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THE CHALLENGE OF TRENT AND THE RENEWAL
OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE GRAND
DUCHY OF LITHUANIA:
THE HIGHER CLERGY OF VILNIUS AND THE
PROBLEMS OF PLURAL BENEFICES AND
RESIDENCE IN THE SIXTEENTH
CENTURY

From the very beginning of the existence of the Catholic Church, both the highest authority of the Church and individual bishops have had the right to form and reform those destined to administer the sacraments. One of those institutions, which played an important role in many aspects of the life of the Church, and also in the history of canon law, was the Council of Trent (1545–1563).¹

The problem of the implementation of the Tridentine reforms in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is not only important, but also able to be grasped from the traces left in documentary sources. Trent merely started a process, which would, over time, bring results that are known today. Historians have for a long time analyzed the records of the council, synods and visitations, and on this basis have shown how the Tridentine decisions were implemented in particular churches.²

¹ The subject may be approached via: R. Bireley, “Redefining Catholicism: Trent and Beyond”, in: *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 6, *Reform and Expansion 1500–1660*, ed. R. Po-chia Hsia, Cambridge, 2007, p. 145–61.

² A. Petrani, “Reforma trydencka (w czterechsetlecie zakończenia soboru trydenckiego)”, *Prawo Kanoniczne*, 7 (1964) no. 3–4; W. Wójcik, “Znaczenie uchwał soboru trydenckiego dla historii prawa kanonicznego”, *Zeszyty Naukowe KUL*, 8 (1965); W. Góralski, “Diecezja płocka i jej synody w okresie potrydenckim (szkie

The council introduced many new solutions and established new ecclesiastical institutions. The Tridentine decrees applied, among other things, to pastoral work, and within this field they introduced a ban on the plural tenure of benefices and a requirement of residence.

In the sixteenth century the plural tenure of benefices, or pluralism, was a social phenomenon across Europe. It often aroused scandal and sometimes caused chaos in the day to day functioning of the Church.³ This was because the accumulation of benefices made it impossible for a canon to carry out the one duty – residence – on which depended the performance of all the others.

Therefore, the Council of Trent, which laid lasting foundations beneath future legislation regarding pluralism and the duty of residence, devoted particular attention to this question. It was decided that “in future only one ecclesiastical benefice to individual persons [should be given]. If however this proves inadequate for the decent maintenance of that person, on whom the benefice had been conferred, it is possible to allocate that same person another *beneficium simplex*, providing an adequate income, as long as both benefices do not require residence in

do badań nad recepcją soboru trydenckiego w świetle synodów diecezjalnych”, *Studia Płockie*, 14 (1986); *ibid.*, *Reforma trydencka w diecezji i prowincji kościelnej mediolańskiej w świetle pierwszych synodów kard. Karola Boromeusza*, Lublin, 1988; M. Banaszak, “Reformacja i reforma katolicka w diecezji wileńskiej (1527–1591)”, *Studia Teologiczne. Białystok Drohiczyn Łomża*, no. 5-6 (1987–1988); A. Kakareko, *La riforma della Vita del clero nella diocesi di Vilna dopo il Concilio di Trento (1564–1796)*, Rome, 1996; J. Gręzlikowski, *Recepcja reformy trydenckiej w diecezji włocławskiej w świetle ustawodawstwa synodalnego*, Włocławek, 2000; J. Hochleitner, *Religijność potrydencka na Warmii (1551–1655)*, Olsztyn, 2000; D. Kisiel, *Recepcja reformy trydenckiej w diecezji płockiej*, Pułtusk, 2004; *Tridento visuotinio Bažnyčios susirinkimo (1545–1563) įtaka Lietuvos kultūrai*, ed. A. Aleksandravičiūtė, Vilnius, 2009.

³ See K. Dola, *Wrocławska kapituła katedralna w XV wieku. Ustrój – skład osobowy – działalność*, Lublin, 1983, p. 162. The phenomenon of pluralism grew by degrees. While in the 13th century it was marginal, by the 15th and 16th centuries clergymen accumulated every kind of position that could be acquired in the course of an ecclesiastical career. In the diocese of Kraków in 1529 the number of beneficed clergymen was 25 per cent lower than the number of benefices. Parish priests and higher clergymen held 60 per cent of the lower benefices – altaries – while six parishes were held by canons. J. Wiesiołowski, “Środowiska kościelne i kultura”, in: *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej XIV–XV w.*, ed. B. Geremek, Warsaw, 1997, p. 261.

person. These principles are to apply not only to cathedral churches, but also to all other benefices, of all titles and kinds.”⁴

The essential condition for the implementation of any of the Tridentine decisions, was the acceptance of the council’s decrees by the episcopate. This was no easy matter. The conditions laid down at Trent aroused controversies, in Catholic and Protestant communities alike, and among both clergy and laity. Bishops and members of chapters accepted the decrees with misgivings and reservations. The higher clergy saw in the decrees the means by which its material position might be severely weakened by the ban on plural benefices.⁵ In the Kingdom of Poland, it was the king who in 1564 decided to accept the Tridentine decrees. At the suggestion of the nuncio Giovanni Francesco Commendone, he accepted them at the Sejm held that year at Parczewo,⁶ whereas some of the bishops demanded a renewed examination of the question. In 1564 the only bishop to accept the decrees – with a reservation regarding the ban on the plural tenure of benefices – was the metropolitan archbishop of Lwów (Lviv), Paweł Tarło. It would be another thirteen years before the province of Gniezno accepted the decrees. This occurred at the provincial synod held in Piotrków in 1577.

