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WIDOW'S CAPITAL. PASTORS' WIDOWS
IN THE POMERANIAN CHURCH
AT THE TURN OF THE 16th CENTURY

The World to maidens, Paradise to wives
Heaven to widows and Hell to old women¹.

The article deals with the situation of pastors' widows in the Pomeranian Church in the 16th and 17th centuries; it will present the legal and institutional aspects of this situation as it was delineated in Church ordinances and other normative acts and will also show what this situation was like in real life, in the widows' relations with their commune and its patron.

Lack of sources is a real problem in research on the situation of 16th century widows and women in general². *Selbstzeugnisse von verwitweten Frauen des 16. Jahrhunderts haben wir kaum*, as Igre Mager rightly says³. Widows themselves seldom speak

¹ Fragment of a 17th century poem quoted after M. Bogucka, *Women in Early Modern Polish Society Against the European Background*, Aldershot 2004, p. 28. The author is deeply grateful for the critical remarks and help extended to him by Prof. Almut Bues, Prof. Wojciech Kriegseisen, Prof. Michael North, Prof. Horst Wernicke, Dr. Jacek Kriegseisen and Ms Doreen Krenzin as well as to the members of Graduirtenkolleg 619 *Kontaktzone Mare Balticum: Fremdheit und Integration im Ostseeraum* as well as employees of the archives in Greifswald and Szczecin. The author alone is responsible for all errors and inaccuracies.

² Cf. M. Bogucka, *New Perspectives on Gender*, "Acta Poloniae Historica" 2000, 82, pp. 185–209, here pp. 185 and 209; a slightly different view is held by Heide Wunder: *Das Fehlen der Frauen ist keineswegs mit der schlechten Quellenlage zu erklären, sondern mit einem vom 19. Jahrhundert geprägten Vorverständnis über den Platz der Frau in der Gesellschaft und darüber, was Geschichte sei*, H. Wunder, *Basel — eine Stadt der Frauen*, in: *Eine Stadt der Frauen. Studien und Quellen zur Geschichte der BaslerInnen im späten Mittelalter und zu Beginn der Neuzeit (13.–17. Jahrhundert)*, ed. H. Wunder, Basel–Frankfurt a.M. 1995, pp. 1–19, quotation from p. 13.

³ I. Mager, "Wegert euch des lieben heiligen Creuzes nicht". *Das Witwentrostbuch der Herzogin Elisabeth von Calenberg-Göttingen*, in: *Kirche und Gesellschaft im Heiligen Römischen Reich des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. H. Boockmann, Göttingen 1994, pp. 207–224, here p. 211.

to us. The historian is therefore compelled to present women's situation from a male perspective for the sources at our disposal were produced mainly by men. The article is based mainly on correspondence for it is the best source for learning the realities of the epoch; it makes it possible because the historian to escape from institutional and legal fictions and, last but not least, it frequently allows women to speak on nearly equal terms with men⁴, which they could by no means do in the purely masculine 16th century public sphere⁵. I also want to present conclusions that would apply to circles outside the social elites which have so far attracted most attention⁶. In addition to correspondence, I have also used Pomeranian Church ordinances, synodal records and instructions for inspectors, but have made little use of "classic" narrative sources, such as sermons and funeral speeches, for this article was not meant to be a discourse but a presentation of social reality⁷. We must be careful when we try to reconstruct this reality on the basis of correspondence which, as a rule, is kept in the archives of ducal chancelleries and consistories, and refers mainly to conflicts, for our conclusions on everyday life may often be drawn on the basis of situations marked by crises and conflicts⁸. This is why I have focused attention on villages and small towns in Pomerania for in large

⁴ Cf. H. Wunder, *Einleitung*, (*Frauenbriefe: Stimmen der Frauen?*), in: *Eine Stadt der Frauen*, pp. 217–222 (it includes a bibliography of older works on this subject); M. Steinman, *Frauenbriefe des 16. Jahrhunderts in der Basler Universitätsbibliothek*, in: *ibidem*, pp. 223–234.

⁵ Cf. E.-B. Körber, *Öffentlichkeiten der frühen Neuzeit. Teilnehmer, Formen, Institutionen und Entscheidungen öffentlicher Kommunikation im Herzogtum Preußen von 1525 bis 1618*, Berlin—New York 1998; O. Brunner, *Das "ganze Haus" und die alteuropäische "Ökonomik"*, in: *idem*, *Neue Wege der Sozialgeschichte*, Göttingen 1956, pp. 33–62.

⁶ Cf. M. Bogucka, *Women in Politics. The Case of Poland in the 16th–18th Centuries*, "Acta Poloniae Historica" 2001, 83, pp. 79–85.

⁷ Cf. the analysis of the discourse, see: B. Jussen, *Der Name der Witwe. Erkundungen zur Semantik der mittelalterlichen Bußkultur*, Göttingen 2000.

⁸ Unlike earlier works which propagated the idea that the pastor's house set an example to other houses, new literature has recognised that conflicts also occurred in pastors' houses, see D. Gugerli, *Zwischen Pfrund und Predigt. Die protestantische Pfarrfamilie auf der Zürcher Landschaft im ausgehenden 18. Jahrhundert*, Zürich 1988, pp. 9–10 (the author analyses *Topos des Vorbildhaftigkeit der protestantischen Pfarrhauses* and criticises it because *eine merkwürdige Mischung nationalistischer Ideologie und kompilatorisch-unreflektierter Soziologie ist das Resultat*). Since there are not many modern studies on this subject, I have also referred to researches concerning southern and western region of the Reich and Switzerland.

urban centres there were fewer crises or they are not documented in the sources that have survived.

Historians have for a long time been interested in whether cultural and political changes exerted an influence on the situation of women⁹. The impressive development of this current in research and studies is connected, on the one hand, with the rise of feminism. The great number of new syntheses, university chairs and periodicals devoted to this subject is a result or a symptom of its vitality¹⁰. On the other hand, the increase of interest in women is also due to the development of research into "everyday life", popular culture and "the social fringe", a development initiated and inspired by historians of the "Annales" group¹¹.

Among the subjects which are being animatedly discussed is the situation of women at the beginning of the early modern era and the influence of the Reformation on their situation¹². Without delving into this well developed literature one can distinguish several main currents and the most important arguments. The supporters of the theory that the Reformation had negative results emphasise, first and foremost, the elimination of convents, the change in the family model and the social changes which, to repeat Gerhard Oestreich's words, can be generally

⁹ Cf. J. Kelly, *Did Women Have a Renaissance?*, in: *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed. R. Bridenthal, C. Koonz, Boston 1977, pp. 137–161; M. Bogucka, *New Perspectives*, pp. 186 ff.; J. Hardwick, *Did Gender Have a Renaissance? Exclusion and Tradition in Early Modern Western Europe*, in: *A Companion to Gender History*, ed. T. A. Meade, M. E. Wiesner-Hanks, Oxford 2004, pp. 343–358.

¹⁰ *Histoire des Femmes en Occident*, ed. G. Duby, M. Perrot, vols. 1–5, Paris 1991–1992; the work was quickly translated into German: *Geschichte der Frauen*, ed. idem, vols. 1–5, Frankfurt a.M. 1993–1995; M. Bogucka, *Women*; G. Bock, *Frauen in der europäischen Geschichte. Vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, München 2000; several good syntheses of individual periods have also appeared: E. Ennen, *Frauen im Mittelalter*, München 1994; E. Uitz, *Die Frau in der mittelalterlichen Stadt*, Stuttgart 1988; H. Wunder, "Er ist die Sonn — sie ist der Mond". *Frauen in der Frühen Neuzeit*, München 1992 is still a model work.

¹¹ M. Bogucka, *New Perspectives*, p. 186; many historians have been pointing out that the history of women should not be confined to the history of prostitutes, witches and nuns, cf. H. Wunder, *Basel — eine Stadt der Frauen*, p. 3; some new trends can also be noticed in research on "exceptional" women, e.g. *Nonne, Königin und Kurtisane. Wissen, Bildung und Gelehrsamkeit von Frauen in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. M. Hohkamp, G. Jancke, Königstein im Taurus 2004.

¹² Cf. M. Bogucka, *New Perspectives*, p. 196 (including literature up to about 1995); S. Ehrenpreis, U. Lotz-Heumann, *Reformation und professionelles Zeitalter*, Darmstadt 2002, pp. 92–99 (the authors single out two points of the controversy: women's participation in the Reformation and the change of opinions on women).

defined as an imposition of “social discipline”¹³. Social changes worsened the situation of the “fringe people” or increased the tendency to penalise previously tolerated behaviours (e.g. prostitution). Attention has also been drawn during the discussion to the fact that the new model of religiousness was less convenient to women¹⁴.

The opponents of this theory draw attention to women’s active participation in spreading the ideas of the Reformation¹⁵ and to the emergence of new roles and social institutions useful to women¹⁶. One of them was the institution of pastor’s wife (*Pfarrfrau*), a phenomenon *ex definitione* Protestant¹⁷. What was specific about it was that, like the person and post of the pastor, it belonged to both the private and the public sphere (at least within the area of the commune)¹⁸. Katharina Zell is frequently cited as an example for she defined herself as *Kirchenmutter*¹⁹, in

¹³ Cf. G. Oestreich, *Strukturprobleme des europäischen Absolutismus*, in: idem, *Geist und Gestalt des frühmodernen Staates. Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, Berlin 1969, pp. 189 ff. P. Schuster, *Das Frauenhaus. Städtische Bordelle in Deutschland 1350–1600*, Paderborn 1992.

¹⁴ Cf. N. Z. Davis, *City Women and Religious Change*, in: eadem, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, Stanford 1988, pp. 65–96; C. Ulbrich, *Frauen in der Reformation*, in: *Die Frühe Neuzeit in der Geschichtswissenschaft. Forschungstendenzen und Forschungserträge*, ed. N. Boskovska–Leimgruber, Paderborn 1997, pp. 163–177, here p. 168; H. Schilling, *Das konfessionelle Europa. Die Konfessionalisierung der europäischen Länder seit Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts und ihre Folgen für Kirche, Stadt, Gesellschaft und Kultur*, in: *Konfessionalisierung in Ostmitteleuropa: Wirkung des religiösen Wandels im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert in Staat, Gesellschaft und Kultur*, ed. J. Bahlcke, A. Strohmeier, Stuttgart 1999, p. 52.

¹⁵ Cf. R. H. Bainton, *Women of the Reformation*, vols. 1–3, Minneapolis 1971–1977.

¹⁶ Cf. H. Schilling, *Die Konfessionalisierung von Kirchen, Staat und Gesellschaft — Profit, Leistung, Defizite und Perspektiven eines geschichtswissenschaftlichen Paradigmas*, in: *Die katholische Konfessionalisierung: wissenschaftliches Symposium der Gesellschaft zur Herausgabe des Corpus Catholicorum und des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte*, ed. W. Reinhard, H. Schilling, Gütersloh 1993, pp. 7–12.

¹⁷ L. Schorn–Schütte, “Gefährtin” und “Mitregentin”. *Zur Sozialgeschichte der evangelischen Pfarrfrauen der Frühen Neuzeit*, in: *Wandel der Geschlechterbeziehungen zu Beginn der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. H. Wunder, C. Vanja, Frankfurt a.M. 1990, pp. 109–153, here p. 109; cf. W. Jannasch, *Pfarrfrau*, in: *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. K. Galling, vol. 5, Tübingen 1986, column 301–303; G. Weber, *Pfarrfrau*, in: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (henceforward referred to as LThK), ed. W. Kasper, K. Baumgartner, vol. 8, Freiburg 1999, p. 171; the German word *Pfarrfrau* has no precise equivalent in English; its root is *Pfarre* (parish), in a way the German word implies that the positions of the pastor and his wife are of equal importance (*Pfarrer*, *Pfarrfrau*); its also brings the pastor’s wife nearer to the public sphere.

analogy to the male *Kirchenvater* institution. Let us not forget, however, that Katharina Zell was an exceptional person: she was the wife of Matthäus Zell, corresponded with Martin Luther, was a friend of Ulrich Zwingli and Kaspar Schwenckfeld and after the excommunication of her husband undertook to defend and legitimise the marriages of clergymen²⁰.

The discussion also resulted in studies on the restrictions imposed on women as well as opportunities created for them by post-Tridentinal Catholicism²¹. The possibility of comparisons is however still restricted for there are no studies on the situation of women in the Orthodox Church, especially on the situation of the wives of popes.

Various factors can be taken into account (or various sources may be used) to describe the role of women in Protestantism. Generally speaking, three orientations are possible: a) theological, b) legal, and c) social. As regards the first orientation, it has been pointed out that Protestantism attached greater value to the institution of marriage, in line with Luther's ideas²². However,

¹⁸ Cf. O. Brunner, *op. cit.* as regards the interconnection between these two spheres in Europe before the modern epoch; L. Schorn-Schütte, *op. cit.*, pp. 112, 133; according to Hans-Christian Rublack, the commune was a public area, a fact overlooked by Jürgen Habermas, cf. H.-C. Rublack, "Der wohlgeplante Priester". *Vom Selbstverständnis lutherischer Geistlichkeit im Zeitalter der Orthodoxie*, "Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung" (henceforward referred to as ZHF) 16, 1989, pp. 1-30, here p. 8, fn. 17; Rublack's line has been followed by J. Wahl, *Lebensplanung und Alltagserfahrung. Württembergerische Pfarrfamilien im 17. Jahrhundert*, Mainz 2000, *passim*; for a survey of recent literature on Öffentlichkeit in early modern times see S. Rau, G. Scherhoff, *Öffentliche Räume in der Frühen Neuzeit*, in: *Zwischen Gotteshaus und Taverne. Öffentliche Räume in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. S. Rau, G. Scherhoff, Köln 2004, pp. 11-52.

¹⁹ K. Zell, *Ein Brief an die ganze Bürgerschaft der Stadt Straßburg betreffend Herrn Ludwig Rabus*, in: J. C. Füßlin, *Beiträge zur Erläuterung der Kirchengeschichte des Schweizerlandes*, vol. 5, s.l., 1753, p. 196, quoted also in L. Schorn-Schütte, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-113, fn. 11; I. Mager, *op. cit.*, p. 211, fn. 36.

²⁰ For more information on K. Zell see A. Conrad, "Ein männlich-Abrahamisch gemuet": *Katharina Zell im Kontext der Straßburger Reformationsgeschichte*, in: *Geschlechterperspektiven: Forschungen zur Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. H. Wunder, G. Engel, Königstein 1998, pp. 120-134; R. Albrecht, *Wer war Katharine Zell?*, *ibidem*, pp. 135-144; G. Jancke, *Die Kirche als Haushalt und die Leitungsrolle der Kirchenmutter*, *ibidem*, pp. 145-155.

²¹ Cf. A. Conrad, *Zwischen Kloster und Welt. Ursulinen und Jesultinnen in der katholischen Reformbewegung des 16./17. Jahrhunderts*, Mainz 1991; "In Christo ist weder man noch weyb". *Frauen in der Zeit der Reformation und der katholischen Reform*, ed. A. Conrad, Münster 1999.

²² Cf. S. Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled. Family Life in Reformation Europe*, Cambridge 1983; D. Lorenz, *Vom Kloster zur Küche. Die Frau vor und nach der*

this positive evaluation has lately been criticised because Protestantism imposed restrictions on women by defining their role only as that of wives and mothers²³. What is also controversial is the interpretation of marriage in Lutheran orthodoxy. According to Luise Schorn-Schütte, Lutheran orthodoxy, despite its emphasis on the sinfulness of human beings, insisted on a positive evaluation of marriage²⁴. This was a steady tradition as is proved by all that was expected from the *Pfarrfrauen*²⁵. Norbert Haag's reflections lead to similar conclusions. On the basis of an analysis of sermons, he portrays a picture in which woman, being by nature a weaker and sinful creature, was subordinated to man, but on the other hand, in keeping with Aristotelian tradition, man's command of the household was presented as a sensible, judicious rule based on harmony and a division of duties²⁶.

The second current in research is represented by studies on courts of first instance concerned with marital problems. In this respect a pioneering role has been played by Lyndal Roper's work²⁷.

Researchers belonging to the current interested in social history dissociate themselves from reflections on the essence of confession; in their view research should be confined to concrete historical conditions and the question should be presented precisely by means of quantitative methods. In their research on pastors and their wives they make use of similar sets of categories: social origin, education, economic situation and social prestige. This is why their research relativises many current theories or shows their real dimensions²⁸.

Reformation Dr. Martin Luthers, in: *Die Frau von der Reformation zur Romantik*, ed. B. Becker-Cantarino, Bonn 1985, pp. 7–35; G. Scharffenorth, "Im Geiste Freunde werden". *Mann und Frau im Glauben Martin Luthers*, in: *Wandel der Geschlechterbeziehungen*, pp. 97–108.

²³ H. Wunder, *Frauen in der Reformation. Rezeptions- und historiographie-geschichtliche Überlegungen*, "Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte" 92, 2001, pp. 303–320; cf. S. Ehrenpreis, U. Lotz-Heumann, *op. cit.*, pp. 95–96, 131–133 (bibliography), the authors greatly simplify the reason behind the controversy; in their opinion it was caused by the ambiguity of Luther's words.

²⁴ L. Schorn-Schütte, *op. cit.*, p. 117, fn. 27.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 120.

²⁶ Cf. N. Haag, *Predigt und Gesellschaft. Die Luthersche Orthodoxie in Ulm 1640–1740*, Mainz 1992, pp. 172–173.

²⁷ L. Roper, *The Holy Household. Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg*, Oxford 1989.

²⁸ Cf. J. Wahl's critical remarks, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

The results of research on pastors' wives (*Pfarrfrauen*), a group which emerged as a result of the abolition of the clergy's celibacy, are an interesting starting point for reflections on the situation of woman in the post-Reformation Church. Studies on the clergy have fairly well defined the social composition of this group. It is a well known fact, and one that seems to be characteristic of the whole *Reich* and other states, that the first generation of the *Pfarrfrauen* was not uniform socially²⁹. The consolidation of the group, or groups, of pastors' wives is a process which cannot be noticed until the 17th century. This is clearly connected with the consolidation of the socio-occupational group of Protestant clergymen who *suchten und fanden ihre Ehepartnerinnen in den Familien derselben sozialen Gruppen, aus denen sie selbst stammten*³⁰. Without delving into the complex problems of historical demography, it is enough to quote the conclusions of L. Schorn-Schütte and Johannes Wahl. In 17th century Württemberg 50.3% of the pastors' brothers-in-law were clergymen and 26.8% were representatives of the administration³¹. In the duchy of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel the respective percentages were 11.3% and 19% in 1569-1630, and 18.6% and 27.1% in 1630-1685³². Despite the fact that quite a high percentage of pastors' wives came from clergymen's families, researchers reject the theory that the pastors' wives were a self-recruited group³³.

Like the wives of pastors, their widows, too, should become an interesting subject for research. However, is widowhood a category by means of which one can separate and clearly define the

²⁹Cf. J. Wahl, *op. cit.*, p. 104; M. Brecht, *Herkunft und Ausbildung der protestantischen Geistlichen der Herzogtüms Württemberg im 16. Jahrhundert*, "Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte" 80 (series 4, 18), 1969, pp. 163-175; L. Schorn-Schütte, *op. cit.*, table 1, p. 126 (her conclusions concerning the 16th and early 17th centuries are doubtful because of gaps in sources); H. Decker-Hauff, *Untersuchungen zur Struktur der protestantischen Geistlichkeit südwestlicher Reichsstädte*, in: *Gesellschaftliche Unterschichten in den südwestlichen Städten*, ed. E. Maschke, J. Sydow, Stuttgart 1967, p. 168; B. Vogler, *Le clergé protestant rhénan au siècle de la Réforme (1555-1619)*, Paris 1976, pp. 208-209.

