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THE PAROCHIAL SCHOOL NETWORK IN POLAND
PRIOR TO THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE COMMISSION OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

(First Half of the 18th Century)

The parochial schools, apparently widespread in Poland already at the close of the Middle Ages, after a derangement of short duration in the period of Reformation, attained the peak stage of development at the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century. The lively interest in them, shown by the synods and by diocesan inspectors, towards the end of the 16th and in the first half of the 17th century, bears witness to the great importance the Church authorities attached to the further expansion of the parochial school system. The school was one of the most important media in the Catholic reform that took place after the Council of Trent. The sources from the late 16th and early 17th century mention, in one way or another, a school in almost every parish (e.g. in Little-Poland, in about 96 per cent of all parishes), although, on the other hand, one can hardly say what percentage of these mentions relate to schools actually functioning. Indeed, the records of diocese inspections from that time, which are the basic source of information on parochial schools, hardly ever speak of pupils or of instruction. Yet the fact that at that time the inspectors investigated scrupulously in particular the material means of the schools is an evidence of the great interest of the bishops in the schools. A distinct regress in the development of the parochial schools in Poland is not noticeable until the second half of the 17th century. The matter has not been thoroughly investigated so far but it seems that the main causes of this state of affairs consisted, on the one hand, in the collapse of the Trent Church reform in Poland around the middle of the 17th century, which automatically reduced the interest of the Church circles in the problems of schools and, on the other hand, in the catastrophic situation of the

country afflicted by the calamities of two devastating wars of the middle of the 17th and of the beginnings of the 18th century; these wars intensified the economic depression which had already been looming for a long time.¹

The little advanced research in parochial schools in Poland does not permit to ascertain in a satisfactory manner what the state of these schools was in the first half of the 18th century. The works by J. Łukaszewicz, S. Kot and T. Wierzbowski which, until not long ago, were the main basis for general conclusions concerning the history of the parochial school system in Poland in the 16th - 18th century, cannot in fact give even a partly answer to this question, because of serious gaps in their source material.² New elements have only been furnished by the detailed research in the school system, initiated in the Lublin scientific centre.³ Already in the light of partly results of this research, the view is changing on the spread of parochial schools in Poland around the middle of the 18th century, i.e. prior to the establishment of the Commission of National Education (1773). The opinion, in force until a short time ago, that before the

¹ S. Litak, *Struktura i funkcje parafii w Polsce* [The Structure and Functions of Parishes in Poland], in: *Kościół w Polsce* [The Church in Poland], vol. II, ed by J. Kłoczowski, Kraków 1970, pp. 382 - 385, 404, 417. Cf. S. Kot, *Szkolnictwo parafialne w Małopolsce w XVI - XVIII w.* [The Parochial School System in Little-Poland in the 16th - 18th Century], Lwów 1912, p. 113.

² J. Łukaszewicz, *Historia szkół w Koronie i w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim od najdawniejszych czasów aż do r. 1794* [The History of Schools in the Crown and in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the Earliest Times up to 1794], vol. II, Poznań 1850, pp. 145 - 152; S. Kot, *op. cit.*; T. Wierzbowski, *Szkoły parafialne w Polsce i na Litwie za czasów Komisji Edukacji Narodowej 1773 - 1794* [Parochial Schools in Poland and Lithuania in the Times of the Commission of National Education 1773 - 1794], Kraków 1921. For a critical evaluation of these works, see: S. Litak, *op. cit.*, pp. 380 - 387.

³ These are studies on parochial schools in the Middle Ages: E. Wiśniewski, *Sieć szkół parafialnych w Wielkopolsce i Małopolsce w początkach XVI w.* [The Parochial School Network in Great-Poland and in Little-Poland in the Beginning of the 16th Century], "Roczniki Humanistyczne," vol. XV, 1967, No. 2, pp. 85 - 127 and, by the same author, *Materiały do stanu liczebnego duchowieństwa i służby kościelnej w diecezji krakowskiej w pierwszej połowie XVI w.* [Materials Relating to the Numerical Force of the Clergy and Church Service in the Diocese of Cracow in the First Half of the 16th Century], "Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne," vol. XVIII, 1969, pp. 218 - 219 and Tables; for the 16th - 18th century: S. Litak, *op. cit.*, pp. 79 - 419; for monastic schools: J. Kłoczowski, *Zakony męskie w Polsce w IV - XVIII w.* [Monastic Orders in Poland in the 16th - 18th Century], in: *Kościół w Polsce* [The Church in Poland], vol. II, Kraków 1970, pp. 651 - 652. The results of research done in Lublin centre served partly as the basis for the chapter on rural schools by M. Chamaćówna, *Szkolnictwo wiejskie do czasów Komisji Edukacji Narodowej* [Rural Schools up to the Times of the Commission of National Education], in: *Historia chłopów polskich* [The History of Polish Peasants], vol. I, ed. by S. Inglot, Warszawa 1970, 27, 469 - 507.

establishment of the Commission there were in the Crown only 125 or possibly 175 parochial schools,⁴ has proved to be unfounded and completely wrong. Owing to the preservation of the Parish Tables of the Bishop of Cracow A. S. Załuski, from the years 1747 - 1749,⁵ we are able to get a relatively accurate idea on the situation of these schools in Little-Poland. The picture obtained on this basis and the fragmentary results of research on the parochial school system in other parts of the country, can serve as basis for an initial evaluation of the situation of those schools in Poland before the establishment of the Commission of National Education. They also allow to realize better than heretofore to what extent the school reforms of the second half of the 18th century were based on the already existing network of parochial schools.

The above-mentioned Tables were made up in connection with the inspection of the Diocese of Cracow also carried out in the years 1747 - 1749. They cover 753 parishes out of the total of about 950 existing at that time in the Diocese of Cracow the territory of which was in principle identical with that of Little-Poland. These parishes belong to 48 decanates (out of the total of 53) or, actually, to 47, because, for the Decanate of Jędrzejów, the Table of only one parish has been preserved, and this one does not note a school. As regards parishes in the Decanate of Bytom, the Tables comprise only those situated within the borders of the Republic. The Tables leave out the parishes belonging to the Diocese of Cracow but situated beyond the frontiers of Poland, with the exception of the whole Decanate of Pszczyna. The value of Załuski's Tables, as a source of information on parochial schools, consists mainly in the fact that they show in special sections the teaching personnel and the number of pupils in schools attached to various parish churches. The remaining information concerning the subject of instruction, the school buildings, the class origin, education and sources of livelihood of the teachers, and the class origin of the pupils, is of lesser importance since it is sporadic and often very superficial.

