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How to Grow Stoneless Cherries, or What Parish Registers Hide Besides Demographics

Jak wyhodować wiśnie bez pestek, czyli co oprócz danych demograficznych kryją księgi metrykalne

Abstract

The objective of the article is an attempt at a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the “incidental” material that is present in the pages of parish registers. This source is characterized by interdisciplinarity, but is most often used by genealogists and historical demographers. Polish historiography generally lacks a synthetic approach to this issue, especially in a broader territorial and chronological perspective. The paper uses the philological method, with elements of a geographic information system used for spatial data visualization. The source basis of the article is the record resource from the area of the former Lublin district. Over 600 archival units from 60 parishes were analyzed, including the two oldest parishes in Lublin. The oldest book begins

Abstrakt

Głównym celem artykułu jest próba jakościowej i ilościowej analizy tzw. materiału przygodnego, który obecny jest na kartach ksiąg metrykalnych. Źródło to cechuje interdyscyplinarność, jednak najczęściej wykorzystywane jest przez genealogów i demografów historycznych. W polskiej historiografii zasadniczo brakuje syntetycznego ujęcia tego zagadnienia, zwłaszcza w szerszej perspektywie terytorialnej i chronologicznej. W pracy posłużono się metodą filologiczną, a w celu przestrzennej wizualizacji danych wykorzystano elementy systemu informacji geograficznej. Podstawę źródłową artykułu stanowi zasób metrykalny z obszaru dawnego powiatu lubelskiego. Analizie poddano ponad 600 jednostek archiwalnych z 60 parafii, w tym

with baptism records from 1582. The end point of the research was 1810. Based on an analysis of the content of the records, which went beyond the standard form of registering the vital statistics of the population, they were grouped. In total, nearly 100 entries were registered, classified as “casual” material. The highlighted content was assigned to six groups: spiritual life, economic life and parish administration; epidemics; war and politics; natural disasters and famine; extraordinary events; literary work.

Keywords

incidental material, parish registers, historical demography, Lublin district, epidemics, wars, natural disasters

z dwóch najstarszych parafii Lublina. Najstarsza księga rozpoczyna się metrykami chrztów z 1582 roku. Kończącą cezurę badań stanowił rok 1810. Na podstawie analizy treści zapisów, wykraczających poza standardowy formularz rejestracji ruchu naturalnego ludności, dokonano ich grupowania. W sumie zarejestrowano blisko 100 wpisów, zakwalifikowanych jako tzw. materiał przygodny. Wyróżnione treści przyporządkowano do sześciu grup: życie duchowe, gospodarcze i administracja parafii; epidemie; wojna i polityka; klęski żywiołowe i głód; zdarzenia ekstrapordynaryjne; twórczość literacka.

Słowa kluczowe

materiał przygodny, księgi metrykalne, demografia historyczna, powiat lubelski, epidemie, wojny, klęski żywiołowe

Introduction

Parish registers are one of the most invaluable sources for demographic and historical research. The research value and wide range of possible research inquiries based on the material contained in them have been widely recognized, as evidenced by the many works chronicling the demographic landscape over the past centuries.¹

¹ The subject of research on Polish demography and history is illustrated by publications of a concise nature. One of the first to describe the state of research was Irena Gieysztorowa, in the 1970s. Nearly a decade later, a study was compiled by Zygmunt Sułowski, who also identified areas where it was necessary to make up for neglect and intensify work. In the early 21st century, an article by Cezary Kukło was published, devoted to the achievements of Polish researchers in the last thirty years of the 20th century. A few years ago, the same author discussed research issues and the current academic environment of historical demography in the professional journal Poland's Demographic Past (hereafter, PDP). It is important to note that for a significant number of publications cited there, the primary source was indeed the parish registers. See Irena Gieysztorowa, *Wstęp do demografii staropolskiej* (Warszawa: PWN, 1976), 31–49; Zygmunt Sułowski, “Stulecie polskiej demografii historycznej (1882–1982), *Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski – Poland's Demographic Past* (hereafter: PDP) 15 (1984): 9–35; Cezary Kukło, “Polska demografia przeszłości u progu XXI wieku,” *PDP* 22 (2001): 7–32; Cezary Kukło, “Problematyka badawcza i środowiska naukowe demografii historycznej na łamach Przeszłości Demograficznej Polski 1967–2016,” *PDP* 39 (2017): 11–29, <https://doi.org/10.18276/pdp.2017.39-01>. See also the bibliography of Polish historical demographic

The aim of this article is to introduce and propose a classification of the information contained in parish registers which, while not essential to their content, is referred to as “incidental” material. While the interdisciplinary nature of this source has been discussed with relative frequency, indicating its usefulness in historical, genealogical, ethnographic, onomastic, or, more broadly, linguistic, sociological research,² there is basically an absence of in-depth analysis relating directly to incidental material, in both the broader territorial and chronological dimensions.³

research: Piotr Łozowski, “Bibliografia polskiej demografii historycznej po 1945 roku,” in *Struktury demograficzne rodziny na ziemiach polskich do połowy XX wieku. Przegląd badań i problemów*, eds. Piotr Guzowski and Cezary Kukło (Białystok: Instytut Badań nad Dziedzictwem Kulturowym Europy, 2014), 157–373.

² See Marian Butkiewicz, “Metryki parafialne jako dokument legitymacyjny szlachty polskiej,” *Roczniki Humanistyczne* 35, no. 2 (1987): 401–07; Hubert Osadnik, “Wykorzystanie akt metrykalnych w badaniach nad wielokulturową i wieloetniczną społecznością regionu sanockiego w XVIII–XIX w.,” *Rocznik Przemyski* 32, no. 3 (1997): 107–11; Władysław Froch, “Księgi metrykalne jako ważne i ciekawe źródło historyczne,” *Memoranda. Wiadomości Archidiecezji Lubelskiej* 2 (1999): 381–89; Cezary Kukło, “Staropolska rejestracja metrykalna ślubów, chrztów i pogrzebów w warsztacie badawczym historyka,” in *Człowiek w teatrze świata. Studia o historii i kulturze dedykowane Profesorowi Stanisławowi Grzybowskiemu z okazji osiemdziesiątych urodzin*, ed. Bożena Popiołek (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego, 2010), 38–52; Marek J. Minakowski, “Gęstość sieci koligacji w parafii Kampinos w XIX wieku,” *PDP* 35, no. 4 (2014): 65–74. Mariusz Kozdrach, “Nekropolia Kochanowskich? Osiemnastowieczne pochówki w kaplicach zwoleńskiego kościoła w świetle metryk parafialnych,” *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej* 70, no. 2 (2022): 201–30.

³ This claim is supported by a query conducted in the leading periodicals on historical and archival issues, namely: *Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne, Kwartalnik Historyczny, Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej, Przeszość Demograficzna Polski, Rocznik Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych, Studia Źródłoznawcze*. There is, of course, no shortage of works, especially historical demographic ones, which, in addition to the basic material of the registers, refer to supporting notes. These mostly include information on epidemics of infectious diseases and natural disasters, the presence of which, when additionally confirmed in the source, makes it possible to better interpret and explain the demographic processes taking place. See, among others, Sabina Rejman, *Ludność podmiejska Rzeszowa w latach 1784–1880. Studium demograficzno-historyczne* (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, 2006); Mateusz Wyźga, *Parafia Raciborowice od XVI do końca XVIII wieku. Studium o społeczności lokalnej* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2011); idem, *Homo movens. Mobilność chłopów w mikroregionie krakowskim w XVI–XVIII wieku* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego im. KEN, 2019); Piotr Miodunka, “Księgi zmarłych z południa dawnej diecezji krakowskiej od roku 1776 w kontekście badań demograficzno-historycznych. Zarys problemu,” in *Jednostka, rodzina i struktury społeczne w perspektywie historycznej. Księga jubileuszowa dedykowana Profesorowi Cezaremu Kukli z okazji 45-lecia pracy naukowej*, eds. Piotr Łozowski and Radosław Poniak (Białystok: Instytut Badań nad Dziedzictwem Kulturowym Europy, 2022), 366–76. One of the most well-known and respected studies based on material from registers is a monograph on the population of England in the 16th–19th centuries, by researchers affiliated with the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure; see Edward A. Wrigley and Roger S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541–1871: A Reconstruction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). On the specifics of metric registration and its use in historical research in other countries, see, among others: Thomas H. Hollingsworth, *Historical Demography* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1969); Donald J. Steel, *National Index of Parish Registers*, vol. 1: *General Sources of Births, Marriages and Deaths before 1837* (London: Society of Genealogists, 1968); idem, *National Index of Parish Registers*, vol. 2: *Sources for Nonconformist Genealogy and Family History* (London: Society

An exception is an article by Kazimierz Dobrowolski, published in 1920, in the pages of the Heraldic Society Yearbook (*Rocznik Towarzystwa Heraldycznego*).⁴ Despite the passage of time, this pioneering text may serve as a reference in terms of classifying the content contained in parish registers, the presence of which is not inscribed in their basic structure. The entirety of the information stored in them is divided by Dobrowolski into essential and incidental material.⁵ In the latter case, referring, among others, to the parish registers of Uścicia Solne, Mszana Dolna, Krotoszyn, Janów Trembowel, Raby, and Białka, he classifies the contents and indicates their provenance.⁶ The first category that stands out is that of historical files and records, among which Dobrowolski lists copies of founding documents, endowments, bulls of indulgence, visitations, and court records – documents relating almost exclusively to church relations. Historical notes also belong to the same group, including materials on climate and natural disasters, as well as wars and epidemics. Part of the entry is also occupied by parsons' notes on the farm, the condition of the crops, and their harvest, related to weather anomalies. The second group specified, i.e., materials for economic events, are mainly inventories included in the pages of the registers, describing the condition of buildings, their equipment, levies, fees for ceremonial activities, voluntary donations, and the private accounts of the clergy. The third category includes materials for the history of art, i.e., registers of church equipment, but also financial matters related to their acquisition and maintenance. The fourth class is records comprising accounts of the customs of private life. Another category of entries – folklore – includes texts of folk songs and medical prescriptions characteristic of folk medicine. In turn, occasional works, short poems, or epilogical poems similar in content were assigned to the category of literary history. The last category, the history of church and parish libraries, is the lists of books in the parish registers, and loose notes on the acquisition or exchange of missals, and collections of sermons. These contents, however, as Dobrowolski notes, are very rare.⁷

of Genealogists, Phillimore, 1973); Walter Lutsch, *Demographic Aspects of the Early Modern Times: The Example of the Zurich Countryside in a European Perspective* (Bern: Peter Lang Group, 2017).