³⁰J. Wahl, *op. cit.* p. 104.

³¹*Ibidem*, p. 108.

³²L. Schorn-Schütte, *Evangelische Geistlichkeit in der Frühneuzeit. Deren Anteil an der Entfaltung frühmoderner Staatlichkeit und Gesellschaft. Dargestellt am Beispiel des Fürstentums Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, der Landgrafschaft Hessen-Kassel und der Stadt Braunschweig*, Heidelberg 1996, pp. 479-481.

³³J. Wahl, *op. cit.*, p. 109; L. Schorn-Schütte, *Evangelische Geistlichkeit*, pp. 86, 89, 97; cf. D. Gugerli, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-187.

object of research?³⁴ It is not easy to give an explicit reply. *Je nach der Zeit, Region, Rechtskultur, Sozialstatus, finanzieller Situation und persönlicher Prägung gestalteten sich die Lebensumstände von Witwen trotz gemeinsamer Erfahrung des Todes des Ehemannes höchst unterschiedlich*, wrote the editor of a recently published book on parsons' wives³⁵. In defiance of this scepticism, it should however be pointed out that in European culture widowhood is a factor which characterises a social group singled out on the basis of *St. Paul's First Epistle to Timothy* (1 Tim 5, 3–16)³⁶. As Bernard Jussen says, after the death of their husbands the wives were not regarded as a separate *genus hominum* until about 200; earlier, the term *vidua* denoted all women who lived alone, whether divorced or unmarried³⁷. In addition to strict norms concerning behaviour, the group's specific life experience was one of the main criteria that set it apart. This group was simply defined differently than others to which it could be compared³⁸. However, this was a real group which, despite the social differences between its members, had a certain common identity, as is testified to by the fact that it had its own literature, addressed mainly, if not exclusively, to it, such as *Witwentrostbuch* by Elisabeth von Calenberg-Göttingen³⁹.

³⁴ Marjo Buitelaar begins his article with the question "What is a widow? and points out that the word has many meanings, M. Buitelaar, *Widows' World. Representation and realities*, in: *Between Poverty and the Pyre. Moments in the History of Widowhood*, ed. J. Bremmer, L. van den Bosch, London 1995, pp. 1–18.

³⁵ M. Schattkowsky, *Einführung*, in: *Witwenschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit. Fürstliche und adlige Witwen zwischen Fremd- und Selbstbestimmung*, ed. M. Schattkowsky, Leipzig 2003, p. 11.

³⁶ Cf. G. Schöllgen, *Witwe. II. Historisch-theologisch*, *LThK*, vol. 10, Freiburg 2001, column 1261; I. Riedel-Spangenberg, *Amt. XII. Frau und kirchliches Amt*, *LThK*, vol. 1, Freiburg 1993, column 558; he even writes about widow's office (Witwen-Amt); so does R. Puza, *Witwe*, in: *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (henceforward referred to as LM), vol. 9, Stuttgart 1999, column 276; B. B. Thurston, *The Widow. A Women's Ministry in the Early Church*, Minneapolis 1989.

³⁷ B. Jussen, *Witwe. B. Sozial- und Kirchengeschichtlich*, LM, vol. 9, p. 279; idem, *Der Name der Witwe*, p. 36.

³⁸ B. Jussen, *Witwe*, p. 280 (he contrasts widowhood with the clergy, for membership of the clergy was defined by a concrete ritual). It is interesting whether the widow status was irreversible, that is, whether a woman ceased to be a widow when she remarried, cf. S. Cavallo, I. Warner, *Introduction*, in: *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. idem, New York 1999, p. 9.

³⁹ I. Mager, *op. cit.*; cf. J. Bepler, "zu meinem und aller dehrer die sich's gebrauchen wollen, nutzen, trost und frommen". *Lektüre und Gebet im Leben der fürstlichen Witwen in der Frühen Neuzeit*, in: *Witwenschaft in der frühen Neuzeit*,

The research on widowhood and widows is at an advanced stage⁴⁰. The last few years have witnessed the appearance of studies on widows from middle-class, business and artisan circles⁴¹. No studies have yet been written on widows from peasant and petty nobility milieux. The starting point for the authors' analyses was the legal situation of widows, their economic situation or their specific experiences⁴². In summing up the state of research Maria Schattkowsky has said that it is a valuable part of the recent "return to individuals" in historiography, with its concentration on concrete people and their experiences⁴³. Research on widows also exemplifies a situation in which studies on women have inspired research on men, leading to new conclusions on this subject, for widowers have also become a subject of studies⁴⁴.

It was Luther who created the patterns of behaviour for *Pfarrfrauen* and *Pfarrwitwen*. In his testament he appointed Catherine von Bora as the custodian and guardian of their children, thus stressing the significance of the institution of pastor's wife and pastor's widow⁴⁵. The patterns were, of course,

pp. 303–320; D. Frischer, *Spätmittelalterlicher Unterweisungsschriften für eine Frau im Witwenstand — Predigt, Lehrgedicht und Lehrgespräch*, in: *Prozesse der Normbildung und Normveränderung im mittelalterlichen Europa*, ed. D. Ruhe, K.-H. Spieß, Stuttgart 2000, pp. 353–374.

⁴⁰ *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*; I. Blom, *The History of Widowhood: a Bibliographic Overview*, "Journal of Family History" 16, 1991, pp. 191–219; C. Opitz, *Emanzipiert oder marginalisiert? Witwen in der Gesellschaft des späten Mittelalters*, in: *Auf der Suche nach der Frau im Mittelalter*, ed. B. Lundt, München 1991, pp. 25–48.

⁴¹ Cf. U. Machtemes, *Leben zwischen Trauer und Pathos. Lebensführung bürgerlicher Witwen im 19. Jahrhundert*, Osnabrück 2001; S. Oglivie, "A Bitter Living". *Women Market and Social Capital in Early Modern Germany*, Oxford 2003, pp. 209–269 (on widows).

⁴² According to M. Schattkowsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 16–20 (an extensive analysis of literature).

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 20.

⁴⁴ S. Cavallo, L. Warner, *Introduction*, in: *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, p. 3; M. Pellin, *Finding Widowers: Men without Women in English Towns before 1700*, in: *ibidem*, pp. 37–54; L. Warner, *Widows, Widowers and the Problem of 'Second Marriages' in Sixteenth-Century France*, in: *ibidem*, pp. 84–108.

⁴⁵ I. Mager, *op. cit.*, p. 210; cf. T. Fabiny, *Luthers letzte Wille*, Bielefeld 1983; on widows as custodians and guardians cf. K.-H. Spieß, *Witwenversorgung im Hochadel. Rechtliche Rahmen und praktische Gestaltung im Spätmittelalter und zu Beginn der Frühen Neuzeit*, in: *Witwenschaft in der frühen Neuzeit*, pp. 87–114 here p. 102 (his reflections, however, concern rich nobility and ducal families); cf. P. Weimer, *Vormund.-schaft, LM*, vol. 8, Stuttgart 1999, columns 1853–1854;

based on the *Bible*, especially on the fragment of *St. Paul's Epistle to Timothy*, mentioned earlier⁴⁶. Luther referred to this fragment in *Der Kleine Katechismus* in 1529; he left out many passages but preserved the distinction between a true widow who lives alone virtuously and continues to pray night and day and a widow who lives in pleasure and is thus dead while she lives⁴⁷. A fragment of Luther's words was repeated in the 1569 book of the Pomeranian Church: *de eine rechte wedewe unde einsam is, de setten eren höpen up godt, unde blifft am gebede dach unde nacht, de verso in wollüsten levet, de levendich dodt*. Widows were commanded to lead a faultless life, they were forbidden to be inquisitive, garrulous and to engage in gossip: *bevele en, dat se unstrafflick sint, nicht klapperich, nicht vörwitzich, de ummeher lopen dorch de hüse unde reden, dat sick nicht behört*⁴⁸.

A pastor's death affected all family members, but not to the same extent. The death of the husband and father was incomparably more painful for the wife and daughters of a pastor than the death of a woman was for men⁴⁹. If the husbands did not secure their future by buying a house and land, the women were faced with three possibilities: to buy an estate, rent a house, or live with their children⁵⁰. The future of sons was often guaranteed

about the influence exerted by Luther's wife on the social shape of the group of wives, see L. Schorn-Schütte, *Gefährtin*, p. 124; S. Westphal, *Frau und lutherische Konfessionalisierung. Eine Untersuchung zum Fürstentum Pfalz-Neuburg, 1542-1614*, Frankfurt a.M-Berlin-Bern 1994, p. 221; J. Wahl, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

⁴⁶ The model of *Pfarrfrau* and *Pfarrwitwe* undoubtedly had many features borrowed from guild statutes, but there are no studies on this subject; the most popular Renaissance instructions for widows were brought out by Juan Luise Vives (*De institutione feminae Christianae*, Latin ed. 1523, translations into: Spanish 1528, English 1529, French 1542, German 1544) and Erasmus (*De vidua christiana* — Lat. 1529); for a broader selection of sources see: *Women's Lives in Medieval Europe: A sourcebook*, ed. E. Amt, London 1993; B. J. Todd, *The virtuous widow in Protestant England*, in: *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, pp. 60–83.

⁴⁷ M. Luther, *Der Kleine Katechismus*, in: *Martin Luther: Luther deutsch. Die Werke Martin Luthers in neuer Auswahl für die Gegenwart*, ed. K. Aland, Göttingen 1991, vol. 6, p. 158.

⁴⁸ *Agenda, dat is ordeninge der hüligen kerckenemter unde ceremonien* (1569), in: *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, ed. E. Sehling, vol. 4, Leipzig 1911 (henceforward Sehling), pp. 419–480, here p. 432.

⁴⁹ J. Wahl, *op. cit.*, pp. 130, 146; this was a rule in early modern European society, see O. Hutton, *Arbeit und Familie*, in: *Geschichte der Frauen*, vol. 3, Frankfurt 1994, pp. 55–56, S. Cavallo, L. Warner, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁵⁰ J. Wahl, *op. cit.*, (usually a daughter's house was chosen).

by scholarships or other forms of aid, a reflection of the clergy's male solidarity which did not extend to women⁵¹. This is why it soon became necessary to lay down special regulations concerning the clergymen's partners in life, and the widows of pastors became the object of social care or charitable activity in both the Lutheran and the Reformed Church all over Europe⁵². Let us add that the widows of sextons, organists and other church servants enjoyed similar privileges.

The problem of pastors' widows arose in Pomerania when the Pomeranian Church took the side of the Reformation and a group of clergymen came into being there. The first generation of local pastors probably did not differ much from its counterpart in other parts of the *Reich*. In view of a lack of qualified persons, people of "the old system", former Catholic priests, kept their posts, but were told to get married⁵³. They frequently married their cooks or housekeepers. But many pastors regarded marriage as a fully rational decision dictated by the requirements of the profession or by the intention to be different from the previous generation⁵⁴. This was reflected in the frequent accusations that pastors did not respect the institution of marriage or had a non-committal attitude towards it⁵⁵.

The question of securing the future of pastors' widows was of course connected with the material situation of the new Church, which was bad, as the clergymen frequently pointed out. Documents from the beginning of the Reformation are simply catalogues of complaints by the leaders of the Pomeranian Church and pastors living in the countryside. It is emphasised in the Church rules drawn up by Johannes Bugenhagen in 1535 and in reports on inspections made in the 1530s that the incomes

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 148; A. La Vopa, *Grace, Talent and Merit. Poor Students, Clerical Careers and Professional Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Germany*, Cambridge-New York 1988, p. 32.

⁵² Cf. W. Kriegseisen, *Charity or Social Welfare? Social Assistance in the Reformed Church's Community of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 18th Century*, "Acta Poloniae Historica" 2003, 87, pp. 55-75, here pp. 65-66.

⁵³ L. Schorn-Schütte, *Evangelische Geistlichkeit*, pp. 86 ff.; M. Brecht, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-167.

⁵⁴ H.-C. Rublack, *op. cit.*, p. 18, fn 59; cf. W. Jannasch, *op. cit.*, column 301.

⁵⁵ Cf. S. E. Buckwalter, *Die Priesterehe in Flugschriften der frühen Reformation*, Gütersloh 1998; compare this with the situation in England: H. Parish, *Clerical Marriage and the English Reformation: Precedent, Policy and Practice*, Aldershot 2000.

of pastors should be raised as soon as possible⁵⁶. Jakob Runge quoted the words of Johann Knipstro, his master and predecessor in the office of superintendent, who said that if his wife had not taken up dressmaking he would have had to renounce his office⁵⁷. In his study on "offences in Pomeranian churches and schools", a different version of which was adopted by the synod held in Stettin in 1566, Runge himself condemned the greed of patrons and believers who let pastors live in poverty, and criticised the misconduct of clergymen⁵⁸. Other pastors also frequently complained to the superintendent, the consistory or even the Duke that poverty compelled them to leave their parish⁵⁹. Nearly a hundred years later the pastor of the commune of Pargitz presented his dramatic situation (poor soil, floods which made it impossible

⁵⁶ *Kerken-ordeninge des ganzen Pomerlandes dorch de hochgebaren fürsten und heren, heren Barnym under Philips, beyde gevedderen, up dem landdage tu Treptow, to eeren dem hilligen evangelio bestaten. Dorch Doc. Joannem Bugenhagen, 1535, Sehling, pp. 328–344, here pp. 332–332, ref. 1 Cor. 9, 7 ff; Gal. 6, 7; cf. Protokolle der pommerschen Kirchenvisitationen 1535–1555, ed. H. Heyden, vols. 1–2, Köln–Graz 1961.*

⁵⁷ J. G. L. Kosegarten, *De academia Pomerana ad evangelium traducta*, Greifswald 1839, p. 28, cited after T. Woltersdorf, *Die Konservierung der Pfarr-Wittwen und Töchter bei den Pfarren und die durch Heirat bedingte Berufung zum Predigamt in Neuvorpommern und Rügen*, "Deutsche Zeitschrift für Kirchenrecht" 11, 1902, pp. 177–246, here p. 178, fn 2; also D. Cramer, *Das Grosse Pommersche Kirchen Chronicon*, Stettin 1628, p. 75. This was an important statement for the superintendent was an intermediary between the Duke and the Church, and between the Church and the pastors, cf. S. C. Karant-Nunn, *Luther's Pastors. The Reformation in the Ernestin Countryside*, "American Philosophical Society" 69, 1979, p. 31 "To the pastors the superintendents were not only accessible ... but they were often sympathetic as well ... they, too, had to make ends meet". These words are confirmed many times in the Pomeranian pastors' 16th century correspondence with the superintendents.

⁵⁸ J. Runge, *Bedanken von Gebrechen in den Kirchen und Schulen in Pommern, 1556*, ed. A. Uckelej, "Pommersches Jahrbuch" 10, 1909, pp. 24–73; the catalogue of complaints had not changed significantly since the 15th century, cf. *Eptstola de miseria curatorum*, ed. A. Werminghoff, "Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte" 13, 1916, pp. 200–227.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Die Evangelischen Geistlichen des ehemaligen Regierungsbezirkes Stralsund. Die Synoden Wolgast, Stralsund, Loitz*, ed. H. Heyden, Greifswald 1964 (henceforward: Heyden, IV) p. 36 (Borchart Lüdecke in Hohendorf); a pastor's income consisted of a fixed salary and payments for services, the prices depending on the number of inhabitants in the parish; this is why Michael Chysovius wrote to the superintendent that the Elmenhorst parish *fast im ganzen Lande und insonderheit im Bardschen Synode das geringste Kirchenspiel ist, woselbst ein Prediger nicht wie ein Prediger, sondern in seinem miserin leben muß wegen der geringen Habung und wenig Anzahl der Zuhörer*. See: *Die Evangelischen Geistlichen des ehemaligen Regierungsbezirkes Stralsund. Kirchenkreise Barth, Franzburg und Grimmen*, ed. H. Heyden, Greifswald 1958 (henceforward Heyden II), p. 249.

to raise cattle, high prices and, first and foremost, low income) and asked to be transferred to another parish because it was impossible to survive in those circumstances⁶⁰. Some pastors presented their desperate economic situation in an ironic way; Heinrich Blomow, for instance, summed up the report on his income with the words: *holz ist holz, man kan da nicht viell von eßen*⁶¹. Johann Draethöger, informing the superintendent that he was compelled to sell a part of his wife's property, added: *was ich nun hiebei für freude habe, kan E(ure) E(xzellenz) ... woll erachten*⁶².

These complaints and threats were often motivated by concern for the dignity of the office and by the realisation of the importance and value of pastor's work. But concern about the future of one's wife and children, the potential widow and orphans, played an important role too. What is more, concern for pastors' families was soon made part of the public sphere and it became the duty of the pastor's office to secure the future of pastors' wives and children⁶³.

Although at the end of the 1520s Bugenhagen was one of the few, if not the only, reformer to raise the problem of pastors' widows in his *Kerken-ordeninge* of 1535⁶⁴, the question is not even mentioned⁶⁵. The question of pastors' wives is referred to

⁶⁰ Pommersches Landesarchiv, Greifswald (henceforward LAG), rep. 5, tit. 63, № 337 (Joachim Albrecht to the Duke, 1617: *an meiner muhlselig nahrung merklich abbruch geschicht ... in groß beschwerde, armuth, noth und schulden gerathe*; German quotations after *Rechtlinien für die Edition Landesgeschichtlicher Quellen*, ed. W. Heinemeyer, Marburg-Hannover 2000.

⁶¹ Archiwum Państwowe (State Archives) in Szczecin, Konsystorz Szczeciński (henceforward AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz.), call number 1342 (Heinrich Blomow, 1625?).

⁶² LAG, rep. 36 II T 8 (Johann Draethöger to the superintendent, Tribsees 18.01.1615).

⁶³ For the pastor's office, see L. Schorn-Schütte, *Evangelische Getstlichkeit*, pp. 31 ff.; W. Kerber, *Amt. LThK*, vol. 1, column 543 ff.; G. Gershake, *Amt, theologischer Begriff, LThK*, vol. 1, col. 544 ff.

⁶⁴ The most important work on north German Church ordinances is still: A. Zieger, *Das religiöse und kirchliche Leben in Preussen und Kurland im Spiegel der evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Köln-Graz 1967; an attempt at a broader presentation has recently been made by S. Kreiker, *Amt, Schule und Obrigkeit. Armenversorgung und Schulwesen in den evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Bielefeld 1997.

⁶⁵ Cf. the appraisal by B. Wunder, *Pfarrwitwenkassen und Beamtenwitwen-Anstalten vom 16.-19. Jahrhundert*, ZHF 12, 1985, pp. 429-498, 434; I. Mager, *op. cit.*, p. 211; W. Petke, *Pfarrwitwen und Pfarradjunkten. Zur Alterssicherung mecklenburgischer Pfarrer und ihrer Witwen bis zum frühen 18. Jahrhundert*, in: *Menschen in der Kirche. 450 Jahre seit Einführung der Reformation in Mecklenburg*,

only in the chapter dealing with excommunication; it was stressed there that concubinage was forbidden, that after getting married pastors should not be deprived of their property and freedoms, and that their wives and children should be protected by the authorities, as the wives and children of other subjects are⁶⁶. The article is rather an echo of late medieval anticlericalism than a realisation of future problems⁶⁷.

