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JESUITS OF THE LITHUANIAN PROVINCE  
IN THE FACE OF THE EPIDEMIC OF PLAGUE  
IN THE YEARS 1708–1711\*

**Key words:** the Society of Jesus, contagious diseases, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Great Northern War (1700–1721)

Epidemics are a typical aspect of life and death in ancient centuries which deeply affected the psyche of people. Between the mid-14<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the plague was among the most dangerous infectious diseases afflicting European society.<sup>1</sup> Apart from its economic and demographic consequences, a subject worthy of research is the reaction of our ancestors in the face of this direct life threat. As part of the study area, the subject of this article is the activity of the Jesuits during the plague that spread in Central and Eastern Europe in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the context of the ongoing Great Northern War (1700–1721), the aforementioned epidemic caused a significant demographic drop. The Fathers of the Society of Jesus could not remain indifferent to this event. The plague led the Jesuits to face two major challenges: the fulfillment of the Order's mission to support Christians in achieving salvation, and protection of the owned human and material resources, in order to renew their pastoral work and teaching after the end of the epidemic.

As part of the broader subject of the relationship between Church and society, the analysis of the various initiatives taken by the Jesuits will highlight both the strategies used by the monks in times of imminent threat, as well as the impact

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<sup>1</sup> See: Philippe ARIÉS, *Człowiek i śmierć*, trans. Eligia BĄKOWSKA, Warszawa 1989; Samuel K. COHEN, *The Cult of Remembrance and the Black Death in Six Central Italian Cities*, Baltimore 1997; Patrick J. GEARY, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages*, Ithaca (NY) 1994; David HERLIHY, *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West*, Cambridge (MA) 1995; Colin PLATT, *King Death: The Black Death and Its Aftermath in Late-Medieval England*, Toronto 1997.

of the plague on their communities. Although the basic data on the victims of the plague do not raise objections, a careful reading of the Jesuit sources leads to the conclusion that they still hold much hitherto unexplored information. This article exists precisely to fill this gap in research. The key question is: to what extent were the perceptions and the behavior of the Jesuits – a coherent group of people joined by a spiritual and legal bond – similar to the views and actions of the society, which they lived in?

The plague spread out to the Baltic Sea in the first decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as part of a pandemic which extended from Central Asia, where it had started in the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, its expansion did not occur only along trade routes. The scale of the epidemic was increased by the armies involved in the Great Northern War.<sup>2</sup> After the first outbreaks in 1702, the bubonic plague swept across the following areas: the Voivodeship of Ruthenia, Podolia and Volhynia,<sup>3</sup> then Lesser Poland, Greater Poland, Mazovia<sup>4</sup> and Royal Prussia, to finally reach Gdańsk in 1709.<sup>5</sup> The emergence of pathogens in that city accelerated the expansion of the epidemic across the Baltic Sea, including Königsberg (today's Kaliningrad) in the Duchy of Prussia. From there it penetrated the neighboring areas of the Commonwealth, including Warmia, and the western districts of both the Duchy of Samogitia (Lithuanian: Žemaitija) and the Voivodeship of Troki (Lithuanian: Trakai). The epidemic spread to the rest of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1710, which was conducive to two factors: the great famine caused by an extremely cold winter, and the taking over of the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea by the Russian army.<sup>6</sup> This allowed Peter I to redirect his forces, who were carriers of the plague, to other fronts. Retreating from the battlefields along the Daugava River, the Russian army spread the epidemic, among others, to Dyneburg (Latvian: Daugavpils), Polotsk (Belarusian: Polatsk), and Vitebsk (Belarusian: Vitsebsk). Troops sent to the west, marching through Courland, Samogitia and

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<sup>2</sup> The connection between plagues and military activities has been touched upon in literature many times. See: Andrzej KARPIŃSKI, *W walce z niewidzialnym wrogiem. Epidemie chorób zakaźnych w Rzeczypospolitej XVI–XVIII wieku i ich następstwa demograficzne, społeczno-ekonomiczne i polityczne*, Warszawa 2000, pp. 291–295.