⁴ Kazimierz Dobrowolski, "Znaczenie metryk kościelnych do badań naukowych," *Rocznik Towarzystwa Heraldycznego we Lwowie* 5 (1920): 90–110.

⁵ *Ibidem*, 94.

⁶ *Ibidem*, 106. The author links the popularity of this type of records with the *silvae rerum*, which were particularly fashionable in the 17th and 18th centuries and kept mainly by the nobility. These were records of an informative and literary nature, in which, in addition to news of a chronicling nature from everyday life, they included, for example, agricultural and economic tips, culinary advice, or amusing lyrical pieces. See Joanna Partyka, "Szlachecka *silva rerum* jako źródło do badań etnograficznych," *Etnografia Polska* 32, no. 2 (1988): 67–91; eadem, "Gazetki seryjne i *silvae rerum* jako źródło wiedzy o niepokojach czasów saskich," in *Między barokiem a oświeceniem. Wojny i niepokoje czasów saskich*, eds. Krystyna Stasiewicz and Stanisław Achremczyk (Olsztyn: Ośrodek Badań Naukowych im. Wojciecha Kętrzyńskiego, 2000), 116–21.

⁷ *Ibidem*, 106–8.

Source Material

The research covered the collection of parish registers from the area of the historic administrative district of Lublin and Urzędów, as per the boundaries of circa 1564 (map 1).⁸

In the current article, the discussion of the title issue is limited to the source material stored in the parish archives of the former Lublin administrative district.⁹ This territory, with an area of about 6500 km², was largely defined by natural boundaries, i.e., the rivers Vistula, Tyśmienica, Wieprz and the elevation of the Western Roztocze.¹⁰ A total of 60 record centers were reviewed, i.e., the parishes of St. James the Apostle, Abramowice, St. John the Baptist, Baranów, the Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle, Bełżyce, St. Stanislaus the Martyr, Biskupice, St. John the Baptist, Bochothnica, St. Anthony Padewski, Boża Wola, St. John the Baptist and St. Francis of Assisi, Bychawa, All Saints, Bychawka, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Bystrzyca, Holy Trinity and the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Chodel, St. Stanislaus the Martyr, Czemierniki, St. Lawrence, Czerniejów, the Apostles Sts. Peter and Paul, Czystoborowice, St. John the Baptist, Dys, St. John Nepomucen, Fajślawice, the Transfiguration of the Lord, Firlej, the Transfiguration of the Lord, Garbów, St. Florian and St. Catherine, Gołąb, the Apostles Sts. Peter and Paul, Kamionka, St. Lawrence, Karczmyska, St. John the Baptist and St. Bartholomew the Apostle, Kazimierz Dolny, the Holy Trinity and the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Kielczewice, St. Anne, Kijany, St. Clement and St. Margaret, Klementowice, Kluczkowice, the Holy Trinity, Kluczkowice, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Catherine of Alexandria, Konopnica, The Discovery of the Holy Cross and St. Andrew the Apostle, Końskowola, The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Sebastian, Krężnica, St. John the Baptist, Jara, St. Mary Magdalene, Łęczna, St. Barbara, Łuszczów, St. Joseph, Markuszów, The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary,

⁸ Stefan. Wojciechowski, ed., *Województwo lubelskie w drugiej połowie XVI wieku* (Warszawa: PWN, 1966 = *Atlas Historyczny Polski. Mapy szczegółowe XVI wieku*, vol. 3). Work to digitize and make available and use the source material for demographic and historical research has been broadly completed. See, among others, the web portal: <https://ksiegimetrykalne.pl>. The expansion of this work, including by extending the research area to include the parishes of the historic district of Urzędów, will result in the creation of a new digital repository and the creation of a database enabling, among other things, denominational research into historical populations. The results of the efforts will soon be able to be tracked at the following web address: <https://rodzinawzrodlach.pl>.

⁹ A text on the same subject, but based on source material held in the local archives of the former Urzędów district, will be the subject of a similar study in the near future.

¹⁰ For more on the state and church administrative divisions of the area and the establishment of the parishes, see Piotr Rachwał, "Staropolskie księgi metrykalne w archiwach parafialnych archidiecezji lubelskiej," *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej* 63, no. 4 (2015): 586–89; idem, *Ruch naturalny ludności w Lubelskiem w XVI–XIX w.* (Lublin: Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II, 2019), 33–46.

Map 1. Parish archives of Lublin and Urzędów districts included in the inventory of the contents of Old Polish parish registers



Matczyczyn, St. Vitus, Mełgiew, The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Michów, St. Bartholomew the Apostle, Niedrzwica Kościelna, The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Opole Lubelskie, The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Ostrów, St. John the Baptist, Parczew, The Elevation of the Holy Cross, Piaski, St. Thomas the Apostle and St. Stanislaus the Martyr, Piotrawin, The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Puchaczów, St. Matthew the Apostle and St. Catherine, Ratoszyn, The Elevation of the Holy Cross, Rudno, St. Mary Magdalene, Serniki, St. Thomas Becket, Targowisko, St. Wojciech the Martyr, Wąwolnica, St. Michael the Archangel, Wilkołaz, St. Florian and St. Ursula, Wilkow, St. Joseph, Włostowice, St. Theodore, Wojciechów, St. Michael the Archangel, Wysokie, St. Martin, Zemborzyce, and The Apostles Sts. Peter and Paul, Żyrzyn.

The study's chronological range spans from late 1582 to 1810.¹¹ The first dividing line is due to the fact that the oldest surviving register dates from this year;¹² the end date is when new regulations related to the keeping of record books in the area under study came into force.¹³ Between these extremes, the parish registers in the selected area were kept according to two types of formats. In the Old Polish period, the "Tridentine" format was used.¹⁴ In the baptismal register, the registrar, which in practice meant the parish priest or the clergyman serving in the area, recorded the date of the ceremony, the place, the name of the person baptized and their sex, along with the parents' details. The entry also had to include the personal details of the godparents and their place of residence. In addition, relevant regulations stipulated how the entry was to be made when the father of the child was unknown, or the parents were unknown. If, in a situation where the child's life was in danger, an early baptism out of water was performed, this fact had to be recorded in the books as quickly as possible. In the marriage register, in addition to the date and place of the wedding, the personal data of the priest, as well as those of the newlyweds, i.e., names and surnames, and those of their parents, were given. The data were supplemented by entries on the witnesses, and their usual residence.

¹¹ Where record-keeping began before 1810 and entries continued after that date, observation for the topic of interest was carried out until the end of the volume in question.

¹² Parish Archives (hereafter: PA) Lublin, *Liber metrices baptisatorum ab anno 1582*.

¹³ With the introduction of the Napoleonic Code, the registration forms for each of the three series of records were changed. In addition, there was a more detailed and intense scrutiny of public registration by the state administration, which, by virtue of the fact that it simultaneously enjoyed the status of official state records, did not allow relative freedom over its maintenance, as in earlier periods, i.e., the 16th–18th centuries. Witold Jemielity, "Akta stanu cywilnego w Księstwie Warszawskim i Królestwie Polskim," *Prawo Kanoniczne* 38, nos. 1–2 (1995): 163–88. It should be remembered, however, that in some parishes, registration of this type, in parallel to the Polish or Napoleonic form, was carried out as late as the 1860s. For more on this subject, see Piotr Rachwał, "Księgi metrykalne z czasów zaboru austriackiego w archiwach parafialnych w Lubelskiem – regulacje prawne, stan zachowania," *Rocznik Lubelskiego Towarzystwa Genealogicznego* 6 (2014/2015): 306–25.

¹⁴ For more on parish registration in the Old Polish period, see Rachwał, *Ruch*, 77–141 (there is also an extensive literature on the subject).

It was also necessary to provide information on the pre-wedding announcements held and the establishment of any impediments to marriage. When recording a funeral, the name of the deceased, place and date of death, age, information on the parents and whether the deceased had left a spouse had to be noted. In addition, acknowledgment was made of confession prior to death, the provision of the holy sacraments, and the place of burial.