The first legal regulations of the situation of pastors' widows were adopted in 1543 at the second synod in Greifswald which was presided over by J. Knipstro, a pastor who owed a lot to his wife. In the preface to the synod's decisions the theologians stated that their aim was to introduce *Eintracht der Lehre und Lebens... Eintracht unter den Lehrern und Kirchen*⁶⁸. The synod laid down institutional foundations for the functioning of the new Church and raised the question of pastors' widows and orphans, pointing out that the problem had to be solved because of human ingratitude and the pastors' low incomes⁶⁹.

The following year (1544) the next synod held in Greifswald took some decisions on the question of widows. It decided that the Church should give each widow one of its flats for life and that all widows should be granted the privileges enjoyed by the clergy. The synod asked the Duke to grant widows an annuity

ed. H. Bei der Wieden, Rostock 2000, pp. 165–218, here p. 173; in Bugenhagen's Church ordinances for towns (Hamburg — 1529, Lubeck — 1531) these regulations appear earlier than they do in instructions for larger territories (since 1537).

⁶⁶ *Kerken-ordeninge* (1535), Sehling, p. 331a; there is much to indicate that the first generation of reformers did not consider it essential to secure the future of widows and orphans; this is confirmed by Luther's words on his deathbed: *Non habeo domum, agros, possessiones, pecuniam quae reliquam. Tu dedisti mihi uxorem et filios, tibi reddo. Nutri, doce, serva, ut hactenus me, o Pater pupillarum*, after O. Vogt, *Dr. Johannes Bugenagens Briefwechsel*, Stettin 1888 (Ndr Hildesheim 1966), p. 67; cf. G. Kawerau, *Der Briefwechsel des Justus Jonas*. Erste Hälfte, Halle 1884 (Ndr Hildesheim 1964) p. 106.

⁶⁷ Cf. S. E. Buckwalter, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

⁶⁸ J. H. Balthasar, *Sammlung einiger zur Pommerschen Kirchenhistorie gehörigen Schriften*. vol. 1, Greifswald 1723, p. 16.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 20 (it is worth while to quote Knipstro's explanation: *Undanckbarkeit ist zu groß und unser Stipendia viel zu klein, und so wir versterben, achtet man unser Wittwen und Waysen nicht, und vertriebt sie aus den Wohnungen. Solches, und nicht der UnGlaub (!), zwinget uns, daß wir auf unser Hausfrauen und Kinder gedencken, und unsers Alters achten. Wir sind Menschen, und haben afectos humanos gegen unser Hausfrauen und Kinder, wie andere Menschen, und werden fromme, gottsfürchtigen und verständige Leute uns das nicht verdencken*); cf. T. Woltersdorf, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

from the Church and hospital funds; this was one of the first attempts in the early modern *Reich* to give widows an old age pension in cash⁷⁰. It was also decided that the pastors of four neighbouring villages (in rural areas) or of the other churches (in towns) should for half a year carry out pastoral duties in the deceased pastor's parish gratuitously so that the widow and the orphaned children might live in the deceased parson's house free of care⁷¹. According to Theodor Woltersdorf this was the beginning of the institution of *Gnadenjahr*⁷² (year of grace), the roots of which — as has been pointed out in recent research — go back to the late Middle Ages⁷³.

All these decisions were repeated at the fourth general synod, the first to be held in Stettin, which was convened by Bartholomeus Suawe in 1545. In a petition to Suawe, who had just taken over the post of bishop of Kammin after Erazm Manteuffel's death, the Pomeranian superintendents and pastors asked him to secure the lives of widows, by which they meant that widows should be permitted to remarry or, if they remained in the state of widowhood, that they should be given a flat and enabled to educate their children at a university or to teach them a craft. The parish of the deceased pastor was to be looked after by neighbouring pastors for half a year and during that time the

⁷⁰ B. Wunder, *Pfarrwitwenkassen*, p. 439.

⁷¹ J. H. Balthasar, *op. cit.*, p. 28 (*nachdem das grosse Elend und betrübliche Armuth unserer Wittwen und Waifchen für Augen ist, wie sie ohn allen Trost verlassen werden, und bald aus den Häusern, weiß nicht wohin, verweist, auch aller Trost und Versorgung mit unser Arbeit auffhört und erstirbt, daß die Städten die andern Prediger, und sonst auf Dörffern die vier Vicini, unschichtig sollen für des verstorbenen Predigers Wittwe die Kirchen-Arbeit warten, ohn alle Entgeltiß damit die Wittwe mit den armen verlassenen Wäyßchen, das halbe Jahr genisse der Besoldung und Behausung*); T. Woltersdorf, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

⁷² *Ibidem*.

⁷³ B. Wunder, *Pfarrwitwenkassen*, p. 438; cf. W. Petke, *op. cit.*, pp. 170–171, 175 (in Bugenhagen's ordinances since 1537) the "year of grace" was to be also a year of mourning which was to separate the husband's death from his widow's remarriage; it applied not only to pastors' widows but in the case of other social groups it was interpreted as a ban or command and not as a privilege; cf. S. Cavallo, L. Warner, *op. cit.*, p. 11; D. Freist, *Religious Difference and the Experience of Widowhood in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Germany*, in: *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, pp. 164–177, here p. 164; in the Netherlands the half-year ban on remarriage applied also to widowers. D. Hempternias-van Dijk, *Widows and the Law. The Legal Position of Widows in Dutch Republic during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, in: *Between Poverty and the Pyre*, pp. 89–103, here p. 97.

widow was to receive all that her deceased husband had been entitled to⁷⁴.

At a synod in 1556, which preceded an inspection, the problem of remuneration for widows was raised again: the Duke was to earmark the money from the sale of monastic estates for this purpose⁷⁵. This was perhaps a nucleus of the idea of widows' fund (*Pfarrwitwenkasse*). According to Woltersdorf, the inspectors' instructions from the middle of the 17th century indicate that widows' pensions were paid out by provosts, parishes and patrons⁷⁶. It was only in 1638 that a widows' fund was created in Stralsund, in other parts of Pomerania they were created in 1690⁷⁷.

The provincial synods held in the late 1550s and early 1560s extended the six-month period of care over the parishes whose pastors had died to 12 months⁷⁸. Some synods formulated the question of widows' incomes with greater precision, pointing out that payments for services should go to the persons who carried them out, that is, the pastors who acted as substitutes for the deceased⁷⁹. Widows were also given the possibility of employing, on a superintendent's recommendation, an assistant to carry out

⁷⁴ J. H. Balthasar, *op. cit.*, p. 43 (*dann sein Weib und Kind dasselbe Quartal vollend solt auffheben, und darnach im halben Jahr die andern Prediger, sein des Verstorbenen vices vergehen, daß sein armes Weib und Kinder dasselbe halbe Jahr vollend die Besoldung vollkömlich mögen bören, und darnach die arme Wittwe möge versorgen werden und getröstet, daß ihr oder wiederum zum Ehestand geholfen, oder so sie im Wittwen-Stände bleiben will, in eine freye Bude möge genommen werden, die Kinder auch dereins zum Studio oder Handwercke gefordert*).

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 146. T. Woltersdorf, *op. cit.*, p. 187; cf. also the Landtag's 1556 instruction for inspectors, J. Balthasar, *op. cit.*, p. 154; monastic estates had been a subject of disputes since the 1530s.

⁷⁶ T. Woltersdorf, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

⁷⁷ D. H. Biederstedt, *Sammlung aller kirchlichen, das Predigtamt, dessen Verwaltung, Verhältnisse, Pflichten und Rechte betreffenden Verordnungen im Herzogthume Neuvorpommern und Fürsterthume Rügen*, vol. 2, Stralsund 1817, p. 216, fn. 17; cf. B. Wunder, *Pfarrwitwenkassen*, p. 447. The Stralsundkasse was one of the earliest Witwenkassen. It was established by clergymen and existed mainly thanks to foundations; it had only a local range.

⁷⁸ Jakob Heinrich Balthasar's edition (*op. cit.* vol. 1) contains fragments of reports on the following provincial synods: Gützkow (1561), p. 420; Barth (1560), p. 428, (*idem* in LAG, rep. 40 VII, 82); Anklam (1557, 1562), pp. 528, 586; I have also made use of documents of the synods held at: Usedom (1557), LAG, rep. 40 VII, 81; Grimmen (1558), LAG, rep. 40 VII, 84; Treptow/Tollensee (now called Altentreptow) (1561), LAG, rep. 40 VII, 85; Greifenhagen (1570), LAG, rep. 40 VII, 86; the reports are fragmentary and mostly repeat *Statuta Synodica*, included in Sehling, pp. 484–492.

⁷⁹ Cf. LAG, rep. 40 VII, 84; Grimmen (1558).

pastoral duties⁸⁰. Efforts were made to improve the financial situation of widows and orphans by according them a share in the fines adjudged by the synods⁸¹. This low-grade ordinance was confirmed by a Church regulation of 1563 which was proposed by J. Runge⁸².

This regulation, considering its scope, devoted little space to widows. Runge paid attention to them only in the fifth (*van scholen*) and sixth (*van der visitation*) parts. In instructions for inspectors Runge stated that care should be taken of widows and old pastors by securing their future out of hospital benefices, perhaps a resumption of the idea of widows' fund, or in some other way⁸³. Augustine von Balthasar, an 18th century commentator of Church law, pointed out that this form of care consisted in according widows a *vitalitum* partly out of Church resources and partly out of the resources of the parish. The new pastor was to give up an eighth part of his permanent income, so that in practice the widow was supported by the patron, the Church and the new pastor⁸⁴. Further on Runge summed up the decisions adopted by the Pomeranian synods: widows were entitled to a *Gnadenjahr*, including the entire income of their parish as well as a free flat⁸⁵. He pointed out that information was coming in that the *Gnadenjahr* was inconvenient for future pastors and the neighbours who were looking after the parish of the dead parson. He entrusted decisions on this matter to inspectors.

The law was made more precise by the resolutions of the synod held in Stettin in 1572. What was made more precise was

⁸⁰ For instance in Barth (1560), included in J. Balthasar, *op. cit.*, p. 428, *idem* LAG, rep. 40 VII, 82 (*Sic tamen ut vicini operas Ministerij pro ea subeant, aut Vidua de iudicio Superintendententi aliquem constituat qui labores Ministerij faciant*).

⁸¹ Cf. Usedom (1557), LAG, rep. 40 VII, 81 (*pars media caedet Superindendenti, altera pars Synodo, ut inde ferantur auxilla viduis seu pupillis Pastorum*).

⁸² W. Petke, *op. cit.*, p. 176 (it is not true that the twelve-month *Gnadenjahr* existed in Pomerania since 1569; this Church ordinance, and not the earlier one of 1563, is often referred to, owing to the fact that they were almost identical, and Emil Sehling decided to publish the 1569 one; cf. A. von Balthasar, *Jus ecclesiasticum pastorale*, vol. 1, Rostock-Greifswald 1760, pp. 876-879).

⁸³ *Kerkenordeninge im lande to Pamern (!)* (1569), Sehling, p. 413a.

⁸⁴ A. von Balthasar, *op. cit.*, pp. 876-878.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 418a (*eine gelegene waninge schaffen, dar se in erem wedewen stande frt in wanen ane alle börgerlike börden unde unplicht, ...dat gnaden jar, mit aller besoldinge unde inkamende*).

the question of *Gnadenjahr*, the sums the widows were to receive and their duties, as well as the maintenance of neighbouring pastors who were to look after the parish of the deceased parson during that time⁸⁶. In 1593 Boguslaus XIII, granting the privilege of *Gnadenjahr* to professors' wives, stated: *wie in anderen geistlichen Lehnen und beneficien gebreuchlich*⁸⁷.

What is striking is the dynamic and intense evolution of these laws. The question of parsons' widows was raised whenever changes in the organisation of the Church came under discussion. It is worth stressing that the initiative often came from provincial synods, that is, from pastors, and not from the Duke and his council. All this shows that protection of widows was not a planned activity undertaken by modern rulers in order to build the machinery of government and include the Church in the state structures. The laws adopted by synods also reflect the rapid changes in the image of pastor's wife. She was no longer the priest's cook or concubine but gained respect as the pastor's wife. In practice only the resolution concerning the year of grace was put into effect; the question of a free flat has not yet been sufficiently researched by historians.

T. Woltersdorf links this deficiency of institutional solutions with the custom of "keeping the widow" (*Konservierung*) in the parish, that is of marrying her or her daughter to the deceased pastor's successor. This custom, which refers to the *Bible* (*Ezek.* 44, 22; *Gen* 38; *Dtn* 25, 5–10) and is regulated by canon law⁸⁸ is said to go back to the beginnings of the Reformation and has its roots in the structure of guilds which used to "keep" a master's widow⁸⁹. The "keeping" of pastors' widows in their parish was a typically north German phenomenon; it was of marginal importance in other regions of the *Reich*⁹⁰. It is said to have been mentioned for the first time in Pomeranian synodal books in an adjourned decision of 1545 on the possibility of widows' remarriage⁹¹. According to Woltersdorf, a real change was effected

⁸⁶ J. H. Balthasar, *op. cit.*, pp. 310–312.

⁸⁷ J. G. L. Kosegarten, *Geschichte der Universität Greifswald*, Greifswald 1856, vol. 2, p. 132; see also vol. 1, p. 226.

⁸⁸ Cf. A. Strotmann, *Witwe*, *LThK*, vol. 8, col. 1261; R. Puza, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

⁸⁹ R. Wissell, *Des alten Handwerks Recht und Gewohnheit*, vol. 2, Berlin 1974, pp. 435–439.

⁹⁰ Cf. J. Wahl, *op. cit.*, p. 139 (he connects this kind of widow care with the fragmentation of patronage, characteristic of northern Germany).

by the resolutions of the 1572 synod, called *Concilium Pomeranicorum Theologorum de anno gratiae*, in which it was said that a new pastor may marry the previous pastor's widow⁹². As the decisions were approved by the Duke who turned them into laws, the custom of "keeping widows in their parish" began to acquire legal value⁹³. Consequently, the readiness to marry the widow or child of the deceased parson became a trump card in rivalry for a vacant parish.

Widows' remarriages were a norm in modern times, even though they evoked great controversy⁹⁴. They were frequently satirised by writers, and E. Foyster says that there even appeared "male fictions about remarriage"⁹⁵. Many European countries adopted laws to restrict the freedom of widows and widowers in this respect; in Frisia widows could themselves decide to remarry when they were over 25 years old⁹⁶, in France the use of the property of a remarried widow was restricted in 1560⁹⁷. These restrictions were motivated by concern about the economic situation of children and the fear that the widow might squander her husband's fortune. But during the same time guilds exerted pressure on widows to remarry⁹⁸. In villages widows had to find husbands quickly to have somebody to run the farm. When the "keeping of parsons' widows" became the subject of a bitter controversy between jurists in the 17th

⁹¹ T. Woltersdorf, *op. cit.*, p. 192; but the evidence he cites to prove that this was a case of granting refuge to a widow is rather weak: Paul von Rode's letter of 1557 (!) and even later documents.

⁹² J. H. Balthasar, *op. cit.*, p. 310 (*wo nicht der Antecessor in seinem Anzuge gleichermäßig frey empfangen hat*).

⁹³ T. Woltersdorf, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

⁹⁴ Cf. V. Brodsky, *Widows in Late Elizabethan London: Remarriage, Economic Opportunity and Family Orientation*, in: *The World We Have Gained: Histories of Population and Social Structure*, ed. L. Bonfield, R. M. Smith, K. Wrightson, Oxford 1986, p. 122; E. Foyster, *Marrying the Experienced Widow in Early Modern England: the Male Perspective*, in: *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, pp. 108–124, here pp. 108–109, cf. also the bibliography *ibidem* pp. 249–251; A. E. Imhof, *Unsere Lebensuhr — Phasenverschiebung im Verlaufe der Neuzeit*, in: *Ehe, Liebe, Tod. Zum Wandel der Familie, der Geschlechts- und Generationsbeziehungen in der Neuzeit*, ed. P. Borscheid, H. J. Teuteberg, Münster 1983, Studien zur Geschichte des Alltags, vol. 1, pp. 170–198, here: pp. 188–190 and Table 8 (according to him remarriages accounted for 25–30% of all marriages in the 17th and 18th centuries).

⁹⁵ E. Foyster, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

⁹⁶ D. Hempenius-van Dijk, *Widows and the Law*, p. 97 (she points out that Frisia was in this case following Roman law).

⁹⁷ L. Warner, *op. cit.*, pp. 85–88.

⁹⁸ D. Freist, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

century, the question of who should run the pastor's office also played an important role. Opinions on this subject were expressed among others by Mathias Stephani, Friedrich Balduin, Theodor Reinikingk, Eberhard Speckhan, Moevius Völschow, Sigismund Finckelthaus, Benedict Carpzow, Johann Winckelmann, Paul Tarnow, Johann Gerhard, Christian Weber and Johann Otto Tabor. Let us follow Woltersdorf and distinguish the following three attitudes: according to the first, appointment should depend on the candidate's readiness to marry the deceased parson's widow; according to the second, readiness to let the widow live in the parish should be an important factor in selecting candidates; the third, very rare, was opposed to this legal custom⁹⁹.

An analysis of selected examples (mainly the appointment of Joachim Bering and the widow Anna Wolf) induced Woltersdorf to characterise the attitudes in this dispute which took place at the turn of the 16th century. He says that the consistory (or rather its director, Joachim Stephani) held the view that the new pastor's duty to marry the deceased pastor's widow was a binding case-law. What it meant in practice was that candidates disinclined to get married found it difficult or even impossible to take over a parish where a pastor's widow lived. Of course marriage was not compulsory: *handelte es sich in den Augen des Konsistoriums und seines Direktors Joachim Stephani niemals um einen positiven Zwang zur Heirat, sondern immer nur darum, ob der Kandidat diese wolle oder nicht, so dass die nach göttlichem Rechte einem jeden gebührende libertas conjugii durchaus gewahrt bleibe ... conjugium ab officio nicht könne geschieden werden, der Wille zum Amte also den Willen zur Heirat in sich schliessen müsse*¹⁰⁰. This attitude was radically different from the attitude of university professors and councillors who separated the two "wills" and did not regard marriage as an indispensable condition for taking over a parish, being of the opinion that the patron's right and freedom to nominate the candidate (*liberum ius nominandi*) was the most important factor. What is more, they referred to the prohibition of forcible marriages, pointing out that such practice might create dangerous and unfavourable results for the recruitment of future

⁹⁹ T. Woltersdorf, *op. cit.*, pp. 214–231.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 206.

pastors¹⁰¹. The difference in the opinions held by the consistory on the one hand and the professors and the council on the other focused on the legal point — the interpretation of the widow's right to be kept by the parish (a custom, an injunction, its relation to other regulations, e.g. the patronage law) and on the theological-ethical point, the extent of freedom allowed in the contraction of marriage.

It was the will of the bodies which had the right to present and appoint candidates that turned out to be decisive¹⁰². This time the Duke, who often was the last instance holding the balance, did not dare to come out openly and decidedly against the consistory's competence and the Church customs. In J. Bering's case he resorted to Solomon's method: the candidate had no right to contract another marriage before being installed in office, and another parish was to be found for the widow¹⁰³. It is characteristic of Solomon-like decisions that frequently neither side is satisfied; this time it was the consistory that suffered an obvious defeat. Similarly, the Duke could force an appointed parson to come to an agreement with the family of the deceased who was not survived by a wife¹⁰⁴.