<sup>3</sup> Only in Lvov (Ukrainian: Lviv) it led to around a 40% population decline (Łucja CHAREWICZOWA, *Kłęski zaraz w dawnym Lwowie*, Lwów 1930, p. 67).

<sup>4</sup> A. KARPIŃSKI, *W walce z niewidzialnym wrogiem*, p. 71.

<sup>5</sup> Eugeniusz SIENKOWSKI, *Dżuma w Gdańsku w 1709 r. Studium z dziejów epidemiologii*, *Archiwum Historii Medycyny*, vol. 33: 1970, no. 3–4, pp. 329, 355. It caused there the death of about 25 000 people; Zdzisław KROPIDŁOWSKI, *Formy opieki nad ubogimi w Gdańsku od XVI do XVIII wieku*, Gdańsk 1992, p. 143.

<sup>6</sup> Riga, defended by a Swedish garrison, was under siege between November 1709 and July 1710. In May a plague broke out therein and was quickly transmitted onto Russian soldiers. The same happened during the siege of other cities: Wyborg (Russian: Vyborg), Kexholm (Russian: Priozersk), Rewel (Estonian: Tallinn) and Parnau (Estonian: Pärnu), which surrendered between June and September 1710 (Karl-Erik FRANDSEN, *The Last Plague in the Baltic Region. 1709–1713*, Copenhagen 2009, pp. 42–43).

Lithuania, also spread the plague, among other places, to Mitawa (Latvian: Jelgava), Szomberga (Latvian: Skaistkalne), and Krože (Lithuanian: Kražiai).

Since the plague of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century had its most significant impact in the regions adjacent to the Baltic Sea, the range of the considerations here can be narrowed down to the geographical area covered by the Lithuanian Province of the Society of Jesus. This administrative unit, established in 1608, included not only most of the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but also Livonia and Courland, Warmia and the northern part of Podlachia (Polish: Podlasie) and Mazovia (pol. Mazowsze) as well. The Province should be viewed in two ways: as an administrative unit consisting of a number of institutions (colleges, residences, or missions) as well as a group of monks under the authority of their supervisor, called provincial superior.<sup>7</sup>

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For a long time infectious diseases have been of interest to researchers, primarily to those engaged in historical demography and history of medicine. In Polish historiography, the essential works on the subject are: the monograph of Franciszek Giedroyc,<sup>8</sup> the studies of Andrzej Karpiński<sup>9</sup> and Jan Kracik,<sup>10</sup> as well as several articles published both as a collective work, and separately in scientific journals.<sup>11</sup> In the case of the plague which occurred at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, however, the studies have a rudimentary character, as they merely illustrate the impact of the epidemic on the lives in particular cities or regions.<sup>12</sup> Valuable information

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<sup>7</sup> Regarding the personnel of the Lithuanian province, in general see: Andrea MARIANI, *Personaleinsatz und -mobilität in der litauischen Provinz der Gesellschaft Jesu im 18. Jahrhundert*, *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropaforschung*, Jg. 63: 2014, H. 2, pp. 163–213.

<sup>8</sup> Franciszek GIEDROYĆ, *Mór w Polsce w wiekach ubiegłych*, Warszawa 1899.

<sup>9</sup> A. KARPIŃSKI, *W walce z niewidzialnym wrogiem*.

<sup>10</sup> Jan KRACIK, *Pokonać Czarną Śmierć. Staropolskie postawy wobec zarazy*, Kraków 1991.