The process of implementing the Tridentine reforms in the diocese of Vilnius began at the diocesan synod of 1582, and so almost two decades after the council had closed. The bishop, Cardinal Jerzy Radziwiłł, issued a pastoral letter regarding benefices.⁷ Parish priests and other beneficed clergymen were obliged to show the bishop,

⁴ *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych, Lateran V, Trydent, Watykan I*, ed. A. Baron, H. Pietras, vol. 4, Kraków, 2004, p. 763.

⁵ S. Litak, “Reformy kościelne w XVI w.,” in: *Uniwersalizm i swoistość kultury polskiej*, vol. 1, ed. J. Kłoczowski, Lublin, 1989, p. 164.

⁶ P. Aleksandrowicz, “Przyjęcie przez Króla i Senat uchwał Soboru Trydenckiego w Parczewie w 1564 r.,” *Prawo Kanoniczne*, 9 (1966), no. 3-4, p. 363-81.

⁷ The statutes of the Vilnius synod, issued on February 12, 1582, and the pastoral letter of Jerzy Radziwiłł, issued shortly afterwards, are printed in: *Concilia Poloniae. Źródła i studia krytyczne. Synody diecezji wileńskiej i ich statuty*, ed. J. Sawicki, vol. 2, Warsaw, 1948, p. 133. See also A. Kakareko, “List pasterski biskupa wileńskiego Jerzego Radziwiłła z dnia 25 lutego 1582 r.,” *Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej*, 2 (2003), p. 107-15.

episcopal visitors or the rural deans the letters granting them their positions.⁸

It should not be overlooked, however, that one way of avoiding the ban on plural benefices introduced by Trent was to apply for a dispensation – either for several years, or for life – from the prohibition on holding separate benefices. Therefore, plural tenure of benefices did not become impossible, but required greater efforts.

As Andrzej Radzimiński has observed, the system of accumulating prebends, for all the scandal it occasioned, had important social consequences, for example by enabling royal chancery officials to acquire additional income.⁹ A royal privilege could free clergymen in royal service (and residing with the king) from the obligation of permanent residence in the cathedral city – capitular acts record such cases. Initially, canons looked quite favorably on their brethren who resided at the royal court instead of the vicinity of the cathedral. They particularly appreciated those who looked after the common interests of the chapter, and by the same token, the interests of the Church in Lithuania. The chapter was even capable of sending money, due to a clergyman from his benefice, “to Warsaw or wherever the court of His Majesty shall happily reside.”¹⁰ Nevertheless, *pace* Aleksander Stępkowski, after the Council of Trent the office of royal secretary did not in itself give any entitlement to accumulate benefices.¹¹ It must be acknowledged, of course, that royal

⁸ *Plebani caeterique beneficiati sint a nobis vel a praedecessoribus nostris instituit et teneantur nobis aut decanis ruralibus seu visitoribus nostris literas institutionis ostendere, Concilia Poloniae*, vol. 2, p. 134.

⁹ A. Radzimiński, “Społeczne funkcje prebend kanonickich w Polsce późniejszego średniowiecza”, in: *Homines et Societas. Księga Pamiątkowa Prof. A. Gąsiorowskiego*, Poznań, 1997, p. 322.

¹⁰ During the nineteenth century, Canon (later Dean) Mamert Herburt compiled a very detailed summary of the acts of the capitular sessions, translating from Latin into Polish. Extensive comparisons with the original acts of the chapter, preserved in the Wróblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (Lietuvos Mokslų Akademijos Vrublevskių Biblioteka, cited henceforth as LMAVB) have revealed the accuracy and reliability of Herburt’s registers, which are located in the Czartoryski Library in Kraków (3516). Cited here and henceforth as Herburt I, § 5-6, f. 197.

