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THE PRELATES AND CANONS OF VILNIUS IN THE
SECOND HALF OF THE 16TH CENTURY:
A PROSOPOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF SELECTED
QUESTIONS*

Chapters – autonomous corporations with their own legal status, statutes and often substantial property, established for the solemn service of God in cathedral and collegiate churches, aiding bishops with counsel and consent in the administration of their dioceses *sede plena*, and administering the dioceses *sede vacante*¹ – are considered institutions which in the late middle ages gathered and simultaneously shaped economic, political and intellectual elites². It is certainly the case that medieval and early modern chapters played significant ecclesiastical and secular roles. Prelates and canons were closely connected with royal, princely, episcopal and magnate courts. The higher clergy, as capitular prelates and canons are called in the literature, often fulfilled important functions and played leading roles at monarchical courts. Many of the clergymen under consideration served at the Polish-Lithuanian court in chancery or diplomacy. By the same they influenced the state. The Vilnius chapter can be called the first ecclesiastical corporation in

* The current text is a distillation of the ninth chapter of my doctoral dissertation *Wileńska kapituła katedralna w II połowie XVI wieku*, Poznań: Adam Mickiewicz University, 2011, p. 711. The material assembled in the fourth appendix of the thesis is subjected to prosopographical analysis. I wish to thank my husband, Dr Richard Butterwick-Pawlikowski, for his suggestions how to improve the text.

¹ Wojciech Góralski, “Kapituła”, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 8, Lublin: TNKUL, 2000, p. 667–670.

² Jerzy Kłoczowski, “Kler katolicki w Polsce średniowiecznej: problem pochodzenia i drog awansu”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 87 (1981), nr. 4, p. 924.

the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which was joined by union with the Kingdom or Crown of Poland. Many of its members – as it transpires – were simultaneously canons or prelates of chapters in the Polish Crown.

Part of the clergy attached to Vilnius Cathedral undoubtedly represented significant intellectual potential, as demonstrated by their scholarship and other extra-ecclesiastical activities³. Nevertheless some clergymen were more and others less talented, assiduous, zealous, exemplary etc. Thus even were we to count all them among the elite of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Crown, they remain a strongly differentiated group. Only some of them constituted the intellectual élite of Lithuania, contrary to the assumption made more than forty years ago by Jerzy Ochmański, and repeated by the historiography⁴. Only the latest research in this question has shown that by itself the formal membership of a given institution proves nothing in this respect, especially in the case of clergymen who accumulated benefices.

In order to explain more fully the working of the Vilnius Cathedral Chapter it is essential to try to characterize the people who constituted the institution. These were the prelates and canons, who formed a clearly identifiable group, for whom we possess reasonably complete and comparable sources. This attempt can be made using a prosopographical approach. Prosopography, or collective biography, already has its own traditions as a research method⁵. This prosopographical study of the

³ Cf. Wioletta Pawlikowska-Butterwick, “Księgozbiór biblioteki katedralnej w Wilnie z końca XVI wieku”, *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*, 56 (2012), p. 162–191.

⁴ According to Jerzy Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie w średniowieczu. Ustrój i uposażenie*, Poznań: VAM, 1972, p. 50, “it can be said of the Vilnius chapter that both in the 15th century and in the era of humanism it constituted the intellectual élite of Lithuania[...]”.

⁵ Andrzej Radziwiński, “Od katalogu duchownych do komputerowej ‘kolektywnej biografii’. Uwagi o dawnych i współczesnych kierunkach i tendencjach w badaniach średniowiecznych i nowożytnych kapituł katedralnych w historiografii niemieckiej”, *Roczniki Historyczne*, 60 (1994), p. 173–184. *The Use of Computers in Developing Prosopographical Methodology*, ed. Katharine S. B. Keats-Rohan, Oxford: Linacre College for prosopographical research, 2002. Wojciech Tygielski, *Z Rzymu do Rzeczypospolitej: studia z dziejów nuncjatury apostolskiej w Polsce XVI–XVII w.*, Warszawa: Wyd. Fundacji “Historia pro Futuro”, 1992, p. 82–105.

Vilnius chapter seeks to apply the postulates for such research published by Antoni Gašiorowski⁶ and Andrzej Radzimiński⁷, within the limits of the material.

Knowledge of the people who constituted the chapter can help both to characterize the entire group and to interpret the available sources. This prosopographical study may stimulate further research on the religious, cultural, economic and political life of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish Crown in this crucial period. During the second half of the sixteenth century fundamental changes occurred in the life of both Church and state, including the codification of the laws of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the establishment of the Vilnius Academy and the Lithuanian Tribunal, and the conclusion of the Unions of Lublin and Brest. The sixteenth century saw the beginning of a long process of reform within the Catholic Church, whose chief impulse came from the General Council held at Trent between 1545 and 1563. The impact of these reforms came to be felt in both the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish Crown. The young Commonwealth of the Two Nations had to find means not only peaceful co-existence between those who differed in faith, but also solutions for older problems between clergy and laity.

The biographical information assembled here comes to a significant degree from the manuscript records of the Vilnius chapter. The clergymen under consideration were active in various ecclesiastical and secular structures (primarily at episcopal, magnate and royal courts), and so are mentioned quite frequently in the literature and in compendia. The secondary sources are of rather uneven quality; the most useful, because they contain much factual information and references to the primary sources, proved the studies of Jerzy Ochmański and Grzegorz Błaszczak

⁶ Antoni Gašiorowski, "Katalogi członków średniowiecznych kapituł Wielkopolski", in: *Ecclesia Posnaniensis. Opuscula Mariano Banaszak septuagenario dedicata*, Poznań: UAM WT, 1998, p. 55–64.