Whether we call it a custom or a law, this led to the rise of pastors' dynasties and to the practice of inheriting the pastor's post¹⁰⁵. The result of this development was rather ambivalent: on the one hand this ran counter to professionalism, increased the "guild" corporate character of the pastor's post, closed it to free competition and to the selection of professional men. As has been stated above, the custom of keeping widows in their deceased husband's post was known also in the case of wives of guild masters¹⁰⁶. This provoked accusations of simony and finally led

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 209–210.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*, pp. 210, 230.

¹⁰³ *Ibidem*, p. 198.

¹⁰⁴ LAG, rep. 36 II 4 (this is what Baltazar von Jasmund wrote on Trent in 1603, Berg 12.2.1603: *alß verstehe ich zwar nicht, weil hie keine Wittive vorhanden, wie solches gemeinet und wohin eß doch endlich wolle gedeutet werden*, this is why there must be a mistake in *Die Evangelischen Getstlichen des ehemaligen Begierungsbezirkes Stralsund. Insel Rügen*, ed. H. Heyden, Greifswald 1956 (henceforward: Heyden, I), p. 124 on an agreement with a widow.

¹⁰⁵ B. Wunder, *Pfarrwitwenkassen*, p. 438; let us put aside the relativisation of the theory about the *Selbstrekrutierung* of the group of pastors, done by L. Schorn-Schütte and confirmed by J. Wahl.

¹⁰⁶ S. Kreiker, *op. cit.*, p. 82; R. Wissell, *op. cit.*, pp. 435–439.

to the prohibition of this practice in the second half of the 17th and the 18th centuries¹⁰⁷. This development can also be regarded as an adaptation to the conditions on the labour market in the situation when the demand for posts exceeded their supply; in view of the lack of new institutional solutions, use was made of the existing patterns¹⁰⁸. On the other hand, the “keeping of pastors’ widows” can be regarded as the beginning of the welfare system which through widows’ funds led directly to the system of general social insurance¹⁰⁹ and consequently was decidedly progressive. There is not a shadow of a doubt that this institution allows of both interpretations; the choice always depends on the social background.

Care of a widow was, according to custom, the duty of the male relatives of the deceased¹¹⁰. The question of who should look after widows and under-aged orphans was not regulated in a uniform way in the *Reich*. The situation was frequently regulated by individual contracts or by the last will of the deceased¹¹¹.

In the Pomeranian duchies the question of legal guardians of widows and orphans also aroused controversy and was one of the fields in which the towns came in conflict with the Church, to be exact with the consistory¹¹². One of such conflicts arose over the question of protection over the widow and orphans of the pastor of Wittenhagen, Joachim Ancker, who died before April 17, 1618¹¹³. Without the knowledge of the municipal council, the consistory

¹⁰⁷ B. Wunder, *Pfarrwitwenkassen*, pp. 437–438; cf. H.–C. Rublack, *op. cit.*, pp. 14–16 (*vocatio per genitituum ... durch eines vornehmen Manns Tochter Heyrat*).

¹⁰⁸ H.–C. Rublack, *op. cit.*, pp. 16–17.

¹⁰⁹ B. Wunder, *Pfarrwitwenkassen, passim*; cf. also idem, *Geschichte der Bürokratie in Deutschland*, Frankfurt a.M. 1986, pp. 34–35.

¹¹⁰ Cf. P. Weimer, *op. cit.*, col. 1853–1854 (widow care as a duty and burden for relatives), K. Nehlsen-von Stryk, *Wittve, II Germanisches und Deutsches Recht, LM*, vol. 9, col. 277; cf. I. Chabot, *Lineage Strategies and the Control of Widows in Renaissance Florence*, in: *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, pp. 127–145.

¹¹¹ Cf. K.–H. Spieß, *op. cit.*, p. 102, fn. 36; the legislation concerning this question was not unified in the *Reich* until 1875; H. J. Teuteberg, *Zur Genese und Entwicklung historisch-sozialwissenschaftlicher Familienforschung in Deutschland*, in: *Ehe, Liebe, Tod*, pp. 15–66, here p. 50, fn. 94.

¹¹² Cf. collected documents LAG, rep. 35, N^o 725 *Konistorium als Gerichtsinstanz über Geistlichen und Schulmänner Vormundschaftssachen derselben*.

¹¹³ LAG, rep. 35, N^o 725, l. 29 (Philip Julius to custodians, Wolgast 17.4.1618; cf. *Die Evangelischen Geistlichen des ehemaligen Regierungsbezirkes Stralsund. Die Synoden Greifswald-Land. Greifswald-Stadt*, ed. H. Heyden, Greifswald 1964 (henceforward: Heyden, III), p. 3.

appointed three citizens of Greifswald as guardians, which led to the protests of the municipal council and mayors in whose opinion the nomination infringed municipal rights and posed a danger to the conscience of the widow's future representatives¹¹⁴. The town resorted to the most serious argument: it threatened it would appeal to the Chamber Court of the *Reich*¹¹⁵. The Duke took at once the side of the consistory, ordering the guardians to take up their duties and threatening that they would be fined 50 thalers each if they refused¹¹⁶. But the case was not solved for a long time and as late as January 1619 the consistory asked the Duke to take more decisive steps¹¹⁷.

Conflicts over the appointment of guardians were in fact conflicts over competence. The towns defended their rights and privileges, trying to restrict the influence of the Duke and the Church while the consistory on the one hand aspired to the whole of *ius episcopalis*¹¹⁸ and on the other hand wanted to preserve the integrity of the clergy¹¹⁹.

The situation was complicated by the fact that the legal foundations for the functioning of the consistories and the Church were not precise enough. As far as the competence of this institution was concerned, the first instruction for the Greifswald consistory issued in 1569 referred to the second Church regulation of the same year and to Runge's rules in which the question of guardians was not raised at all¹²⁰. It was explicitly stated in

¹¹⁴ LAG, rep. 35, N^o 725, l. 30–33 (Senatus, Greifswald 16.5.1618: *unsere Lieben Mitburger, wegen solcher von Ihnen nicht angenommenen Vormundschaft halber, kein Ungnad werfen, sondern dieselben, zu rettung Ihrer gewissen, in gnadens entschuldiget halten wollen*).

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*, l. 31, (notary H. Pretzman: *ein Erbar Raht dadurch zum höchsten gawtret, als wolte ... Senatus von solchem Mandato, von mir Notario und den zu unde benandte Zeugen an das Hochpretsliche Kays(erliche) Cammergerichte zu Spetr, in eventum bestermassen appelliren und provociren, auch daneben mich Ampthalber requiritret haben, solche interponirte appellation gebuerlich anzunehmen*).

¹¹⁶ *Ibidem*, l. 28, 31 (Wolgast 17.4.1618); 34 (Wolgast 26.10.1618).

¹¹⁷ *Ibidem*, l. 39 (Consistory to Philip Julius, Greifswald 2.1.1619).

¹¹⁸ Cf. *ibidem*, l. 36 (Philip Julius, Wolgast 8.3.1614).

¹¹⁹ Cf. *ibidem*, l. 35–38 (Consistory, Greifswald 14.2.1613); the dispute was not so serious as the Leiden conflict between the consistory and the municipality when (municipal) freedom was set against religious purity (of the Church) see C. Kool, *Liberty and Religion. Church and State in Leiden's Reformation, 1572–1620*, Leiden–Boston–Köln 2000, pp. 17, 198.

¹²⁰ *Consistorial Instruction*, 1569, Sehnling, pp. 480–484; *idem*: AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 26; Szczecin Dukes' Archives 1/4100.

the drafts of a reform, which had been elaborated from the 1570s to the beginning of the 17th century, that the question of pastors' widows and orphans was in the competence of the consistory and that it was the consistory which was responsible for appointing their guardians¹²¹.

A presentation of only the legal situation of pastors' widows would however not give us a complete picture. Church rules tried to impose legal norms on the diversified social reality. In 1622 the Superintendent Bartholdus Krakevitz remarked that *unsere Kirchenordnung, wie in vielen anderen, in diesen sachen* (that is, the question of pastors' widows — M.P.) *zimlich (!) general und dunkel (ist — M.P.), und nur Gotte zu danken, das man propter exemplum bei den leuten noch etwas erhalten (hat — M.P.)*¹²². In addition to the synods' decisions mentioned above, pastors' widows undoubtedly benefited from many other privileges regulated by custom and only partly by law¹²³. Despite the attempts to improve their economic and social situation, the existence of widows was precarious, especially their old age. Pastors' families did not feel safe either, as is proved by the fact that pastors used to buy land and tried to have their own property to provide the basis for the existence of their family after their death¹²⁴. Pastors tried to avoid a situation in which the provost of the synod might

¹²¹ LAG, rep. 40 VI, 32 (*Item das der verstorbenen Prediger widtwen, auch mit Veter des Consistorij bott meßigkeit gehören. Item die Erbschichtungs der Prediger und Kirchendiener. Item anordnung vormundern, fürderselben witwen und wäijßen*); for the legal foundations of the consistory in Greifswald, see N. Buske, *Das alte Greifswalder Konsistorium*, "Baltische Studien" 76, 1990, pp. 48–81; for the unsuccessful attempts made until 1663 to revise the instruction see A. von Balthasar, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

¹²² LAG, rep. 5, tit. 63, N° 149, vol. 2, l. 269 (B. Krakevitz to the Duke, Greifswald 22.3.1622).

¹²³ e.g. LAG, rep. 36 II T 8 (Tribsees 1597: decision to construct a church bench which pastors' widows could use free of charge; other persons who wanted to have separate benches had to pay 1 florin each).

¹²⁴ LAG, rep. 36 II T 8 (pastor Michael Möller, Tribsees 1620: *in betrachtung, das ich Ihnen sönsten wenig zuverlassen, die witwen und verlassenenen weisen auch nach der Pastorn todte geringe favor und beforderunge haben, und schwerlich also dan etwas erwerben und erhalten können, also muchte ich etwa meiner Haußfrawn und kindern könnftig zu Ihrer notturfftige unterhalt damit* (that is, through a purchased piece of land — M.P.) *gedienet sein*); he was about 86 years old when he died (1663), and his widow was probably 99 (cf.: Heyden, II, pp. 307, 312). He may have thought that she would die first and may have been planning another union. But it did not have to be so and the seemingly irrational character of his endeavours makes them even more important.

write about their widow: *viduae ibidem ... una cum parvulis orphanis relictæ ..., quod præter liberos & libros non ita multum post mortem reliquant*¹²⁵.

A solitary woman was a burden for the congregation for it was not easy to fulfil the Church's regulations. One of the most frequent forms in which communes in northern Germany secured the fate of pastors' widows was to guarantee them a free flat. In most cases the commune built a widows' house (*Pfarrwitwenhaus*) which had a garden and a piece of land. Widows' houses are mentioned for the first time in the Church rules of Lüneburg (1564), Prussia (1568), Wolfenbüttel (1569), Verden (1572) and Lauenburg (1585)¹²⁶. In neighbouring Mecklenburg they are not mentioned before 1602, though sources indicate that they existed already in the second half of the 16th century¹²⁷.

In Pomerania no widows' houses were built before the appropriate regulations were issued; what is more, the problem was not solved even many years after the regulations. It was mentioned in the information about the death of the parson of Kröslin, sent to the Duke in 1623, that the local widows' house had not yet been built¹²⁸. In Groß Kießow the widow of pastor Borhard Lüdetke was placed in an almshouse¹²⁹. Regina Stalkop, widow of Lukas Bruvenus, pastor of Pasewalk (d. in 1623), was placed in a house meant for the organist¹³⁰. However, this can be regarded as a kind of *freie Wohnung* for the congregation had not had an organist for a long time¹³¹ and the house had previously been occupied by the widow of pastor Johann Fabricius, and then by the cantor¹³². When Regina Stalkop appeared, the cantor was

¹²⁵ LAG, rep. 36 II R 12 (Reinikenhagen 1607); cf. J. Wahl, *op. cit.*, p. 140 (according to him the expression "the pastor has left only books and children" was a proverbial saying at that time).

¹²⁶ B. Wunder, *Pfarrwitwenkassen*, p. 438.

¹²⁷ W. Petke, *op. cit.*, pp. 182–183 (Bützow 1582, Groß Pankow 1586, Alt Meteln 1587).

¹²⁸ LAG, rep. 5, tit. 63, N^o 103 (Kröslin 1623: *sonderbahre häuser unde wohnungen für die Priesterwitwen*).

¹²⁹ Heyden, IV, p. 36.

¹³⁰ In the commune of Rambin the house which before the Reformation was used by the chaplain began to be used as *Predigerwitwenhaus*, cf. Heyden, I, p. 221; in Richtenberg the widow of pastor Christoff Polmann was placed in the vicar's house (*Vikarienkasten*), Heyden, II, p. 133.

¹³¹ Cf. *Kerken-ordeninge* (1535), Sehling, p. 333a; and *Kerkenordeninge* (1569), Sehling, p. 399.

given a flat in the local school. The house must have been meant for pastors' widows and when it was unoccupied, the town used it for other purposes. Stalkop also received the contributions obtained earlier by the wives of the previous pastors: 12 bushels of rye from the widow of pastor Schmidt and 20 florins from Margaret Kratz, widow of pastor Martin Pahle¹³³.

Georg Colditz junior, pastor of Neuwarp, trying to secure the fate of the widow of Georg Colditz senior (the widow must have been his mother), asked that the municipality or the church should finance the construction of new quarters in the pastor's house which was in a dilapidated state. To back his request he explained that it would be cheaper to construct new quarters than rent a flat¹³⁴.

In 1617 Clara Hertziger, widow of pastor Balthasar Ruloth, complained to the superintendent that she would have certainly died the previous winter *wan mir nicht guethertzige leutte die hand gebotten*, for several attempts had been made to throw her out of her allegedly lifelong *freie Wohnung*¹³⁵. This shows that the situation was still out of control and depended on the balance of forces in the commune. Had not kind-hearted people lent a hand...

¹³² Ap Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2217; H. Moderow, E. Müller, *Die Evangelischen Geistlichen Pommerns von der Reformation bis zu Gegenwart*, vol. 1, Stettin 1903; vol. 2, Stettin 1912 (henceforward: Moderow-Müller), here vol. 1, p. 330 (it is not said in the source which pastor is meant: Johann Schmidt Fabricius, who was ordained in 1575 or Johann Fabricius (who held the post in about 1594); Moderow's list is too brief to make this clear. But probably the latter pastor was meant. It is strange that there is no mention of Margarete Kratz, widow of the previous pastor Martin Pahle, who after her husband's death married L. Bruvenius (she may have remarried twice for it seems that Moderow has omitted one pastor). This may have been due to the fact that the previous widow was still alive.

¹³³ Cf. Moderow-Müller, vol. 1, pp. 329-330.

¹³⁴ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2175 (Georg Colditz 1'623 — this is probably a copy: *thr (der Witwe — M.P.) etn geringe Staub (=Stube — M.P.) und Kamerchenn uf den Wiedmen hof müge erbawet, und darüber etwas von Rathause und der kirchen zugeordnet werden, davon sie tzeit ihres kurzen lebens ihre uffendhalt haben könne, dan wehl das wiedmen hauß vast bawfellig, datzu ungodlich gebawet, dan nuhr geringe kuhstelle und keine kamer drein vorhanden, itzs ohne das hochnöttigk, das solche kammern daran gebawet werden, well sönst ungleich vielmehr heure Jehrllich druß gehen, als an solche geringe Gebewte gewand werden möchte*).

¹³⁵ LAG, rep. 36 II T 8 (Tribsees 1617: *heete vorgangen winter, wan mir nicht guethertzige leutte die handt gebotten wol gahr derben und untergehen mußten, wie ich dan auch wol 3 oder 4 mahl an der ab vitam vorheißenen freijenn wohnung turbret worden*), it is worth adding that the woman had been living in Tribsees as a widow since 1607. Cf. Heyden, II, p. 306.

Trent (Rügen) was one of those few places which had a widows' house as early as the 16th century, a fact confirmed by sources. Pastor Matthäus Schröder had to sell the house of the vicar (*Vicelebanus*), so that the church should be able to maintain the house for pastors' widows¹³⁶.

Let us mention yet another aspect of the burden posed by widows. The necessity of maintaining a widow restricted a commune's financial possibilities, small as they were, which meant that it ceased to be attractive as a work place.

The one-year *Gnadenjahr* was specific of Pomerania. As far as this institution was concerned, the 16th century *Reich* was divided into the northern part in which the "year of grace" lasted six months and the southern part which enjoyed only a three-month long *Gnadenjahr*¹³⁷. This was a great burden for the congregation and for the neighbouring pastors who looked after the deceased pastor's parish. The situation was sometimes dramatic, as was the case in Tribsees in 1607 when neighbouring pastors were replacing their colleague Balthasar Ruloth¹³⁸ who died during the plague which was still rampant in the region. Difficulties often led to negligence, which the neighbouring pastors used to explain in a rather trivial way, saying that the time was dangerous or that it was very inconvenient to carry out the services¹³⁹.

Efforts were of course made to bend or evade the rules of Church laws in order to adapt them to the hard reality. It was stated in the provincial statutes of the Uznam synod in 1557 that the pastors who were obliged to carry out religious services under the "year of grace" scheme would be fined if they were insubordinate or indolent¹⁴⁰. The instruction for provosts issued in 1591

¹³⁶ Cf. Heyden, I, p. 123; there is no mention in *Matrkul der Kirche Trent auf Rügen. Visitatio der kirchen tzu Trent ... geschehen am Mittwoch nach Mtsertcordias Dni den 12. Aprilis anno 1581*. I have made use of a copy contained in Helmuth Heyden's unarranged legacy in Kirchenarchiv in Greifswald.

¹³⁷ B. Wunder, *Pfarrwitwenkassen*, p. 436, fn. 17 (imprecise: according to him the *Gnadenjahr* lasted 12 months only in Saxony).

¹³⁸ LAG, rep. 36 II T 8 (Tribsees 1608: *da wir fast die ganze Zeit da mein collega in der Peste aufgewartt, und ich auch drinnen getreten, und mein Leib und Leben aufgesetzt bei den Teribeschen*), cf. Heyden, II, p. 306.

¹³⁹ LAG, rep. 36 II T 4; appointment of Jacob Brauer 1603; also a note about the plague; the widow of Gregorius Boie, Heyden, I, p. 124; the irritation of the *Gnadenjahr* pastors: AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2161 (1626); AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz 2491 (1616); LAG, rep. 5, tit. 63, N^o 149 (Iven).

¹⁴⁰ LAG, rep. 40 VII, 81 (Usedom 1557: *contumax aut negligens*).

warned that pastors who neglected these duties would be fined or that after their death their widows would lose the right to this kind of care¹⁴¹. This shows that such form of securing the fate of widows had consolidated, that it had become a right to which all pastors' widows were entitled because of their status, and its annulment was regarded as a punishment. If a widow was denied the right to benefit from the *Gnadenjahr* this was due to conflict over *ius patronatus* or to the commune's intention to manifest its independence of the patron or the parish; it did not mean a denial of the widows' right¹⁴². For the pastors, their own commune and the duties connected with it were often more important; this reflected the ambivalent character of their post which imposed on them duties as shepherds of the Lord's flock as well as obligations as officials of the Church administration.

It was usually the provost, the elder of the synod, who determined the order in which the 3–4 neighbouring pastors were to look after the deceased parson's parish and who controlled the implementation of the *Gnadenjahr*, although the decision to accord a widow the *Gnadenjahr* belonged to the superintendent¹⁴³. However, very often, especially in the duchy of Stettin, the whole synod¹⁴⁴, or a large part of it¹⁴⁵, looked after the orphaned parish. Sometimes not only all the pastors of a synod but even the deacons were asked to help¹⁴⁶.