¹¹ A. Stępkowski, “Wawrzyniec Grzymała Goślicki: przyczynek do biografii”,

connections could help when applying for a dispensation. For example, King Stefan Batory and Queen Anna Jagiellonka sent a request to the pope that the newly nominated bishop of Chełm, Adam Pilichowski, a canon of Vilnius, be allowed to retain all his benefices on succeeding to the see.¹²

The basis for waiving the requirement of residence could be a situation, in which the income from the benefice in question did not suffice for decent maintenance. This was the argument used – appealing to a royal privilege – by the dean of Vilnius, Jan Wirbkowski, who on April 24, 1564 declared to the chapter, that “because of his slender provision and the smallness of his prestimonium, as well as the non-payment of his stipend for the year 1563, without the means of supporting himself, in order to carry out his duties, he does not consider himself obliged to reside constantly near the cathedral, according to his royal privilege.”¹³

Initially a royal privilege, and after Trent a papal dispensation could free a clergyman from the requirement of residence. This does not, however, alter the fact that the duties of the benefice had to be performed. Theoretically pastoral duties were carried out on behalf of non-resident clergymen by salaried vicars, but – as the records and bills reveal – in practice these duties fell upon colleagues from the chapter. Although they discharged the duties conscientiously, they were not always rewarded accordingly. For example, on May 12, 1568 a session of the Vilnius chapter discussed the matter of the procurator, Jan Makowiecki, who had been neglecting his duties because he had been occupied by royal business. So the canons decided, that they would distribute additional monies only among resident clergymen. This step was all the more justified, in that the clergymen, “have no consolation or *refectio* for the continual performance of duties for absent

in: *O senatorze doskonałym studia. Prace upamiętniające postać i twórczość Wawrzynca Goślickiego*, ed. A. Stępkowski, Warsaw, 2009, p. 22.

¹² *Propozycje konsystorialne w XVI wieku*, ed. H. Fokciński, Rome, 1994, no. 20, p. 79.

¹³ *Herburt I*, § 424, f. 171.

prelates and canons.”¹⁴ This far from unique example also bears witness to the fact, whatever may be alleged in the historiography, that even clergymen holding capitular offices (such as that of procurator) did not always reside close to the cathedral.¹⁵ This question is in itself a separate problem for research. Nevertheless, at this point I wish to attempt an answer to the question of the scale of the phenomenon.

Before embarking on that task, however, I wish to define the group of clergymen I have studied. In speaking of the Vilnan higher clergy I refer to members of the Vilnius cathedral chapter (prelates and canons) in the second half of the sixteenth century (75 clergymen, 32 prelates, 58 canons).¹⁶ Concentrating on this group is justified, because the prelates and canons of Vilnius were a consolidated group of clergymen, for whom we possess relatively complete, and internally comparable documentary sources. Nevertheless, for some clergymen we have only fragmentary knowledge, and so further research may yield more plural benefices. The figures quoted here are minimum, not maximum numbers of benefices.

That said, the current state of knowledge, especially regarding the lower clergy and the relations between the cathedral clergy and other churches and chapels remains unsatisfactory in many respects. Sometimes we have only fragmentary information, merely that a given clergyman possessed a benefice. So conclusions regarding the scale of the phenomenon will be based on the number of benefices acquired by the clergyman in question.

Efforts were made to deal with the problem of plural benefices by the means of suitable provisions of general law. There was permission

¹⁴ Herbut I, § 548, f. 179.

¹⁵ E. Wólkiewicz, *Kapituła kolegiacka św. Mikołaja w Otmuchowie. Dzieje-organizacja- skład osobowy (1386–1477)*, Opole, 2004, p. 217.

¹⁶ The basis of this article is the prosopographic material assembled in the appendix to my doctoral dissertation (in preparation) on the Vilnius cathedral chapter in the second half of the 16th century, as well as the following works: J. Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie w średniowieczu. Ustrój i uposażenie*, Poznań, 1972; G. Błaszczyk, *Diecezja żmudzka od XV do początku XVII wieku. Ustrój*, Poznań, 1993; V. Ališauskas, T. Jaszczolt, L. Jovaiša and M. Paknys, *Lietuvos katalikų dvasininkai XIV–XVI a.*, Vilnius, 2009.

to join simple benefices, including mansionries, rectorships of hospitals, altaries and chaplaincies with the exception of canonries – because this benefice (although counted as a simple benefice) required residence. However, the joining of so-called incompatible benefices, which, from the consideration that no one can perform the said duty, “if he abandons the sheep consigned to him”, required residence. Incompatible benefices included those linked to pastoral work – bishoprics, capitular prebends in cathedral and collegiate churches, prelatures, parishes, and permanent vicariates.¹⁷

In this period benefices were classified as compatible and incompatible, pastoral (*curata*) and simple; double (*duplicia*) and individual or simple (*simplicia*); with the duty of residence (*residentiam exigentia*) and without (*sine obligationis residentiae*); greater (*maiora*) and lesser (*minora*).¹⁸ The correct division, nomenclature and classification of benefices possessed by clergymen, as well as the establishment, as accurately as possible, of the dates of the beginning and end of their tenure, is of fundamental importance to research on the phenomenon of pluralism.

Moreover, in order to fill out and verify the results obtained, and to display the principal trends and the changes that occurred over the fifty years in question, I have divided the half-century into two twenty-five year sub-periods. Fully aware of the limitations and generalization implicit in such prosopographical conclusions, I nevertheless consider that there is a need to attempt at least a hypothesis, regarding the scale of the phenomenon of pluralism. This could serve comparisons with other chapters.