⁷ Andrzej Radzimiński, "W sprawie opracowania katalogów (spisów) prałatów i kanoników kapituł katedralnych w Polsce średniowiecznej", in: *Christianitas et cultura Europae. Księga jubileuszowa Profesora Jerzego Kłoczowskiego*, ed. Henryk Gąpski, vol. 1, Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 1998, p. 133–136.

and the recently published catalogue of Lithuanian clergymen⁸. It should be added that more than a dozen prelates and canons are the subjects of entries – again of uneven quality – in the Polish Biographical Dictionary (*Polski Słownik Biograficzny*). Despite doubts as to the verity of some information, the assembled data permits an initial attempt at a collective biography of the Vilnan prelates and canons. The dimensions of the present article allow me to address only some of the most important questions concerning the early modern Catholic clergy.

During the second half of the sixteenth century a total of 75 persons possessed a Vilnan capitular benefice. Naturally the members of the chapter changed over time, but at any one moment it contained a maximum of six prelates and 12 ordinary canons, as well as a few supernumerary canons. The number of persons fluctuated slightly for a variety of reasons. The most important of these was the accumulation of benefices within the chapter itself. During the second half of the sixteenth century 32 persons held prelatures. Six of these clergymen were in simultaneous possession of a prelatore and canonry for some length of time⁹.

The second reason is the frequency of vacancies and changes in personnel. During the years selected for a ‘snapshot’ of the chapter, all of the persons who in the course of that year sat in the chapter are counted. For example in 1575, both the old dean – Paweł Skaszewski – and his successor – Jan Jarczewski – count towards the total number¹⁰. The question of promotions within the chapter is best illustrated by

⁸ In addition to my doctoral dissertation, I have drawn on material contained in the following works: Jerzy Ochmański, *op. cit.*; Grzegorz Błaszczyk, *Diecezja żmudzka od XV do początku XVII wieku. Ustrój*, Poznań: UAM, 1993; Vytautas Ališauskas, Tomasz Jaszczolt, Liudas Jovaiša and Mindaugas Paknys, *Lietuvos katalikų dvasininkai XIV–XVI a.*, (Bažnyčios istorijos studijos, vol. 2) Vilnius: Aidai, 2009.

⁹ See Wioletta Pawlikowska, “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”, in: *Church History Between Rome and Vilnius: Challenges to Christianity from Early Modern Ages to the 20th Century*, ed. Arūnas Streikus, (Bažnyčios istorijos studijos, vol. 4), Vilnius: LKMA, 2011, p. 37–56.

¹⁰ Skaszewski died before 7 October 1575, and Jarczewski was installed on 19 October 1575.

Skaszewski. He acquired a supernumerary canonry in 1559, which he exchanged for an ordinary canonry on 27 October 1562. Twenty days earlier, he had been recorded as a 'future canon'. He resigned his canon's stall before 2 April 1563, but earlier, on 17 February 1563 he was elected as dean of Vilnius.

THE AGE OF THE PRELATES AND CANONS
AND THE DURATION OF THEIR PREBENDS

We possess no direct information about the dates of birth (to within a year) of more than half of the Vilnan prelates and canons in the second half of the sixteenth century. The question of their age at the moment at which they acquired their capitular prebends therefore requires a precise explanation of the basis on which I have estimated their ages. It is possible to suggest the most likely date of birth if the course of the clergyman's career or the year of his matriculation at university is known.

The matricular date may indicate that the person in question was about 15 years old; the minimum age for the acquisition of a cathedral prebend was 14 years¹¹. The synod of the ecclesiastical province of Gniezno, held at Łowicz in 1556, forbade the installation of 'children', but such a ban testifies to the occurrence of the phenomenon earlier¹². The situation changed somewhat when the process of implementing the Tridentine decrees began. Henceforth no one who had not at least 25 years old could be entrusted with a *cura animarum*. For other dignities

¹¹ Andrzej Radziwiński, "Problemy metodyczne w badaniach duchowieństwa kapitulnego w Polsce średniowiecznej", in: *Duchowieństwo kapitulne w Polsce średniowiecznej i wczesnonowoczesnej. Studia nad pochodzeniem i funkcjonowaniem elity kościelnej*, ed. A. Radziwiński, Toruń: Wyd Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2000, p. 169. Elsewhere A. Radziwiński, (*Prałaci i kanonicy kapituły katedralnej płockiej w XIV i I poł. XV w. Studium prozopograficzne*, vol. 1: *Prałaci*, Toruń: Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika, 1991, p. 28–29), states that a condition for receiving a first benefice was reaching the age of 16 years.

¹² Bolesław Ulanowski, *Materiały do historii ustawodawstwa synodalnego w Polsce w XVI w.* (Archiwum Komisji Prawniczej Akademii Umiejętności, vol. 1), Kraków, 1895, p. 434.

and offices, to which pastoral responsibilities were not attached, the minimum age would be 22 years¹³. On the basis of these assumptions I have established an approximate date of birth for 35 persons. However, I have not been able to establish even the approximate dates of birth of three clergymen – 4 % of the total number for the second half of the sixteenth century. If a clergymen belonged to the Vilnius chapter for only a few years, and we do not have other information on the course of his career, then it is not possible to estimate his age.

In the light of my research the youngest members of the Vilnius chapter at the time of entry were Jan Jarczewski, Mikołaj Niemczynowicz and Szymon of Brzeziny. Each of them was 14 years old (or a little older). The oldest was Petrus Roysius (Pedro Ruiz de Moros / Piotr Roizjusz / Petras Roizijus), who acquired his benefice at the age of 62 years. These were not typical cases. The average mean age at the moment of installation was about 34 years. Most were installed between 21 and 30 years of age – 23 persons (31 %) and between 31 and 40 years of age – again, 23 persons (31 %). 11 persons (14 %) entered the chapter between 41 and 50 years of age.