⁴ These figures have been accepted after: T. Wierzbowski, *op. cit.*, p. 19. See e.g. the entry "Polska" in *Wielka encyklopedia powszechna PWN [The PWN Great Universal Encyclopaedia]*, vol. IX, Warszawa 1967, p. 140, and M. Mitera-Dobrowolska, *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej 1773 - 1794. Pierwszy urząd wychowania w Polsce [The Commission of National Education 1773 - 1794. Poland's First Administration of Education]*, Warszawa 1966, p. 110.

⁵ Those are 12 books in the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow. B. Kumor has recently set forth the hypothesis that these Tables were compiled as a result of decanal inspections or on the basis of an inquiry; this theory is very unlikely. See: B. Kumor, *Nieznane źródła do statystyki ludności diecezji krakowskiej w XVIII w. [Unknown Sources Relating to the Demographic Statistics of the Diocese of Cracow in the 18th Century]*, "Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski," vol. IV, 1971, p. 22, Cf. S. Litak, *op. cit.*, pp. 272 - 273.

The criterion for ascertaining the existence of a school in Załuski's Tables is the presence of the teacher and pupils. In some cases, the term "school" does not even denote a school building but a group of pupils. Thus, e.g., in Ropczyce, the teacher Franciszek Skowroński taught for 7 years "scholam," i.e. 12 pupils at the local church.⁶ In accordance with the suggestion of the source, we therefore adopt the principle that a school existed in the given parish when the presence of at least the two above-mentioned elements: the teacher and the pupils, can be ascertained. The Table of parishes with schools, given below, lists exclusively schools conceived so, with one exception: the teaching of children in Maciejowice where more precise information is not available.⁷ The teacher there, not identified by name, was probably a local townsman, whose relationship with the parish church is not defined. That school was, however, in some way controlled by the vicar which derives from the fact that it was listed in the Tables.

Table 1. Urban and Rural Parishes with Schools in the Archdiocese of Cracow according to the Tables of A. S. Załuski

Number of parishes			Number of parishes with schools			% of parishes with schools		
total	urban	rural	total	urban	rural	total	urban	rural
753	179	574	263	110	153	35	61	27

Table 1 leaves out 6 decanates not appearing in Załuski's Tables, namely the Decanates of Jędrzejów (with the exception of one parish), Książ, Mielec, Pilzno and two Cracow decanates. The schools in the decanates of Cracow can easily be established, though, with data from the work by Łukaszewicz who made up a list of Cracow schools for the time around 1773. It can be assumed that as far as the number of schools is concerned, the situation presented by Łukaszewicz did not differ from that around the middle of the 18th century, with one exception: the school at St. Nicholas Church in Cracow, closed down before 1773, but named in the inspection of 1711.⁸ So, according to Łukaszewicz, there were in Cracow, around the middle of the 18th century, 10 parochial schools, with the total number of parishes amounting at that time to 12; (included in the above number

⁶ Ropczyce: the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow. A. S. Załuski's Tables (quoted below as: Tables), No. 7 (the Decanate of Ropczyce).

⁷ Tables, No. 1 (Decanate of Stężyca).

⁸ *Materiały do dziejów szkolnictwa parafialnego w Małopolsce XVI - XVIII w.* [Materials Relating to the History of the Parochial School System in Little-Poland in the 16th - 18th Century], in: S. Kot, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

of schools are those at St. Nicholas Church and at the branch Church of St. John, performing the *cura animarum*).⁹ Thus, in the Diocese of Cracow, including the city of Cracow, there were, towards the middle of the 18th century, 273 schools with the total number of parishes amounting to 765; this means that about 36 per cent of all parishes unquestionably had schools. Apart from that, however, we find in the Tables 28 mentions which can serve as probable evidence. These mentions state — with one exception — that in the given parish, the organist or cantor is the teacher, and that pupils are missing. One can ask at this point whether this statement meant that there were no pupils altogether or that they were not present at the time the Table was compiled. A detailed analysis of the above mentions incline to accept the latter alternative.¹⁰ One can therefore hypothetically assume that all the 28 cases concern periodical instruction, widely practised at the time, not only in Poland,¹¹ rather than the total absence of instruction. The correctness of such a conclusion seems to find corroboration in the information concerning the parochial school in Rygllice; according to it, there was in that parish a handful of pupils who were not attending school at the time of inspection and of entering the data into the Tables (*sunt pauci sed modo non frequentant scholam*).¹²

Thus, if we assume that the 28 hypothetical mentions about schools actually indicate their existence, the total number of parochial schools in the Diocese of Cracow in the middle of the 18th century, should be increased to 301; this would mean that out of the total of 765 parishes listed in the Tables (and including the parishes of Cracow), about 40 per cent had schools. If we now assume that out of the 185 parishes outside of Cracow, not listed in the Tables, also 40 per cent, i.e. 74, had schools, then we will arrive at the figure of about 375 schools for a total of about 950 parishes in the Diocese of Cracow in the years 1747 - 1749. This figure would be more than four times higher than the number of mentions about parochial schools in Little-Poland around the middle of the 18th century, that appear in the incomplete source material published by S. Kot (86 schools),¹³ and more than double of what has so far been accepted for the whole territory of the Crown prior to the establishment of the Commission of National Education.

It seems that as far as the density of the parochial school network is concerned, Little-Poland was not exceptional. According to the contempor-

⁹ *Synodus diocesana ab [...] Casimiro a Łubna Łubienski episcopo Cracoviensi [...] celebrata [...] A. D. 1711*, p. 17.

¹⁰ S. L i t a k, *op. cit.*, pp. 390 - 391.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 415.

¹² Tables, No. 6 (Decanate of Tarnów).

¹³ S. L i t a k, *op. cit.*, p. 386.

ary opinion of H. Kollątaj, the situation in the parochial school system was even better in Great-Poland, Royal Prussia and Varmia.¹⁴ This is also corroborated by the great interest of the Poznań bishops in the parochial schools in the first half of the 18th century. The episcopal inspectors investigated the condition of these schools in detail.¹⁵ They obligated the local population to reconstruct these schools and did not even hesitate — as e.g. in Rogoziniec in 1738 — to threaten with inflicting penalties for indifference in this matter.¹⁶ There are also many instances bearing witness to a greater interest of the population of the Poznań Diocese in the parochial schools. This seems to have taken place under the influence, among other things, of the Protestant, mainly German, population living in the northern and western parts of that Diocese, and having their own schools, probably doing quite well.¹⁷ The functioning in those territories of Protestant schools created an atmosphere of emulation, reflected in the sources¹⁸ and favourable to the development of the Roman-Catholic school system. According to J. Nowacki, in the years 1777 - 1787, about one half of all parishes in the Diocese of Poznań had schools.¹⁹ One can hardly suppose that these schools were established only as a result of the activities of the Commission of National Education which did not have major achievements in the numerical expansion of the parochial school system. The recently undertaken research indicates that the overwhelming majority of those schools existed already

¹⁴ H. Kollątaj, *Stan oświecenia w Polsce w ostatnich latach panowania Augusta III, 1750 - 1764* [The State of Education in Poland in the Last Years of the Reign of Augustus III, 1750 - 1764]. Ed. by J. Hulewicz, Wrocław 1953, p. 52.