<sup>11</sup> See: Małgorzata JASZCZUK, *Dżuma w polskim piśmiennictwie w XVIII wieku*, *Medycyna Nowożytna*, vol. 1: 1994, issue 2, pp. 31–59; *Charitas. Miłosierdzie i opieka społeczna w ideologii, normach i praktyce społeczności wyznaniowych w Rzeczypospolitej XVI–XVIII wieku*, ed. Urszula AUGUSTY-  
NIAK, Andrzej KARPIŃSKI, Warszawa 1999; *Wśród córek Eskulapa. Szkice z dziejów medycyny i higieny w Rzeczypospolitej XVI–XVIII wieku*, ed. Andrzej KARPIŃSKI, Warszawa 2009.

<sup>12</sup> See: E. SIENKOWSKI, op. cit., pp. 309–401; Z. KROPIDŁOWSKI, op. cit., pp. 146–160; Janusz CHARYTONIUK, *Walka z epidemią dżumy w Elblągu na początku XVIII wieku*, *Rocznik Elbląski*, vol. 10: 1985, pp. 35–57; Stanisław FLIS, *Dżuma na Mazurach i Warmii w latach 1708–1711*, *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie*, 1960, no. 2, pp. 473–523; Jolanta ŚLIŻEWSKA, *Dżuma na Mazurach w latach 1708–1711*, [in:] *Życie codzienne na dawnych ziemiach pruskich. Człowiek a środowisko*, ed. Hanna KRÓLIKOWSKA, Olsztyn 1999, pp. 45–51; Georg BRANDT, *Die Pest der Jahre 1707–1713 in der heutigen Provinz Posen*, *Zeitschrift der Historischen Gesellschaft für die Provinz Posen*, Bd. 17: 1902, pp. 301–328; Jarosław BURCHARDT, Roman K. MEISSNER, Dorota BURCHARDT, “Oddech śmierci” – zaraza dżumy w Wielkopolsce i w Poznaniu w pierwszej połowie XVIII wieku, *Nowiny Lekarskie*, vol. 78: 2009, no. 1, pp. 79–84; Emilia KARPACZ, “Oplakane czasy” – epidemia dżumy w Krakowie w latach 1707–1710. Przyczynek do badań nad upadkiem królewskiego miasta, *Folia Historica Cracoviensia*, vol. 18: 2012, pp. 239–256; Katarzyna PĘKACKA-FALKOWSKA, *Profilaktyka przeciwdżumowa w nowożytnym Toruniu na przykładzie działań administracyjnych i leczenia*, Toruń 2011; eadem,

about the plague is also found in monographs focused on particular cities<sup>13</sup> or their demographic development.<sup>14</sup> Other noteworthy sources are the studies concerning infectious diseases in particular areas throughout the ages.<sup>15</sup>

Similar to the Polish-language literature, the Lithuanian historiography also lacks a general overview. The existing studies provide little information on health issues in Lithuania over the centuries.<sup>16</sup> The historiography of Western European and Scandinavian countries is significantly richer, their tradition dating back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup> In addition to numerous articles on the deadly epidemics and their toll on particular regions,<sup>18</sup> there are also more comprehensive studies.<sup>19</sup>

In the context of Jesuit historiography, the impact of the plague on the life and the activity of the Society of Jesus has so far remained on the sidelines of historians' attention. An article by Ludwik Grzebień outlines this issue, basing mainly on literature and printed sources.<sup>20</sup> Valuable information on the most important events related to various epidemics are referred to in the five-volume monograph by Stanisław Załęski, devoted to the history of the Jesuits in the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth.<sup>21</sup> In the fourth volume, focusing on single houses of the Order,

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"Wielka zaraza w Toruniu w trakcie trzeciej wojny północnej jako «fakt totalny»", Toruń 2012 (PhD thesis written under the supervision of Professor Krzysztof Mikulski at the Faculty of Historical Sciences of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń).

<sup>13</sup> See: Franz BUCHHÖLZ, *Braunsberg im Wandel der Jahrhunderte. Festschrift zum 650-jährigen Stadtjubiläum am 23. und 24. Juni 1934*, Braunsberg 1934, p. 164.

<sup>14</sup> Cezary KUKŁO, *Rodzina w osiemnastowiecznej Warszawie*, Białystok 1991, pp. 84–86, 115–119, 147.