It has been possible to establish the duration of prebends for 74 out of the 75 persons who were members of the Vilnius chapter in the second half of the sixteenth century. Each prebend has been counted separately, so, for example, a canon who was subsequently promoted to a junior prelature (such as the custodianship) and then to a senior one (such as the deanship) would figure three times. Taking all the clergymen and all their prebends into consideration, the average mean duration of a prebend was 17 years. The briefest tenure was that of Mikołaj Kochanowski († before 15 August 1577), who held his benefice for about four and a half months. The longest tenure was enjoyed by Alessandro de Pessenti, who kept his stall for 45 years.

Summing up, the 'average' prebendary acquired his first Vilnan capitular benefice when he was 34 years old, while the average length of tenure (for all stalls) was 17 years.

¹³ *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych*, vol. 4: 1511–1870, ed. Arkadiusz Baron and Henryk Pietras, Kraków: WAM, 2004, p. 750–755.

THE VACATING OF PRELATURES AND CANONRIES

Except for deaths, in most cases we can only make an informed guess about the reasons for the vacating of capitular stalls. Only very rarely did clergymen give the reasons for their resignation *expressis verbis*. It has been possible to state the reason for vacating prebends with a least a fair degree of probability for 73 out of the 75 clergymen in question (97 %).

The most common reasons in this period for vacating prelatures and canonries were:

- death: 46 persons (61 %);
- promotion within the chapter: 5 persons (7 %);
- promotion to the episcopate: 11 persons (15 %);
- voluntary resignation: 8 persons (11 %);
- involuntary resignation: 3 persons (4 %);
- unknown: 2 persons (3 %).

The problem of taking possession of new benefices is linked to the questions of plural benefices and/or resignation from previously acquired benefices.

On the basis of the available sources I conclude that 11 clergymen resigned from their Vilnan canonry or prelature when or after they became bishops. However, promotion to the episcopate did not always result in resignation from the Vilnius chapter. Walerian Protasewicz-Szuszkowski kept his canonry of Vilnius while serving as Bishop of Lutsk (Łuck)¹⁴. The Bishop of Samogitia, Waclaw Wierzbicki, resigned his canonry of Vilnius only shortly before his death (†18 July 1555¹⁵). Moreover, to the end of his life he was simultaneously Bishop-Ordinary and Archdeacon of Samogitia.

Mikołaj Pac resigned from the deanship of Vilnius before 10 June 1558¹⁶, shortly after his nomination as bishop of Kiev (Kyiv) in

¹⁴ Mamert Herburt, *Wypisy z Aktów czyli dziejów kapituły katedry wileńskiej z siedmiu pierwszych tomów od 1501 – do 1600 r.*, Biblioteka Czartoryskich, Kraków, MS 3516 (hereafter – *Herburt*), § 307, fol. 122.

¹⁵ Grzegorz Błaszczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 56, no. 15.

¹⁶ *Acta Capituli Vilnensis*, constitute Fondas 43, no. 210/1–216 of the manuscript collection of the Lietuvos Mokslų Akademijos Vrublevskių biblioteka, Vilnius (hereafter – ACV), vol. 3, fol. 200v.

1557¹⁷. He was later installed as provost of Vilnius (before 25 February 1561)¹⁸, but 12 February 1582 removed from his stall by the bishop, Cardinal Jerzy Radziwiłł (Jurgis Radvila) (chiefly because of Pac's sympathies for the Protestant Reformation)¹⁹. He remained nominated bishop of Kiev, unconfirmed by the Holy See, until the end of his life.

Piotr Arciechowski, who was both canon and Dean of Vilnius at the time of his nomination as Bishop of Kamaner's (Kamieniec), died 1 September 1562²⁰, before he could be confirmed as bishop or resign his Vilnan prebends. Andrzej Patrycy Nidecki, Bishop of Wenden, kept his archideaconry of Vilnius until his death in 2 January 1587²¹.

The decrees of the Council of Trent regarding the joining of prebends with bishoprics, as in the question of plural benefices, were unambiguous. As they began to be implemented, the occurrence of pluralism was restricted. According to the Tridentine decrees, only a bishop-ordinary – as the delegate of the Holy See – could decide on whether a clergyman could keep a benefice received 'in the last forty years'.

The provincial synod of Gniezno reacted relatively swiftly to the decrees. As early as 1577 it took the position that bishops should be exempted from the prohibition. Rome proved accommodating – apostolic nuncios were empowered to grant dispensations in this regard. In practice little changed, as monarchs could still, via bishops (who were usually associated with the royal court), reward their ecclesiastical supporters with benefices. This type of procedure is illustrated by the

¹⁷ Krzysztof Rafał Prokop, *Biskupi kijowscy obrządku łacińskiego XIV–XVIII w. Szkice biograficzne*, Biały Dunajec-Ostróg: Wołanie z Wołynia, 2003, p. 45–52.

¹⁸ ACV 4, fol. 7v–8.

¹⁹ ACV 6, p. 351–353; Herburt, § 267, fol. 265. See also Hieronim Eugeniusz Wyczawski, "Pac Mikołaj", *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (hereafter – PSB), vol. 24, Wrocław: Wyd. Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1979, p. 737.

²⁰ "Dziennik biskupa Piotra Myszkowskiego 1555–1568", ed. Łukasz Kurdybacha, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, vol. 47 (1933), no. 1, p. 460.