¹⁵ The Archdiocesan Archives in Poznań, e.g. AV 22 (1725), p. 203v; AV 21 (1726), p. 486v; AV 20 (1727), p. 377v; AV 26 (1738), pp. 166, 178v; AV 29 (1742), p. 645.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, AV 25, p. 90v.

¹⁷ This can be illustrated e.g. by the report from 1718 on a conversation between the inspectors and a group of Lutheran children returning from school in the village Chlastawa. The inspectors met *pueros et puellas circiter 12 ex villa Chlastawa in villam Kościeszyn cum libris et scriptis tabulis redeuntes [...]*." (Archdiocesan Archives in Poznań, AV 19, p. 253).

¹⁸ Cf. the statement on this matter made by an inspector on the occasion of inspection in the parish of Potulice in 1727 (Archdiocesan Archives in Poznań, AV 20, p. 377v): "[...] *Non sine animi dolore rescivimus in hac villa olim catholica lutheranum scholiregam, sine ulla dependentia a R. parcho, juventutem falsis dogmatibus inficere [...] quapropter obligamus R. parochum, ut cum generoso haerede expostulet, quatenus lutheranum scholiregam virus juventuti propinare inhibeat aut de villa pelli faciat [...] et loco haeretici, catholicum scholiregam [...] poni et sustentari mandet [...]*."

¹⁹ J. Nowacki, *Dzieje archidiecezji poznańskiej*, t. II, *Archidiecezja poznańska w granicach historycznych i jej ustrój* [History of the Archdiocese of Poznań, vol. II: The Archdiocese of Poznań in Its Historical Boundaries and Its Organization], Poznań 1964, pp. 667 - 668.

before the establishment of the Commission.²⁰ In the beginning of the 18th century, also in the Diocese of Chełmno, more than one half of all parishes had schools.²¹ The number of schools certainly increased as years went by and as the interest in education was growing under the reign of Augustus III. The school system was developed much better in Varmia where in the first half of the 18th century, every parish had a school.²²

Not everywhere, however, was the situation as favourable as in Little-Poland, Great-Poland, Varmia or Pomerania. Numerically, the situation seems to have been much worse in Mazovia which had suffered most in the period of Swedish wars.²³ Thus, taking into account that the percentage of parishes with schools in Great-Poland, Pomerania and Varmia was probably higher than in the Diocese of Cracow, it seems justified to conclude that in the middle of the 18th century, about 40 per cent of parishes in Poland had schools. Since Poland on the eve of the 1st Partition had 4,334 parishes (not counting the Diocese of Wrocław),²⁴ the number of schools would amount to 1,733. In the Crown alone, with its 3,742 parishes — there would be about 1,500 schools, i.e. about 10 times more than has heretofore been assumed. In comparison with Western Europe, however, the number of schools was low all the more so that the parishes there had territories considerably smaller. By the end of the 17th and the beginnings of the 18th century, in the Archdeaconry of Hesbaye (Diocese of Liège), which has been investigated by way of example, out of the total of 243 parishes — mostly one-village ones — there were schools in 160 of them. This means 65 per cent. What is more, unlike in Poland, we notice there an increase

²⁰ S. Olczak, *Akta wizytacyjne jako podstawa źródłowa do badań nad siecią szkół parafialnych, na przykładzie archidiecezji średzkiej* [Inspections as a Source Basis for Research on the Network of Parochial Schools, on the Example of the Archdeaconry of Środa]; "Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne," vol. XXIV 1972, pp. 293 - 307.

²¹ This is mentioned in reports on the situation in the Diocese of Varmia from the years 1727 and 1745: Vatican Archives, the Archive of the Council Congregation (quotes below as: ACC), the Varmia portfolio.

²² M. Chamaćówna, *op. cit.*, p. 478. The report on the situation in the Diocese of Chełmno in 1702 (ACC, the Chełmno portfolio) says of numerous parochial schools in that Diocese.

²³ T. Mizia, *Szkolnictwo parafialne w czasach Komisji Edukacji Narodowej* [The Parochial School System in the Times of the Commission of National Education], Wrocław 1964, pp. 162 - 163, 188 - 191. The low number of schools in the Diocese of Płock is mentioned in Bishop M. Poniatowski's report on the situation in that diocese in the year 1778 (ACC, the Płock portfolio).

²⁴ We accept the number of parishes after W. Müller, *Diecezje w okresie po-trydenckim* [Dioceses in the Post-Trent Period], in: *Kościół w Polsce* [The Church in Poland ...], vol. II, pp. 73 - 74.

in the number of schools in the 17th and early 18th century.²⁵ In France, in the second half of the 18th century, before the Revolution, with a total number of 37 thousand parishes with territorial structure similar to Belgium, there were 25 thousand parochial schools, which means that 68 per cent of all parishes had schools.²⁶ Also in Germany and Austria, the parochial school system looked better than in Poland. In Germany, it was speedily reconstructed after the devastations of the Thirty Years' War. In the middle of the 18th century, in certain parts of the Archdiocese of Cologne, the number of parishes with schools reached 98 per cent.²⁷ It must be stressed that parishes there covered bigger areas than in Belgium or France. In Southern Austria (Steiermark), in the 17th - 18th century, there was a school in almost every parish.²⁸ In Slovenia, too, more than 60 per cent of parishes had schools.²⁹ One should point out, however, that the territorial structure of Austrian and Hungarian parishes (Slovenia) was more like that in Poland.

The social function of parochial schools was determined not only by their smaller or greater number but also by the number of pupils. Generally speaking, however, we find in the sources very scant information on this subject. Zaluski's Tables are an exception in this respect; like the

²⁵ The calculations have been made on the basis of: *Visitationes archidiaconales archidiaconatus Hasbanae in dioecesi Leodiensi ab anno 1613 ad annum 1763*. Edidit G. Simenon, vol. I, II, Leodii 1939; cf. S. Litak, *op. cit.*, p. 393. For the area of Flanders, cf. M. Cloet, *Het kerkelijk leven in een landelijke dekenij van Vlanderen tijdens de XVII^e eeuw*, Tielt van 1609 tot 1700, Leuven 1968, p. 413.