Among the chosen group of clergymen only five (7%): Izajasz (OP), Cyprian (OP), Ludwik Fulgineusz, Andrzej Jurgiewicz, Izaak Feuchtin, possessed only a single prebend. The remaining clergymen each accumulated from two to over a dozen prebends of various kinds – often holding them concurrently.

¹⁷ See B. Szady, “System beneficjalny w diecezji chełmskiej w latach 1600–1621”, *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, 45 (1997), no. 2, p. 39-43.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

When we compare the group of prelates with the canons, we note that all the Vilnius prelates had more than one benefice. All of the above clergymen who possessed only a single benefice were canons. Many Vilnan clergymen combined their canonry and/or prelature with a parish, altary or vicariate.¹⁹

My calculations indicate that the prelates and canons of Vilnius accumulated from two (7% of the group) to twenty (1%) benefices (parishes, altaries, vicariates and mansionries). Vilnan clergymen were most often possessors of benefices in the cathedral chapter of Kraków, with twelve documented cases (16%) (Piotr Arciechowski, Stanisław Fogelweder, Józef Jasiński, Maciej Kalecki, Maciej Kłodziński, Andrzej Patrycy Nidecki, Aleksander de Pessenti, Piotr z Poznania, Jan Przerębski, Zygmunt Rościszewski, Bartłomiej Sabiniusz, Jan Benedykt Solfa); almost as many held benefices in the cathedral chapter of Samogitia – 10 persons (13%) (Ambroży Bejnart, Stefan Grabia Jałbrzykowski, Maciej Kłodziński, Jerzy Pietkiewicz, Walerian Protasewicz, Piotr Roizjusz, Waclaw Wierzbicki, Wiktoryn Wierzbicki, Jan Wiewiórka, Jan Wirbkowski); while we find eight (11%) in the cathedral chapter of Łuck (Lutsk) (Jerzy Albin, Jan Domanowski, Wojciech Narbut, Stanisław Narkuski, Jan Pikarski, Walenty z Pilzna, Wiktoryn Wierzbicki, Wawrzyniec Wolski). Benefices in other chapters were much rarer.

Vilnan clergymen, like others in this period, gladly topped up their income as canons or prelates with revenues from parishes.²⁰ As stated earlier, only five of the seventy-five clergymen in question did not have another benefice. Twelve of them (16%) each had three benefices. Following them were clergymen who each had four or five benefices – taken together there were twenty such.

¹⁹ The table shows the scale of the problem.

²⁰ See S. Jujeczka, *Duchowni średniowiecznej Legnicy. Studium prozopograficzne nad klerem diecezjalnym*, Legnica, 2006, p. 96-97.

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TABLE 1

Number of benefices	Name	In sum	%
1	Izajasz (OP), Cyprian (OP), Ludwik Fulgineusz, Andrzej Jurgiewicz, Izaak Feuchtin	5	7
2	Jerzy Pietkiewicz, Benedykt Woyna, Jan Bulpat, Andrzej Taglia	4	5
3	Mikołaj Pac (†1585), Mikołaj Niemczynowicz, Szymon Krzywański, Mateusz Piskorzewski, Paweł Górnicki, Jan Kukrowicz, Mikołaj Dicus, Mikołaj Kostka, Jan Ryszkowski, Mikołaj Pac († 6 IX 1624), Jan Jussoila, Abraham Woyna	12	16
4	Jan Kunicki, Stefan Grabia Jałbrzykowski, Wojciech Grabowski, Jan Jarczewski, Mikołaj Kochanowski, Bartłomiej Niedźwiecki, Ambroży Bejnart, Stanisław Wilczopolski, Stanisław Szydłowski, Grzegorz Świącicki	10	13
5	Paweł Wiżeński, Bartłomiej z Kowna, Paweł Skaszewski, Jan Ostrowski, Marcei Suchodolski, Jerzy z Tyczyna, Stanisław Gorecki, Szymon z Brzezin, Melchior Giedroyc, Piotr Roizjusz	10	13
6	Walenty z Pilzna, Maciej Dobratycki, Wiktoryn Wierzbicki, Tomasz Makowiecki, Mikołaj Koryzna, Zygmunt Rościszewski, Jerzy Fabiusz	7	9
7	Wacław Wierzbicki, Wojciech Narbut, Stanisław Narkuski, Jan Wiewiórka, Jan Makowiecki, Maciej Kłodziński, Mikołaj Jasiński, Eustachy Wołłowicz	8	11
8	Jerzy Albin	1	1
9	Wacław Czyrka, Walerian Protasewicz, Wawrzyniec Wolski	3	4
10	Stanisław Dąbrówka	1	1
11	Aleksander de Pessentis, Piotr Arciechowski, Piotr z Poznania, Jan Pikarski,	4	5
12	Jan Domanowski, Bartłomiej Sabiniusz, Stanisław Fogelweder	3	4
13	Józef Jasiński, Adam Pilichowski, Jan Wirbkowski,	3	4
14	Jan Przerębski,	1	1
16	Jan Benedykt Solfa, Andrzej Patrycy Nidecki	2	3
20	Maciej Kalecki	1	1
Total	75	75	100