²¹ Leszek Hajdukiewicz, "Nidecki Patrycy Andrzej", *PSB*, vol. 22, Wrocław: Wyd. Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1977, p. 713–717; *Propozycje konsytorialne w XVI w.*, ed. Hieronim Fokciński, Roma: Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Ecclesiarum, 1994, p. 100–102, no. 31.

following example, preserved in correspondence. On 4 December 1577 King Stephen Báthory asked Pope Gregory XIII to permit Adam Pilichowski to keep all his existing benefices after becoming bishop of Chełm (which was a poorly endowed see). The Queen, Anna Jagiellonka, asked the Pope for the same favour. A few years later the King repeated the request. Royal support was conditional, however, on Pilichowski's exchanging benefices in the Warsaw chapter with Nidecki (see below). Pilichowski himself wrote in his own cause to Cardinal Giovanni Francesco Commendone²². Stephen Báthory also wrote to Gregory XIII on behalf of Nidecki. On 13 October 1584 he asked the Pope to permit Nidecki to keep all his existing benefices²³, and on 13 March 1585 his request was seconded by Queen Anna²⁴. The previous day (12 March 1585) Nidecki wrote a request of his own to the Pope²⁵. As a result of these efforts Nidecki obtained a dispensation allowing him to keep benefices that were not intrinsically joined together²⁶.

For many clergymen elevation to the episcopacy was an undoubted promotion. Entry into the senate of the Commonwealth opened new possibilities of public activity. But alongside new rights and privileges, it also entailed new duties²⁷. Skills acquired during work in the royal chancelleries and/or cathedral and collegiate chapters prepared them for the role, and often helped them to achieve their senatorial chair.

Among the 75 clergymen under consideration, 11 became bishops. All of them had earlier held a secretarial or other position at the royal court. According to Alicja Dybkowska, promotion to the office of referendary or grand secretary, or above all vice-chancellor, was proof

²² *Propozycje konsytorialne w XVI wieku*, p. 79, no. 20, footnote 5.

²³ *Annales ecclesiastici quos post Caesarem SRE cardinalem Baronium*, ed. A. Theiner, vol. 3, Romae: ex typographia Tiberina, 1856, p. 579–580, no. 76.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 628–629, no. 10.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 628, no. 10.

²⁶ *Propozycje konsytorialne w XVI wieku*, p. 100, no. 31, footnote 3.

²⁷ Alicja Dybkowska, "O powoływaniu biskupów za panowania Zygmunta Augusta", in: *Między monarchią a demokracją. Studia z dziejów Polski XV–XVIII wieku*, ed. Anna Sucheni-Grabowska and Małgorzata Żaryn, Warszawa: Wyd. Sejmowe, 1994, p. 117.

of the monarch's trust and heralded further honours²⁸. One of the clergymen in question – Piotr Arciechowski – was promoted from referendary. Jan Przerębski was elevated from the vice-chancellorship of the Crown to the archbishopric of Gniezno.

Jan Dziegielewski's research has revealed that 70 per cent of Polish and Lithuanian bishops-ordinary in the years 1587–1648 had been active at the (broadly understood) royal court and the central offices of the Crown and Grand Duchy before receiving their first episcopal see²⁹. All the bishops-ordinary of Vilnius and almost all the prelates and canons of Vilnius, who were promoted to that or another bishopric, were associated with the royal court previous to their elevation.

That said, it is much more difficult to decide which of these bishops-elect received their nomination primarily because of their ecclesiastical service, and which of them were promoted chiefly as a result of their broadly understood extra-ecclesial activity. Dziegielewski has tried to answer this question. He estimates that between 1587 and 1648 only six bishops (just over 8 per cent of the total), received their mitres because of their pastoral service. Among them he includes the Custodian of Vilnius, Melchior Giedroyć (Merkelis Giedraitis)³⁰. However, Giedroyć had earlier been a royal secretary to King Sigismund Augustus, although according to Grzegorz Błaszczyk this service was 'probably only an episode in his life'³¹. He was moreover engaged in political activity. For example in 1569 he was an envoy from the palatinate of Vilnius and a signatory of the Polish-Lithuanian Act of Union concluded in Lublin³².

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 129. Nb. in the Polish Crown the vice-chancellorship and chancellorship were held alternately by a clergyman and a layman, but the equivalent offices in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were held only by laymen.

²⁹ Jan Dziegielewski, "Biskupi rzymskokatoliccy końca XVI – pierwszej połowy XVII w. i ich udział w kształtowaniu stosunków wyznaniowych w Rzeczypospolitej", in: *Między monarchią a demokracją...*, p. 197.

³⁰ Jan Dziegielewski, *op. cit.*, p. 198–199.

³¹ Grzegorz Błaszczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

³² *Akta unji Polski z Litwą. 1385–1791*, ed. Stanisław Kutrzeba and Władysław Semkowicz, Kraków: Nakładem Polskiej Akademji Umiejętności i Towarzystwa Naukowego Warszawskiego, 1932. See Grzegorz Błaszczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

We can therefore legitimately ask whether he did in fact become a bishop because of his pastoral work and service in the diocese of Vilnius. Whatever the reasons for his promotion, it remains the case that, once Melchior Giedroyc had become Bishop of Samogitia, he won a lasting reputation among historians as an exemplary pastor to his flock³³. Nevertheless, according to Dziegielewski, the most important factors in episcopal promotions were: services to the state and the dynasty, social status (birth and wealth), and to a significantly lesser degree, service to the Church³⁴. In addition, the web of family and social connections exercised a considerable influence on episcopal nominations.

Three clergymen were removed involuntarily from their benefices, in circumstances that are not always clear³⁵. The examples from the Vilnius chapter testify expressively that if the corporation was determined and convinced of the correctness of its decision, it could deprive a clergyman of his benefice, while obliging all members of the chapter to keep silent. However, things were not so easy in the case of a bishop, even a mere nominee, such as Mikołaj Pac³⁶.