²⁶ S. Lazar, *Struktura parafialna i życie religijne pod koniec Ancien Régime'u, na przykładzie Provins [The Parish Structure and Religious Life towards the End of the Ancien Régime, on the Example of Provins]*, "Roczniki Humanistyczne," vol. XIX, 1971, No. 2, p. 168.

²⁷ Calculated on the basis of description of parishes in: P. Schug, *Geschichte der zum ehemaligen kölnischen Eifeldekanat gehörenden Pfarreien der Dekanate Adenau, Daum, Gerolstein, Hillesheim und Kelberg*; Trier 1956. Cf. L. A. Veit, *Das Volksschulwesen in Kurmainz unter Erzbischof Johan Philipp von Schönborn 1647 - 1673*, Mainz 1909, pp. 22 - 29; P. Opladen, *Das Dekanat Wipperfürth, Siegburg* 1955, pp. 55 - 56.

²⁸ D. Cwienk, *Kirchliche Zustände in den Salzburger Pfarren der Steiermark in der Gegenreformation nach dem Visitationsprotokoll des Sackauer Bischofs Jakob Eberlein aus den Jahren 1617 - 1619*, Retzhaf 1966, pp. 174 - 179 (typescript in the Nationalbibliothek in Vienna); G. Winkler, *Die Entwicklung der Pfarrschulen und der Beginn der Volksbildung im heutigen Schulbezirk Felbach*, Graz 1966, pp. 9 - 24 (typescript *ibidem*).

²⁹ J. Hází, *Die kanonische Visitation des Stefan Kazó, Archidiakon von Eisenstadt (Vesvár) in Burgenland. Teil des Komitates Eisenburg in den Jahren 1697 - 1698. In Anh. die kanonische Visitation des Franz Scacchi, Archidiakon von Eisenburg (Vesvár) in den Jahren 1713 - 1714*, Eisenstadt 1958, pp. 16 - 18 (Introduction).

same Bishop's inspections dating from the same period, they quote, as a rule, the number of pupils in the various schools. Let us therefore try to establish, on the basis of Zaluski's Tables and of Łukaszewicz's data for Cracow, the total number of pupils in the Diocese of Cracow in the years 1747 - 1749. This will give us a certain idea on the number of pupils in other parts of the country, too.

Out of 273 schools, data on the number of pupils have been preserved for 201 schools. Assuming that the total number of schools in the Cracow Diocese amounted to 375, data are missing for 174 schools. In 201 schools, there were 1,634 pupils which makes an average of 8.1 pupils per school. If we now leave out Cracow, data exist for 192 out of 263 schools which were attended by a total of 1,500 pupils. In the 9 schools of Cracow, on the other hand (no data available for 1 school), there were 134 pupils. Thus we obtain an average of 14.8 pupils per school in Cracow, and 7.8 pupils per school outside of Cracow.

Having established the average number of pupils for the Diocese of Cracow not counting the city of Cracow itself, as well as the average for the schools in Cracow, we can easily estimate the presumable number of pupils in the remaining 174 schools, of which 173 were outside of Cracow. By multiplying the average number of pupils in schools outside of Cracow by 173, and adding 14.8, we arrive at the figure of 1,364, i.e. about 3 thousand pupils in about 375 parochial schools of the Diocese of Cracow in the middle of the 18th century. One should add that, with few exceptions, those pupils were exclusively youngsters of male sex.¹⁰ The general mentions on pupils in the sources relating to the Dioceses of Poznań and Gniezno, permit to believe that in the schools of Great-Poland, female pupils were a more frequent occurrence.¹¹

Assuming that the Diocese of Cracow comprised at that time 950 parishes, we obtain an average of 3 pupils per parish. This was not much, especially if one takes into account the huge disproportions in the size of the various parishes (on the average, one parish covered a dozen or so localities but there were many parishes counting several dozen villages).¹² At the same time, however, it was not little, considering that those were times of almost universal illiteracy, especially among the lower social classes. If we assume that the Diocese of Cracow in the middle of the 18th century

¹⁰ S. Litak, *op. cit.*, pp. 413 - 414.

¹¹ E.g. The Archdiocesan Archives in Poznań, AV (1718 - 1719) 19, p. 217v; J. Goldberg, *Stosunki agrarne w miastach ziemi wieluńskiej w drugiej połowie XVII i w XVIII r.* [*Agrarian Conditions in the Towns of the Land of Wieluń in the 2nd Half of the 17th and in the 18th Century*], Łódź 1960, p. 103.

¹² S. Litak, *op. cit.*, pp. 288 - 289.

had a population of about 1,250 thousand,³¹ the approximate number of pupils in elementary schools would account only for 0.24 per cent. This does not at all mean that only such a percentage of the population was covered by primary instruction. It must be remembered that engaged in elementary education were not only parochial schools but also some of the monastic colleges which were numerous in the 17th and 18th century.³⁴ The numerical growth of the latter in the 17th and 18th century, with the exception of years of calamities, was considerable. In the years 1700 - 1772/73 alone, the number of these colleges nearly doubled (growing from 58 to at least 104). Within the same time, the number of youth attending them increased more than threefold — from about 8 thousand in 1700 to about 27 thousand by the time of the First Partition. Together with about ten so-called academic colonies, the number of pupils in secondary schools of all types grew to 30 - 35 thousand within the period up to the First Partition.³⁵ Besides, magnates and better-to-do gentry often educated their children at home. All the same, the state of education in Poland, especially of the lower classes, was much worse than e.g. in France where in the year 1774, e.g. in the Diocese of Reims, the pupils of parochial schools accounted for about 14 per cent of the total population.³⁶

When comparing the above-obtained results of research in the school system in Poland around the middle of the 18th century, with the situation in this field in the 16th and early 17th century, we should state that within the second half of the 17th and the beginnings of the 18th century, there occurred a considerable, more than twofold drop in the number of parochial schools. One ought to note, however, that the data concerning parochial schools contained in the above-mentioned inspection records from the late 16th and early 17th century, are only partly comparable with those contained in Załuski's Tables. The cited sources from the 16th and 17th century inform directly about the functioning of parochial schools in relatively few cases, while the information in the Tables is largely indisput-

³¹ W. Müller, *Diecezja krakowska w relacjach biskupów z XVII - XVIII w.* [*The Diocese of Cracow in the Accounts of Bishops from the 17th - 18th Century*], in: "Roczniki Humanistyczne," vol. XIII, 1965, No. 2, p. 65.

