be expanded. The development project was prepared by the royal architect Marcin Knakfus (ca. 1740—1821)<sup>23</sup>.

Poczobut was involved in every phase of the development, showing an interest even in ways of tying rock foundation blocks and learning about methods of erecting walls. He consulted Warsaw-based architects about methods of tying walls. The rector informed King Stanislaus II Augustus about the development progress. As a result of the work, two observatory towers were set up, adjacent to the southern wall of the observatory building. The new observatory opened in 1788, and Poczobut notified the Commission of work completion in his annual report. In March 1789, the Commission expressed its satisfaction with the work completion and its full acknowledgement of the rector<sup>24</sup>.

A well-equipped observatory provided opportunities of conducting more advanced observations. Unfortunately, the period of KEN operation did not bring to fruition any significant achievements, and, above all, publications. Poczobut did not have a successor, either, who would step in to head the astronomy department. The observatory was a venue keenly visited by guests including significant guests from home and abroad<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> A.F. Adamowicz, *Krótki rys początków i postępu anatomii w Polsce i Litwie, skróślony na pamiątkę 50-letniego trwania Cesarskiego Towarzystwa Lekarskiego Wileńskiego*, Vilnius, 1855, 18, 306; J. Garbowska, "Badania geologiczne prowadzone przez wileński ośrodek naukowy w latach 1781—1832", in *Wkład wileńskiego ośrodka naukowego w przyrodnicze poznanie kraju (1781—1842)*, ed. J. Babicz, W. Grębecka, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1988, 73; J. Garbowska, "Nauki geologiczne w uczelniach Wilna i Krzemienia w latach 1781—1840", in *Prace z zakresu historii nauk geologicznych*, ed. W. Narębski, K. Jakubowski, Warsaw, 1993, 24—26; A. Grigelis, "Du Romano Simonavičiaus rankraščiai ir Vilniaus universiteto Mineralogijos katedra", *Vilniaus universiteto bibliotekos metraštis* 7, 2004, 124; J. Kamińska, "Symonowicz Roman", in *Polski słownik biograficzny*, ed. A. Romanowski, 46, Warsaw—Kraków, 2010, 251—254; J. Kamińska, *Universitas Vilnensis 1793—1803*, 190—195.

<sup>24</sup> J. Moraczewski, *Starożytności polskie ku wygodzie czytelnika porządkiem abecadlowym zebrane*, 1, Poznań, 1842, 54; W. Dziewulski, "Historia astronomii w Uniwersytecie Wileńskim", *Rocznik Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk w Wilnie* 7, 1921, 148—150 (reprinted: *Postępy Astronomii* 1, 1993); M. Odlanicki-Poczobutt, A. Odlanicka-Poczobutt, "W 250. rocznicę...", 25; S. Matulaitytė, *Senoji Vilniaus universiteto astronomijos observatorija ir jos biblioteka*, Vilnius, 2004, 132 and subsequent; J. Kamińska, *Universitas Vilnensis 1793—1803*, 123.

<sup>25</sup> J. Kamińska, *Universitas Vilnensis. Akademia...*, 124—125; W. Pawlikowska-Butterwick, R. Butterwick-Pawlikowski, "Najjaśniejsza gwiazda wileńska. Ks. Rektor Marcin Poczobut w ostat-

Also the other study rooms enjoyed a great interest of foreign visitors. The physical study room headed by former Jesuit Józef Mickiewicz (1744—1817) extensively enriched its collections during the KEN operations. The professor had at his disposal mechanical, hydrostatic and aerostatic devices, as well as tools to examine the qualities of the air, sound, electricity, meteorological phenomena and theories of fire and light. He built many of those all by himself but also placed orders with Vilnius craftsmen<sup>26</sup>. Mickiewicz used them during the course of experimental physics with his students, as well as during public shows. He was able to take advantage of a well-equipped library, the origins of which dated back to the Jesuits. Its creation was begun by Tomasz Żebrowski in the 1750s. On his part, Mickiewicz was enlarging the library by properly putting in order his resources and grouping the books in topical categories<sup>27</sup>.

The chemical study room began emerging in 1784 on the initiative of Professor Józef Sartoris (d. 1799), a chemist and a doctor of medicine and pharmacy, who had arrived in Vilnius from Turin. Sartoris was a distinguished scientist, member of the Royal Academy of Sciences in Turin, who included in his lectures the latest scientific discoveries. He familiarised his students with the properties of many substances and drew their attention to how those could be used practically in life. Sartoris carried out experiments during his lectures and presented ways of making medications in his pharmacy presentations. He also talked about ways of using mineral waters in the treatment of various diseases and pioneered that way of therapy in Lithuania<sup>28</sup>.