Cases of translation from one bishopric to another are also noteworthy. It seems that quite apart from questions of prestige, one of the principal motives was the desire for a better endowed, more lucrative see. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, the most attractive bishoprics were (besides the primatial see of Gniezno) Kraków,

³³ Zenonas Ivinskis, "Merkelis Giedraitis arba Lietuva dviejų amžių sąvartojė", in: *idem, Rinktiniai raštai*, vol. 4: *Krikščionybė Lietuvoje*, Roma: LKMA, 1987; Jonas Boruta, "Didysis Žemaičių ganytojas Merkelis Giedraitis", in: *Mikalojaus Daukšos "Katekizmui" – 400*, Klaipėda: Žemaičių kultūros draugija, 1995, p. 15–23; Eugenija Ulčinaitė, "Merkelis Giedraitis – vyskupas, mecenatas, poetas", *Naujasis Židinys-Aidai*, 1999, no. 9–10, p. 444–453; Liudas Jovaiša, *Katalikiškoji Reforma Žemaičių vyskupijoje*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Vilnius, 2004.

³⁴ Jan Dziegielewski, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

³⁵ The reasons for the deprivation of Jan Ostrowski, Mikołaj Pac and Jan Kukrowicz are discussed below. I am unable to explain the circumstances in which Mateusz Piskorzewski was deprived.

³⁶ Krzysztof Rafał Prokop, "Pseudo-episcopus Kiioviensis. W kwestii daty rezygnacji z biskupstwa i śmierci nominata kijowskiego Mikołaja Paca", *Lituanos-Slavica Poznaniensia. Studia Historica*, 11 (2005), p. 241–254.

Włocławek, Płock, Poznań, Vilnius and Warmia. Clergymen's evident ambitions to acquire these richer prizes, whenever occasion arose, are entirely understandable. Poorly endowed bishoprics were treated as 'waiting rooms' by those with hopes of one of the most lucrative sees.

No member of the Vilnius chapter seems to have resigned from his benefice for the sake of a lay career, although there was a case in the neighbouring chapter of Samogitia. Canon Benedykt Kotarski, having thrown off his clerical garb and embraced Protestantism, contracted a legal marriage (from a Reformed point of view) with his concubine Urszula, with whom he had already fathered two boys and a girl while still a canon³⁷.

Nor were there any cases in Vilnius of a canon or prelate resigning his prebend in favour of another clergyman. The procedure was nevertheless not unknown to some of the Vilnan clergymen. In 1538 Ioannes Benedictus Solfa received the scholarship of the Holy Cross in Wrocław (Breslau). A certain Nicolaus Copernicus had resigned from it for him³⁸. Pilichowski exchanged the office of *prepositus* of Warsaw for that of the custodianship of the same collegiate church with Nidecki³⁹. Maciej Kłodziński 'inherited' the cantorship of Kraków and the archdeaconry of Samogitia from his brother Stanisław, who had abandoned his clerical career⁴⁰.

³⁷ *Visitatio dioecesis Samogitiae (A. D. 1579)*, ed. Juozas Tumelis and Liudas Jovaiša, Vilnius: Aidai, 1998, p. 304. See also Grzegorz Błaszczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 117–119; Wioletta Pawlikowska, "Konkubiny w życiu prałatów i kanoników wileńskich w XVI–XVII wieku. Uwagi o recepcji uchwał Soboru Trydenckiego w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim", in: *Tridento visuotinio Bažnyčios susirinkimo (1545–1563) įtaka Lietuvos kultūrai*, ed. Aleksandra Aleksandravičiūtė, Vilnius: Kultūros, filosofijos ir meno institutas, 2009, p. 232–233. On Benedykt Kotarski, see also: Vaclovas Vaivada, *Katalikų Bažnyčia ir Reformacija Žemaitijoje XVI a.: esminiai raidos bruožai*, Klaipėda: Klaipėdos universiteto leidykla, 2004, p. 152.

³⁸ Gerhard Zimmermann, *Das Breslauer Domkapitel im Zeitalter der Reformation und Gegenreformation (1500–1600)*, Weimar: H. Böhlau Nachfolger, 1938, p. 192–193. See also Teresa Borawska, *Życie umysłowe na Warmii w czasach Mikołaja Kopernika*, Toruń: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 1996, p. 180.

³⁹ *Propozycje konsystorialne w XVI wieku*, p. 79, no. 20, footnote 5.

⁴⁰ Grzegorz Błaszczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 116–117.

SOCIAL ORIGINS OR STATUS

Research on the composition of the Vilnius chapter enables us to answer the question of the social estate into which the prelates and canons were born (or acquired, in the case of ennoblements). In the case of noble-born clergymen, we can also usually identify their family. In most cases, the necessary information is available in armorials (*herbarze*) and similar publications. Knowledge of the family connections of the clergyman in question also helped. In ten cases, I was able to establish their membership of a given family on the basis of documents provided by the canon or prelate himself, on which the mark of a signet seal remains visible.

In total it has been possible to indicate the social origins or status of 57 out of the 75 clergymen under consideration – 76 % 53 of them (93 %) were of noble status, while four (7 %) came from a burgher background. Among the nobles were six who acquired nobility just before their entry into the Vilnius chapter or while members of it. It was not possible to identify any sons of peasants, although they may be hidden among those clergymen whose origins or status remain unidentified.

TERRITORIAL ORIGINS

It is no simple matter to state the territorial origins of members of the Vilnius cathedral chapter. The available sources do not always permit us to identify the prelates' and canons' places of birth. Quite often we can only make suppositions as to the approximate places, regions or provinces whence hailed the clergyman in question on the basis of their family connections. Similarly, we can sometimes make provisional judgments about clergymen's territorial origin on the basis of information about their families⁴¹. The form of clergymen's names

⁴¹ This section is a summary of Wioletta Pawlikowska-Butterwick, "A "Foreign" Élite? The Territorial Origins of the Canons and Prelates of the Cathedral Chapter of Vilna in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century", in: *The Slavonic and East European Review*, (forthcoming).

may, in the absence of other data, indicate the region from which their family came⁴². The migration of individuals and families from the Polish Crown to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania should also be taken into consideration. So too should the fact that some of the persons in question may have originally come from one region, but later settled on estates (purchased or exchanged) in another. Although the results of this research will not be free of imprecision and generality, the effort to establish clergymen's territorial origin should allow us to answer the question of with which lands Vilnan canons and prelates were most closely connected.