Using the data in Table 1, we can try to answer the question of how many prebends were possessed by Vilnan higher clergymen. In practice some of them held several benefices at once, but it was sometimes the case that the acquisition of a new benefice involved resignation from one that was already in the clergyman's possession. This procedure occurred more often when the canon or prelate was promoted within the chapter itself, than when he obtained another benefice in another diocese. In the case of the Vilnius chapter, in the third quarter of the sixteenth century several clergymen combined a canonry with a prelature. For example, Józef Jasiński was simultaneously archdeacon and canon until he died; likewise, Bartłomiej Sabiniusz was prepositus and canon. On the other hand, Paweł Skaszewski resigned from his supernumerary canonry of Vilnius on the day when he acquired a new benefice (October 27, 1562). On February 17, 1563 he was elected dean of Vilnius by his colleagues. He was installed one week later and resigned his canonry before April 2, 1563.

Throughout the entire half-century in question we can find real "prebend hunters" (*łowcy prebend*).²¹ The greatest number of prebends (of various kinds), both in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and in the Polish Crown, was held by Maciej z Małolina Kalecki. He retained some of them for life (his canonries of Vilnius and Pułtusk, the cantorship of Płock, the parish of Maków, and probably also the rectorship of Trakai). The list may lengthen in the light of new research.²² His colleague, Jan Benedykt Solfa, also retained many canonries until he died. In all he acquired fourteen benefices. We know that he retained his canonry of Vilnius and scholastery of Wrocław for life, and probably also kept his stalls in Kraków, as well as the office of prepositus in the chapter of Warmia. Bartłomiej Sabiniusz and Stanisław Fogelweder, received twelve benefices each, and of those Sabiniusz kept for life

²¹ A phrase introduced by Ewa Wólkiewicz, *Kapituła kolegiacka św. Mikołaja w Otmuchowie*, p. 214.

²² I make such optimistic assumptions on the basis of the best-known chapter – Vilnius. 61 per cent of clergymen retained benefices for life. The figure for other chapters in this period would probably be at least as high, especially in wealthiest chapters.

the following: the custodianship of the collegiate churches of Saint Giles and Saint Florian in Kraków, his canonry of Kraków cathedral, the archdeaconry of Lublin, his canonry of Vilnius, and the prelature of prepositus in the same cathedral, a canonry of Sandomierz, the archdeaconry of Łęczyca, and the parishes of Gumniska, Piotrowin, Stężyca and Rzejowice.

A comparison between the two sub-periods (1550–1575 and 1576–1600) reveals that both the number of clergymen accumulating benefices and the number of plurally held benefices fell over the course of the second half of the sixteenth century. During the third quarter of the century the average number of benefices acquired by Vilnan canons was eight. Maciej Kalecki had twenty, Andrzej Patrycy Nidecki and Jan Benedykt Solfa – sixteen each, Jan Przerębski had fourteen, and Stanisław Fogelweder had twelve. In contrast, the mean number of benefices for canons installed in the fourth quarter of the century was three. Mikołaj Jasiński acquired most – eight. Maciej Kłodziński and Eustachy Wołłowicz came next with seven.

A separate research problem is the plural tenure of benefices by bishops. Before their enthronement, they should have resigned all their benefices – including capitular benefices. In practice, however, clergymen who sought an episcopal miter frequently also applied for a papal dispensation, enabling them to retain their benefices – especially the most lucrative ones.

All of the thirty-two prelates of Vilnius cathedral in the second half of the sixteenth century had more than one benefice. This is illustrated by Table 2. Vilnan prelates accumulated from two (6%) to thirteen (3%) benefices. Six of the thirty-two (19%) held three benefices each; five of them (16%) each had five. The real “prebend hunter” proved Andrzej Patrycy Nidecki, who in total, although not concurrently, held sixteen prebends.

TABLE 2: PLURAL TENURE OF BENEFICES BY THE PRELATES OF VILNIUS

Number of benefices	Name	In sum	%
2	Benedykt Woyna, Andrzej Taglia	2	6
3	Mikołaj Pac (†1585) (x 2), Jan Kukrowicz, Mikołaj Dicus, Mikołaj Kostka, Jan Ryszkowski	6	19
4	Stefan Grabia Jałbrzykowski, Jan Jarczewski	2	6
5	Paweł Wiszeński, Paweł Skaszewski, Jerzy z Tyczyna, Szymon z Brzezin, Melchior Giedroyć, Piotr Roizjusz	6	19
6	Zygmunt Rościszewski	1	3
7	Stanisław Narkuski, Jan Makowiecki, Maciej Kłodziński, Mikołaj Jasiński, Eustachy Wołowicz (x 2)	6	19
8	Jerzy Albin	1	3
11	Piotr Arciechowski	1	3
12	Jan Domanowski, Bartłomiej Sabiniusz	2	6
13	Józef Jasiński	1	3
14	Jan Wirbkowski (x 2), Jan Przerębski	3	9
16	Andrzej Patrycy Nidecki	1	3
Total	32	32	100

When we turn our attention to the cathedral canons, we see that they possessed from one (9%) to twenty (2%) benefices. The greatest proportion (28%) held three or four benefices each. Seven clergymen (12%) each acquired five benefices.