³⁴ S. Bednarski, *Upadek i odrodzenie szkół jezuickich w Polsce. Studium z dziejów kultury i szkolnictwa polskiego* [*The Decline and Revival of Jesuit Schools in Poland. A Study from the History of Poland's Culture and Schools*], Kraków 1933, p. 106. For Piarist colleges, see: A. Szczepański, *Szkoły i wychowanie w Polsce. Przegląd historyczny od najdawniejszych czasów* [*Schools and Education in Poland. A Historical Survey from the Earliest Times*], Poznań 1875, p. 48.

³⁵ J. Kłoczowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 681, 683.

³⁶ D. Julia, *L'enseignement primaire dans le diocèse de Reims à la fin de l'Ancien Régime*, "Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française," 1970, No. 2, pp. 241 - 246.

able and is fully comparable with analogical data only. Besides, added to the number of parochial schools in the middle of the 18th century, ought to be at least some of the monastic colleges which were also engaged in primary education.

It is therefore justified to surmise that the disproportion between the number of schools at the turn of the 16th to 17th century and in the middle of the 18th century was not as big as one might judge from the figures cited above. At any rate, even without taking into account these reservations, the decline of the parochial school system in the second half of the 17th and in the beginning of the 18th century was incomparably less important than has been accepted so far. On the other hand, the tendencies to reconstruct that system, appearing in the '30s and '40s of the 18th century, especially in Great-Poland,³¹ prove that the schools, like the whole country, were slowly beginning to rise again after the calamities suffered in the second half of the 17th and the beginnings of the 18th century. The coincidence of the attempts to reconstruct the parochial school system with the first signs of Poland's economic recovery around the middle of the 18th century, is very significant.

The parochial schools looked different in towns and in the countryside. Urban parochial schools had considerably higher standards and a much higher number of pupils than analogical rural schools. Studying in 84 urban schools were 1,052 pupils, i.e. an average of 12.5 pupils per school. The schools in towns also had, as we shall see, more of competent teaching personnel. Relatively favourable was the situation in the parochial schools in Cracow although some of them had only a few pupils: at the Church of the Holy Ghost — there were 3 pupils, at St. Anne's — 5, at St. Stephen's and at the Cathedral — 6 pupils each. The schools at the Corpus Christi Church in Kazimierz and at St. Peter's had 10 pupils each, that at St. Florians — 14. The most numerous were the schools at St. Mary's Church (50 pupils) and at All Saints' Church (30). Generally speaking, not only the average number of pupils per school in Cracow was higher than in the remaining towns of the Cracow Diocese but the schools there were better organized, too. Each of them had a separate teacher and the two most numerous schools also had seniors.

Among the urban parochial schools in the Cracow Diocese outside of Cracow itself, the most numerous group was that of schools with from 6 to 10 pupils (34.6 per cent of all schools for which data on the number of pupils are available). Next (24 per cent) were schools attended by less than 6 pupils. The number of schools with more than 10 pupils was considerably smaller. In this group, the most numerous were schools with 11 - 15 pupils

³¹ See Notes 15, 16. Cf. S. K o t, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

(14.6 per cent) and those with 16 - 20 pupils (13.3 per cent); the remaining three groups were very small. All in all, the schools with more than 10 pupils accounted for 41.3 per cent, the remaining ones — for 58.7 per cent of all schools for which data are available.

In the rural parochial schools, the numbers of pupils were considerably lower. The average per one rural school amounted to 4.9 only (582 pupils in the 117 schools for which data are available), as compared to the average of 12.5 in urban schools. Unlike in towns, the most numerous group was

Table 2. The Number of Pupils in Urban and Rural Parochial Schools in the Diocese of Cracow, according to A. S. Zaluski's Tables

Number of pupils	Number of schools	
	Urban parishes	Rural parishes
1 - 5	18	72
6 - 10	26	37
11 - 15	11	6
16 - 20	10	2
21 - 25	4	—
26 - 30	5	—
50	1	—
Total	75	117

that of schools with the lowest attendance — up to 5 pupils (61.6 per cent). Next (31.6 per cent) were schools with from 6 to 10 pupils. The remaining two groups, numbering from 11 to 15, and from 16 to 20 pupils accounted for an insignificant percentage (5.1 and 1.7 per cent, respectively) of the total number of schools for which data are available; there were no rural schools at all with attendance higher than that.

The low numbers of pupils in schools were not typical of Little-Poland alone. In the second half of the 17th century, the situation was similar in Silesia, lying outside of the Republic's borders; it was somewhat better in the German schools there, worse in Polish schools. While in the former the attendance was in most cases (79 per cent) not lower than 10, in the latter it usually (in 68 per cent) did not exceed 10, and a significant percentage (40 per cent) of Polish schools had even fewer than 5 pupils. On the whole, however, the number of pupils in Silesian schools in the second half of the 17th century was slightly higher than in the Diocese of Cracow which may indicate that the schools in Silesia were generally doing better.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ W. Ostrowski, *Scholarze i skrybowie śląscy drugiej połowy XVII w. Studium z dziejów stosunków społeczno-oświatowych* [Silesian Scholars and Scribes in the Second Half of the 17th Century. A Study from the History of Social and Educational Relations], "Sprawozdania Wrocławskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego," No. 15, (1960), p. 61, Cf. M. Chamaćówna, *op. cit.*, p. 477.

Low attendance in parochial schools seems, however, to have been characteristic of Poland. The absence of thorough studies on the parochial school system in the West makes broader comparisons difficult. We can, however, get a certain idea on the difference in this respect between Poland and Western Europe, by looking closer at these schools, especially in the Netherlands, Germany and Austria. We have, by way of example, examined inspection records from the Decanates of Bergen op Zoom and Breda in the Netherlands, the country where the school system seems to have reached the highest level in Europe at that time; the attendance in schools was relatively very high there. Taking into account — as we did in the case of the Diocese of Cracow — the highest attendance within a year in the first half of the 17th century (1620 - 1647), we find that the average number of pupils per school ranged in the various years from 70 to 136. We have thus to do here with a situation entirely different from that in Poland. It seems that in the above-named decanates, the majority of the children were embraced by primary instruction. The inspection records show that the elementary school system, both Catholic and Protestant, was greatly expanded in the Netherlands already in the 17th century; the Catholic population sent their children not only to Catholic but also to Protestant schools, and the exasperation of the inspectors over this was of no avail (e.g. the parish of Holstren in the Decanate of Bergen op Zoom).³⁹

The attendance in German and Austrian parochial schools was not as high as in the Netherlands. With regard to this matter, less is known about Germany. The synods and parish inspection records laid emphasis on the problem of sending children to school, especially after the Thirty Years' War. On the other hand, however, it is known that many parents, not feeling the enforcement of compulsory school attendance, shirked that obligation towards their own children.⁴⁰ In the parochial schools of Southern Austria (Steiermark) the attendance was on the average more than twice higher than the average in Poland's best functioning urban parochial schools. In the beginnings of the 17th century, it amounted to 33 pupils. This situation lasted there, it can be assumed, until the school reform under Maria Theresa in the second half of the 18th century.⁴¹ Things did not look so good all over Austria, though, since e.g. in the school district of Bruck-on-the-Mur the average number of pupils in parochial schools

³⁹ For the Netherlands, I used excerpts from inspection records kept in Louvain, in the research workrooms of Professor J. Ruwet to whom I wish to express my warm gratitude for having given me access to them. Cf. also: M. Cloet, *op. cit.*, pp. 416, 517 - 518.