Pastoral practice sometimes turned out to be different from theory. Joachim Somius, the sexton in Bobbin, complained in 1629 that he had been performing the *Gnadenjahr* service alone;

¹⁴¹ *Leges praepositis ecclesiarum praescriptae*, (1591), Sehling, pp. 492–494, here p. 494a.

¹⁴² Cf. AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 1157 (1635).

¹⁴³ *Leges praepositis*, p. 493b ([praepositus] *jubetis eos sacrum ministerium in orphana ecclesia incupate procurare*); cf. LAG, rep. 36 II R 12 (Reinekenhagen 1607, Matthäus Rubach, provost and pastor of Grimmen informs four neighbouring pastors that the parish must be looked after and that Anna Eriken, widow of Johann Schmidt, should be granted a "year of grace", 1607); AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 947 (death of the pastor of Boldekow: the pastors of Putzar, Spantekow, Iven and Wusseken are designated to look after the parish; death of the pastor of Teterin — pastoral care of the parish entrusted to the pastors of Kagendorf, Ducherow, Bargischow and Crien; AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 3435 [Treptow/T., now Altentreptow], 1631: complaint that after the provost's death the *Gnadenjahr* is disorganised).

¹⁴⁴ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 446a (synod held at Greifenhagen [now Gryfino] in 1626).

¹⁴⁵ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2161 (synod held at Labes, now Łobez, in 1626, death of the pastor of Neuekirchen, care entrusted to the pastors of Wangerin, Klaushagen, Boltenhagen, Schönwalde and Zülzefitz).

¹⁴⁶ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 1132 (synod held at Greifenhagen in 1631).

in the final period (the last three weeks) he had received no help from the neighbouring churches because neighbouring clergymen claimed that the journey was dangerous and they were overburdened with duties in their own parishes¹⁴⁷. In 1626 a coadjutor carried out the services in the parish of Neuwarp alone; in this case the situation differed for the deceased pastor was his father¹⁴⁸; moreover, he had been performing these duties for some time owing to the disability of his father. He also demanded the appointment of a coadjutor who would marry his sister, but this question was connected with the size of the parish and the enormous amount of work the parson was expected to do, and not with the specific character of the *Gnadenjahr*¹⁴⁹.

Sometimes widows were induced to leave the pastor's house during the *Gnadenjahr* and to move to another flat¹⁵⁰. This is what happened to Regina Stalkop who received the organist's flat and the money granted to the widows who had lived in the parish earlier; it was stressed however that after a year she would have the right to both privileges¹⁵¹. In such cases the widow was either not granted the right to *Gnadenjahr* or the privileges were confined to a maintenance allowance and a free flat. Let us point out however that the situation in Pasewalk in about 1616 was far from the Pomeranian norm; as the superintendent Bartholdus Krakevitz wrote: *weil es itzo der waren Religion halber beschwerliche undt gefערliche luffte sein, und dieser ort an die khur Brand-*

¹⁴⁷ LAG, rep. 36 II B 26 (Bobbin, *sintemalen die Pastors Wittovienses wegen des ferner und gefarlichen Reisens gar keine hulffe thun können und Ern Johan zu Sagart [Johann Wessel took over the parish in 1626, M.P.] der auch allein ist, mit seinen Kirchenspiel gnug zuthun hatt*); cf. Heyden, I, p. 49, 102.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Moderow-Müller, vol. 1, p. 592.

¹⁴⁹ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2175.

¹⁵⁰ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2217 (Pasewalk 1624); cf. Heyden, I, p. 124 (a half of *Gnadenjahr* is bought for 200 florins from the children of the deceased pastor of Trent).

¹⁵¹ The situation is not quite clear for there is an undated note made about 1630, before the nomination of Heinrich Calenus, in which it is said that the widow is still living in the pastor's house, but this may refer to the widow of the next pastor who is not mentioned in Moderow's list, cf. Moderow-Müller, vol. 1, p. 330 (most probably this was Jacob Virow, Hoffprediger, a protégé of Sophia Hedwig, widow of Duke Ernest Ludwik, cf. Heyden, I, p. 271; Heyden does not include him in the list but he mentions Joachim Virow, pastor of Zudar from 1622, after whom the parish was taken over by his son, Jacob; if in line with an ancient tradition the grandson was given his grandfather's first name, it is probable that Hoffprediger Jacob Virow was Joachim's father.

*enburg (in welcher es leider mit dem einschleichenden verfluchten Calvinismo seltzam aussihet) nahe grentzet*¹⁵².

It was the widow's duty during the *Gnadenjahr* to host the neighbouring pastors who were looking after her parish and let them keep some payments for services. Sometimes conflicts arose over these issues. Other matters also gave rise to quarrels: faced with the hardships of *Gnadenjahr*, the inhabitants often tried to force the widow to hire and pay a chaplain for carrying out pastoral duties in their village¹⁵³. At other times the patron tried to shorten the *Gnadenjahr* by including in it the period when the pastor was disabled and could not carry out his duties¹⁵⁴.

The question arises what the institution of *Gnadenjahr* meant for the widows. There is much to be said for the assertion that the women who benefited from the year of grace were in fact *Quasipfarrfrauen*¹⁵⁵. Though direct testimonies are not extant, this period can be regarded as a continuation of the previous stage of a pastor's wife. The widow lived in the same house, received the remuneration which the pastor had been receiving, looked after the household and frequently also after children. It can be assumed that she enjoyed the respect she had enjoyed during her husband's lifetime¹⁵⁶. But arguments against this theory can also be found: the guardian who was to look after a widow could restrict her freedom. A parson's widow was not part of the parson's office to the same extent as she was when she was the parson's wife¹⁵⁷; the fees for pastoral care did not pass through her hands but found their way direct into the purses of the pastors who were looking after the parish.

It is difficult to give an unequivocal reply to this question. Everything was probably solved according to the possibilities and inclinations of the persons concerned. Both solutions seem to have been possible in the existing social conditions.

¹⁵² AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2217 (on Pasewalk, B. Krakevitz, Wolgast 24.8.1616).

¹⁵³ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 753.

¹⁵⁴ LAG, rep. 5, tit. 63, N^o 149, vol. 2.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. K.-H. Spieß, *op. cit.*, p. 107, in case of the quasi-widow the woman is married *de iure* but lives like a widow; here the woman is a widow *de iure* but her life style is to a great extent reminiscent of the life style of a *Pfarrfrau*.

¹⁵⁶ Of course this was not a rule, as is proved by the fact that widows were often denied the contributions they should be receiving: AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 753.

¹⁵⁷ In a sense she was never part of the office; J. Wahl, *op. cit.*, pp. 172 ff. is in favour of a strict division of the *Pfarrhaus* into the sphere of women's influence (occupations of mistress of the house and mother) and the sphere of men's influence (pastoral duties belong only to this sphere).

As Wolfgang Petke rightly pointed out, widows also abused the possibilities offered by *Gnadenjahr*¹⁵⁸. In defiance of legal decisions, a widow from the Stettin synod asked the parsons who were looking after her parish to give her a share in the payments for pastoral services. One of the pastors complained at first that he had not received any payment even though he had made more than 100 sermons during the past few years. Later the three pastors performing services under the *Gnadenjahr* scheme stated unanimously that the widow was not entitled to any payments for pastoral services and that she herself was responsible for her difficult economic situation¹⁵⁹. Clara Hertziger, widow of the pastor of Tribsees, B. Ruloth and daughter of the superintendent of Wallersleben (Lüneburg), was accused of unlawfully charging fees for religious services¹⁶⁰.

A widow's life was not free of conflicts. A pastor's family was frequently an extended one, and life under one roof could easily lead to squabbles¹⁶¹. Pastor Laurentius Gerschow found it advisable to stress that should his daughter be granted refuge in the parish *kein Zanck, kein hass, zorn oder unwillten entstanden, sonder viel mehr mit Ihr, als mit einer Mutter, friedlich fur und fur leben und conversieren mueg*¹⁶². Despite the pastor's belief, both parts of his argumentation seem to have been probable.

The situation was similar if children from different unions lived in the same household. Such a situation generated conflicts, a fact of which contemporaries were well aware¹⁶³. A widow's

¹⁵⁸ W. Petke, *op. cit.*, pp. 182–183 (examples mainly from the beginning of the 18th century).

¹⁵⁹ LAG, rep. 40 III N° 96 (1593): *Em Matthel Seeligern Witwe eine unfuge sich über uns beschweret hat, dan ob wirs woll gestendlg, das wir die accidentalia zu uns genommen ein itzlicher pro labore seines theils, so haben wir doch das nicht ohne grundt und ursach gethan, die wir nicht alleine die verordnung der Synodorum in Pommern, darin die Kirchenordnung erkleret wirdt ... sondern auch des Ehrewürdigen Capittels und E[ures] F[ürstlichen] Raths zu Colberg ausgesprochen urteil ... in diesem falle erkand;* cf. *ibidem* Joachim Grunow's complaints, Raptim 6.7.1607.

¹⁶⁰ LAG, rep. 36 II T 8 (Tribsees 1607); cf. Heyden, II, p. 306.

¹⁶¹ Cf. J. Wahl, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

¹⁶² AP Szcz. Kons Szcz. 2038.

¹⁶³ LAG, rep. 5, tit. 63, N° 219 (Nitzke 1599, now called Neetzka, I have preserved the name used in the source); LAG, rep. 5, tit. 63, N° 149, vol. 2, l. 5–7, 19 (Jürgen Ernst von Schwerin mentioned the widow's following shortcomings: *viel großer unerzogenen Kinder hatte, welchen fur zur arbeit beschwerlich ... gehabt dazu mit vielen tells grossen tells kleinen unerzogen kindern welchen ein ander nicht fur arbeiten wirt verlassen* — what he meant was probably that because of small children's care woman's work productivity was low).

remarriage increased the possibility of tension in the household. Mothers frequently had to compete with their daughters, and daughters by a pastor's first marriage with their stepmothers for the right to be kept by the parish¹⁶⁴. If the daughter was given this right, the widow usually remained in the parish, but she lost her position; she was no longer a *Pfarrfrau* but only a mother. Not many widows were ready to accept such a change of roles.

Rivalry for a place in the parish could lead to friction between two spheres of influence, those of the widow's first and her second husband. In a letter informing the superintendent of the death of the pastor of Tribohm, the patron of the parish recommended the pastor's widow to him but suggested that the daughter of the previous pastor should be kept in the parish because the previous pastor was a good friend of his¹⁶⁵. What was propitious for a decision to grant the previous pastor's daughter the right to asylum was the fact that during the late pastor's life she took part in looking after the household, frequently on equal terms with the servants¹⁶⁶ and this might have reduced the distance between her and the commune. But if daughters were entrusted with control over the Church's property this could easily lead to conflicts with the members of the community because of economic rivalry between the parish and the commune¹⁶⁷.

Disputes between widows and their sons were relatively rare. They did not compete for the same place in the parish and it can be assumed that a mother's position was more attractive than the position of a parson's mother-in-law. But the scale of conflicts was wider and was often a result of ambiguous decisions concerning property, as is proved by the fate of the widow of Joachim

¹⁶⁴ Cf. H.-C. Rublack, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14; cf. AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 3369 (after his death Paul Schmit, pastor of Klatzow, left his young wife and a marriageable daughter from his first marriage in the parish), cf. *Moderow-Müller*, vol. 1, p. 577; LAG, rep. 5, tit. 63, N^o 219.

¹⁶⁵ LAG, rep. 36 II T 7 (Tribohm 1600: *mein Leber Gefatter undt vertrauwer freundt*); one can assume that the widow was kept in the parish; cf. the mistake made by Heyden, II, p. 199 (he suggests that it was Gerdt Rubenow's daughter that was referred to while it was clearly stated in the letter that the daughter of Rubenow's predecessor, Johannes Henning, was meant).

¹⁶⁶ J. Wahl, *op. cit.*, p. 194; D. Gugerl, *op. cit.*, pp. 120, 204 (by servants he means *Arbetersartz für Kinder*); David Gugerl refers to L. K. Berkner, *The Stem Family and the Developmental Cycle of the Peasant Household: An Eighteenth-Century Austrian Example*, "The American Historical Review" 77, 1972, p. 413 ("labour substitute for children").

¹⁶⁷ J. Wahl, *op. cit.* p. 154.

Großkreutz, pastor of Sillingsdorf (Sielsko)¹⁶⁸. During the “year of grace” the three sons of the deceased pastor, Heinrich, Hans and Joachim, put forward claims for crops from both summer and winter sowing. The successor to the parish, Georg Schultze, who had married the widow, maintained that all three were adult men: they had studied long, two of them were engaged in handicrafts and had their own wives. As pastor Schultze said on the basis of his wife’s words, four weeks after the funeral the sons came to the widow, took the books left by the deceased pastor and forced the widow to conclude an agreement with them (irrespective of the absence of the widow’s guardian). Schultze enumerates all this in order to show the illegality and even injustice of their claims: the sons were adult men, heads of families, they had been given education, and the supposed agreement was without legal value because of its character and the conditions in which it was concluded. What is even more interesting, the pastor adds that the books the sons took away should be regarded as an adequate compensation.

However, mothers did not always have to fight with their sons for the parish, for the existing social and legal structures as well as customs put the son-successor in a rather unfavourable situation. After the death of Isaac Graverten, the commune of Holzendorf (Mecklenburg), in token of its gratitude, wanted to appoint his son, Adam, as his successor. But Adam renounced the nomination at once, which was by no means surprising for if he had agreed to take over the parish he would have had to maintain his mother and four siblings. The father could bear the burden, but for Adam it would have meant renunciation of any thought of marriage for many years¹⁶⁹.

Conflicts in which a woman had been involved as a *Pfarrfrau* could be very dangerous for her when she became a pastor’s widow. The widow of Kaspar Zander, pastor of Neukirche, had had a conflict with the patron who, using anti-clerical arguments,

¹⁶⁸ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2666 (synod in Freienwalde; the pastor calls her sons *Stiffkinder* but it is not clear whether he regarded them as his *Stiffkinder* or the *Stiffkinder* of his wife, widow of his predecessor); cf. Moderow-Müller, vol. 1, p. 171 (Großkreutz is wrongly called the successor of G. Schultze; there are no biographical data and there is no precision in chronology).

¹⁶⁹ LAG, rep. 5, tit. 63, N° 219; they are unfortunately not mentioned in the list of G. Willgeroth, *Die Mecklen-Schwerinschen Pfarren seit dem dreißigjährigen Kriege. Mit Anmerkungen über die früheren Pastoren seit der Reformation*, vols. 1–3, Wismar 1924–1925.

insisted that after the “year of grace” she and her three children should be removed from the parish¹⁷⁰: the patron *wuste nicht warumb man sich den laten Pfaffen weibe so hoch annehme*¹⁷¹. The reason for the patron’s aversion was not clear to the contemporaries for the pastor’s wife was *eine Gottüchtige fromme Ehrliche frawe* and the conflict had started 40 years before¹⁷². Despite his determination, the patron did not have his way and the widow was allowed to stay in the parish. The decisive arguments were probably the woman’s good reputation and her age, for the adversary had to admit that the widow *noch beij Jung Jahren wehre*¹⁷³.

Similar was the case of the widow of Andreas Müller, pastor of Iven. The patron Jürgen Ernst von Schwerin¹⁷⁴, who for some unknown reason hated the widow, came out against her, raising all kinds of accusations relating to her age and conduct. However, the widow’s supporters attributed Schwerin’s statements to irritation¹⁷⁵ and in the chancellery his letter was marked with the note *Insanij hominis insanum scriptum*¹⁷⁶. One of the reasons for Schwerin’s hostility may have been that he was in debt to the deceased pastor, as the superintendent Bartholdus Krakevitz rightly pointed out: *Schwerin thuett woll ungezwungen hibeij nictes, vermacht es auch vielleichte nicht. So ist er auch der witwen ohne dasnoch wegen ihres S(eligen) mannes gnug schuldig, undt besorge ich wol, wo sie füer der zalung aus der pfarre gedrunge wirt, so bekommen sie es wol nimmer, weil ihr der heutige rechtszwangk, viele zu langk undt saur werden möchte, das sie es nicht ausfüren kann*¹⁷⁷. After haggling for two years over the terms, the widow had to leave despite the goodwill of the authorities¹⁷⁸ and the relatively strong support she enjoyed. The

¹⁷⁰ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2161 (synod in Labes).

¹⁷¹ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2161 (Andreas Borke to the superintendent 8.8.1626); *loser Pfaffe* was an invective frequently used against clergymen at that time.

¹⁷² *Ibidem*: [the patron decided] *ungefahr von 40 Jahren, gahr zuvorstoßen, und einen ungelahrten undüchtigen menschen in daß Caspell einzudringen*.

¹⁷³ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2161 (Virigentz Borke, 22.8.1626)

¹⁷⁴ LAG, rep. 5, tit. 63, N^o 149, vol. 2 (the set concerning this case has ca 300 leaves).

¹⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, l. 36 (the widow’s guardians to the superintendent, Spantekow 6.9.1620); l. 44 (the widow’s guardian to the Duke, Anklam 8.10.1620).

¹⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, l. 112.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, l. 55 (undated note by B. Krakevitz).

situation of the widow in Iven was worse than that of the widow in Neukirche for since the patronage in the former commune was not divided among several members of the family, it was impossible to overcome the patron's opposition. It was therefore clear from the beginning that the widow would have to leave the parish¹⁷⁹. J. E. von Schwerin resorted to a simple means to make it impossible for the widow to remain in the parish: he appointed a married pastor.

So for various reasons the widows were not always allowed to stay on in the parish. Sometimes the widow herself was responsible for this decision, sometimes this was caused by the candidate and sometimes this was simply due to circumstances. The successor could be married or bound by engagement ties, by a marriage promise which in those times was of greater importance than it is now, also because gifts were exchanged on such occasions, or he could be involved in a matrimonial trial before the consistory¹⁸⁰.

The transfer of a parish to the successor after the "year of grace" was often an official event. It was attended by the patron, the provost, the local nobility and friends who could act as witnesses if after some time a conflict arose¹⁸¹.

Pastors who took over a parish without marrying the widows sometimes concluded an agreement with them, pledging themselves to hand a part of their income over to them. The widow was not then a potential rival of the pastor in the commune and was

¹⁷⁸ Schwerin reproached the Duke for favouring the widow and granting her privileges which were not yet enjoyed by Pomeranian widows, cf. *ibidem*, l. 74 (J. E. von Schwerin to the superintendent, 2.11.1620: *der witwen zu weit uber notturffes gebuhr und gebraucht favortstret*).

¹⁷⁹ *ibidem*, l. 44 (note of the Duke's chancellery, after 8.10.1620: [von Schwerin — M.P.] *seher widerlich und feindt ist, und keine Compatronj verhanden, damit man sonst tractiren konte, es solte billich demnegst angelegenen Hauptman zur Clempenow anbefohlen werden, das er sampt den Praeposito ... soche verordnung mit dem Patrono behandeln sollte*).

¹⁸⁰ LAG, rep. 36 II S 2 (Sagard), a letter from the widow's brother: *angesehen, das er [Andreas Virgin — M.P.] sie, wan er glich wolte, zu eheligen nicht berechtiget als der da welcher Zeit, von einer person zu Alten Stettin, in puncto condic matrimonii, fur das Consistorium dasebst, sub poena 300 Thall, ist citret worden*; J. Wahl, *op. cit.*, pp. 82–110 writes in a very interesting way about pastors' matrimonial strategy (early marriages concluded at the beginning of the career, during the curacy, predominated in the milieu of the Württemberg candidates for the post of pastor).