Both in the early period of the creation of this type of reporting, i.e. immediately after the resolutions of the Council of Trent (1563), and later, at the stage when the Council's law was received and the various legal acts promulgated in this regard, there were no additional indications, recommendations or general wording in documents issued by the church authorities that mentioned the inclusion in the parish registers of additional records not directly related to the registration of vital statistics. On the other hand, there is no lack of additional information and recommendations prescribing the maintenance of the parish registers in good order both in terms of content and appearance, and penalties were stipulated in the event of lapses. The language of the entries was Latin, but there are occasional entries in which Polish was used.

As previously mentioned, the content of the parish registers was also analyzed for sources from the period when the area under study was temporarily under Austrian annexation, i.e., from 1795 to 1809. After this period, the Lublin region was incorporated into the newly formed Duchy of Warsaw. During Austrian rule, in all the parishes we examined, record-keeping using a new format began in 1797 under the orders of the diocesan consistory, and this was subsequently reiterated in 1803. The registers were to be tabulated, in a uniform format, and detailed instructions for keeping the three series were placed on the first pages of each volume. In principle, the content of the entries did not differ from that specified in the Tridentine format, with a certain exception being the order to mark the cause of death of the deceased, which had no counterpart in the regulations of the Old Polish period.¹⁵ It seems, however, that from the point of view of the record compilers, i.e., parish priests or other clergymen exercising parish ministry, the format of the record (columns), hindered and perhaps at the same time discouraged the production of narrative entries beyond the legally prescribed information. This is confirmed by the statistics for such entries. In the Austrian registers, only three annotations that went beyond the content prescribed by the form were noted. The texts were drawn up in Polish. The first, from the parish of Abramowice, dates back to 1814,¹⁶ the second,

¹⁵ For detailed information on the rules of parish registration in the Lublin region during the Austrian partition, see Rachwał, "Księgi."

¹⁶ At the top of the death register beginning with entries from 1797 is a certificate drawn up by the parish priest at the urging of the mayor of the municipality of Abramowice, reporting the unusually high mortality of the population in the second half of 1813 and the first half of 1814.

from the parish of Lubartów, to 1816,¹⁷ and the third, mentioning Napoleon, from Targowisko parish, to 1812.¹⁸

A total of 385 books kept according to the Tridentine format and 220 volumes compiled according to the Austrian format were used (table 1).

Table 1. Number of registers preserved and included in the research in the parish archives of the historic Lublin district

Parish	Baptisms			Marriages			Deaths			3 series	Total
	16th c.	17th c.	18th c.	16th c.	17th c.	18th c.	16th c.	17th c.	18th c.	A.F.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Abramowice	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	3
Baranów	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bełżyce	–	6	3	–	3	2	–	–	2	3	19
Biskupice	–	2	3	–	1	2	–	–	2	5	15
Bochothnica	–	–	2	–	–	1	–	–	1	3	7
Bychawa	–	2	3	–	–	3	–	–	1	1	10
Bychawka	–	–	1	–	–	1	–	–	1	2	5
Bystrzyca	–	1	5	–	1	2	–	–	2	5	16
Chodel	2	–	4	–	–	2	–	–	1	3	12
Czemierniki	1	5	4	–	1	3	–	–	3	2	19
Czerniejów	–	1	4	–	1	1	–	–	–	2	9
Częstoborowice	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Dys	–	2	4	–	1	3	–	–	4	6	20
Fajslawice	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	1	6	9
Firlej	–	1	4	–	–	2	–	–	2	3	12
Garbów	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

According to the note, this is a remarkable fact, since usually no more than 90 people died over an entire year, and in this period, 282 people died in 6 months (in 1813, 3 in September, 11 in October, 20 in November, and 42 in December; in 1814, 97 in January, and 109 in February). The note is dated March 4, 1814, reporting that the death rate was still high: “The population is growing sick and dying in such large numbers that 10 people each day are disposed to die and the priest cannot keep up and reach all those in need. Nor can he keep up with digging graves and burying the dead.” (Translated from the original Polish.) PA Abramowice, *Księga metryk umarłych za rządu austriackiego utrzymywanych od roku 1797 zaczynające się w parafii abramowickiej*.

¹⁷ At the end of the register (after February 1816), a revision protocol was inserted, recording how many parish registers there were “from the earliest times until the introduction of the Age of Civil Registers” [i.e., until 1810 – P.R.], as well as what years they included and how many pages were written on. PA Lubartów, *Książka zaślubionych od roku 1797 w parafii lubartowskiej, księga 6*.

¹⁸ PA Targowisko, *Liber natorum ab anno 1797*.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Gołąb	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	3	5
Kamionka	–	–	2	–	–	3	–	–	1	6	12
Karczmiska	–	–	2	–	–	1	–	–	1	3	7
Kazimierz	–	3	2	1	2	–	–	1	1	3	13
Kielczewice	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	5
Kijany	–	–	4	–	–	2	–	–	1	5	12
Klementowice	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	1	3	6
Kluczkowice	–	–	1	–	–	1	–	–	1	3	6
Konopnica	–	–	5	–	–	1	–	–	1	7	14
Końskowola	–	2	3	–	2	1	–	–	3	5	16
Krasienin	–	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	6
Krężnica Jara	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	3
Krzczonów	–	4	6	–	9	–	–	1	2	3	25
Kurów	–	2	2	–	1	2	–	1	2	4	14
Lubartów	–	–	2	–	1	2	–	–	2	5	12
Lublin (Archcathedral)	–	6	4	1	3	3	–	–	2	9	28
Lublin St. Nicholas	–	1	5	–	1	5	–	–	4	5	21
Łańcuchów	–	–	1	–	–	1	–	–	1	1	4
Łęczna	1	4	5	–	1	–	–	–	2	3	16
Łuszczów	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Markuszów	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	5	7
Matczyn	–	1	2	–	–	1	–	–	–	3	7
Mełgiew	–	1	4	–	1	2	–	–	2	8	18
Michów	–	–	1	–	–	2	–	–	–	1	4
Milejów	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Niedrzwica	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	3
Opole	–	1	5	–	–	–	–	–	2	21	29
Ostrów	–	1	4	–	1	1	–	1	–	5	13
Parczew	–	4	4	–	–	1	–	–	2	8	19
Piaski	–	1	3	–	–	1	–	–	1	5	11
Piotrawin	1	2	1	–	–	1	–	–	–	2	7
Puchaczów	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	2	3	6
Ratoszyn	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	5
Rudno	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	1	6	9
Serniki	–	1	4	–	–	2	–	–	2	3	12

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Targowisko	–	1	4	–	–	1	–	–	1	1	8	
Wąwolnica	–	2	2	–	2	1	–	–	2	4	13	
Wilkołaz	–	–	3	–	1	–	–	–	–	3	7	
Wilków	–	–	1	–	–	1	–	–	–	2	4	
Włostowice	–	2	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	11	
Wojciechów	–	1	3	–	1	2	–	–	1	3	11	
Wysokie	–	1	3	–	–	1	–	–	–	2	7	
Zemborzyce	–	–	2	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	3	
Żyrzyn	–	–	2	–	–	2	–	–	1	5	10	
Total		5	63	149	2	34	65	–	4	63	220	605

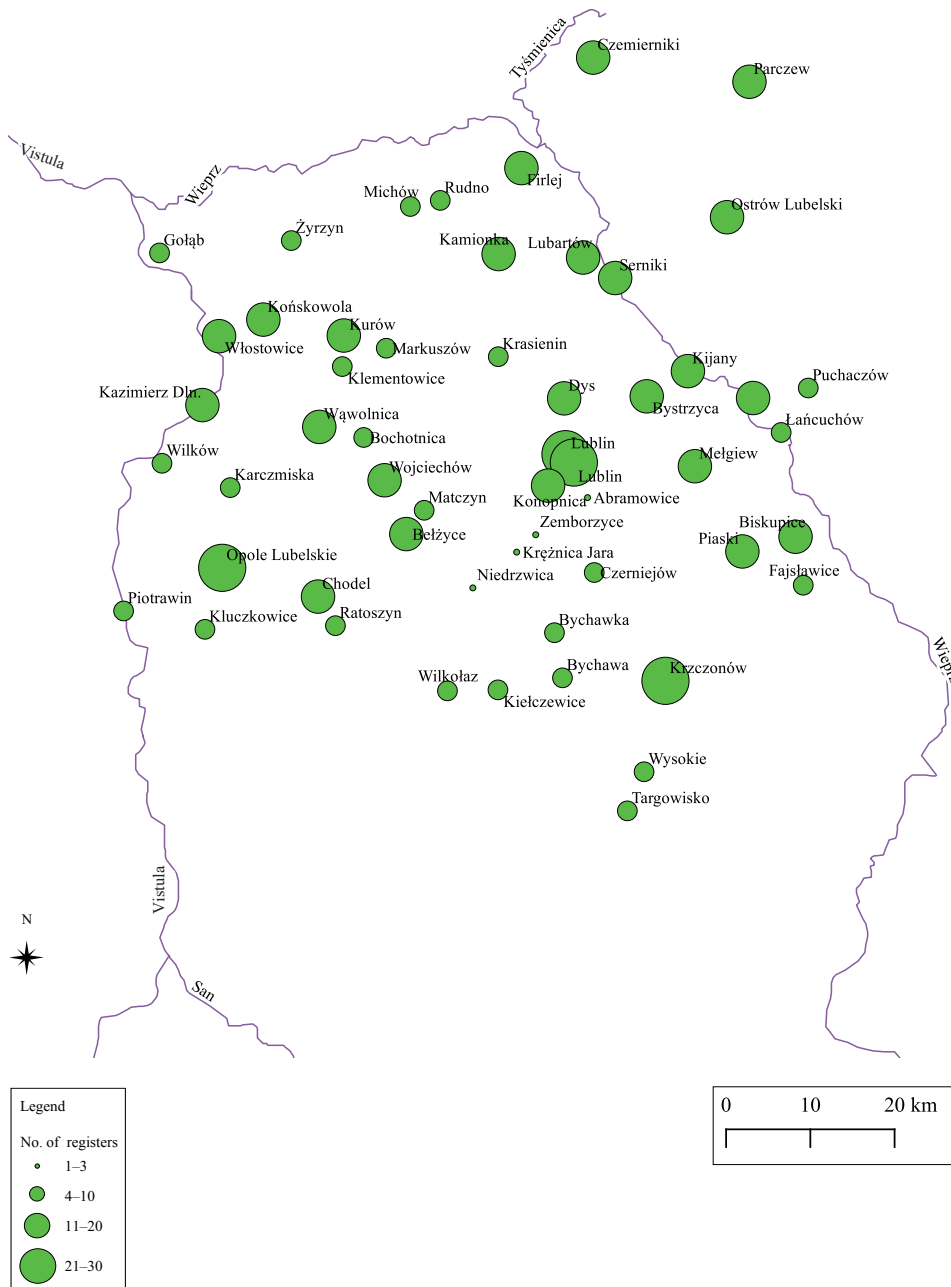
Note: A.F. – Austrian Format.