The current article does not attempt to establish the nationality of the persons constituting the chapter of Vilnius in the sixteenth century⁴³. Despite the fact that the problem of nation-forming in the early modern period remains absorbing, and the discussion among historians about the early modern meanings of concepts such as 'nation' and '*patria*' continues to be extremely lively, with no consensus in sight⁴⁴. The complexity of

⁴² Jan Stanisław Bystron, *Nazwiska polskie*, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1993, p. 19–20.

⁴³ On the subject of "Poles" in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania see the recent remarks of Andrzej B. Zakrzewski, "Jeszcze o Polakach w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim w XIV–XVIII wieku", in: *Przez Kresy i historię po obrzeża polityki*, vol. 1, ed. Iwona Hofman and Wojciech Maguś, Toruń: Wyd. Adam Marszałek, 2011, p. 258–266.

⁴⁴ For a critical review of recent literature, see Robert John Weston Evans, "Confession and Nation in Early Modern Central Europe", *Central Europe*, 9 (2011), no. 1, p. 2–17. For the Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian territories, see, *inter alia*: Robert Frost, "Ordering the Kaleidoscope: The Construction of Identities in the Lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth since 1569", in: *Power and the Nation in European History*, ed. Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 212–231; Tomasz Kizwalter, "Nowoczesność narodu jako problem badawczy – przykład Polski", *Historyka*, 29 (1999); *idem*, *O nowoczesności narodu. Przypadek polski*, Warszawa, 1999; Andrzej Sulima Kamiński, *Historia Rzeczypospolitej wielu narodów 1505–1795*, Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2000; Jūratė Kiaupienė, „Mes, Lietuva“. *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės bajorija XVI a. (viešasis ir privatus gyvenimas)*, Vilnius: Kronta, 2003; Maciej Franz, *Idea państwa kozackiego na ziemiach ukraińskich w XVI–XVII wieku*, Toruń: Wyd. Adam Marszałek, 2006; Oleg Łatyszczek, *Od Rusinów do Białorusinów*, Białystok: Wyd. Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2006; Mathias Niendorf, *Das Großfürstentum Litauen: Studien zur Nationsbildung in der Frühen Neuzeit (1569–1795)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006;

the problem, and the difficulty of defining such concepts in their own contexts is signalled by Urszula Augustyniak⁴⁵. In my view, the arbitrary assignment, using contemporary criteria, of nationality to people who departed this life four centuries ago is an entirely unscholarly exercise.

For 68 of the total of 75 members of the Vilnius chapter in the second half of the sixteenth century, it has been possible, more or less precisely, to establish their territorial origins. Although I have not been able to pinpoint the exact place of origin for every clergyman, I have tried to discover they came from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (including its Ruthenian territories), the Polish Crown (including Great Poland, Little Poland, Mazovia), Podlasie, Royal Prussia, or whether he was a 'further foreigner' (coming from, for instance, the Holy Roman Empire, Italy, Dalmatia or the Kingdom of Sweden).

Canons and prelates from Podlasie have been treated as a separate group, because of the ethnic and social specificity of these lands. Podlasie is described as 'an artificial administrative creation, assembled from pieces of the Polish-Ruthenian-Yotvingian ethnic borderland'⁴⁶. Colonized mainly by Mazovians moving east and Ruthenes moving west, Podlasie acquired a typically borderland character in ethnic and confessional terms. Most of the noble families from whom the Vilnan clergymen descended had migrated to Podlasie from the west, rather than the east. Located between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland, it was the object of continual disputes and controversies between those two powers⁴⁷. Following the transfer in

Pod wspólnym niebem. Narody w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej, ed. Michał Kopczyński and Wojciech Tygielski, Warszawa, 2010.

⁴⁵ Urszula Augustyniak, *Koncepcje narodu i społeczeństwa w literaturze plebejskiej od końca XVI do końca XVII wieku*, Warszawa: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1989; *eadem*, "Wielokulturowość Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego i idea tolerancji, a praktyka stosunków międzywyznaniowych w XVI–XVIII w.", in: *Lietuvos Didžioios Kunigaikštijos tradicija ir tautiniai naratyvai*, ed. Alfredas Bumblauskas and Grigorijus Potašenko, Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2009, p. 90.

⁴⁶ Stanisław Alexandrowicz, "Powstanie i rozwój miast województwa podlaskiego (XV–XVIII w.)", *Acta Baltico-Slavica*, 1 (1964), p. 137.

⁴⁷ Jerzy Wiśniewski, "Rozwój osadnictwa na pograniczu polsko-rusko-litewskim od końca XIV–XVII wieku", *ibid.*, p. 130. See Anna Kołodziejczyk, "Z dziejów kolo-

1569 of most (but not all) of Podlasie from Grand Duchy to the Crown, Podlasians became foreigners according to Lithuanian law⁴⁸. Although all the Podlasian members of the Vilnius cathedral chapter in the second half of the sixteenth century were not only born, but also installed before 1569, it makes sense to treat them separately.

This raises the question of the role played by ‘foreigners’ in the life of the Vilnius chapter. To achieve greater clarity I divide ‘foreigners’ into ‘nearer foreigners’ and ‘further foreigners’. The former are used for persons who came from the Polish Crown, and the latter for those who came from lands beyond Lithuania and Poland (after 1569 the Commonwealth of the Two Nations). It is helpful to do so both because of the high number of clergymen from the Crown and because of the close (if not always harmonious) relationship between Lithuania and Poland. It should be noted that the law of the Grand Duchy, even after the Union of Lublin, did not differentiate between inhabitants of the Polish Crown and other ‘foreigners’. Similarly, after the Ukrainian, Volhynian and Podlasian territories were incorporated into the Polish Crown in 1569, the inhabitants of these lands became ‘foreigners’ according to Lithuanian law, as codified in the Second Lithuanian Statute of 1566⁴⁹.