⁴⁰ P. Opaden, *op. cit.*, pp. 55 - 58.

⁴¹ D. Cwienk, *op. cit.*, pp. 174 - 179; G. Winkler, *op. cit.*, pp. 9 - 24.

in 1752 amounted to about 16.⁴² Thus, in comparison with countries of Central and Western Europe, as regards the number of pupils, the situation in Poland's parochial schools was closest to that in Austria prior to Maria Theresa's reform.

On the example of Little-Poland, one can notice considerable differences in the density of the parochial school network in the various regions (as shown on the enclosed map). Apart from the Decanate of Spisz, and the decanates of Cracow, standing out are such Decanates as Kije, Pacanów, Opatowiec, Lelów, Witów, Wojnicz and Sokolina. With the exception of the Decanate of Lelów, they are all areas of old and dense settlement, with the oldest and well-equipped parish network.⁴³ The Decanate of Lelów, on the other hand, was characterized by a relatively great number of towns. The relatively high number of schools in that Decanate was probably due to a considerable extent to the presence there of big estates belonging to the King, the magnates and the Church; according to the Tables,⁴⁴ at least 25 parishes in that Decanate remained under the patronage of those big landowners. We touch here upon the very important problem of the social forces contributing to the development and functioning of the schools. Indeed, the patron of the parish church who was at the same time the owner of the local estate, undoubtedly had a rather essential influence on the existence of the parochial school.⁴⁵

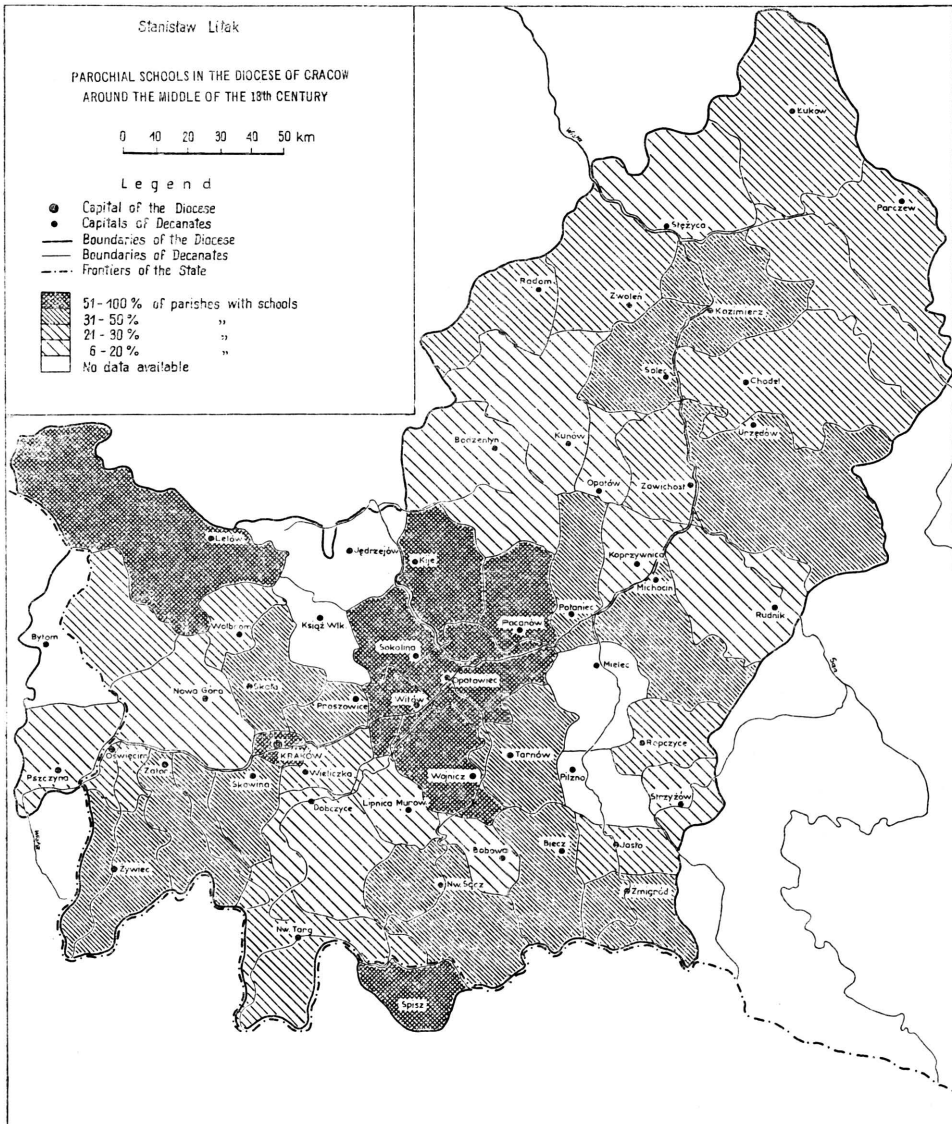
Table 3 shows that among the three basic kinds of patronage: of the nobles, the King and the Church, there were no major differences from the point of view that interests us here. It can be said, however, that the support of the gentry for parochial schools was the weakest, while the attitude of the Royal demesne and of the Church towards parochial schools was almost equal. In view of the not uniform character of the gentry, one should now ask what was the attitude of the various groups of the gentry towards these schools. The example of the Decanate of Lelów can indicate that more interested in supporting parochial schools were the big magnate landowners. A similar conclusion may also be drawn from the rather

⁴² Calculated on the basis of: R. Gritzner, *Die Entwicklung der Pfarrschulen in heutigem Schulbezirk Bruck an der Mur*, Graz 1967, pp. 107 - 282 (typescript in the Nationalbibliothek in Vienna).