<sup>15</sup> Ł. CHAREWICZOWA, op. cit., pp. 67–68.

<sup>16</sup> Milda BUDRIENĖ, *Iš Lietuvos sveikatos apsaugos istorijos*, Čikaga – Vilnius 1992, pp. 21–29; Ieva GATELYTĖ, "Ypač pavojingų užkrečiamųjų ligų istorinė raida Lietuvoje XIV–XVIII a.a.," [Vilnius] 2011 (MA thesis written under the supervision of Vitalia J. Miečutavičiūtė PhD at the Medical Faculty of the University of Vilnius).

<sup>17</sup> See: Georg STICKER, *Abhandlungen aus der Seuchengeschichte und Seuchenlehre*, Bd. 1: *Die Pest*, Gießen 1908.

<sup>18</sup> It included Finland, Scania, East Prussia and the cities of Hamburg and Stralsund. See: Nils G. ENGSTRÖM, *Pesten i Finland 1710*, Hippokrates. Suomen Lääketieteen Historian Seuran Vuosikirja, [vol.] 11: 1994, pp. 38–46; Bodil E. B. PERSSON, *Pestens gåta. Farsoter i det tidiga 1700-talets Skåne* (Studia Historica Lundensia, vol. 5), Lund 2001; Wilhelm SAHM, *Geschichte der Pest in Ostpreußen*, Leipzig 1905; Stefan WINKLE, *Die Pest in Hamburg. Epidemiologische und ätiologische Überlegungen während und nach der letzten Pestepidemie im Hamburger Raum 1712/13*, *Hamburger Ärzteblatt*, 1983, H. 2–3, pp. 1–14; Jörg ZAPNIK, *Pest und Krieg im Ostseeraum. Der "Schwarze Tod" in Stralsund während des Großen Nordischen Krieges (1700–1721)* (Greifswalder Historische Studien, Bd. 7), Hamburg 2007.

<sup>19</sup> See: K.-E. FRANDSEN, op. cit.; Stefan KROLL, *Die "Pest" im Ostseeraum zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung*, [in:] *Städtesystem und Urbanisierung im Ostseeraum in der Frühen Neuzeit: Urbane Lebensräume und Historische Informationssysteme, Beiträge des wissenschaftlichen Kolloquiums in Rostock vom 15. und 16. November 2004* (Geschichte und Wissenschaft, [Bd.] 12), hrsg. v. idem, Kersten KRÜGER, Berlin 2006, pp. 124–148.

<sup>20</sup> Ludwik GRZEBIEŃ, *Jezuici polscy wobec epidemii*, [in:] *Charitas*, pp. 245–255.

<sup>21</sup> Stanisław ZAŁĘSKI, *Jezuici w Polsce*, vol. 1–4, Lwów – Kraków 1900–1905, passim.

the author, himself a Jesuit, pays close attention to the effects of the plague on the Jesuits. According to the apologetic purpose of this work, Załęski mentions the victims, and sometimes describes their merits in the field of pastoral efforts.<sup>22</sup> A similar approach was characteristic of subsequent historiography, as evidenced by a study on the various seminaries.<sup>23</sup> An important starting point for statistical research is the list of the dead Jesuits published by Jan Popłatek<sup>24</sup>.

All these works are based largely on religious records preserved in the Roman Archive of the Society of Jesus (Archivum Romanum Societatis Jesu). The sources which enable to reconstruct the activity of the Jesuits during an epidemic can be divided into two groups. The first includes narratives, describing the actions taken in the face of the plague. Such information can be found both in the chronicles (*historiae*) of various houses, and in annual reports on the pastoral activities (*litterae annuae*), regularly sent to the Jesuit Curia in Rome.<sup>25</sup> Some interesting details are provided in the slightly more comprehensive chronicles of some colleges, preserved in the Polish archives.<sup>26</sup> Journals containing daily reports on the Jesuits' activities are also useful.<sup>27</sup> The second group consists of personnel records such as the so-called annual directories (*catalogi breves*), containing the names and posts held in a given college year by the Jesuits assigned to a specific location.<sup>28</sup> Each annual catalogue included a list of deceased members of the religious community, which allows developing statistics about the mortality rate among the monks against the general state of staff across the province. This data should be supplemented with details based on obituaries.<sup>29</sup>