¹⁸¹ LAG, rep. 36 II S 5 (Samtes 1615); cf. LAG, rep. 36 II S 2 (Sagard: ratification of the *Gnadenjahr* and the division of incomes).

not a financial burden for the community, but she was definitely a burden for the pastor.

As an example let us mention the agreement concluded between Anna Kleinsorge and Nicolaus Gode, pastor of Samtes (Rügen) from 1609¹⁸². According to the widow, the pastor pledged himself to give her 4 geese and two bushels of oats every year as well as money for her children. However, he quickly ceased to hand over his dues under the pretext that the parish was in ruin¹⁸³.

Similar objections were raised by Johann Dolete, pastor of Schaprode (synod of Rügen). The widow Elisabeth Meier was to receive from him every year 4 florins, one measure of rye, 2 bushels of barley, 2 bushels of oats, one calf and 4 geese. The transfer of the property took place in dramatic circumstances (1603) for the widow concealed she had inherited 100 florins from her dead husband. When the fact became known, the new pastor demanded that the widow should give him the money and be fined 20 florins. After nine years he stopped paying the alimony on the grounds that she had broken the contract because he did not receive the plot of land he had been promised¹⁸⁴. Twelve years after the conclusion of the contract the pastor described in dramatic words the parish he had taken over: *wie Ich aus gottlicher providentz durch ordentliche beruff Anno 1601 zu dieser Pfarh gekommen, nicht ein einig Zimer vor mir gefunden, welche in bawlichen Esse gewest, oder dar man sicher inne sein, oder das seine vorwahren können, sonder ich zu abwendung Leibes und Lebens gefahr auch aus hochdringender noth alles was jetzo beij dem pfarrhause und andern zimmern ist, aus meinen beutel erbawen, und daher, welche ich mit meinem gewißen und Register bezeugen kan, und der augenschein auch gibt. Elf hundert fl spendirenn (habe — M.P.) mußten daruber ich mich in große schwere schulde gesetzt (habe — M.P.) auch noch darein gewaltig stecke, und woll die tage meines lebens nicht herauskomme*¹⁸⁵. The situation was not improved by the pastor's fertility; as he

¹⁸² Cf. Heyden, I, p. 228.

¹⁸³ LAG, rep. 36 II S 5 (Samtes 1615: *die Pfare dazumale bawfellig undt gantz mangelhaftig befunden worden* — the widow is surprised that he decided to take this step after six years, not before, and that he did not stop paying the pension to her children).

¹⁸⁴ LAG, rep. 36 II S 8 (Schaprode 1612).

¹⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, (Schaprode 1618).

informed the authorities, he had seven "kids" in 1612, as many as 10, one of whom died, in 1618 and his wife was expecting another child. The situation was aggravated by the fact that the widow was the mother of the pastor's wife.

The communes often negotiated with widows in order to establish a *modus vivendi* on the most favourable conditions for themselves. The provost Johannes Georgi informed the superintended that the Trutzlatz commune, which had no pastor at that time, tried to impose rather hard conditions on the widow. It was willing to allow her to go on living in the pastor's house only if she agreed to maintain a chaplain who would look after the congregation¹⁸⁶.

Widowhood probably meant a greater freedom for pastors' wives. It is however still an open question how independent a widow was and what value her decisions had before a new pastor was appointed. It is difficult to give an unequivocal reply to this question, to go beyond the methods used in the history of everyday life and try to analyse social structures. Let me just point out the factors which, in my opinion, played an important role in shaping a widow's future life and made up the capital of a single woman.

A widow could exert a direct or indirect influence on the appointment of a pastor. As has been mentioned above, the commune of Kröslin used the person of the widow in support of its request for the appointment of the deceased pastor's son: since Kröslin had no widows' house, the son was a convenient candidate for he not only knew the church but could also look after his mother and keep her in his household¹⁸⁷. Concern for the widow's future was the basis of this argumentation. However, in this case the argumentation was of no effect¹⁸⁸. In the parish of Kartlow the widow frightened all potential candidates away¹⁸⁹. In the

¹⁸⁶ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 753 (s.l., J. Georgi, 27.4[?].1616; a similar case is mentioned by Heyden, I, p. 212 (Anna Rheum, widow of Jacob Musselus, maintains pastor Mathias Vahrenholtz for some time).

¹⁸⁷ LAG, rep. 5, tit. 63, N^o103 (Kröslin 1623: *der Zustand dieses Kirchenspiels von Jugentauff bekannt ... seine leibliche Mutter bei sich behalten, unde sie alimentaren könnte; ibidem* also a letter from a pastor's widow in which the same arguments are repeated); similar argumentation in AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 3435 (Treptow/T. 1629).

¹⁸⁸ The widow's son, Martin Schmidt, did not get the post for it was accorded to Jakob Portales.

¹⁸⁹ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 1082.

commune of Targelow the would-be pastor, Adam Griese, left the congregation because he did not want to marry the widow¹⁹⁰.

An important argument used in support of a candidate for the pastor's office was that he had won the widow's good feeling¹⁹¹, while the widow's dislike of a candidate, or simply lack of love, was sometimes regarded as an argument against his appointment. It is not easy to evaluate the strength of this kind of argumentation explicitly for each side usually made use of more arguments, building up elaborate constructions reminiscent of scholastic argumentation.

An important argument which, though ignored in research, is closely connected with a widow's attitude was her good name, dignity and honour¹⁹². It is worth drawing attention to this question for an insult to her dignity was frequently the reason why a widow did not like a candidate. The widow in Nitzke felt insulted when the teacher Jakob Amman described her as an old woman. This is why — as her brother explained — she decided to reject his candidature: *dissen gesellen abwijsen, den meine swester nicht muglich und Ere hartz vormag es auch nicht, weil sie so swe(r)lich von Im vorachtet gewes ist*¹⁹³. Amman tried to save the situation and deny everything (*Er gesagt, ehr habe mein swester nicht vor ein alt weib gescholden, und der massen verachtet*¹⁹⁴) but he was fighting a losing battle. The widow in Iven felt hurt by the insults J. E. von Schwerin hurled at her. Her defenders presented these insults as disrespect of the Church office: *sonst vernehmen E(ure) F(ürstliche) G(nade) gleichwoll auß dem Titul welchen Jurge Ernst vom Schwerinne unser Pflegewitwen giebt wie rümblich Er vom heiligen Ministerio, in seinem hertzen halte, in deren er setnes Sehligen Seelensorgers Witwe vor*

¹⁹⁰ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2217 (Adam Griese, Wolgast 21.12.1625); cf. *Modero-Müller*, vol. 1, p. 336.

¹⁹¹ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2038 (*die wittwe ... auff meinen Sohne eln hertz und gut gemöth muchte tragen*).

¹⁹² Cf. G. Algazi, *Sich selbst vergessen* im späten Mittelalter: Denkfiguren und soziale Konfigurationen*, in: *Memoria als Kultur*, ed. O. G. Oexle, Göttingen 1995, pp. 387–427 (according to the author in the Middle Ages *Ehre* did not mean the same for men and women); R. van Dülmen, *Der ehrlose Mensch: Unehrlichkeit und soziale Ausgrenzung in der frühen Neuzeit*, Köln 1999; *Ehrenkonzepte in der Frühen Neuzeit. Identitäten und Abgrenzungen*, ed. S. Backmann, Berlin 1998; *Verletzte Ehre. Ehrkonflikte in Gesellschaften des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. K. Schreiner, G. Schwerhoff, Köln 1995.

¹⁹³ LAG, rep. 5, tit. 36, N° 219, l. 25.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibidem*.

*ein Pfaffen weib, gantz lesterlich außbruffett. Da Ihr sehliger Ehwirtt doch kein Maßpfaffen, sondern ein reiner Luterischer Prediger gewesen*¹⁹⁵.

But one can also point out examples of single women's more direct influence on their fate, when they themselves decided who would be the next pastor or took part in decision-making. In 1599 the widow of Nitzke, mentioned above, refused to remarry, quoting her age and the wish to avoid family conflicts as arguments. According to her, a conflict might arise as a result of different interests of her children from the first and the second marriage and this might lead to discord (*uneinigkeit und zankt*) in the household. Though she objected to remarriage and had an aversion to the candidates proposed to her, she insisted on remaining in the parish and she did remain! In 1599 three candidates entered into the competition for the parish: Michael Gerven, a teacher from Woldegk in Mecklenburg, J. Amman and Adam Havemann. In the light of the existing sources, the first candidate, the son of the mayor of Woldegk, was the most energetic in the campaign. He invested a lot of money and time and his candidature was warmly supported by the Dukes of Mecklenburg; a year before his death Sigismund Augustus (1560–1600), son of Johann Albrecht I and husband of Klara Maria, daughter of the Pomeranian ruler Boguslaus III, repeatedly raised this question in his letters to Duke Boguslaus (13.4., 4.5.1599)¹⁹⁶. But the strength of this support should not be exaggerated: the Duke only asked that the candidate be presented to the superintendent and admitted to the examination, mentioning as the motive for his request that Gerven's relative had been a faithful secretary of Johann Albrecht I¹⁹⁷. Boguslaus replied quickly but without committing himself: in a letter to Sigismund Augustus of April 18 he declared he was ready to support the Mecklenburg candidate¹⁹⁸.

Gerven did not let things lie and sent one letter after another to the superintendent Frederick Runge: on December 21, 1597¹⁹⁹,

¹⁹⁵ LAG, rep. 5, tit. 36, N^o 149, vol. 2, l. 96.

¹⁹⁶ LAG, rep. 5, tit. 63, N^o 219 l. 12, 30.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, l. 12 (Sigismund Augustus to Boguslaus, Jvenack 13.4.1599).

¹⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, l. 13 Boguslaus to Sigismund Augustus, 18.4.1599).

¹⁹⁹ A reference to his father's letter which has not survived in the Greifswald archives, the information on it is indirect, it comes from Gerven's letter of April 1599.

March 26, 1599²⁰⁰, and June 2, 1599. It seems that he knew well that the widow might be the key to the parish and in an undated letter of April 1599 expressed his readiness to marry the woman. During his battle for the parish he made 14 journeys and spent 39 florins and 15.5 shillings²⁰¹.

It seems that J. Amman, who according to the widow's brothers was sexton at Saint Mary's Church in Greifswald²⁰², arrived in the parish of Nitzke on the recommendation of Duke Boguslaus²⁰³. He did not want to marry the 48-year-old woman, for she was too old in his view²⁰⁴, but he guaranteed her a free flat for life. His candidature ceased to count quickly, probably because of his refusal to marry the widow and the lack of sufficiently strong political support. The lack of this candidate's correspondence, not a trace of it has survived, may indicate that he was not deeply engaged in the matter. His weak position and rigid attitude in negotiations fitted in with his superficial courtesy towards the widow whom he was ready to respect like a mother: *und sich gegen die Witwe erbotten, sie die Zeit ihres lebtages, bei sich zu halten, und als eine Mutter zu ehren*²⁰⁵.

The third candidate, the controversial A. Havemann, had been a teacher in Johann von Restorff's estate in Stargard and was supported by the dowager Duchess Sophia Hedwig (her letters in this matter: May 1 and May 21, 1599). He was an educated man. He found acceptance with the widow's relatives and the widow herself thanks to his assurances that he wanted to marry her and did not regard her as too old. He gained a certain measure of support from Boguslaus thanks to the intercession of his patron. His prospects were not harmed by the information which Sigismund Augustus sent to Boguslaw about him: Havemann was promised the parish of Basepohl if he married the

²⁰⁰ LAG, rep. 5, tit. 36, N° 219 (M. Gerven to Sigismund Augustus, undated 1599).

²⁰¹ *Ibidem*, l. 81 (*Verzeichnts der uncosten so das Pfarfrau Wittwe zu Nitzker auf ihre mit angetragenen Vereheligung und Pfardienst durch ihrer itzigen unbesteniges hinter Ziehen mutwilliges Verursachen*).

²⁰² He is not mentioned in Heyden's lists, which probably means that he was never promoted. Heyden mentions Matthias Amman, deacon in Gings, pastor in Bargischow and Ranzin; cf. Heyden, I, p. 62; Heyden, III, p. 61, Matthias Amman matriculated in Greifswald on 30.7.1557, so this may be Jacob's father.

²⁰³ LAG, rep. 5, tit. 63, N° 219, l. 11.

²⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, l. 7 (Hennig von der Osten to F. Runge, Stargart 1599: *ehr das alte weib nicht haben wollte*).

²⁰⁵ *Ibidem* (L. Gerschow to F. Runge, s.l. 1599) l. 9 ff.

daughter of the old pastor, but refused to keep his word after being appointed. As Sigismund Augustus wrote: *Welches gleichwol solch einer person, wie er zu werden vorhabens, nit woll anstehet*²⁰⁶. No letter of Havemann's has survived; it can be assumed that the energetic patron was the driving force in Havemann's case.

And it was Havemann, the last of the three candidates, who married the widow and became pastor despite the fact that Gerven had received four ducal appointments in the course of a few months. The widow's consent turned out to be the decisive factor; it was more important in this case than the Duke's decisions. Just as negotiations with the widow's brothers in Nitzke turned out to be more important than the decisions taken in Wolgast and Greifswald.

Katharina Schutz, widow of pastor Paulus Cron²⁰⁷, refused to marry the chosen candidate. She said she had little affection for the candidate and would rather die than live with him²⁰⁸. The candidate, who had been proposed by the Duchess, informed the Duchess later that the trial sermon he had made had been generally accepted and that he himself found the congregation likeable. Nevertheless, the superintendent kept deferring the appointment because he wanted to have a talk with the widow first²⁰⁹. It seems that as it happened in the case of J. Bering and the widow A. Wolf, cited by *Woltersdorf*, the superintendent held the view that it was the candidate's duty to marry the widow and that the widow had the right to remain in the parish, if she wanted to²¹⁰. Duchess Sophia Hedwig reacted at first with deter-

²⁰⁶ *Ibidem*, I. 30 (Sigismund Augustus to Boguslaus, Ivenack 4.5.1599).

²⁰⁷ *Heyden*, IV, p. 214.

²⁰⁸ The Duchess presented Joachim Voigt, cf. *Heyden*, IV, p. 214; *LAG*, rep. 36 II T 3 (Trantow 1608: *ich zu derselben Personen gar undt gantz keine zuneigung noch gemuth drage, sondern mihr dieselbe durchaus zu wiedern undt mich mitt deselben Personen ihn Ehegelübde einzulassen nicht gelegen sey. Was mihr das für eine Ehe werde worde dazu ich solte gezwungen werden, haben E[uere] F[ürstliche] G[nade] gnediglich woll zuerachten, undt ich lber den Todt also das leben alseden erwehlen wolte, welcher E[uere] F[ürstliche] G[nade] mihr ihn gneen nicht giinnen werdet*); the widow of Kartlow also threatened to commit suicide; *AP Szcz.* Kons. Szcz. 1082 (*das sie an Ihrem leben Ihr selbst Wehzhuthuen würde verursacht werden, auszufahren lassen*).

²⁰⁹ *LAG*, rep.36 II T 3 (Trantow 1608; J. Voigt, Loitz 24.4.1608: *als das er [superintendent — M.P.] zuvor mitt der wittewn meinen personehalbe reden ... und ob sie bei der pfarre Consueto more zu bleiben willens oder mag dießfals ehre entliche metnung seij*).

mination, ordering the superintendent to appoint the candidate without considering the widow's decision: *sie nehm ihn oder nich*. It was added on the margin of the letter that the widow would hopefully find another husband and if she did not, the Duchess would take care of her fate²¹¹. Three months later, after a consultation with the widow's guardians, Sophia informed the superintendent that she had ordered the pastor to arrange his household in a way that would enable the widow to live near him. In a letter sent to the widow the same day the Duchess expressed her bitter disappointment with her behaviour, adding that she would answer to God and her children for her stubbornness²¹². The widow decided to move to Greifswald but it seems, contrary to what Helmuth Heyden says²¹³, that she came back and lived in the parish, for several years later the pastor complained that his income had been reduced because the widow was staying in the parish²¹⁴. The fact that the appointment was forced through despite the superintendent's doubts may have been due to the Duchess's decisive role as the patron of the church and regent. Sophia's readiness to force through the appointment indicates that the candidate was her protégé²¹⁵. However, what did the widow's might consist in that power which allowed her to force through her will in Nitzke and which was obviously lacking in the other case?

Widows possessed capital. They were often wealthy persons with a great deal of money at their disposal; such capital can be defined and described on the basis of direct testimonies (lists of property, last wills) or by referring to indirect sources (purchases,

²¹⁰ Cf. also the decision in the dispute over the appointment of a pastor for the Reinikenhagen parish 1607–1608, LAG, rep. 36 II R 12. One of the superintendent's arguments in favour of the candidate was that the widow liked him: *welle auch die Wittwe undt deroselben furmunde lust zu thme magen zu gerüchen*; nota bene the superintendent, too, had to give in to the patron's pressure; Heyden, II, pp. 284–285.

²¹¹ LAG, rep. 36 II T 3 (Trantow 1608: Sophia Hedwig, Wolgast 28.4.1608).

²¹² *Ibidem* (Trantow 1608: Sophia Hedwig, Ludenburg 4.7.1608: *bei ewre halßstarrigk meinung verharren, und unsere gnedige gewegenheit so wir gegen euch gehabt nicht erkennen wollen ... es wirdt aber der außgang und das ende geben, wehm es treffen wirdt, und ob lhrs von Gott und Kunftige ewre Kinder verandworten können*).

²¹³ Heyden, IV, p. 214.

²¹⁴ LAG, rep. 36 II T 3 (Trantow 1616).

²¹⁵ Cf. also a note in his gravamina about the sermons in Sophienhof: rep. 36 II T 3 (Trantow 1616).

bribes, and the like)²¹⁶. This kind of capital is called economic capital in sociology²¹⁷. In fact capital consists of many more factors, such as education, qualifications, the respect a person enjoys and social relations. To follow in the footsteps of Pierre Bourdieu, one can speak — with some reservations²¹⁸ — of cultural capital and social capital²¹⁹. The latter has been defined as follows by Bourdieu: *das Sozialkapital ist die Gesamtheit der aktuellen und potentiellen Ressourcen, die mit dem Besitz eines dauerhaften Netzes von mehr oder weniger institutionalisierten Beziehungen des gegenseitigen Kennens oder Anerkennens verbunden sind: ... es handelt sich dabei um Ressourcen, die auf der Zugehörigkeit zu einer Gruppe beruhen*²²⁰. Moreover, a widow's capital also consisted of many qualities which can be regarded as natural or inborn, such as physical strength, fertility and beauty²²¹. These factors cannot be presented quantitatively and this is why they are often omitted in studies and their description is rather subjective.

In pastors' marriages, as in many other types of marriage in early modern times, there was a certain division of property²²².

²¹⁶ A slightly later proof of widows' prosperity is the case of the widow of Christian Lüdemann, pastor of Drechow, who built a *Witwenhaus* in Leplow out of her own means, Heyden, II, p. 146.

²¹⁷ Cf. P. Bourdieu, *Ökonomisches, kulturelles und soziales Kapital*, in: *idem, Der verborgenen Mechanismen der Macht*, Hamburg 1992, pp. 49–75, quoted after *Theorien der Sozialisaton*, ed. F. Baumgart, Bad Heilbrunn 1997, pp. 217–231, here p. 218.