⁴³ E. Wiśniewski, *Rozwój sieci parafialnej w prepozyturze wiślickiej w średniowieczu. Studium geograficzno-historyczne* [*The Development of the Parish Network in the Provostry of Wiślicz in the Middle Ages. A Geographical and Historical Study*], Warszawa 1965; J. Szymański, *Czas powstania kościoła w Wojniczu i benedyktyni tynieccy* [*The Time of Establishment of the Church in Wojnicz and the Benedictines from Tyniec*], "Roczniki Humanistyczne," vol. XI, 1962, No. 2, pp. 125 - 145.

⁴⁴ Tables, No. 9 (Decanate of Lelów).

⁴⁵ Cf. J. Nowacki, *op. cit.*, p. 348.



Map 1

frequent presence of schools in parishes under the patronage of magnates, e.g. in the Decanate of Opatów or in the Land of Łuków where — which is typical — there were only two parochial schools, and just in parishes under magnate patronage: in Siedlce and in Radzyń. The information to be found in sources on the negative attitude of the gentry towards the education of peasant children, apply mainly to moderately wealthy gentry.⁴¹ The problem of the attitude of the gentry towards parochial schools calls for fur-

Table 3. Patronage over Parish Churches with Schools according to A. S. Załuski's Tables

Kind of patronage	Number of parishes	Parishes with schools*	
		in absolute figures	in % of the number of parishes
of the nobility	443.5	145	32.9
of the King	113.5	43	38.7
of the Church	172.5	65	37.6
of the town	4	2	50.0
academic	10.5	5	47.6

* For 3 parishes, data on patronage are lacking.

ther and more detailed research, though. It should be considered within the broader framework of the attitude of the gentry towards their subjects under the conditions of Poland's deteriorating economic situation in the 17th and 18th century. The apparently more positive attitude towards parochial schools on the part of the magnates is comprehensible in view of the fact that it was from that group above all — apart from certain circles of burghers and the clergy — that came highly-educated individuals making part of the country's cultural elite, even in the period of Poland's worst decline in the beginnings of the 18th century.

On the other hand, the peasants themselves showed no great eagerness for education. The almost complete attachment of the peasant to land, the increased villein exploitation and the general decline of cultural standards⁴⁷ deprived even the educated peasants of any prospects of social advancement. In the first half of the 18th century, certain chances, especially of

⁴¹ S. Kot, *op. cit.*, pp. 42, 108 and, *ibidem: Materials ...*, p. 231 (Radomyśl); Tables, No. 7, (Decanate of Skala, parish of Tczyca; No. 5, Decanate of Jasło, parish of Szebnie).

⁴⁷ Cf. especially: A. Wyczański, *Polska rzeczka pospolitą szlachecką 1454 - 1764* [Poland, a Republic of the Gentry 1454 - 1764], Warszawa 1965, pp. 312 - 325, and R. Wołoszyński, *Pokolenia oświeconych. Szkice z dziejów kultury polskiej XVIII w.* [Generations of the Enlightened. Essays from the History of Polish Culture in the 18th Century], Warszawa 1967.

a modest career in the priesthood, existed practically only for the subjects of the King and of the Church.⁴⁸

Zaluski's Tables offer also a considerable amount of data about the teachers. The Tables contain information on 261 teachers employed in 260 schools. These teachers can be divided into 5 groups according to the type of functions performed by them.

Table 4. Parochial School Teachers in the Diocese of Cracow according to A. S. Zaluski's Tables

Kind of teachers	Number of teachers	% of total number
Professional teachers	37	14.2
Clergymen	19	7.3
Cantors	17	6.5
Organists	160	61.3
Undefined representatives of church service	28	10.7
Total	261	100.0

Table 4 shows that the most numerous group was that of organists who, together with other representatives of church service and clergymen, accounted for nearly 86 per cent of the total number of teachers. The small group of professional teachers was made up of those teaching in towns where, as has already been said, the standards of schools were higher. It seems that most of the teachers were of plebeian origin, more precisely — coming from townspeople. It is true that the sources contain few mentions attesting to this; on the other hand, however, there are no traces whatsoever of teachers of noble origin. Teachers very seldom had academic degrees. Yet, it seems that even the various church functionaries, especially organists, engaged in teaching, were able to teach at least to read and write; this follows from the general estimation of their competence.⁴⁹

The remuneration of teachers varied considerably. Apart from a modest endowment in land (mostly in the form of gardens), they received regular salaries from the municipal self-government or the vicars, or a regular tribute from the population. Clergymen performing teaching duties, often did so without pay. The church servants were as a rule paid by the vicars

⁴⁸ H. Kollątaj, *Pamiętnik o stanie kościoła polskiego katolickiego i o wszystkich innych wyznaniach w Polsce* [Memorials on the State of the Polish Catholic Church and on All Other Creeds in Poland], in: by the same author, *Stan oświecenia ...* [The State of Education ...], pp. 208 - 210.

⁴⁹ S. Litak, *Struktura ...*, [Structure ...], pp. 405 - 413. On the education of organists, cf. J. S. Bystron, *Kultura Ludowa* [Folk Culture], Warszawa 1947, pp. 141 - 143.

or derived their income from the church. Teachers also received certain income from the parents for teaching their children. All in all, however, these incomes were not high.¹⁰

Theoretically, binding for parochial schools was the programme outlined in the school law promulgated together with the synodal acts of the Bishop of Cracow, Piotr Tylicki, in 1612.⁵¹ The last synod of the Diocese of Cracow held in 1711, still recommended compliance with that law.⁵² It seems, however, that the law, partly modelled on the programme of Protestant schools and on the Jesuit *Ratio atque institutio studiorum*, was actually never totally observed. It is possible that it was binding only in the better-standing urban schools.⁵³ In the remaining parochial schools, those programme provisions were probably adhered to only within the scope of elementary instruction: reading and writing in Latin, catechism and acolyte's responses. As for reading and writing in Polish, one could learn it only indirectly, through the instruction of Latin. Both H. Kollątaj and his contemporary J. Kitowicz in his *Description of Customs*, speak of instruction in writing and reading; Kitowicz also mentions "the ABC of Latin" and the catechism, i.e. religious instruction which was "the first before all others."⁵⁴ This is corroborated by sporadic mentions appearing both in the Tables⁵⁵ and in the inspection records e.g. from the Diocese of Poznań.⁵⁶ In some urban schools, arithmetic was also taught.⁵⁷ It should be pointed out, however, that the standards of instruction in parochial schools depended on many factors, such as competent teaching personnel, the attitude towards the school of the vicar, the patron of the church or the owner of the village, as well as the specific needs of the local community. There exist some traces indicating that the initiatives of educational reforms around the middle of the 18th century, while concerning mainly secondary schools, did find a certain reflection in parochial schools, too. An example of this can be seen in the *Ordinance and Regulations* worked-out in form of a book in

⁵⁰ S. K o t, *op. cit.*, pp. 24 - 28, 82 - 88; cf. also: Z. R u t a, *Szkoły tarnowskie w XV - XVIII w.* [*The Schools of Tarnów in the 15th - 18th Century*], Wrocław 1968, pp. 57 - 79.