Starting the work with source materials, one should take into consideration the specific rhetoric harnessed in promoting the achievements of the Order. This

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., vol. 4, pt. 1–4, Kraków 1904–1905, pp. 35, 54–55, 90–91, 213–214, 450, 913–914, 928, 1016, 1078, 1241, 1317, 1330, 1415, 1431–1432, 1468–1469, 1492, 1499, 1531–1532, 1607, 1615.

<sup>23</sup> Adolf POSCHMANN, *Das Jesuitenkolleg in Rößel*, Zeitschrift für die Geschichte und Altertums-kunde Ermlands, Bd. 24: 1930–1932, pp. 579–909; Ludwik PIECHNIK, *Dzieje Akademii Wileńskiej*, vol. 3, Rzym 1987, pp. 106–107; Marek INGLÓT, *Kolegium Księża Jezuitów w Iłkukszczie*, Kraków 2000, p. 13.

<sup>24</sup> Jan POPLATEK, *Ofiary miłości z litewskiej prowincji Towarzystwa Jezusowego w czasie zarazy w 1710 roku*, Nasze Wiadomości, vol. 9: 1928–1931, pp. 264–272, 368–369.

<sup>25</sup> Archivum Romanum Societatis Jesu (further cit. ARSI), Lituania, no. 45 (*Historiae et Annuae provinciae Lituaniae*, 1705–1710).

<sup>26</sup> Library of the Museum of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn (Biblioteka Muzeum Warmii i Mazur w Olsztynie, further cit. BMW), no. 6 (*Historia collegii Brunsbergensis Societatis Jesu 1643–1772*); Archiwum Diecezji Warmińsko-Mazurskiej [Archives of the Diocese of Warmia and Mazury] (further cit. ADWM), no. H 204 (*Historia domus missionis Regiomonti Soc. Jesu 1692–1740*). I would like to thank Ms Lucyna Szewczyk from the Library of the Jesuits in Cracow for making the microfilms available to me.

<sup>27</sup> *Diarium Collegij Societatis Jesu ab anno 1710 ad anni 1723 septembrem exclusive*. Vilniaus jėzuitų kolegijos dienoraštis, 1710–1723 metai, parengė Irena KATILINĖ, Vilnius 2004.

<sup>28</sup> ARSI, Lituania, no. 57 (*Catalogi breves provinciae Lituaniae*, 1695–1725).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., no. 62 (*Necrologi provinciae Lituaniae II*, 1690–1723).



also applies to the heroic attitudes of the Jesuits during the plague. One of the few scientists that pointed this out is the Canadian historian Paul Shore, the author of a monograph devoted to the Jesuit activities in Hungary.<sup>30</sup> According to Shore, praise is a permanent feature of the Jesuit literature, which still influences the perception of the Society by both its followers and adversaries.<sup>31</sup> Shore recalls that the first Jesuits perceived plagues not necessarily as defeat, but as a just and mandatory punishment for sinners. The awareness of this aspect allows avoiding the use of our own individual standards in order to understand the successes or failures of Jesuits.