²¹⁸ In some theoretical studies social capital is defined as the property of the social structure, which supports the actions of individuals, and not as the property of individuals; cf. J. S. Coleman, *Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital*, "American Journal of Sociology" 94, 1988, pp. 95–120; *idem, Foundations of Social Theory*, Cambridge 1990; R. Putnam, *Bowling Alone. America's Delining Social Capital*, "Journal of Democracy" 6, 1995, pp. 65–78; *idem, Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York 2000. Even though we refer here to the concept of "social capital" which is the nearest to P. Bourdieu's ideas, we shall not separate cultural capital so precisely as he did for this would be of no use in our reflections, nor would it be possible on the basis of the data at our disposal.

²¹⁹ Cf. P. Bourdieu, *Ökonomisches, kulturelles und soziales Kapital*, pp. 218–226; *idem, Zur Soziologie der symbolischen Formen*, Frankfurt a.M. 1974.

²²⁰ P. Bourdieu, *Ökonomisches, kulturelles und soziales Kapital*, p. 224 for a review of recent research and a systematics of views see S. N. Durlauf, M. Faichamps, *Social Capital*, in: *Handbook of Economic Growth*, ed. S. Durlauf, P. Aghion (forthcoming), electronic version: <http://www.economics.ox.ac.uk/members/marcel.faichamps/Homepage/socaphandbook.pdf>.

²²¹ Cf. P. Bourdieu, *Ökonomisches, kulturelles und soziales Kapital*, p. 220 (he links cultural capital with biological strength and possibilities).

²²² Cf. O. Hufton, *op. cit.*, p. 46; L. Roper, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

As an example let us recall the statement made by a pastor that he had sold his wife's estate. This shows that the sides realised that their property was divided: the *Pfarrfrau* as well as the *Pfarrwitwe* retained the right to her dowry. Let us again recall the congregation in Nitzke where after the death of its pastor, A. Havemann, the family raised claims to a half of the property. The widow rejected the claims, stating that she had brought much more into the household than the pastor had²²³. The disproportion was quite large: after Havemann's death the widow's property was estimated to be worth 1,100 florins and the pastor's annual income amounted to 50 florins. Let us add that the marriage lasted four years and the pastor had probably not brought in any cash. His contribution to the family property consisted of a garden in Neubrandenburg, worth probably less than 100 florins (according to his sister's estimate²²⁴), his suits and books. The real value of these things must have been low, as is testified to by the fact that the husband of Eve Havemann, the pastor's sister, proposing an agreement to the widow and a division of property estimated to be worth 1,100 florins, thought that she would be satisfied if she received the garden, the suits and books as well as 400 florins, which means that the total value of the garden (100 florins is a questionable sum), suits (previously estimated by the claimants at nearly 100 florins²²⁵) and the books (this casts a shadow over the pastor's erudition) amounted to no more than 150 florins.

Defending his wife's dowry against the claims of the other heirs to her first husband's property, Pastor G. Schultze stressed *meine haußfrau (ist — M.P.) nun fur 18. Jahren in die Wedeme mit einem ansehnlichen braudt schatz gekommen, und Ihrer handt arbeit und vleiß alles vorbeßert so mennige bewust*²²⁶. This means that in favourable circumstances a *Pfarrfrau* could exercise control over her property which, on the one hand, guaranteed her independence and, on the other, was of interest to candidates to the pastor's post²²⁷.

²²³ LAG, rep. 5, tit. 36, N° 219, l. 106 ff. (*Specification der beschwerden, so H. Adam Haumans (!) weiland Pastor zu Nizkosche (!) hinterlassen wird bij der handlung, 24.5.1604*).

²²⁴ *Ibidem*, l. 105.

²²⁵ *Ibidem*, l. 105 (the formulation is not clear; it seems that both the pastor's suits and his share in the wedding cost 100 florins).

²²⁶ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2666.

²²⁷ Cf. J. Wah1, *op. cit.*, p. 134 (cites an example which shows that young age gave a widow a better possibility of remarriage than wealth).

To return to a pastor's statement about the sale of his wife's property, let us point out that this proves that the balance of forces in the households was not always even²²⁸. According to the widow from the parish of Nitzke, during the first year of marriage the pastor sold to Anklam crops from seeds that had been sown during the *Gnadenjahr* and therefore belonged to the woman. According to the widow's estimate, he received 105 florins for it but he never told her what he had done with the money. He must have used it for his own purposes, as he used the money from the sale of 4 horses which certainly were not his property, for the family would have reminded the widow of this fact. Did he use the money to pay off some pressing debts? All the widow knew was that he was in debt to a certain Krazenbarh from Neubrandenburg for the man had often asked for the return of the money so that the pastor was forced to take out a loan. The receipts presented by the widow show that the old woman was systematically robbed and financially exploited by her younger heavily indebted husband.

But a widow's capital consisted not only of possessions but also of knowledge of church economy²²⁹. When the pastor of Neuwarp asked for help in a rather advanced age, he did not forget to pay tribute to his wife: *Uxor etiam mea ... his corporis viribus et mentis industria pollet, ut domum et familiam regere sciat*²³⁰. The financial situation and prosperity of a parish were elements which could attract candidates ready to marry the widow. Sceptical remarks could sometimes be heard that the candidate finds the parish more attractive than his future wife²³¹. It was not rare for a wealthy widow to pay off the debts of her deceased husband²³². Such calculations could of course be treacherous as is

²²⁸ But let us avoid a too far-reaching interpretation: nothing is known about the woman's reaction and the pastor's ironic tone indicates that he did not do this willingly, that it was not an easy decision for him to infringe his wife's property.

²²⁹ LAG, rep. 36 II B 26. In a letter to the superintendent J. Somius, deacon in Bobbin, says that the widow of his predecessor, whom he married informed him about the finances of the church.

²³⁰ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2175.

²³¹ The supposition that the men who married widows were more interested in the women's wealth and position than in their qualities is one of the most frequent accusations, see E. Foyster, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-110.

²³² For instance, Barbara Rubach, daughter of pastor Matthäus Rubach, wife of Michael Lothmann (d. 6.12.1629), Johann Walther (d. 1631), Bernhard Alberti (d. 1644) and Joachim Viccius (d. in Dec. 1663) paid the debts of her last husband; Heyden, II, pp. 216-217, 224.

proved by the fate of the sexton J. Somius who married the widow of his predecessor only to see that she was heavily indebted and that the parish was less profitable than he thought it would be²³³.

In addition to economic and cultural capital, social capital, too, strengthened a solitary woman's position. In a passage quoted above Pierre Bourdieu defines social capital as the sum of advantages stemming from the membership of a group²³⁴.

Widows received help from their families²³⁵. However, since the pastor's career demanded mobility, the *Pfarrfrau* had to remember that family ties could be severed²³⁶. A widow's capital also comprised the acquaintances and contacts which she established with members of the commune during her husband's pastorship, as godmother, for instance²³⁷. It was, however, not always possible to count on these bonds, as can be seen from Paul Ebert's words about the situation of Luther's wife: *erfuhr Sie auch großen Undank von vielen, von denen Sie wegen der ungeheuren öffentlichen Verdienst ihres Gatten um die Kirche Wohltaten erhoffte, aber in schändliche Weise enttäuscht wurde*²³⁸. These words indicate that there was a belief in the durability of such bonds. In disputes between the appointed pastor, the patron or the commune on the one hand and the widow on the other,

²³³ LAG, rep. 36 II B 26.

²³⁴ Wolfgang Reinhard's studies marked a turning point in this kind of research, see idem, *Freunde und Kreaturen. Verflechtung als Konzept zur Erforschung historischer Führungsgruppen. Römische Oligarchie um 1600*, München 1979; as regards the latest literature dealing with forms of patronage and relations with groups in power, see G. Jancke, *Autobiographie als soziale Praxis. Beziehungskonzepte in Selbzeugnissen des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts im deutschsprachigen Raum*, Köln 2002; cf. also a modern sociological presentation of this question, which stresses the specific character of women's contacts, V. Mayr-Klaffel, *Frauen und ihre sozialen Netzwerke. Auf der Suche nach einer verlorenen Ressource*, Opladen 1991.

²³⁵ LAG, rep. 36 II S 2 (a letter from a widow's brother who asks that the candidate should be given another parish so that his widowed sister might remain in Sagard, the request produced the desired effect: the widow's daughter was granted refuge in the parish; cf. Heyden, I, p. 102; AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 1082 (father); LAG, rep. 5, tit. 63, N^o 19 (brothers).

²³⁶ Cf. J. Wah1, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

²³⁷ For a characterisation of the sphere of pastor's influence cf. J. Wah1, *op. cit.*, p. 119 (congregations frequently reacted negatively to the pastor's family extending its influence), 131, 180; E. Koch, *Die Kirche im Dorf. Studien und Beobachtungen zur Kirchlicher Situation in der ländlichen Gemeinde des Herzogtums Württemberg*, "Zeitschrift für württembergische Landesgeschichte" 52, 1993, pp. 155–178, here pp. 159–171.

²³⁸ Quoted after I. Mager, *op. cit.*, p. 211; cf. *Scriptora Publice propositorum a professoribus in Academia Wittenbergenst*, vol. 1, Wittenberg 1560, pp. 441 ff.

the woman's friends often make an appearance²³⁹. The widow of the pastor in Nitzke said that before deciding which of the candidates to the post, and her hand, to choose she would like to consult "her friends" because this was not just a "purchase of a horse"²⁴⁰.

In most cases this was probably a reference to her legal guardians (*Vormünder*) and the male members of the family entitled to represent her in court, who cannot be easily distinguished from "true" friends²⁴¹. However, irrespective of the nature of these ties, widows were surrounded by a group of male friends who helped them in all activities in the public field.

Widows were given support not only by close acquaintances and the deceased pastor's friends. Their natural *ex officio* protector was the ruler whose obligation to look after widows stemmed from the Bible but was repeated in the regulation adopted in 1569 and consequently had the force of law²⁴². In addition to religious motivation, a category of *longue durée*, another motive appears in Dukes' letters during that period, especially in the letters of Philip Julius.

In 1617 Philip Julius concluded it was his duty to look after a pastor's widow for her husband *ihme anbefohlener gemeine biß an sein end getrewlich furgestanden*²⁴³. This can be regarded as a "modern" aspiration to guarantee security to the nascent machinery of government or, in other words, as an attempt to

²³⁹ L. Enders, *Bürde und Würde. Sozialstatus und Selbstverständnis frühneuzeitlicher Frauen in der Mark Brandenburg*, in: *Weiber, Menschen, Frauenzimmer: Frauen in der ländlichen Gesellschaft, 1500-1800*, ed. H. Wunder, C. Vanja, Göttingen 1996, pp. 123-154, here p. 126 (according to the author *Freunde* is in such cases a synonym of relatives in Brandenburg).

²⁴⁰ LAG, rep. 5, tit. 63, N^o 19 (*hat sie endlich achte dage frist gebete, sich mit eren freunden dißfals zubereden und beradtschlagen, dan es wehre kein Pferdekauff darnach wolte sich mit etner grundlichen antworde vernemen laßen*).

²⁴¹ Cf. LAG, rep. 36 II T 3 (Trantow 1608, Joachimus Voigt: *die wittve und thre freunde, wie sie diese legitimam vocationem durch allerhand practika umbstoßen mochten sich unthernemen wollen* — emphasis mine M.P.).

²⁴² *Agenda* [1569], pp. 419-480, here p. 430b (reference to *Iz* 1, 17); LAG, rep. 36 II R 12.

²⁴³ LAG, rep. 36 II T 8 (Philip Julius, Wolgast 9.12.1617, it is worth quoting the whole passage: *Wen uns dan erwaltes Pastorn wolvorhalten und das er der ihme anbefohlenen gemetne biß an sein end getrewlich furgestanden, hiebe vor unterschiedlich geruhmet, und wir dahero nicht gestattet kunnen, das seine hinterlaßene Witwe und Wijsen ... ihre Leben in armuth undt durstigkeit hinbringen, und ihres respective sehligen Ehrwurts und Vattern getrewen dienst und auffwartung darin er endlich sein leben einbußen mußen, nicht genießen sollten*).

link Church institutions with the state through their actual or planned dependence. But this can also be regarded as a continuation of clientage²⁴⁴ for the Duke was a patron of the Church²⁴⁵.

Similar motives can be found in the correspondence of Sophia Hedwig, widow of Duke Ernst Ludwik, who lived and ruled alone in Loitz. In a letter concerning Klara Herziger, written in 1612, Sophia Hedwig came out extremely sharply and strongly against Klara's removal from the parish, stressing the quiet, pious and godly life led by the pastor's wife, the pastor's services to the congregation and the fact that he did not leave his flock during the plague²⁴⁶. The widow's origin must have also been important: she was the daughter of a superintendent.

Male assistants helped widows by representing them in courts, looking after their interests and negotiating with candidates. It seems that even without the knowledge of their commune and patron, widows made use of their help to find a suitable candidate for marriage. Christina Backen, widow of Joachim Lüddeke, pastor of Pinnow, was accused of having single-handedly found a candidate for marriage²⁴⁷. She wanted to marry Joachim Hintzen from Belgard, a protégé of Georg von Podewills.

²⁴⁴ Cf. A. Mączak, *Nierówna przyjaźń. Układy klientalne w perspektywie historycznej (Unequal Friendship. Clientelism in Historical Perspective)*, Wrocław 2003; on the link between clientelism and antimodernism in socio-historical interpretations (in connection with Antoni Mączak's book) see T. Kizwalter, *Sarmact, klienci i modernizacja (Sarmatians, Clients and Modernisation)*, "Przegląd Polityczny" 2004, 64, pp. 42–45.

²⁴⁵ For an example of a patron's care of a widow see AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 3300 (Stolzenburg, Pasewalk 1627: *Ich Fridrich von Rammin auch dero mobilien bij der Vohergewachsenen Schwedischen Impressur naher Stettin führen und in mein hauß daseibst so wol als mein eigen vorwarlichen einsetzen lassen, das sie durch solch unebenes queruliren zu der suspicion eines undanken ursach geben sollen sie ist ja gesteridigk das sie mit vermude vorsehen, und solle uns hertzlich leidt seth wan daro wolgemeinte billige erinnerung beij uns nicht, sondern witwen trenen oder der wäijsen seuffzen auf uns geladen werden sollen. Was sie wil so kan sie an Ihren kunftigen lieben Eijden ia troßt und Frawde haben, nur allein das sie die oner matrimonij vielmehr erliechtern als beschweren helffe.*)

²⁴⁶ LAG, rep. 36 II T 8 (*etnes Pastorn und Superintendenten Tochter woll bekannt ... sie auch Ihrer Fraw Mutterlich Namens halber lieb und angenehm, sie sich auch Zeit Ihres ganzen lebens still, fromb, Gottesfürchtig und in unscheltbaren wandel verhalten habe, was Ihre Gott sehliger Ehwirt, für ein christlicher getreuer hirt und Seelsorger geweßen, wie lang und wie sehr er seine Ihm anvertraute Schäßflein, mit der helsamen leer, das allein Sehligemachenden worts Gottes geweide, auch in den gefehrlichen Pestiletz Zeiten nicht verlaßen habe*). cf. also rep. 36 II T 3 (Trantow 1608; Sophia Hedwig, Ludwigsburg 4.7.1608, protection for children because of their father's pastor-services).

²⁴⁷ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 3593 (1614), Moderow-Müller, vol. 2, p. 304.

This encountered the opposition of the church patrons and the von der Osten family which wanted to place a candidate from Krummesfließ in the post. The nomination of the candidate of the von der Osten family, who came from Poland, would have been tantamount to the removal of the widow from the parish for the candidate was married. The patrons suspected that when the widow learned about their plans she quickly found a candidate who was ready to marry her in spite of her advanced age. The case of Christina Backen does not seem to have been isolated. Even though widows did not often resort to such radical steps as to find candidates on their own, it can be assumed that they and their relatives had a substantial share in spreading information about vacant posts²⁴⁸.

Since antiquity and the late Middle Ages attempts had been made to make privileges for widows dependent on the woman's age: sixty years of age was chosen as the border line²⁴⁹. Having analysed the dependence between widowhood and remarriage in the milieu of Württemberg pastors' wives in the 17th century, J. Wahl pointed out that *Pfarrwitwen* between the age of 25 and 40 had the best chance of remarrying. After the age of 40 or 45 the chances dropped considerably²⁵⁰. This was naturally linked with women's fertility cycle but it also had Biblical²⁵¹ and rational foundations. People wanted to avoid a situation where the pastor would find a female believer more attractive than his wife²⁵² for this might involve serious consequences in the social field, leading to conflicts in the congregation, in the public-private field, by posing a danger to the harmony of the pastor's conjugal life, and in the eschatological-moral sphere, for the pastor might commit the sin of secretly wishing his wife death²⁵³.

²⁴⁸ This is also indicated by the case of the widow in Nitzke.

²⁴⁹ M. Puz a, *op. cit.*, col. 276.

²⁵⁰ J. Wahl, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-135.

²⁵¹ LAG, rep. 3, tit.63, N° 149, vol. 2, l. 10 (J. E. von Schwerin refers to 3 Mos 21, this probably means the third book of the *Pentateuch*, that is *Leviticus*).

²⁵² LAG, rep. 3, tit. 63, N° 149, vol. 2, l. 10-14 (J. E. von Schwerin to the superintendent, 8.4.1620: *der Cantzell wan er ein schon weibs bilde in der Kirchen stehen sehe, ... und gedencken solte muchtestu doch deines alten verlebten weibes loß setrn*), l. 19-21 (J. E. von Schwerin to the Duke, 23.4.1620: *Und in dessen heiligen hochwürdige Sacramenta einen schonen lungen metgen verreichet, gedacklichen sundigte, als setner alten quiet werden mocht, eine gleich bekommen konnte*).

²⁵³ *Ibidem*.

A plan to remarry an elderly widow also had other consequences: it greatly reduced the attractiveness of the parish and restricted the number of potential candidates. The situation can be described as a kind of recession: a simultaneous drop in demand and supply. J. E. von Schwerin expressed this forcibly in a conversation with the widow's guardian, the Duke and the superintendent, arguing that if the old widow remained in the parish he would have to employ a man of doubtful morals and without qualifications: *Ihrenthalben einen schlechten scholaren und einfaltigen simplicisten welcher was er lehrte selber nicht vertreten kundte*²⁵⁴, ... *etwas fur die lange weil dahin plapperte wieder wil noch till heete, selbsten er Luthero oder Calvinio beifall geben solt, welcher recht oder unrecht lehretem nich verstunde*²⁵⁵. However, the choice of a parish with an old widow might for a pastor mean a safe road and a quiet old age²⁵⁶. Von Schwerin repeated the conversation he had had with the deceased Andreas Müller in which the latter admitted that not having acquired a university education, he felt so confused in these times when even the chosen could go astray, that he decided to marry an old woman and settle down in a prosperous parish²⁵⁷.

Age is a category which despite appearances is difficult to define objectively. There are many examples which prove that the age of women — and also of men — was defined imprecisely and subjectively in the early modern epoch. Whenever age is mentioned in the statements made by witnesses we come across such formulations as “about” or “nearly”. During the struggle to keep the parson's widow in the parish of Iven, J. E. von Schwerin, who

²⁵⁴ LAG, rep. 3, tit. 63, N^o 149, vol. 2, l. 10–14 (J. E. von Schwerin to the superintendent, 8.4.1620).

²⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, l. 19–21 (J. E. von Schwerin to the Duke, 23.4.1620).