16 of the 75 clergymen under consideration (21 %) came from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (including its Ruthenian, but excluding its Podlasian territories). 6 came from Podlasie (8 %). Among the rest, 36

nizacji puszcz na Podlasiu w XV–XVI wieku”, in: *Szkice z dziejów kolonizacji Podlasia i Grodzieńszczyzny od XIV do XVI wieku*, Olsztyn: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego, 2002.

⁴⁸ According to Marek Plewczyński (“Szlachta podlaska w wojsku polskim za ostatnich Jagiellonów”, in: *Drobna szlachta podlaska w XVI–XIX wieku. Materiały z sympozjum w Hołnach Mejera (26–27 maja 1989 roku)*, ed. Stefan K. Kuczyński, Białystok: Ośrodek Badań Historii Wojskowej, Muzeum Wojska w Białymstoku, 1991, p. 13), even before the Union of Lublin nobles from Podlasie were treated in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a foreigners.

⁴⁹ Przemysław Dąbkowski, *Stanowisko cudzoziemców w prawie litewskim w drugiej połowie XV i w XVI wieku (1447–1588)*, Lwów: Nakł. Towarzystwa dla Popierania Nauki Polskiej, 1912, p. 17–22. Cf. Sławomir Godek, *Elementy prawa rzymskiego w III Statucie litewskim (1588)*, Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa, 2004, p. 38 ff.

(48 %) came from one or other lands of the Polish Crown (so these may be called 'nearer foreigners'). 11 were from Little Poland (15 %), and 12 from Great Poland (16 %). To these 12 eight more clergymen from Mazovia (incorporated into the Polish Crown only in 1529) might be added. The controversial nature of the relationship of Royal Prussia to the Polish Crown suggests that, as in the case of the Podlasians, the single clergyman from Royal Prussia should be placed in a separate category⁵⁰. Several other clergymen can be plausibly identified only as coming from some part of the Polish Crown. To judge by the surnames of most of those whose origin I have not established, they would probably also come into this category.

During the period 1550–1600 we can find only nine 'further foreigners' (12 %) – that is, persons from places beyond Lithuania and Poland. However, there were more of them in the fourth than in the third quarter of the sixteenth century.

EDUCATION AND INTELLECTUAL LEVELS

Questions associated with education belong to the canon of research on capitular communities⁵¹. An attempt to answer the question about the levels of education among the Vilnan clergymen therefore seems fully justified.

Initially, Polish chapters did not require university studies from prospective members, so prelates and canons entering chapters did not have to provide evidence of their degrees. Such a requirement was introduced in the middle of the fifteenth century in the Kraków cathedral

⁵⁰ See Karin Friedrich, "Citizenship in the Periphery: Royal Prussia and the Union of Lublin 1569", in: *Citizenship and Identity in a Multinational Commonwealth: Poland-Lithuania in Context, 1550–1772*, ed. K. Friedrich and B. M. Pendzich, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009, p. 49–69.

⁵¹ Andrzej Radziwiński, *Prałaci i kanonicy kapituły katedralnej płockiej*, vol. 1: *Prałaci* (Toruń: Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika, 1991); vol. 2: *Kanonicy* (Toruń: UMK, 1993); Ewa Wólkiewicz, *Kapituła kolegiacka św. Mikołaja w Otmuchowie. Dzieje – organizacja – skład osobowy (1386–1477)*, Opole, 2004; Marta Czyżak, *Kapituła katedralna w Gnieźnie w świetle metryki z lat 1408–1448*, Poznań: UAM WT, 2003.

chapter, but only for candidates who were not of noble status. Those who could not demonstrate their nobility had at least to have the title of doctor⁵². The question of the education of the clergy was addressed more closely by the Council of Trent, whose formula was more an encouragement than a command: 'In those countries, where it will be possible to achieve it, all dignities, and at least half the canonries in cathedral churches and the more significant collegiate churches should be allocated only to masters or doctors, and also bachelors of theology or canon law'⁵³.

In the middle of the sixteenth century, chapters applied educational requirements only to clergymen of plebeian backgrounds, but later – undoubtedly as a result of the process of implementing the Tridentine reforms – study at university sometimes became a more widely applied condition of installation. Such was the case with the cathedral chapter of Poznań in the sixteenth century. When considering clergymen for those prebends accessible to plebeians, it could, citing the statute, refuse to accept candidates who could not provide evidence of five years of unbroken studies and certification of a doctor's or bachelor's degree, awarded after an appropriate examination. As Konrad Lutyński's research has shown, the chapter of Poznań did not always execute the letter of its own statute rigorously. It rarely required evidence of five years of study, usually contenting itself with evidence of a doctoral degree, and in some cases it did not even require that⁵⁴.

The chapter acted in a principled manner, while still not quite meeting the letter of the statute, towards Stanisław Fogelweder. On 7 July 1572 his procurators, in completing the act of his taking possession of the archdeaconry of Warsaw, instead of showing evidence of his noble status, simply appealed to his earlier reception into the Płock cathedral chapter, in the office of chancellor. Nevertheless, the chapter obliged

⁵² Marek Daniel Kowalski, *Pralaci i kanonicy krakowskiej kapituły katedralnej od pontyfikatu biskupa Nankera do śmierci biskupa Zawiszy z Kurozwęk (1320–1382)*, Kraków: Wyd. nakładem Towarzystwa Historii i Zabytków Krakowa, 1996, p. 72.

⁵³ *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych*, vol. 4, p. 753.