Source: Piotr Rachwał, *Księgi metrykalne i stanu cywilnego (do 1900 roku) w archiwach parafialnych Lubelszczyzny* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2021).

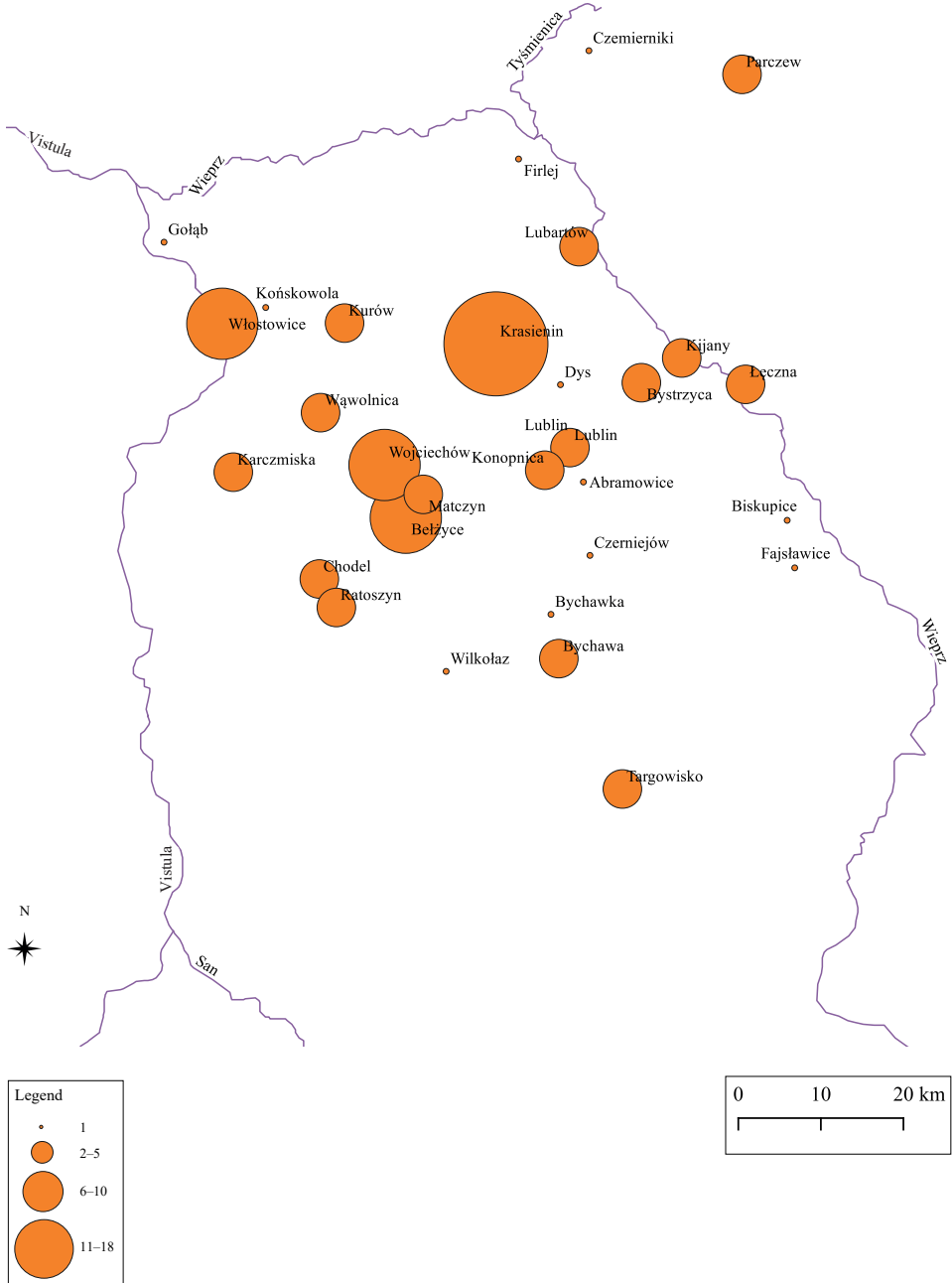
Of these centers, the parishes of Ostrów, Bełżyce, Biskupice, Bochtowice, Czesztorowice, Dys, Firlej, Kamionka, Końskowola, Krasienin, Krzczonów, Kurów, Lubartów, Markuszów, Ratoszyn, Serniki, Targowisko, Wąwolnica, Włostowice, and Żyrzyn had the oldest registration of vital statistics, additionally characterized by the continuity of three data series. In Ostrów, the sources have survived since 1681, while in the remaining ones, registration dates back to the first half of the 18th century. In another 25 centers, records dating back to the second half of the 18th century have survived. Equally old registers of weddings and baptisms are kept by the parish archive in Czemierniki. The marriage registers of Kazimierz parish, as one of very few in the area under study, are of 16th-century provenance. The registration of baptisms also begins relatively early. Population statistics, however, are highly fragmented. The collegiate parish of Lublin also deserves a mention. Of all the archives examined, the oldest registers are preserved there. The baptismal register begins in 1582, but by the 1560s the series is much depleted. In terms of the number of volumes, the most numerous collection comes from Opole parish, with 29 volumes, Lublin Archcathedral parish, with 28 volumes, and Krzczonów parish, with 25 volumes. More than 20 books remain in the archives of the Lublin parish of St. Nicholas with 21, and the parish of Dys with 20 volumes. In turn, in the parish archives of Baranów, Czesztorowice, Garbów, Łuszczów and Milejów, no parish registers have survived¹⁹ (map 2).

¹⁹ Most of the surviving parish registers are devoid of pagination, while some volumes have incomplete or double page numbering, hence it was decided that when referring to selected excerpts from the records in a given register, the name of the parish, its title and the chronological range of the entries would be given.

Map 2. Number of parish registers (Tridentine and Austrian formats) in the archives of the historic district of Lublin



Map 3. Number of records identified as incidental material in the parish registers (Tridentine and Austrian formats) of the Lublin district parishes



Incidental Material Classification and Content

In attempting to characterize the incidental material contained in the collection outlined above, it was assumed that the statistics of such records would include content beyond the regimen imposed by the forms of entry. In all, nearly a hundred records were selected, ranging in volume from single sentences to statistical summaries of several or more pages or inventories of churches and visitation reports. Among all the parish resources reviewed, incidental material is most abundantly represented in the registers of Krasienin parish, with eighteen records. In second place were the parish registers of Bełżyce parish with eight records, with six each in the parish registers of Wojciechów and Włostowice parishes. In Łęczna parish, five such entries were recorded. In the remaining centers there were only single entries (map 3).

For the purpose of classifying the collected source material, but also as an example of a universal proposal for the classification of content of this type, six categories were identified, covering a relatively broad topical range of entries constituting the “incidental” material.