²⁵⁶ The question of clergymen's efforts to find marriage partners in the 16th and 17th centuries has not yet been adequately researched, cf. J. Wah l, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

²⁵⁷ LAG, rep. 3, tit. 63, N^o 149, vol. 2, l. 4–7 (J. E. von Schwerin to the superintendent, 26.3.1620: *Wie mich den Sjelige] herr Andreas selbst berecht, er sein lebenslangk auf keyner Universtet außerhalb der Magdeburgesis particular Schule von dannen zur den paedagogi kommen und gerahen wehre, studieret hette, beij dieser fast letzten beschwerelichen und geferlichen Zeiten, da der lehre so viel aufkommen, wodurch was muglig were, auch die außerwelten verfuhrer werden mochten ein schlechte lege, bald nicht weiß, welchem thejls trawen und beyfal geben nicht Consulium, darum er die alte Frawe eheligen wolte, auff etne solche pfarre Jehrlichst dan noch noch (!) woll uber 500 R tragen kann); J. E. von Schwerin may have tried to slander the widow by using the established pattern, see f. 231.*

opposed the idea, defined her age at 60 at first²⁵⁸. He gradually softened his estimate, saying that she was well above 50²⁵⁹, only to return to his original version after a few months²⁶⁰. The widow's guardians maintained she was 44–45 years old²⁶¹.

Another question is at what age a woman may remarry and when she should no longer do so. In the case of masters' widows, guild legislation usually set the age limit at 45²⁶². An interesting example is the attempt to keep the widow of the pastor of Nitzke (Mecklenburg) in the parish. When she was 48 years old she was rejected by the candidate for the post of pastor, J. Amman, who said that she was "an old woman" and declared that he was ready to marry her daughter. The provost L. Gerschow described her as a "matron" (*ein alte Matrona wehre*) and contrasted her with the girl (*eine Junkfrauwen*), thus emphasising her good sides, and pointed out that the widowed pastor would be a good candidate²⁶³. According to the provost, Amman was faced with a simple alternative: *nimbt er die Tochter würde Er (fürchte Ich) sich in Schultz setzen. Nimbt Er aber die Wittwe, behelt Er allet bei sich, welches ein großes ist, und kan nach der Zeitt und gelegenheit die Kinderen mit ehren ausßsteuren. Sie als eine vernunftig und verstendig Frauw, wird ihm in großen würden und seine trewlich furstehen, da sonste, so er dienne nehme, und vom Bau und Ackerwerk wenig wüste, konnte in hintersicht kömen.* The main arguments in favour of the widow were her vitality and her knowledge of the household (she had looked after it for 28 years), which were a counterweight to the dilettantism of the new pastor²⁶⁴. Another important argument was that she was a "rea-

²⁵⁸ LAG, rep. 3, tit. 63, N^o 149, vol. 2, l. 4–6 (J. E. von Schwerin to the superintendent, 26.3.1620: *balt etne 60 Jahrige frawe were*); l. 10 (J. E. von Schwerin to the superintendent, 8.4.1620: *sie eine Wittve an Ihrer 60 Ihar und sonsten gebrechlich*).

²⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, l. 19–21 (J. E. von Schwerin to the Duke, 23.4.1620: *ist sie thres etliche und 50 jahre*).

²⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, l. 74 (J. E. von Schwerin to the superintendent, 2.11.1620: *ein erlebtes Sechzigjahriges weib*).

²⁶¹ *Ibidem*, l. 36 (Vormünder to the superintendent, 6.9.1620: 44 years); l. 38 (Vormünder to the Duke, 15.9.1620: 45 years), l. 44 and 57 (Vormünder to the Duke, 8.10.1620: 45 years, *etner frawe mittelmeßiges alters*).

²⁶² S. Kreiker, *op. cit.*, p. 82; P. Borscheid, *Geschichte des Alters. Vom Spätmittelalter bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, München 1989, p. 107.

²⁶³ Short biography of L. Gerschow: *Moderow-Müller*, vol. 1, p. 33.

²⁶⁴ LAG, rep. 5, tit. 63, N^o 219 (Nitzke 1599: *er [the pastor — M.P.] vom Bau und Ackerwek wenig wüste*).

sonable woman” from whom the future pastor could expect obedience and respect. In other words, she was familiar with the institution of marriage and this could by no means be said of a young wife. The provost summed up the arguments briefly: *Ich wole mich nicht lange bedenken*. In spite of this enthusiastic appraisal of the widow, the provost thought that she should avoid marriage, being aware of the burdens and troubles it brought in its wake: *was für großer sorge und mühe ein heilige Ehestand wehre welches sie vielfeltig in der tädt teglich erfahren, sie wolte sich zu ruhe und friede geben, der tochter die Pfarf ubergunnen, und godtwillig abtreten*²⁶⁵. The provost’s words about “marital troubles” probably referred — and were taken by the contemporaries to refer — to the duties of a pastor’s wife, and because of her “advanced” age the woman would not be able to cope with them. On the other hand, the words could also refer to the asymmetry of relations between the *Pfarf frau* and the pastor, for contrary to the myth lingering in literature, a pastor’s household was not “an ideal place”, free of conflicts and tension, a place where there was eternal harmony between the spouses. In marriage woman was subordinated to man, male interests were of primary importance and the family strategy was subordinated to the interests of the eldest son²⁶⁶. As J. Wahl emphasises, in pastors’ houses the interests of wives were not taken into account until the last phase of a pastor’s life, when he became concerned about the fate of the family he was leaving behind²⁶⁷. L. Gerschow, too, became concerned about the fate of his wife four years before his death, when he was 62 years old. Being realistic, he thought her too old to remain in the parish as a pastor’s wife, for she was almost 60 years old, and therefore he asked the superintendent to take care of the old woman’s future²⁶⁸.

When a pastor’s widow was too old to get married, the obvious solution was to marry her daughter to the candidate for the pastor’s post. In Tribobhm Friedrich Breitsprecher pledged himself

²⁶⁵ LAG, rep. 5, tit. 63, N° 219.

²⁶⁶ Cf. J. Wahl, *op. cit.*, pp. 125 ff.; cf. D. Gugerli, *op. cit.*, pp. 183–185; see fn. 8; criticism of the family model is characteristic of modern literature, cf. C. Ulbricht, *Shulamit und Margarete. Macht, Geschlecht und Religion in einer ländlichen Gesellschaft des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Wien-Köln-Weimar 1999, pp. 14–19, p. 14: *Die Ordnung im Haus setzte die Ungleichheit der Geschlechter voraus*.

²⁶⁷ J. Wahl, *op. cit.*, pp. 129, 134.

²⁶⁸ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2038 (Medow); Moderow-Müller, vol. 1, p. 33 (Marie Germann was his wife, she died in 1637).

to marry the daughter for the mother was in an advanced age²⁶⁹. Early marriages when the bride was not yet 15 were rare. In 1631 pastor Nicolaus Göde, who fell into arrears with payments to the widow mentioned above and was suffering from gout and other old age troubles, trying to secure the fate of his wife after his death, asked that his 14-year old daughter be kept in the parish²⁷⁰. Let us add that this was his only daughter and that he probably thought there was no other way to secure his wife's residence in the parish.

But as a rule, young age was regarded as a trump card if a widow wanted to remarry²⁷¹. In such cases the custom of keeping the pastor's widow in the parish was interpreted as a binding law and marriage was ordered²⁷².

One of the elements of widows' social capital was the respect they enjoyed in their congregation. They probably worked for years to earn it, for they had to overcome the late medieval anti-clericalism and people's negative attitude to clergymen's partners in life, as is proved by the remarks in Bugenhagen's Church ordinances quoted above²⁷³. A congregation's respect and concern for pastors' widows were expressed by various small gestures, such as, for instance, the above-mentioned decision (fn. 123) to construct a free-of-charge bench for pastors' widows in the church²⁷⁴. The growing demands and expectations with

²⁶⁹ LAG, rep. 36 II T. 7 (Tribohm 1609: *die mutter alt und sich der pfarre und fringen (?) beguben wil*); AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2038.

²⁷⁰ LAG, rep. 36 II S 5 (Samtes 1624: *in meinem alter, nach seinem Veterlichen Rechte und willen, mit dem beschwerlichen morbo articulari belget und heimge-sucht*); 1631: *meine liebe einige tochter, ein Megdlein, ins 14 Jahr, nach dieser lande wolgebrachte löblichen gebrauch und gewohnheit, bejbehalten undt bewahren werde*).

²⁷¹ LAG, rep. 36 II S 2 (Sagard, letter from a brother of the widow who was considered young, though she already had four children: *die doch noch eine junge wittwe ist nebest ihren (?) 4 Kleinen Kinderlein*); AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 1082.

²⁷² AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2161 (Neukirchen 1626: *die wittwe ... noch bej Jung Jahren wehre ... ein ander so nicht uxoratus mit nahmen Andreas Tischer ... sich mit der wittwen verhejrahten [soll — M.P.]*).

²⁷³ Cf. H.-J. Goertz, *Antiklerikalismus und Reformation: sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, Göttingen 1995; U. M. Govil, *Antiklerikalismus: ein Erklärungssatz für die Entstehung und frühe Entwicklung reformatorischer Bewegungen in Deutschland*, Hamburg 1993; L. Schorn-Schütte, *Evangelische Geisteslichkeit*, pp. 272–273, has a very sceptical attitude (I do not think her remarks are right).

²⁷⁴ LAG, rep. 36 II T 8 (Tribsees 1597); this is a very important decision for it may concern the widow of pastor Johann Bole who got himself into trouble with the commune because of his quarrelsome disposition and his excessive use of excom-

regard to the widows' way of life were another indirect proof of congregations' respect for pastors' widows.

The way to build and accumulate a "capital of confidence" varied but in most cases it consisted in a faithful service at the side of the woman's husband and in renunciation of her own plans in life²⁷⁵. 16th century correspondence sometimes provides dramatic proof of the spouses' joint fate. In 1631 Elisabeth Schmades, widow of pastor Georg Balekow, apologised for informing the superintendent so late about her husband's death, explaining that the plague of which her husband died had deprived her of strength for a long time and as her flat was in quarantine, there was nobody to whom she could give her letter. There is no mention of the widow in the parish in the appointment of the new pastor, made half a year later²⁷⁶.

The widow of pastor L. Gerschow earned the congregation's respect thanks to her 40-year hard work in the parish²⁷⁷. Her reputation was not hurt by the fact that she had run up debts, for this was attributed to the requirements of a pastor's household and to expenses for the university education of her three sons who were expected to become clergymen in the future. It can therefore be said that the congregation's representatives who were in favour of keeping the widow in the parish were motivated by a sense of justice and wanted to compensate the widow for the expenses she had incurred for the common good.

One of the most interesting examples of the role of social appreciation is the case of the widow of the pastor of Kartlow (Demmin synod)²⁷⁸. The situation is known from Julius Cogelerus's account made for the superintendent Bartholdus Krakevitz on January 12, 1619. Cogelerus was sent to Kartlow in December 1618 to look after the faithful and the widow in the parish. At the beginning of the new year he and two *vicines pastores* witnessed an interesting dispute between the patrons and the widow. The

munication; in the inspection reports referred to here there is a note saying that he owes 200–250 florins to the church; cf. LAG, rep. 5, tit. 63, N^o 164 (the text is badly damaged), Heyden, II, p. 305.

²⁷⁵ Cf. J. Wahl, *op. cit.*

²⁷⁶ LAG, rep. 36 II S 9 (Schlitzkow 1631).

²⁷⁷ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 2038.

²⁷⁸ AP Szcz. Kons. Szcz. 1082; the case is also briefly discussed by Woltersdorf, *op. cit.*, pp. 231–232; cf. also Michaelis, *Pastor dioecesis suam dirgens*, Rostock u. Parchim 1721, p. 197.

widow's father asked in public why the candidates who were arriving in the parish to make sermons on a trial basis refused to marry his daughter²⁷⁹. Since she was young (*ein Junger Mensch*), he suspected that there was somebody behind it who wanted to drive her into poverty²⁸⁰. The patrons replied that the case had nothing to do with respect for the widow but was connected with events which had happened when the widow's husband was still alive. Three objections were raised against the widow: she had allowed the pastor to wear dirty suits, she had incited him against the patron and she had provoked conflicts by scandalmongering²⁸¹. This shows that the seemingly "private actions" of the pastor's wife were interpreted in categories from the public sphere, a sphere to which the commune belonged. The question of the pastor's clothes was not a private matter but was part of the post he held²⁸². And so were his conflicts with the civilian authorities. As regards scandalmongering by the pastor's wife, this was probably not what frightened pastors at the third synod in Barth in 1569 which forbade pastors to talk with their wives about the matters raised during the debates for *etliche von der Priester-Frauen (!) gar übel schweigen könnten. Darauf in diesem ... Synodo ein jeder vermahnet (wird — M.P), er wollte seinem Weibe nicht kund thun, was unter der Priesterschaft gehandelt und geschlossen sey*²⁸³. It can rather be assumed that the pastor's wife was a quarrelsome person and that this had led to conflicts; once again we see that the seemingly private traits of character exerted an influence on the public sphere.

²⁷⁹ *Ibidem* (vorgeschlagene gesellen, so zu probpredigt sich hören lassen, seine Tochter die itzige Wittwe zu hetraten sich weigerten dessen grund begehrete er gern zu wissen).

²⁸⁰ *Ibidem* (vernehmen, was der jenne set, das man seiner Tochter zu zeigen wüste, darumb sie solte also ins Elend verhaget werden, der massen er sagt den verdacht hette, das die gesellen müsten von anderen umbgeredet werden).

²⁸¹ *Ibidem* (darunter dennoch nichts vorgefallen, das an Ehr und leumutt der Wittwen solt abtragen sein, sondern viel darauf hinaus gangen, das sie Ihren vorigen altes man mit seinen kleideren unsauber gehen hatt lassen, Ihren auch zu weile darzu angeretzet, dadurch er mit den Patronen in unfried geraten. Darhero Man sich zubesorgen, das sie es hünferner auch machen würde, und sonsten mit schwatzen und reden wie bisdaher vieleicht, hir und dar Mauterej anrichten).

²⁸² Cf. D. Gugerli, *op. cit.*, p. 37: he explains the significance of the pastor's clothes, recalling J. Habermas's concept of *repräsentativer Öffentlichkeit*; this is not a very happy idea because of the shortcomings of Habermas's thought in this respect; cf. S. Rau, G. Schwerhoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 16–17.

²⁸³ J. H. Balthasar, *op. cit.*, p. 445

The *longue durée* of a widow's bad reputation is also documented by the letters of the pastor's wife in Iven who was suspected of having contributed to her husband's death. Pastor Andreas Möller fell ill a few years before his death and was unable to perform his duties. After his death the patron accused the widow of being indirectly responsible for the pastor's death by calling in a bad doctor²⁸⁴. Most probably the accusation was groundless for it was not repeated in the patron's further negotiations with the supporters of the widow, nor did it provoke the widow to defend herself against it. It is much more likely that the patron wanted to defame the widow, knowing how important her "good reputation" was²⁸⁵.

The fact that it was important to have "a good reputation" and to inspire confidence means that pastors' widows were expected to maintain very high standards. These high standards show that the faithful respected the pastor's wife and built up an image in their minds of what she should be like. What is striking about pastors' wives is that they were quickly accepted by the congregation and earned appreciation for their function. Owing to the division of work in the household, pastors' wives seem to have escaped the problem which affected pastors: the women's physical work was well accepted in rural areas, but the pastors' "non-physical work" might have been found strange there.

It is not easy to present the life situation of the pastor's widow and the role she played in the appointment of a new pastor at the turn of the 16th century. The main difficulty is that the institutional framework regulating the functioning of the new Church and the question of conduct towards widows were not yet formulated at that time. The result is that the sources are scant and,

²⁸⁴ LAG, rep. 3, tit. 63, N° 149, vol. 2, l. 74 (J. E. von Schwerin to the superintendent, 2. 11. 1620: *ein Jungen frischen glatten Compan, die unzucht lust Ihr mehr und pesser dan Er andres [Seltiger] mit dehnm alten grahen Kopffe vermöcht, buhlen könne, warumb sie Ihm auch, ein Qwak selber zum Medico gebrauchet, der Ihmet was geordnet, und befholen, sich erstlich borichtten zur lassen, der auß sie woll ja erachten können, solche starcke materia sein würde den Todt davon nehmen muste, darauff allezeit ich ein studiosus wehre, sie hin wieder nicht Eheligen wollt, solt geleich mein lebtage, kein pfar kriegem undt ein käuff her sterben;* l. 87–92, J. E. von Schwerin, 29.12.1620.

²⁸⁵ On the importance of gossip see P. Holstein, N. Schindler, *Geschwätzgeschichte(n). Ein kulturhistorisches Plädoyer für die Rehabilitierung der unkontrollierten Rede*, in: *Dynamik der Tradition*, ed. R. van Dülmen, Frankfurt a.M. 1992, pp. 41–108, 271–281.

on the other hand, the situation forced the widows to resort to informal actions with the help of friends and relatives. It can be said that such conduct is timeless, independent of historical epoch. But in this case, in the period examined by us, it was not of a marginal character, it established patterns of behaviour. Nevertheless, the institutionalisation of the social role of clergymen's partners in life undoubtedly raised their status: the new legal norms and forms of social care streamlined the functioning of the Church apparatus and became a model for the later mechanisms of a modern state. The Church played the role of an intermediary between medieval guild structures and the state machinery.

Widows undoubtedly had a great influence on the appointment of new pastors, a negative influence, if the candidate was rejected because he was not accepted by the woman, and a positive influence when the woman decided which candidate should be chosen or found him herself. This new field of activity gave widows the possibility of shaping their lives in accordance with their own interests and requirements. The extent of this freedom was however restricted to the short period between the death of their husband and their remarriage. The situation of a widow after the "year of grace" was not thought to be particularly attractive, as is proved by the endeavours made by pastors and their wives to ensure that after the pastor's death his widow would be kept by the parish²⁸⁶.

It is impossible to present the question quantitatively for the endeavours to allow a widow to stay in the parish and negotiations with candidates were informal, they were not institutionalised. It is also difficult to say how many women were allowed to remain in the parish and why. I have therefore decided to analyse widows' capital, that is to point out the factors which usually played the decisive role in these processes. This capital consisted of elements which can be presented quantitatively, such as wealth, as well as factors which cannot be measured by traditional research means, such as network of contacts or social respect. But even seemingly objective categories, such as age, are

²⁸⁶ Cf. LAG, rep. 5, tit. 53, N° 219; J. Peters, *Das laute Kirchenleben und die leisen Seelensorgen*, in: *Arbeit, Frömmigkeit und Elgensen*, ed. R. van Dülmen, Frankfurt a.M. 1990, pp. 75–105, here p. 91; L. Schorn-Schütte, *Evangelische Geistlichkeit*, p. 274.

in fact defined socially and consequently evade an objective presentation.

It is impossible to establish on this basis what influence the Reformation exerted on the status of woman. Though I doubt whether this is at all possible, let me point out that the social role of a pastor's wife and a pastor's widow opened a relatively wide field of action and many possibilities to Protestant women, possibilities which were inaccessible to women in the Catholic Church. This is all the more important as it concerned a whole social group, and not just a social fringe.

Let us also point out that the custom of keeping pastors' widows in the parish was specific to northern Germany and the Pomeranian duchies and that the "year of grace" lasted there a whole 12 months. If the social role of pastors' widows denoted an improvement in the situation of women, Pomerania was the region where this should be clearly seen.

(Translated by Janina Dorosz)