⁵⁴ Konrad Lutyński, *Kapituła katedralna w Poznaniu w XVI wieku. Organizacja i majątek*, Poznań: UAM WT, 2000, p. 95.

the procurators to present a suitable document within twelve months. On 10 March of that year, Jan Powodowski had presented the chapter with a document, issued in Padua on 12 March 1562, testifying to his promotion to the doctorate⁵⁵.

The Vilnan statute is silent regarding the education of the canons and prelates. Nevertheless, whatever the formal requirements or lack of them, during the second half of the sixteenth century we can observe a tendency encouraging the further education of the cathedral clergy. Additional funds were allocated to brethren who undertook further study. On 8 February 1589 the Vilnius chapter aided Canon Ioannes Bolpatus with the sum of ten Lithuanian schocks for his 'further advances [...] out of regard of his most important need'⁵⁶.

For most of the prelates and canons of Vilnius in this period, sources testifying to their education are known. It is not always certain, however, whether all the clergymen who matriculated at university actually completed their full course of studies. Not all of the members of the chapter appear in sources adorned by academic titles. In a few cases the clergyman's level and place of education can be deduced from the knowledge that he occupied an office which required a given standard of education. Such persons worked in chancelleries of various kinds⁵⁷.

Sources testify that at least 51 of the 75 clergymen in question (over 68 %) had received a formal education. The level of that education was however extremely varied.

It is not possible to say much about the early schooling of the future prelates and canons of Vilnius. Most of them probably attended parish schools, just as most future clergymen did at this time. We can only indicate a few persons, however, for whom the sources verify such an elementary education. Nidecki attended the parish school in Oświęcim, was later a pupil at the school attached to St John's Church in Kraków,

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁵⁶ *Herburt*, § 219–221, fol. 294–295.

⁵⁷ According to the findings of Krzysztof Skupieński, *Notariat publiczny w średniowiecznej Polsce*, Lublin: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2002, p. 83, trivial knowledge sufficed for the function of public notary.

and after that was educated in the Franciscans' school in the same city, before he began his studies at the University of Padua. Stanisław Fogelweder went to school in Strassburg, Maciej Kłodziński was a schoolboy in Łowicz and Warsaw, Johannes Jussoila was educated at schools in Rauma (Raumo) and Turku (Åbo), while Petrus Roysius first encounter with learning was in Alcaniz. For others, the information is vaguer. Grzegorz Błaszczyk states that Jan of Domanowo (Domanowski) studied in Kraków, Italy, Germany and France⁵⁸. However, according to his own fellow member of the Vilnius chapter, Waclaw Czyrka, Domanowski had no degree: 'he passed himself off as a graduate with a learned degree, although he was only a simple supervisor of a school'⁵⁹.

HOLY ORDERS

Even greater difficulties are presented by the questions of the degree and date of ordination. We can confidently state the year of ordination only for a few of the canons and prelates in question. In some cases, we can infer that they had taken higher orders because they received payment for saying Mass. Bearing this in mind, at least 53 out of the total of 75 persons (71 %) had higher orders of some kind (sub-deacon, deacon, priest). Among the 32 prelates we can identify 21 with higher orders (66 %), while among the 58 canons we can do likewise for 40 persons (69 %). When we examine the chapter of Vilnius as a single group, just as when we focus separately on the canons and on the prelates, we find that a significant majority of the clergymen had higher orders. Moreover, among both prelates and canons, the great majority of those with higher orders were priests.

CONCLUSIONS

The biographical information I have assembled about members of the Vilnius cathedral chapter, once subjected to prosopographical

⁵⁸ Grzegorz Błaszczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

⁵⁹ *Herburt*, § 139, fol. 87.

analysis, reveals a number of tendencies and phenomena concerning them as a group. By way of summary, we may construct the profile of a 'model' Vilnan clergyman. This model clergyman was presented to his benefice by the king. At that time he was 34 years old, and kept it for a further 17 years until he died. The average lifespan of the prelates and canons of Vilnius was 51 years. Our model clergyman was a nobleman from the Polish Crown, who possessed a doctorate from the University of Kraków. After taking his stall in Vilnius he was ordained priest. Besides his Vilnan benefice he possessed two or more others elsewhere. Obviously the composition of the Chapter of Vilnius was far more diverse than this 'model' clergyman would suggest. Nevertheless, this reconstruction reflects the current state of research on the Vilnan cathedral clergy. This profile may undergo change as research continues on early modern chapters, and as 'blanks' are filled in⁶⁰.

The analysis of fifty years in the history of the Vilnius chapter has allowed us to capture instances of both continuity and change. For example, for nearly all of this period the chapter contained a representative of the Apennine peninsula. On the other hand, the breakdown of the data into two quarter centuries suggests that to some extent the territorial composition of the chapter depended on the person of the King and Grand Duke. Between 1550 and 1575 the chapter included members from Italy, Spain and the German Reich. Between 1576 and 1600 the chapter included two clergymen from the Kingdom of Sweden and two 'Hungarians' from Transylvania and Dalmatia. It is hard to overlook the Hungarian origins of Stephen Báthory and the Swedish ones of Sigismund III Vasa.

A comparison between these two quarter-centuries shows that both the number of persons accumulating benefices and the number of benefices held plurally diminished. This may reflect the early impact of the implementation of the Tridentine prohibition of the accumulation prebends. My research indicates that many if not most of the prelates and canons of Vilnius had studied at university. Two tendencies can be discerned. The proportion of formally educated clergymen appears to

⁶⁰ The term is taken from Antoni Gaşiorowski, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

fall somewhat, but this may be the result of gaps in the extant sources. It does seem that among the formally educated clergy, more of them took higher degrees. Finally, the tendencies outlined here occurred without any sudden breaks. The chapter of Vilnius in 1600 was not so very different from its predecessor of 1550.