I. The Spiritual, Economic Life and Administration of the Parish

The first group identified, which is also the most numerous, includes mentions of missions held in the parish, accounts related to changes in the staffing of parish offices, church consecrations, the founding of a cemetery, descriptions of visions, prayers of thanksgiving, accounts of exhumations of bodies, visitations, information outside of the form on the dead and those buried unconsecrated, and illegitimate children, lists of those who had confessed and received Holy Communion, and lists of pastors serving in the parish (these are also the most extensive texts in terms of volume, included either between the pages containing the actual records, or on the last pages of the volumes). In addition, there are inventories with descriptions of parish property, mentions of donors to the local church, foundations, court cases in which the parish priest was an involved party, and tips intended as agricultural advice. A total of thirty-nine such entries were collected. The oldest were dated 1636 and 1637. Both excerpts (a total of 5 pages, partly damaged) were inserted in the last pages of the oldest baptismal register for parish Krasienin. The 1700 entries are followed first by an inventory of the parish church, and then by a report of an episcopal inspection, dated December 1637. It contains a list of failings that the parish priest was expected to rectify. In addition to orders concerning, among other things, the proper storage of the Host and consecrated oils and the repair of the altar, the bishop ordered the parish priest to take an accurate census of living

parishioners and to do so when performing the Easter confession,²⁰ and also to take care to accurately record by name the deceased and those being confirmed.²¹ In the context of keeping accurate records of sacraments administered (baptism and marriage) and funerals, attention is drawn to entries recording deaths, which deviated in the range of information provided from the standard recording format. In January 1778, the parish priest of Bychawa reported the death of the noble Joseph Postupalski, who died at the age of 17, and who had not been given the sacraments due to the negligence of his mother, who had failed to notify the priest in time. Despite this, he was buried in the cemetery (on the south side) because of his young age and as a testimony to those who had lived a Christian life.²² In the same month, on January 12, Michal Filarski, aged about 60, died in Stara Wieś. He, neither, had been given the sacraments which, according to reports, was due to his hard-heartedness and resistance; furthermore, he was unwilling to admit his sins and refused to make a final Easter confession. He was buried beneath a cross outside the city. He left behind a son and a daughter.²³ In turn, on June 1, 1778, a certain Paweł, a newcomer from the Parish of Popkowice, died in Zadubia having made no confession or Easter Communion, and also having made no confession before his death. It is interesting that this fact was explained by a protest from Grzegorz Gadzat of Zadub. Paweł, who was about 56 years old, was buried beneath a cross outside the town, near the road to Kielczewice.²⁴

Lists also appear in the pages of the registers, as lists of surnames. In the parish of Bełżyce, there are two lists of illegitimate children. The first includes a list of names from 1692–1698,²⁵ while the second is from 1698–1724.²⁶

²⁰ “Regestrum animarum viventium diligenter conscriptum habeat ac eas circa Confessiones Paschales diligentissime notet.” PA Krasienin [*Liber metrices baptisatorum ab anno 1604*].

²¹ “Defunctorum quoque nec non confirmatorum nomina fidei conscribenda curet.” PA Krasienin [*Liber metrices baptisatorum ab anno 1604*].

²² “Januarius 1778, stara Wieś. Obiit in Domino Nobilis Josephus Postupalsky annorum 17 sacramentis non munitus ob negligentiam matris ejus quod non notificavit sacerdoti sepultus in cemeterio ad meridiem ex ratione testimoniorum quod christiane vixent et annorum paucorum.” PA Bychawa, *Akta zmarłych od 1771 do 1797*.

²³ “Die 12 Januarij [1778] Stara Wieś. Obiit in Domino Generosus Michael Firalsky annorum circiter 60 sacramentis non munitus ob sui renitentiam nollens notificare de sui aegritudine neque Paschali confessione onfessus cujus sepultura sub Cruce extra civitatem Bychawa cum maxima admiratione duo liberi remasi sunt filius et filia.” PA Bychawa, *Akta zmarłych*.

²⁴ “Die 1 Junij [1778] Zadubie. Obiit in Domino nomine Paulus advena de Parochia Popkowicense sine confessione Paschali et Communione circa mortem etiam non confessus ob renitentiam Gregori Gadzata de Zadubie cujus sepultura sub Cruce post civitatem prope viam Kielczewicensem annorum circiter 56.” PA Bychawa, *Register of deaths 1771–1797*.

²⁵ PA Bełżyce, *Natorum ab anno 1679 ad annum 1698*.

²⁶ PA Bełżyce, *Natorum ab anno 1698 ad annum 1723/4*.

The parish registers in Konopnica contain a list of confessors from 1760 and 1765.²⁷ From the parish of Matchyn there is a list of clergy holding the post of parish priest from 1605 to 1895.²⁸ A similar list can be found at the end of the marriage register from the parish of Wojciechów, where a marriage certificate from June 1732 is followed by a list of the names of parish priests since the re-establishment of the Catholic church in Bełżyce from the Calvinists in 1626.²⁹

Within the records, comparatively numerous comments concern the subject of public recordkeeping itself. They come from both the 17th and 18th centuries, and their authors are usually those responsible for overseeing individual parishes. However, there are also notes made by parish priests themselves, who, aware of the neglect in this respect, try to justify the shortcomings. This was the case in the parish of Bychawka, where the parish priest, in a short annotation in the February 1794 register of deaths, apologizes for his careless handwriting, and explains it by his frozen fingers, which have hampered his ability to write carefully.³⁰ Meanwhile, Fr. Mazurkiewicz's illness was used to justify the lack of entries on deaths in December 1757 in Lublin's Czwartek parish.³¹ Ecclesiastical inspectors urged the registers to be kept accurately. In the parish of Parchew, alongside a note made during such a visit there was the advice that church servers should not write in the registers as if they were priests who were performing baptisms.³²

In this group of records, an example of a supplication prayer that begins a series of entries of baptized persons from 1706 in the Kazimierz parish attracts the eye. This short text is a request to God to please deliver the afflicted faithful from the pestilence and war that have continuously devastated Poland since 1701.³³ In turn, a very interesting and relatively extensive (two page) description of apparitions can be found in the baptismal register of Krasienice parish.³⁴

²⁷ PA Konopnica [*Liber metrices mortuorum ab anno 1759*]. See the study of the former by Piotr Rachwał, "Spis ludności parafii Konopnica z 1760 roku," *PDP* 38, no. 2 (2016): 117–32, <https://doi.org/10.18276/pdp.2016.2.38-05>.

²⁸ PA Matczyn, *Liber copulatorum ab anno 1763. Liber mortuorum parochiae Matczynensis ab anno 1750; X 1763–I 1799, I 1750–V 1799*.

²⁹ PA Wojciechów [*Liber metrices copulatorum ab anno 1689*].

³⁰ "Deprecor quia digitos nimium congelatos habui et non potui bene inscribere." PA Bychawka, *Księga I. metryk zejścia zaczyna się od roku 1787, a kończy 1797*.

³¹ "In reliquo huius anni non sunt scripta nomina mortuorum propter infirmitatem Admodum Reverendissimi Mazurkiewicz." PA Czwartek [*Liber metrices mortuorum ab anno 1722*].

³² "Ministri Ecclesiae non scribant in Metrica modo Sacerdotes qui baptisant monetur." PA Parzew, *Księga urodzeń 1708–1721; IV 1708 – XII 1720*.

³³ "Annus Chri. Dni 1706-tus. Hujus initium oramus te Domine Rex coeli et terrae, ut nos a peste et bello, que duo ab anno 1701 in Polonia grassantur, liberare digneris, utque ferocem Svecum bona Patriae vastantum et depopulantem a finibus nostris fugare et potentia dexteræ tuæ digneris prosternere, quia est aliquis qui pugnet pro nobis nisi tu Domine Deus noster, cui sit honor in saecula. Amen." PA Kazimierz Dolny [*Liber metrices baptisatorum ab anno 1687*].

³⁴ PA Krasienin, *Książka urodzeń od 1703 do 1773 roku*.

Among the unique contents in the registers are those designed to impart knowledge of farming, cultivation of crops and animal husbandry. Worthy of citation, due to its content and because it was written in Old French, is a short tutorial on how to grow seedless cherries. According to it, one should proceed as follows: “The secret to producing seedless cherries. This is what you need to do; one year chop down the cherry tree at the third limb from the ground, leaving the stump and splitting it in half so that from the middle of both sides (phrase underlined) you can take out all the pulp without disturbing the sapwood. When you have done this, you should bind the two halves together and seal them with wax both from the sides and the top (to prevent dripping). Once it has grown, in the second year you have to graft it, so you should look for a grafting cherry that has not yet produced, and on the same day of the previous year when you removed the pulp, you should then carefully do the graft.”³⁵ The above text was written on the inside of the back cover of the baptismal register of 1712–1739, and was most likely written by the parish priest, Sebastian Uchmanowicz.

II. Epidemics

The second featured category includes accounts related to the course of dangerous infectious diseases that afflicted either the parish community or had a wider impact. It is a fact that in the Old Polish period, and even as late as the 19th century, the main threat to the population in particular areas was infectious diseases.³⁶ Because of their widespread prevalence and the grave socioeconomic and political consequences they caused, epidemics were considered noteworthy by record keepers. This is supported by the number of entries from the area under study. A total of more than 20 such accounts were found, and the number would be much higher if this statistic included abbreviated terms – *sub tempus pestis* – that record keepers often added when beginning standard record formulas. Epidemics posed a particular threat to residents of larger cities. For example, in Lublin, epidemics broke out in 1592, 1623, 1625, 1629, 1657, 1677. A very difficult time for the entire Lublin region was the mid-17th century wars, and later the period of the Third Northern War. In 1708 there was an outbreak of plague, which claimed many lives, and wreaked even more havoc in 1710 and 1711. In the 1730s, on the other hand,

³⁵ PA Parczew, *Liber metrices baptisatorum ab anno 1712*. [*Liber metrices mortuorum ab anno 1718*]. (Translated from the original Polish.)