TABLE 3: PLURAL TENURE OF BENEFICES BY THE CANONS OF VILNIUS

Number of benefices	Name	In sum	%
1	Izajasz (OP), Cyprian (OP), Ludwik Fulgineusz, Andrzej Jurgiewicz, Izaak Feuchtin (SJ)	5	9
2	Jerzy Pietkiewicz, Jan Bulpat	2	3
3	Mikołaj Niemczynowicz, Szymon Krzywański, Mateusz Piskorzewski, Paweł Górnicki, Mikołaj Dicus, Mikołaj Pac (†6 IX 1624), Jan Jussoila, Abraham Woyna	8	14

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4	Jan Kunicki, Wojciech Grabowski, Mikołaj Kochanowski, Bartłomiej Niedźwiecki, Ambroży Bejnart, Stanisław Wilczopolski, Stanisław Szydłowski, Grzegorz Świącicki	8	14
5	Bartłomiej z Kowna, Paweł Skaszewski (x2), Jan Ostrowski, Marcei Suchodolski, Stanisław Gorecki, Piotr Roizjusz	7	12
6	Walenty z Pilzna, Maciej Dobratycki, Wiktoryn Wierzbicki, Tomasz Makowiecki, Mikołaj Koryzna, Jerzy Fabiusz	6	10
7	Wacław Wierzbicki, Wojciech Narbut, Stanisław Narkuski, Jan Wiewiórka, Eustachy Wołowicz	5	9
9	Wacław Czyrka, Walerian Protasewicz, Wawrzyniec Wolski	3	5
10	Stanisław Dąbrówka	1	2
11	Aleksander de Pessentis, Piotr Arciechowski, Jan Pikarski	3	5
12	Jan Domanowski, Bartłomiej Sabiniusz, Stanisław Fogelweder	3	5
13	Józef Jasiński, Adam Pilichowski, Jan Wirbkowski	3	5
14	Jan Przerębski	1	2
16	Jan Benedykt Solfa	1	2
20	Maciej Kalecki	1	2
Total	58	58	100

Among the pluralist canons, we can observe significant differences – between those who held two benefices, and those who acquired a dozen or more. Among the canons – and the chapter as a whole – the record holder was Maciej Kalecki z Małolina, with twenty. Besides the benefices he retained for life, mentioned earlier, on November 17, 1531 he resigned his canonry of Sącz, and on September 3, 1544 gave up his canonry in Kraków's collegiate church. And in 1548 he exchanged his parish of Nur for the parish of Maków. The fact that we do not know how long he held his other benefices allows us to conclude that the list of benefices he held for life was in reality rather longer.

Having examined both prelates and canons separately, we can see that both groups were keen to accumulate benefices. Among the canons who held stalls in the second half of the sixteenth century, 40% of the canons held three, four or five benefices. But more than half of the prelates (eighteen out of thirty-two, or 56%) acquired three, five

or seven benefices. In all, 91% of the canons and 100% of the prelates possessed some benefice besides their cathedral prebend – 93% of the members of the chapter, when counted together.

When we ask where Vilnan higher clergymen held their additional benefices, we can state that most were in the metropolitan province of Gniezno – to which the diocese of Vilnius belonged. The available primary sources and the secondary literature inform us that Vilnan prelates and canons passed through – and often remained in – the cathedral and collegiate chapters of Chełm, Frombork, Głogów, Gniezno, Kalisz, Kamieniec, Kielce, Kraków, Kruszwica, Lublin, Łęczyca, Łowicz, Łuck, Sącz, Samogitia, Skalbmierz, Środa, Płock, Poznań, Przemyśl, Pułtusk, Sandomierz, Sieradz, Warsaw, Wiślica, Wojnicz, Wołborz and Wrocław. We know too, that Jerzy Fabius was until his death archdeacon of Kolozsvar (Cluj Napoca), canon of Loreto, and very generally, that he was a canon *ecclesiae Transsilvaniae*. Three years after becoming abbot of Sulejów, he resigned his canonry of Vilnius. Further north, Jan Jussoila was vicar and provost of Parnawa (Pärnu).

The prelates and canons of Vilnius also joined their capitular benefices with numerous so-called minor benefices, such as parishes, altaries, vicarships, mansionries and such like. Of these seventy-five clergymen, forty of them (53%) began their careers in a lesser benefice, such as a parish or an altar, and only later acquired a benefice within the Vilnius chapter.