⁵¹ The importance of the school reform of 1612 for the parochial school system is discussed by S. K o t, *op. cit.*, pp. 56 - 66.

⁵² *Synodus diocessana ab [...] Casimiro a Lubna Łubiński*, p. 22.

⁵³ S. K o t, *op. cit.*, pp. 56 - 66.

⁵⁴ H. K o ł ł a t a j, *Stan oświecenia ...*, [*The State of Education ...*], p. 52; J. K i t o w i c z, *Opis obyczajów za panowania Augusta III* [*Description of Customs under the Reign of Augustus III*], ed. by R. Pollak, Wrocław 1951, p. 71.

⁵⁵ Tables, No. (Decanate of Skawina, parishes of Lanckorona and Pobiodr).

⁵⁶ Archdiocesan Archives in Poznań, AV 20 (1727), p. 315v; AV 26 (1738), pp. 59, 163v.

⁵⁷ E.g. in Jastrów in the year 1738: Archdiocesan Archives in Poznań, AV 26, p. 98v.

1765 by the provost in Kościan; these regulations were entered in the local official town records as binding for the parochial schools in that town.⁵³

In the light of the above data, we are able to evaluate more correctly the results of the work of the Commission of National Education with regard to parochial schools. It should be pointed out here that we have in mind not so much the activities of the Commission itself but the role of the civilian-and-military order commissions for the Crown and Lithuania respectively, established by the Four Years' Sejm at the end of 1789; their role was decisive, as has recently been demonstrated by T. Mizia.⁵⁴ While appreciating the great contribution made by the Commission of National Education, above all in outlining new educational goals conformable to the ideas of Enlightenment, in working-out new programmes and textbooks for schools, it must be said that as far as the establishment of parochial schools was concerned, the work of the Commission was rather unimpressive.⁵⁵ Of much greater importance for the development of the parochial school system were the activities of the above-mentioned order commissions in the years 1790 - 1792. They were to bring about the establishment by the vicars of parochial schools remaining under their supervision. For evasion by the vicars of the school duties imposed upon them, there were provided adequate penalties, such as the Commission of National Education did not have at its disposal. In this way, the parochial schools were placed not only formally but also practically under State control which ensured their more intensive development; their cooperation with the Commission of National Education was of a loose character only and their programmes were different from those recommended by the Commission.⁵⁶

Mizia's assertions concerning the role of the order commissions in the quantitative growth of parochial schools, give rise, however, to rather serious reservations. In fact, he failed to demonstrate that in those localities where, according to the records of the civilian-and-military commissions, schools were established, there had been no schools earlier. Yet, if we compare the lists of schools in the districts of Cracow, Proszowice, Książ and Lelów, compiled by Mizia on the basis of the above-mentioned records, with the Tables of Załuski, we shall find that only a part of those schools were actually organized in the years 1790 - 1792. A considerable development of the school network in that period can only be ascertained in the district

⁵³ This is mentioned in the inspection of 1778: Archdiocesan Archives in Poznań, AV 32, p. 1307.

⁵⁴ T. Mizia, *op. cit.*, pp. 162 - 163, 168 - 191.

⁵⁵ M. Mitera-Dobrowolska, *op. cit.*, pp. 110 - 111. The seemingly vivid development of parochial schools in Lithuania did not prove durable.

⁵⁶ T. Mizia, *op. cit.*, pp. 150 - 154.

of Cracow (without the city of Cracow) for which Żaluski's Tables mention only 10 out of the 46 schools named in the list worked-out by Mizia. It is more difficult to establish the actual proportion between the number of parochial schools in the middle of the 18th century and the number of those schools in the years 1790 - 1792, for the district of Książ: since this was the area of, among others, the Decanate of Jędrzejów from which, as we remember, Tables have been preserved for one parish only, there are no data in the Tables about the 18 schools named in Mizia's list. It is, none the less, significant that out of 7 mentions in the Tables concerning the schools in that district, 5 speak distinctly about the existence of the school, and only 2 state that the school does not exist. The situation was different in the district of Proszowice where, out of the 27 schools listed by Mizia as established in the years 1790 - 1792, 17 most certainly existed already in the middle of the 18th century, one probably existed at that time, and of new schools there were only four. For the remaining 5 schools on Mizia's list, we find no data in Żaluski's Tables; one of those schools is placed in the village of Cudzynowice which had only a branch church, and such churches seldom had schools. For the district of Lelów, out of 31 schools listed by Mizia, 18 appear already in Żaluski's Tables. Only with regard to 7 schools, it can be stated that they did not yet exist at that time. For the remaining 6 schools, there are no data in the Tables. Out of the 10 schools in the Voivodship of Sandomierz, which were listed by Mizia, 6 appear in the Tables.⁴²

This shows that the preserved records of the civilian-and-military commissions are to be used as sources with more caution because they do not deserve full confidence. In their work, the commissions based themselves on the already existing school network to a much greater extent than it would appear from their records. It seems, however, that credit is due to the commissions mainly for a certain reorganization of the schools along new lines, more uniform for the whole country. While the important contribution made by these commissions to increase the number of parochial schools must not be negated, their merits in this respects were much more modest than Mizia's work seems to indicate.

One example of the changes occurring in schools organized under the supervision of the civilian-and-military commissions consists in the increased number of female pupils in parochial schools, which can indicate a widerspreading of school education. While in the middle of the 18th century schools with female pupils were a rarity in Little-Poland, calculations made on the basis of the list of schools in the work by T. Mizia, show that

⁴² T. Mizia, *op. cit.*, pp. 197 - 200, 163.

e.g. in the year 1792, girls accounted for 26 per cent of all pupils in the district of Cracow. The average number of pupils per school also grew, although not too radically: from 7.8 in the middle of the 18th century to 11.2 in 1792 (in the district of Cracow).

Thus we can see that the school reforms of the 18th century, making part of the all-European Enlightenment trend, did not meet a vacuum in Poland, as far as parochial schools were concerned, but found the ground already prepared. The schools, appearing in considerable numbers, especially in certain parts of the country, had to be multiplied and adapted to new requirements by giving new content to the instruction itself. To what extent this task was fulfilled by the Commission of National Education, still remains a problem for research.

(Translated by Antoni Szymanowski)