³⁶ An extensive article on this subject has been written by Andrzej Karpiński, *W walce z nie-widzialnym wrogiem. Epidemie chorób zakaźnych w Rzeczypospolitej w XVI–XVIII wieku i ich następstwa demograficzne, społeczno-ekonomiczne i polityczne* (Warszawa: Neriton, 2000). There is a wealth of literature on the subject there.

a typhoid epidemic was most likely a serious threat. Subsequent waves of disease appeared with varying intensity on and off until the end of the 19th century.³⁷

The parishes for which such records were found include Abramowice, Bełżyce, Biskupice, Chodel, Czemierniki, Kazimierz Dolny, Kijany, Krasienin, Kurów Lublin, Łęczna, Wąwolnica, Włostowice, and Wojciechów. From the first comes a comparatively extensive entry, made at the beginning of a register of deaths kept in the Austrian format. It is a certificate written by the parish priest at the request of the Abramowice municipality mayor, reporting on the population's unusually high mortality rate in the second half of 1813 and the first half of 1814. The note says that this is a remarkable fact, since usually no more than 90 people die in an entire year, and in this period 282 people have died in 6 months (in 1813, 3 in September, 11 in October, 20 in November, 42 in December; in 1814, 97 in January, 109 in February), and the high mortality rate has continued; the population is now falling sick and dying in such large numbers that 10 people each day are "disposed to die," and the priest cannot keep up with reaching all those in need. Nor can he keep up with digging graves and burying the dead. The note is dated March 4, 1814.³⁸ In Lublin itself, the Black Death epidemic of 1711 took a heavy toll. Described as horrific and severe, the plague led to the deaths of many "respectable" townspeople. The dead included clergymen, which, according to the note's author, resulted in omissions in the registration of the baptized.³⁹ Periods of increased mortality determined by outbreaks of epidemics were also a threat to the accuracy of recording vital statistics, of which contemporaries were also aware. In Biskupice, the priest inserted a note after the September 1710 entries stating that due to rampant pestilence in the parish and difficulty in accessing the parish church, by special permission services had been relocated to the church in Faistawice.⁴⁰

III. War and Politics

Equally frequent as the topic of epidemics are accounts of the battles fought in the territory of individual parishes, the marches of armies and the destruction caused by military operations. These descriptions are not always purely local,

³⁷ For more on infectious disease epidemics and their demographic consequences in the area under study, see Rachwał, *Ruch*, 141–49.

³⁸ PA Abramowice, *Księga metryk*.

³⁹ "In decursu huius mensis et sequentium videlicet Septembris, Octobris et Decembris Justo DEI Iudicio ferox saevaque hac in urbe grassabat pestis, multosque dignorum civium congressit tumulos, quos etiam dolendum Confratres nomine (...) Paulus Borowicz, Stanislaus Młodecki Jacobus Mitrus non evitarunt. Quapropter hoc intervallo temporis multa baptisatorum nomina desiderant." PA Lublin [*Liber metrices baptisatorum ab anno 1700*].

⁴⁰ "Ob grassantem pestilentiam in oppido Biskupice ac non tutum accessum ad ecclesiam parochialem de consensu speciali, quo ad administrationem sacramentorum in villam Faistawice." PA Biskupice, *Urodzonych 1699–1717*.

but also provide a broader perspective and the political background. The area under study, with Lublin at its center, was at the heart of the political life of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at the turn of the 17th century. The political and economic situation deteriorated dramatically in the early 17th century. An armed conflict with Russia affected transit trade, and the issue was exacerbated by internal conflicts. In the mid-17th century, Lublin became an area of armed struggle, and the economy collapsed. Crop yields shrank markedly, and there were years in which famine reigned. The devastation and losses caused by the Swedish “deluge” proved catastrophic.⁴¹ After a decades-long period of stability, the Third Northern War brought another wave of destruction. In the 1800s, Swedish troops devastated the Lublin region seven times with their onslaughts. The following years saw debilitating clashes between the armies of Sweden, Saxony and Russia, the Crown and Lithuanian armies. In 1716, a build-up of armed forces of the Tarnogród and Lithuanian Confederation occurred near Łęczna, and negotiations between August II and the Confederates took place in Lublin and Kazimierz Dolny.⁴² The Lublin region was also battered by destructive battles at the end of the 18th century. From 1792 Russian troops operated in the area, and some of the parishes in the study were badly damaged.⁴³

Of the accounts documenting these events, those from the period of the Great Northern War predominate.⁴⁴ They can be found in the registers from the parishes of Bełżyce, Krasienin, Kurów, Włostowice, and Wojciechów. These are often short notes of the following type: “[In the year of our Lord 1703, during the invasion of Małopolska by Swedish troops amidst unforgivable persecution of the population ...]. On the eve of St. Luke the Evangelist at around 7 o’clock an enemy army swept in from the north, wreaking havoc and with no limits to the looting.”⁴⁵

⁴¹ Ryszard Orłowski, “Problemy społeczno-gospodarcze Lubelszczyzny XVII i XVIII stulecia,” *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska* 32, no. 4 (1977): 63–87; Edward A. Mierzwa, Stanisław Tworek, “W okresie wojen i konfederacji 1648–1696,” in *Dzieje Lubelszczyzny*, ed. Tadeusz Mencil, vol. 1 (Warszawa: PWN, 1974), 362 ff.

⁴² Gustawa Hyczko, “Straty i zniszczenia wojenne we wsiach lubelskich oraz ich skutki w latach trzeciej wojny północnej (1700–1721),” *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych* 28 (1968): 33–54.

⁴³ Wiesław Śladkowski, “Pod zaborem austriackim, w Księstwie Warszawskim i Królestwie Polskim 1795–1831,” in *Dzieje Lubelszczyzny*, 485–90.

⁴⁴ A more elaborate entry dating back to the 17th century comes only from Kurów, and reports on the ongoing activity of Swedish troops in the parish: “Velites advenerunt spoliacerunt Ecclesiam et multos occiderunt tam Christianos tam Judeos die 15 mensis Octobris Anno Domini 1655. Idem die 21 ejusdem mensis iterum invaserunt Velites et multus trucidaverunt. Anno domini 1656 die 20 mensis Februarij exercitus Suecorum pertransiit per civitatem cum damno totiusque populi.” PA Kurów [*Liber metrices baptisatorum ab anno 1628*].

⁴⁵ “Nempe in pervigilio S. Lucae Evangelistae hora circiter 7ma de hoste horribilis a septentrione cursus totus lysieus (...) et in praedio die (,,) apperuerunt columina.” PA Fajstławice, *Metryki zmarłych. Księga pierwsza* [od 1757 r.].

Sometimes, however, the accounts are more detailed. In 1707, in Kurów, the parish priest noted: “In the current year we are going through, many bad things have happened. We were all threatened with destruction and the gravest calamity by barbarians from the east, who perpetrated a cruel slaughter of the entire population of our city of Kurów; they took the population and parishioners in part captive, and in part scattered them. And we, the unfortunate witnesses to this tragedy, watching but not seeing the end of the misery, after these barbarians ransacked the church, we gave up mass and sacraments for a while. Thus, if any children of parishioners of the church in Kurów were baptized in neighboring churches between the last days of March and the first days of September that year, their names were not recorded in this register. However, in the following months of that year, baptismal records continued.”⁴⁶

Also among the incidental material that describes the dire times of war is some that is not limited to the local community, but is often a testament to the record authors’ good grasp of the ongoing geopolitical situation. An example is the description given by the parish priest in Krasienin of the barbaric Russian aggression in 1771. At the time, Poland was suffering widespread misery at the hands of Moscow, the priest writes. The Russians plundered a great deal of grain for food, looted many carts of food, and advanced to the border with Turkey, against whom they fought a war in which many thousands of soldiers on both sides died. In Poland, the Muscovites persecuted the Confederates, and several times tried to capture the fortress in Częstochowa from which, suffering great losses, they were fought off. The people of Lanckorona were heavily involved in the war with Moscow, taking many prisoners in numerous clashes, and sending some of them back to Moscow. Later in the account we also find a brief description of the kidnapping of King Stanislaus August Poniatowski and the pithy conclusion that a host of calamities resulted from it.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ “Anno currente quo vidimus mala haque annotantur. Minitante nobis omnibus excidium et ultimam vitae cladem Barbarorum Orientalium cruento mucrone Univerſus Civitatis Noſtrae Kuroviensis Populus et Plebs Parochiana in jugam et diſperſionem ſe convenit. Nos vero infelices huius tragediae ſpectatores, ſpectantes et non videntes malorum finem, poſt vigilatam ſpoliatamque ab iisdem barbaris Eccleſiam noſtram a ſacrificiis et ab adminiſtratione ſacramentorum per ab quam ſpaciū temporis ſeceſſimus. Ideoque ſi quorum ex Parochianis Eccleſiae Kuroviensis in Eccleſiis proximioribus, ab ultimis diebus Martij uſque ad primas dies Septembris ejuſdem anni currentis infantes baptizati fuerunt, eorum in Eccleſiae huius Libris Nomina non exarantur. Tandem ſequentibus menſibus ejuſdem anni inſcriptiones baptizatorum continuantur.” PA Kurów [*Liber metrices baptisatorum ab anno 1691*].