For thirteen of our seventy-five clergymen (17%), their first benefice was in a chapter other than that of Vilnius. This was the case for Aleksander de Pessentis, whose first benefice was the deanship of Przemyśl with a prebend in Kraków cathedral; Stefan Grabia Jałbrzykowski, whose began with a canonry of Samogitia; Maciej Kalecki, who started with a canonry of Sącz (*fundi Niskowa*); Bartłomiej Sabiniusz, whose first prebend was the custodianship in the collegiate church of St. Giles in Kraków, Jan Przerębski, who was first installed as canon of Kruszwica; Jerzy Pietkiewicz, whose first benefice was in the cathedral at Miedniki; Jan Ostrowski, who commenced his clerical career as canon of the collegiate church of Wołborz; Andrzej Patrycy Nidecki, who like Przerębski began with a canonry of Kruszwica; Stanisław

Fogelweder, who first held a canonry of Płock; Szymon Krzywański, whose first benefice was a canonry of Kamieniec; Jerzy Fabius who started as archdeacon of Kolozsvár; Maciej Kłodziński – archdeacon of Samogitia; and Zygmunt Rościszewski – canon of Chełm.

My research shows that twenty-two clergymen (29%) began their clerical career with a canonry or prelatry of Vilnius cathedral (as in the cases of Bartłomiej z Kowna, Mikołaj Pac (†1585), Wojciech Grabowski, Izajasz (OP), Tomasz Makowiecki, Marcelli Suchodolski, Szymon z Brzezin, Benedykt Woyna, Mateusz Piskorzewski, Cyprian (OP), Ludwik Fulgineusz, Paweł Górnicki, Jan Bulpat, Mikołaj Dicius, Mikołaj Kostka, Andrzej Jurgiewicz, Andrzej Taglia, Izaak Feuchtin, Grzegorz Święcicki, Jan Jussoila, Abraham Woyna, Mikołaj Jasiński). However, doubts regarding this figure arise when we consider that in other cathedral chapters, the acquisition of a prebend was usually preceded by a period working in a collegiate church, or a parish. So as research proceeds, this figure may well be diminished.

Clergymen also accumulated benefices within the Vilnius cathedral chapter. My calculations indicate that as many as fourteen (19%) acquired a second benefice within the chapter, as shown in Table 4. The question of whether this should always be viewed as a promotion remains open.

TABLE 4: PROMOTIONS WITHIN THE VILNIUS CATHEDRAL CHAPTER

Dignity	name
prepositus	Jan Domanowski: May 17, 1529 – November 28, 1555 (resigned)
canon	Jan Domanowski: November 26, 1548 – †
canon (by grace)	Jan Kunicki: October 1, 1527 – July 11, 1529 (r.)
canon	Jan Kunicki: July 11, 1529 – †
archdeacon	Józef Jasiński: before June 6, 1536 – †
canon	Józef Jasiński: December 6, 1555 – †
canon	Walerian Protasewicz: August 4, 1537 – before September 28, 1555 (r.)
dean	Walerian Protasewicz: 1544/45 – April 16, 1547 (r.)
canon	Jan Wirbkowski: before November 10, 1548 – †
dean	Jan Wirbkowski: July 1, 1558 – June 23, 1561 (r.)

dean	Jan Wirbkowski: October 20, 1562 (dean of Vilnius, not installed); on February 16, 1563 he officially rejected the election
dean	Mikołaj Pac (†1585): before March 12, 1549 – before June 10, 1558 (r.)
prepositus	Mikołaj Pac (†1585): before February 25, 1561 – February 12, 1582 (deposed)
canon	Stanisław Narkuski: before September 5, 1550 – before May 31, 1560 (r.)
archdeacon	Stanisław Narkuski: May 15, 1560 – at least until June 21, 1564 (r.)
canon	Bartłomiej Sabiniusz: before 1551 – †
prepositus	Bartłomiej Sabiniusz: November 28, 1555 – †
canon	Piotr Arciechowski: before February 21, 1556 – †
dean	Piotr Arciechowski: July 28, 1561 – †
prepositus	Jan Przerębski: August 29, 1556 – May 13, 1558 (r.)
canon	Jan Przerębski: August 29, 1556 – May 13, 1558 (r.)
canon (by grace)	Paweł Skaszewski: December 19, 1559 – October 27, 1562 (r.)
canon	Paweł Skaszewski: December 27, 1562 – before April 2, 1563 (r.)
dean	Paweł Skaszewski: February 24, 1563 – †
canon	Piotr Roizjusz: October 23, 1567 – before August 23, 1569 (r.)
custodian	Piotr Roizjusz: August 26, 1569 – †
canon	Mikołaj Dicius: November 28, 1586 – May 24, 1596 (r.)
dean	Mikołaj Dicius: June 11, 1596 – †
canon	Eustachy Wołłowicz: November 12, 1592 – before July 19, 1597 (r.)
cantor	Eustachy Wołłowicz: July 19, 1597 – before December 12, 1600 (r.)
custodian	Eustachy Wołłowicz: December 5, 1600 – ?

We can see that initially, that is until the 1560s, clergymen who acquired a second benefice within the Vilnius chapter retained their first one. The exception was Mikołaj Pac (†1585). In the later period all the clergymen resigned their existing benefice before taking possession of their new one.