A botanic garden was crucial for presentation of naturalist subjects. Its creation was no easy task. It was initiated by French naturalist Jean-Emmanuel Gilibert (1741—1814), doctor of medicine and veterinary, explorer of Lithuanian flora and fauna, who was employed in Vilnius in 1781 and commissioned by the KEN and King Stanislaus II Augustus to transfer the garden from Grodno to Vilnius. During the transfer, most of the plants suffered, while others were not properly cultivated in Vilnius and languished. The employment of naturalist and traveller Georg Forster (1751—1794) aroused some hope for creation of a genuine garden. To that end, the Main School purchased a proper square,

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nich latach Rzeczypospolitej”, in *Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštystė. Valstybė, kultūra, edukacija*, ed. R. Šmigelskytė-Stukienė, Vilnius, 2015, 88.

<sup>26</sup> L. Klimka, R. Kivilšienė, “Gabinet fizyczny pod rządami profesora Józefa Mickiewicza. Materiały do historii nauczania fizyki w Uniwersytecie Wileńskim”, *Analecta. Studia i Materiały z Dziejów Nauki* 12, 2003, 30—31; J. Kamińska, *Universitas Vilnensis. Akademia...*, 126.

<sup>27</sup> L. Klimka, R. Kivilšienė, “Gabinet...”, 31—32.

<sup>28</sup> I. Szybiak, *Szkolnictwo...*, 155; P. Szarejko, M. Wagner, “Sartorius (Sartoris) Józef Gerard”, in *Polski słownik biograficzny*, ed. E. Rostworowski, 35, Warsaw—Kraków, 1994, 239—240; J. Kamińska, *Universitas Vilnensis. Akademia...*, 126—131; J. Kamińska, *Universitas Vilnensis 1793—1803*, 206.

but unfortunately, Forster did not live up to his task, as he soon left Vilnius. He had, however, succeeded in creating a study room of natural history which accommodated exhibits collected by professors and donated by Lithuanian nobles<sup>29</sup>.

Care for the schools of a lower rank, i.e. secondary schools, was arguably a novel task for the University, which was ordered by the Commission and set down in the Acts. The Main School exercised direct supervision over the department schools which, in turn, exercised supervision over sub-department schools. The work was quite efficient. Once a year, the Main School dispatched school inspectors who thoroughly examined the school's work: the state of repair of the building, teachers' work, students' progress, equipment and study supplies; they identified the schools' strengths and weaknesses. It was the rector of the Main School, Marcin Poczobut, who made sure the schools' needs were met. Teachers would usually contact him by letter and request different types of support, such as material aid, transfers to another school or purchases of study supplies<sup>30</sup>.

The transformation of the Vilnius Academy into the Main School of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was a critical change in the organisation of science and teaching and of the entire education system of the Polish—Lithuanian Commonwealth. Embarking on the reform of the Vilnius Academy, the KEN was led by the Enlightenment philosophy and the nation's needs, connected primarily with the economic and cultural strengthening of the country and the need to arouse patriotic sentiment of the youth. Consequently, the syllabus included new, enlightened subjects with the application of experiments. Formal and natural sciences and medicine were key, but attention was also focused on the domestic domain: literature and history, and, in particular, the Polish language.

The Main School became a modern university allowing freedom to pursue research and didactic activities. The solutions of the KEN era were used during

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<sup>29</sup> Z. Fedorowicz, "Organizacja studiów przyrodniczych na Wszechnicy Wileńskiej w latach 1781—1832", *Studia i Materiały z Dziejów Nauki Polskiej* 1, 1957, 89; K. Plasota, "Zoologia wileńskiego ośrodka naukowego a badania fauny krajowej (1781—1842)", in *Wkład wileńskiego...*, 238—240; J. Kamińska, *Universitas Vilnensis. Akademia...*, 141—142.

<sup>30</sup> H. Pohoska, *Wizytatorowie generalni Komisji Edukacji Narodowej. Monografia z dziejów administracji szkolnej Komisji Edukacji Narodowej*, Lublin, 1957, 9—10, 129 and subsequent; I. Szybiak, *Szkolnictwo...*, 117 and subsequent. A more extensive examination of the schools' supervision has been presented in books prepared by a group of historians of education working on the project *Komisji Edukacji Narodowej model szkoły i obywatela. Koncepcje, doświadczenia i inspiracje* [*The Commission of National Education's model of the school and the citizen: Concepts, experiences and inspirations*]. It is worthy of note that the Vilnius University Library's collection of manuscripts includes extensive correspondence of teachers with Marcin Poczobut. See e.g.: VUL, F2 DC 102, 105, 108, 109, 120, 122, 128.

the education system reform in Russia conducted by Tsar Alexander I (1777—1825) in 1803. It is worthy of note that the universities reform in the Commonwealth outpaced the reform implemented by Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767—1835) in Berlin in 1807.

The topics examined in this article are far from exhausted. Creating an ideal school and the moulding of a good and educated citizen during KEN's operations still appears to be an open subject that is worth further exploration. Comparative studies appear to be a significant aspect of research that would more precisely demonstrate the condition of the Vilnius University and its reform in comparison with other European universities.

Moreover, it is also worth conducting biographical research and tracking the lives of the Main School's graduates. Such knowledge will surely demonstrate the efficacy of university education of the KEN times. Thorough examination of sources, especially at the Moscow archives, may give an answer to many outstanding questions.

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