⁴⁷ “Hoc anno multae calamitates a Moſitis inflictæ. Hi extorquendo multa pro victualibus frumenta tum cogendo multas vecturas tum iisdem victualibus, ad limites Turcam cum quibus bellum gerebant et ab utraque parte multa millia interierunt, in noſtro vere Regno continuo Moſchi confaederatam militum perſequebant. Fortalitiā Częſtochoviensem aliquoties expugnare conabat, ſed totus cum damno uni repulſam paſſi. Idem dicendum de Tynieć et Caſtro Lanckoron. unde obſeverati repreſſerunt Moſchos unde tamen tempore conflictus in ubriis locis Moſkiti in

IV. Natural Disasters and Famine

The fourth category of records present in the parish registers are natural disasters, understood here as extreme natural phenomena causing significant damage and losses to people or the economy, and therefore various types of violent windstorms, hurricanes, floods, fires, severe frosts and droughts and, often the result of these disasters, famine.⁴⁸

Events from this category featured in records from seven parishes, Bystrzyca, Kijan, Krasienin, Lubartów, Łęczna, Parczew and Włostowice. Of note is the fact that the vast majority describe the destruction wrought by fires. The fires in Łęczna had particularly drastic consequences. The first occurred on September 16, 1710, when the parish church of St. Mary Magdalene burned down, as well as the Church of the Holy Spirit. Immediately afterwards, an epidemic broke out in the city.⁴⁹ A similar disaster befell the town in 1764. According to accounts, the fire started at the town's storage sheds (warehouses), consumed 62 houses, 54 warehouses full of crops, as well as several sheds in the town center, which also eventually burned down. Thus, any human hope that had hitherto persisted crumbled, and the only hope that remained was that the town had somehow survived.⁵⁰

A vivid account of the devastation caused by the fire is also given by a priest from the Bystrzyca parish. After the extremely unfortunate year of 1795,

captivitate capti et ad Moschoviam remissi, aliorum pauca interierunt. Cuius Congregationis fuit Regimentarius Generalis Casimirus Puławski strenuli scimus. In Lituania Bęński Dux Exercituum Lit. movit et confederationem in numero militum 6000 sed non bene dispositis cum ignominia cui a Moschicis dispersus in Prussiam fugari totus arripuit Varszavia nocturno tempore in platea cum ad palatium venerabilis Rex Sta. Augusti a quibusdam ei ofensio enormiter in capite vulneratus confusus in captivitatem tractus, sed post aliquod horarum a iisdem libere dimissus. Hac stante calamitta multa iudicia omnibus praefatis annis praeter quorum vere centi crimine iudicabantur.” PA Krasienin, *Książka urodzeń*.

⁴⁸ In the pre-war works on natural disasters, which are still current, we find statistics on years of famine in addition to weather anomalies. Stanisława Namaczyńska, *Kronika klęsk elementarnych w Polsce i w krajach sąsiednich w latach 1648–1696*, vol. 1: *Zjawiska meteorologiczne i pomory* (Lwów: Kasa im. Minakowskiego, 1937 (=Badania z Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych 23); F. Jukniewicz, “Zjawiska meteorologiczne i stan urodzajów oraz pomory w Polsce w latach 1697–1750,” *Sprawozdania Towarzystwa Naukowego we Lwowie* 17, no. 1 (1937): 63–70. From the more recent works, see Piotr Miodunka, “Staropolskie księgi metrykalne jako źródło do badania klęsk elementarnych,” in *Od powietrza, głodu, ognia i wojny... Klęski elementarne na przestrzeni wieków*, eds. Tomasz Głowiński and Elżbieta Kościak (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo GAJT, 2013), 41–58; Michał T. Wójciuk, “Zjawiska atmosferyczne, elementy meteorologiczne i klęski żywiołowe na Litwie w latach 1697–1763 w wybranych źródłach narracyjnych,” *Rocznik Lituanistyczny* 1 (2015): 115–69. There is also more on the issue there.

⁴⁹ PA Łęczna, *Liber baptisatorum from 1702 to 1725 in the parish of Łęczna*.

⁵⁰ “Anno hoc 1746 4 7bris incendium factum ex huttyis Civitatis Lecznensis magnum domos combussit ignis 62, horrea plena segetibus 54 exceptis cliterijs in medio civitatis quas etiam devoravit. Sic spes humana quodmodo alit hinc fallit vere, non habemus hic manentem Civitatem nisi aliam inquiramus.” PA Łęczna, *Liber baptisatorum*.

on September 24, a fire consumed the entire year's crops and all the buildings except the rectory, and reduced all the equipment, carts, everything for the needy and tools for domestic work to ashes. The fire, which was huge, started from an unknown cause at the rear of the buildings, and from 8 a.m. onward for about half an hour, destroyed many large buildings, leaving the church's rector destitute. He assessed the total damage at 30,000.⁵¹

The most detailed description, this time not pertaining to a fire, is found in the baptismal book of Krasienin and refers to the events of 1713. The text consists of two parts of sorts. The first is written in Latin, while the second section is in Polish. At the beginning of the account, the author notes that the year was exceptional. The winter storms subsided around the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus, but the frost, with occasional short breaks, held until spring. During this period there was no snow, rain was also rare, and the weather was sunny. At the beginning of March, the land was plowed and planted, but nothing grew, neither in the fields nor in the gardens, nothing turned green, nothing grew or blossomed until late spring.⁵² Further on, the account continued in Polish: "May bright, until there were heavy floods in the meadows that drowned the grains of the rye in bloom, vegetables scarce and a serious shortage of food. However, the Saxons were calm, our side and the Saxons passed through, and in Greater Poland, Moscow was somewhat troublesome. Russian Voyevoda taken in Warsaw and sent to Saxony ... Swedish Carolus still in Bandera. Seym wrecked."⁵³

V. Extraordinary Events

In the life of every community there is no shortage of events that, by their nature, depart from the norm and disturb the peace, arouse curiosity or prompt reflection. Sometimes, in the eyes of contemporaries, they deserved to be immortalized in the form of a brief description. Such accounts can be found in sources from several parishes. In the village of Łagiewniki in the Bystrzyca parish, Małgorzata Szymańska's son Maciej died at the age of 6. He was buried in the cemetery. As we learn

⁵¹ "Post infelissimum annum 1795tum quo die 24 7bris ignis omnem totius anni segetem et omnia quoditiva praeter Domum Plebanalem devoravit et in Cynerem omnia superlectilia, omnes currus, omnes res hospitales et ad usum laboris domesticis pertinentes commutavit. Hoc vero tam grande incendium a tergo Herrai ignoto modo erat inceptum et fere per mediam horam de mane octavam multa et magna aedificia combussit et me Rectorem Ecclesiae tum indigentiae et pauparitate induxit. Totum damnum 30 000." PA Bystrzyca, *Zmarłych roku 1785*.

⁵² "1713. Annus hic singularis fuit: Hyems cum omnibus suis tempestatibus tempeste circa festum Purificationis recessit, gelu de hinc ad ipsius adulti veris tempora et id exiguum vix semel aut bis fuit. Ninxit nihil tunc temporis, pluit aliantum bis aut ter, continua serenitas, arabatur ineunte Martio seminabatur nihil tamet oriebatur in agris et hortis, nihil florebat, nihil virebat aut frondebat, uaque adveniente consueto tempore, imo maturo ver." PA Krasienin, *Książka urodzeń*.

⁵³ Ibidem.

from further accounts, the boy was killed by a wolf, which also tore apart and injured people, especially younger children, in many other places. The priest, as he remarked, recorded this testimony in memory of the case.⁵⁴ Almost a year later, on June 20, 1791, in Rokitno, a similar fate befell eight-year-old Agnieszka. Only her remains (head and hand) were buried in the cemetery.⁵⁵

An equally tragic account, written in Polish, was recorded in the baptismal register of Włostowice parish. On September 1, 1743, an accident happened there. Seven people were trying to cross the Vistula to gather pears. While they were crossing, a violent storm blew up, which capsized the boat. Five of the people drowned. The bodies of three women and two men were found and buried in the following days.⁵⁶

A note from Firlej is of a different nature. It concerns a funeral that took place in the local parish in 1788. On May 1, a beggar named Michael, surname unknown, who was a native of Ethiopia (and therefore Black) died. He had come to Firlej from the town of Lubartów, where he had been living for several years. In the course of his travels he ended his life; he was not suffering from any illness, and his death was violent. Since he had lived a pious and Christian life, he was absolved and received Holy Communion at Easter, and was buried in the church cemetery on May 4. He died at the age of seventy or older.⁵⁷

VI. Literary Works

The last category, due to its original form of writing, differs from the earlier materials featured. Among the texts found in the registers of the Lublin region are epitaphs and short rhyming poems. In the oldest register of deaths in the Kazimierz Dolny parish, epitaphs were included after the February 1688 register, listing,

⁵⁴ “Łagiewniki. Die 28 Julii. Obiit in Domino Mathias annorum 6 filius Lab. Margarithae Szymanska sepultus in cemeterio. Hic notatus hoc anno 1790. Sufrascriptum puerum esse a Lupo devoratum qua Bestija et in alijs plurimis locis homines et praecipue juniores liberos devoravit et vulneravit. Hoc inscribitur ob rei memoriam.” PA Bystrzyca, *Zmarłych roku 1785*.

⁵⁵ “Rokitno. Die 20 Junij. Inscribitur hoc propter memoriam futuri temporis, quod puella nomine Agnes annorum 8. filia Adaberti Snoscicki et Marianna conjugum a Bestia seu Lupo in sylva devorata fute reliquie vero ut caput et manus sepulte sunt in cemeterio.” PA Bystrzyca, *Zmarłych roku 1785*.

⁵⁶ PA Włostowice, *Księga urodzonych od roku 1721 do 1745, zaślubionych od roku 1722 do 1732, zmarłych od roku 1721 do roku 1749*.