The existing historiography tends to associate the acquisition of a new benefice and resignation from an earlier one with promotion. It is certainly the case that most of the clergymen in Table 4 moved to a benefice that ranked higher. It might be supposed that this was linked to higher income. However, doubts are raised by the case of Jan Wirbkowski, who began his career in the Vilnius chapter as a canon. He was elected dean in 1558, and remained in that office until June 23,

1561. He again performed the duties of dean towards the end of 1563, but he was never installed. On February 16, 1563 he officially refused to accept the office. From the sources it transpires that the reason for his refusal was the slender provision attached to the deanship. So the income from this prelature must have been lower than that from his ordinary canonry, given that he resigned from the former in order to remain a canon of Vilnius for the rest of his life.

The consequence of plural tenure of benefices (in different locations) was the impossibility of fulfilling the duty of residence. That in turn led to the neglect of other duties. Only a canon or prelate in residence could take part in Divine worship or in meetings of the chapter.²³ According to my calculations attendance at general sessions varied between three to six canons in the winter, two to seven in the spring, and one to eight in the autumn.

On the basis of the protocols of the capitular sessions three groups of clergymen have been distinguished. The first are non-residents, or occasional residents. These made up about 52% of the total. Then there were temporary residents – about 18%, and residents – about 30%.

Therefore, the cathedral chapter of Vilnius, like other chapters in this period,²⁴ was affected by the problem of non-residence. This means that some members of the chapter had a fairly loose association with their corporation, which, on the face of it, negatively affected its functioning. Without doubt this is the first conclusion that comes to mind. Nevertheless, the available source material indicates that the canons and prelates who remained in residence did not lament the absence of their fellow-clergymen. Instead they rubbed their hands gleefully, when it came to the division of capitular income.

Prelates and canons in residence alike had the right to so-called foundation money, whose maximum annual amount was set at 20 Lithuanian schocks. *Refectioes*, on the other hand, was paid every

²³ S. Librowski, *Kapituła katedralna wrocławska*, Warsaw, 1949, p. 55.

²⁴ For example, in the 16th-century cathedral chapter of Wrocław, 84 of the 280 canons (29%) were permanent residents, 47 (17%) were temporary residents and 159 (57%) were non-residents, G. Zimmermann, *Das Breslauer Domkapitel im Zeitalter der Reformation und Gegenreformation (1500–1600)*, Weimar, 1938, p. 149.

week. The weekly system of payment was supposed to incline (or force) clergymen to reside more conscientiously, and so to heal the “faltering Divine service in the cathedral”. This is hinted at by the forty-second decree of the capitular statute “De refectiōibus et quotidianis distributionibus dandis.”²⁵ The decree “about daily *refectiōes* and distributions” indicates that the capitular procurator was to pay every canon who said or sang Mass, or was present at Mass, two Lithuanian *grosze* daily.

The weekly quota of money paid out to individual canons increased when fewer clergymen were in residence. Moreover, it increased along with the increase in the total amount available for distribution. Perhaps it was for this reason that clergymen in residence often condoned the absence of their colleagues.

For example, in the week before October 29, 1580, only the cantor resided for all seven days, while two canons, Tomasz Makowiecki and Marcelli Suchodolski, spent only one day of the week in residence. So the cantor obtained a *refectiōes* of three schocks and fifteen Lithuanian *grosze*, as well as fourteen *grosze* for bread.²⁶ The two canons mentioned were given “*pro uno diebus*” a *refectiōes* of 15 Lithuanian *grosze* and 2 *grosze* for bread.²⁷

We note that those clergymen who accumulated the most benefices (both among the prelates, and among the canons) were closely associated with the royal court. This group also tended to be the best educated. These clergymen were usually among the group of “non-residents” or “temporary residents”. This does not mean, however, that they exercised little influence on the fortunes of the corporation or the diocese. Undoubtedly, although this is more difficult to show from capitular sources – the non-residents had the opportunity to represent the interests of the chapter at the royal court or the tribunals – supreme courts of appeal – of Lithuania and Poland. By the same token, they could represent royal interests in the chapter.

²⁵ LMAVB, F43-155, f. 20-20v.

²⁶ LMAVB, F43-453, f. 6.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

On the basis of my research into the clergymen present at capitular sessions, it is however possible to identify those prelates and canons who – together with the bishop – had an influence on the life of the diocese through their work within it. Those who accumulated significantly fewer benefices could more easily reside in the diocesan capital permanently, or do so with shorter and less frequent interruptions. As a result, they were in a position to influence the choices made by the chapter.

In the last quarter of the sixteenth century we note a certain decline in the phenomenon of the plural tenure of benefices by the higher clergy of Vilnius. The question of the extent to which the fall-off in pluralism resulted from the implementation of the Tridentine decrees remains without a full answer. Towards the end of the century fewer members of the Vilnius chapter were associated with the royal court – and so with the patron who most influenced the assignment of benefices in the chapter – than half a century earlier.