⁵⁷ “1788. Ex oppido Firlejow. Die vero 1ma mensis Maj quievit pie in Domino defunctus certus pauper sive mendicus nomine Michael cognomine ignotus de gente seu natione Aethiopus seu vulgo Murziyn natus in Arabia baptizatus vero in Polonia et occupando in civitate Lubartow per aliquot certos annos vertet pro mendicatione sua ad hoc oppidum Firlejow et ambulando nihil egrotando repentina morte mortuus est. Dum vero pie et Christiane vixit communionem sacram et confessionem Paschalem absolvitur ac per hoc sepultus est in cemeterio eiusdem Ecclesiae Parochialis Firleviensis die 4ta Maj ejusdem mensis more christianorum et bonorum Catholicorum, etatis vero fuit seu annorum suos habens circiter 70 vel plura.” PA Firlej, *Księga zmarłych parafii Firlej (Firlejów) od roku 1758–1797. Księga numer XII*.

among other things, the many accomplishments of the deceased. There are more than a dozen of these entries covering the period from 1688 to 1757.⁵⁸

On the inside of the back cover of the 18th-century register of baptisms for the parish of Końskowola, there is a four-line poem:

God sees, time flies, death hastens, eternity waits.
 Short life, death inevitable
 Final reckoning, everlasting eternity
 Earthly pleasures – oh, how they fade.⁵⁹

Another interesting example of local literary creativity are the short rhymes appearing at the beginning of the 17th century marriage register from Wąwolnica parish. They were written by the local presbyter Grzegorz Charabniewicz. The rhymes were written in the Polish of the time and one in Latin:

A lovely couple's getting married, please bless them, Oh Lord,
 The priest who gives the wife away, he himself cannot afford.

Vir bonus ac uxor hinc est concordia tota
 Non belli faedus, sed pacis esse debet.

Nothing worse for the flock than domestic strife,
 A field trampled by oxen will bear no life.

Some say marriage is holy; I wouldn't say that's true.
 The vestments and the blessings make you think it's holy, too.
 But once the wedding's over and the couple's left alone,
 Their hell starts with his laziness and his wife's heart of stone.⁶⁰

Conclusion

The analysis of the entries that go beyond the usual form assigned to the registers of the baptized, married and deceased by their content structure confirms the conviction that parish registers are not only an excellent example of an interdisciplinary source, but also a gold mine of knowledge on the functioning of historical societies in various respects. Chronicle content, as *sylvae rerum*, and referred to

⁵⁸ PA Kazimierz, *Metryki kościelne zejścia parafii kazimierskiej od dnia 11 stycznia 1687 roku do dnia 13 maja 1767*.

⁵⁹ PA Końskowola [*Liber metrices baptisatorum ab anno 1765*]. (Translated from the original Polish.)

⁶⁰ PA Wąwolnica, *Księga II zaślubień ab anno 1696 do roku 1778*. (Translated from the original Polish.)

as incidental material, relates to the spiritual sphere of human life, along with political, economic or cultural issues. Often, they can also provide, by the fact of their locality, a basis for explaining or supporting research hypotheses posed by researchers of the past, especially regional historians. A more detailed look at this type of source, especially in a broader territorial and chronological dimension, also makes us think about the issue of securing these valuable source materials from destruction and irretrievable loss,⁶¹ and also prompts reflection on the options and methods for source editing of the chosen archival materials.⁶²

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⁶¹ The collection of parish registers that form the basis of the research featured in this article is stored in its entirety in the individual parish archives.

⁶² See Tomisław Giergiel, “Staropolska *Liber Baptisatorum* jako edycja (stan badań, metody, postulaty),” *Roczniki Humanistyczne* 68, no. 2 (2020): 193–216.

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How to Grow Stoneless Cherries, or What Parish Registers Hide Besides Demographics

Summary

Public registers are considered to be both valuable and one of the primary sources for demographic and historical research. Despite their mundane nature, the range of possible research questions that can be raised based on the information contained therein means that they are used by researchers from a variety of fields, including historians, genealogists, sociologists, biologists and linguists. However, the literature lacks a comprehensive analysis, in broader territorial and chronological terms, of those aspects of the source that are not formally inscribed in its genetic structure, i.e., what is known as incidental material. By this term we mean all entries in both narrative and verse form that go beyond the standard form of public register content.

The aim of the article is to attempt to collect content of this type, to systematize and categorize it, and to answer the question of whether the practice of placing different types of records—in a source formalized in terms of structure—was common. The research was based on parish registers from the historic Lublin district, an area of about 6,500 sq. km. with Lublin centrally located. There were 60 parishes in the area. The source material used is stored in its entirety in parish archives; as part of earlier work, it had been inventoried, digitized and put in the public domain. The chronology of the research covers the period from 1582, when the oldest surviving parish register was started, to 1810, when changes of a legal and formal nature took place in terms of recording the population's vital records. A total of 385 books kept in Tridentine format and 220 volumes compiled in rubric format (the “Austrian” format) were reviewed.

After analyzing the sources' content, and based on previous proposals for categorizing incidental material, six groups were determined, which made it possible to fully classify the incidental material. These categories were: spiritual life, economic life and parish administration; epidemics; war and politics; natural disasters and famine; extraordinary events; and literary works. A total of nearly 100 records were found, with the first category the most prevalent. It also turned out that the most numerous group of entries were those made in the 18th century, especially by the 1760s. The number of such entries depended on the parish, and probably more precisely on the writing predisposition of those responsible for keeping the registers. Most entries were found in the registers of the parishes of Krasienin, Belzyce, Wojciechów and Włostowice, while for some parishes no such entries were found at all.

A number of research suggestions emerge from the analysis of the sources' contents. Firstly, it appears advisable to make similar attempts at a detailed inventory of the parish registers, along with incidental material contained in them, for other areas of Poland. This work would certainly yield insights into valuable mementos of the past, and would also have an invaluable cognitive value *per se* for a wider audience. Secondly, it would be desirable to consider a coordinated campaign to publish critical editions of selected, particularly valuable, sources of this type.

Jak wyhodować wiśnie bez pestek, czyli co oprócz danych demograficznych kryją księgi metrykalne

Streszczenie

Księgi metrykalne uważane są za cenne, a zarazem za jedno z podstawowych źródeł do badań demograficzno-historycznych. Mimo swojej schematyczności, zakres możliwych pytań badawczych, jakie można postawić w związku z zawartymi tam informacjami powoduje, że wykorzystywane są przez badaczy różnych specjalności, w tym historyków, genealogów, socjologów, biologów, językoznawców. W literaturze przedmiotu brakuje jednak szczegółowego spojrzenia – w szerszym wymiarze terytorialnym i chronologicznym – na te elementy źródła, które nie są formalnie wpisane w jego genetyczną strukturę, czyli tzw. materiał przygodny. Pod pojęciem tym rozumiemy wszelkie wpisy zarówno w formie narracyjnej, jak i wierszowanej, wykraczające swoją treścią poza standardowy formularz zapisów metrykalnych.

Celem artykułu jest próba zebrania treści tego typu, jego usystematyzowanie i kategoryzacja, a także odpowiedź na pytanie, czy praktyka umieszczania różnego rodzaju zapisów – w sformalizowanym pod względem struktury źródle – była powszechna. Badania oparto na księgach metrykalnych z historycznego powiatu lubelskiego, obszaru liczącego ok. 6500 km² z centralnie położonym Lublinem. Na obszarze tym funkcjonowało 60 ośrodków parafialnych. Wykorzystany materiał źródłowy przechowywany jest w całości

w archiwach parafialnych, w ramach wcześniejszych prac został on wcześniej zinventaryzowany, poddany digitalizacji i udostępniony w domenie publicznej. Chronologia badań obejmuje okres od 1582 r., kiedy rozpoczęto prowadzenie najstarszej zachowanej obecnie księgi metrykalnej, do 1810 r., kiedy to nastąpiły zmiany o charakterze prawno-formalnym w zakresie rejestrowania ruchu naturalnego ludności. Razem przejrano 385 ksiąg prowadzonych według formularza trydenckiego oraz 220 woluminów sporządzonych w formie rubrykowanej (tzw. formularz austriacki).

Po przeprowadzeniu analizy treści źródeł, uwzględniając także wcześniejsze propozycje w zakresie kategoryzacji materiału przygodnego, wyróżniono sześć grup, które umożliwiły pełną klasyfikację materiału przygodnego. Wyróżnione kategorie to: życie duchowe, gospodarcze i administracja parafii; epidemie; wojna i polityka; klęski żywiołowe i głód; zdarzenia ekstraordynaryjne; twórczość literacka. W sumie stwierdzono blisko 100 zapisów, z czego najliczniej reprezentowana była pierwsza kategoria. Okazało się także, że najliczniejszą grupę wpisów stanowią te sporządzone w XVIII w., zwłaszcza do lat 60. tego stulecia. Liczba tego typu treści zależała od parafii, a bardziej precyzyjnie – zapewne od predyspozycji pisarskich osób odpowiedzialnych za prowadzenie ksiąg metrykalnych. Najwięcej wpisów odnaleziono w metrykach parafii Krasienin, Bełżyce, Wojciechów, Włostowice, zaś dla części parafii wpisów takich nie stwierdzono w ogóle.

Na podstawie przeprowadzonej analizy treści źródeł pojawia się kilka postulatów badawczych. Po pierwsze wydaje się celowe podjęcie podobnych prób szczegółowej inwentaryzacji ksiąg metrykalnych wraz z ich zawartością pod kątem materiału przygodnego dla innych obszarów Polski. Prace te pozwoliłyby zapoznać się z cennymi pamiątkami przeszłości, miałyby też *per se* nieocenioną wartość poznawczą dla szerszego grona odbiorców. Po drugie należałoby rozważyć skoordynowaną akcję krytycznych edycji wydawniczych wybranych, szczególnie cennych, źródeł tego typu.

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