#### STRUCTURE AND MORTALITY OF STAFF IN THE PROVINCE OF LITHUANIA ON THE EVE OF THE OUTBREAK

The analysis of Jesuit activities during the plague and its consequences requires the initial determination of the manpower in the Lithuanian Province during the Great Northern War. Of major significance to the activities of individual monks, both in normal circumstances and during the plague, was their position within the Order. In this regard, the Jesuit personnel was not uniform, but divided into four main categories: priests, lay coadjutors (also called brothers), scholastics, and novices. While the priests received holy orders after several years of religious formation, the lay coadjutors did not receive any formal training, but met more practical tasks, primarily associated with the management of a house and its estates. Scholastics took a three-year course of philosophy and a four-year course of theology, which formed the basis for their ordination to the priesthood. In the period between the end of the first and the second course they worked in the so-called public schools, teaching humanities to secular youth. The lowest rank was represented by the novices, serving a two-year trial period. They could be further subdivided into two groups: the so-called *novitii scholastici*, for the future career in the clergy, and *novitii coadiutores*, who powered the ranks of lay brothers.<sup>32</sup>

Additionally, a distinct feature of the Society of Jesus was its diversity within the priest community, which was divided into four groups. The first related to those professed of the four vows: these were the persons with the full formation in the field of scholastic theology, who for that reason were allowed to take not only the three usual vows, but also the fourth, pledging special obedience to the Holy

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<sup>30</sup> Paul SHORE, *Narratives of Adversity: The Experience of Jesuits on the Eastern Periphery of the Habsburg Realm (1640–1773)*, Budapest – New York 2012 (book review in: Kazimierz PUCHOWSKI, *Trudna misja. Jezuita na Węgrzech w świetle studium Paula Shore*, *Czasy Nowożytnie*, vol. 28: 2015, pp. 183–194).

<sup>31</sup> K. PUCHOWSKI, *op.cit.*, p. 189.

<sup>32</sup> *Nowicjat*, [in:] *Encyklopedia wiedzy o jezuitach na ziemiach Polski i Litwy 1564–1995*, ed. Ludwik GRZEBIEŃ, Kraków 1996 (further cit. EWJ), p. 463. About the novitiate in the other religious orders, see: Jerzy FLAGA, *Formacja i kształcenie duchowieństwa zakonnego w Rzeczypospolitej w XVII i w XVIII wieku*, Lublin 1998, pp. 139–193.

Father in matters regarding mission. According to the laws of the Order, they were eligible to occupy most positions of responsibility, such as Father Provincial and House Superior. The second group consisted of the so-called coadjutor clergy, who, in contrast to the professed Fathers, did not have a complete education. They usually received their education in the field of moral theology, a discipline of a more practical orientation, aimed at solving the so-called cases of conscience. Having taken the three ordinary vows in private, they engaged in practical tasks, such as teaching catechesis, listening to confessions and conducting popular missions. The third, usually a small group, were those professed of the three vows, allowed to take the three vows formally during a ceremony.<sup>33</sup> The last group was composed of those already ordained, but still awaiting their final vows.<sup>34</sup> They usually worked as preachers or teachers in the subject of rhetoric and humanities. They would also undertake Tertianship, a probation period designed to deepen the Ignatian spirituality before taking their solemn vows.<sup>35</sup>

Against the background of these divisions one should look at the territorial distribution of facilities and the personnel of the Lithuanian Province in the period preceding the outbreak of the Great Northern War. In contrast to previous armed conflicts unfolding on a grand scale, the Polish-Swedish War (1655–1660) and the Polish-Russian War (1654–1667), the Great Northern War did not lead to the liquidation of institutions, nor to the mass murder of the monks. While there was no shortage of cases where Jesuits were killed in raids,<sup>36</sup> in comparison with the previous century these represent rather marginal incidences.<sup>37</sup> The number of personnel was impacted primarily by political instability and the destruction of Jesuit property, which seriously hampered the recruitment of candidates for the Order. The difficult financial situation of the novitiate at St. Ignatius in Vilnius<sup>38</sup> was of particular importance. In addition, since the prospective monks were recruited mostly among secular students, the fact that schools functioned irregularly due to war was not irrelevant.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> About the above-mentioned divisions and the formation of priests, see: Estanislao OLIVARES, *Los coadjutores, espirituales y temporales, de la Compañía de Jesús. Su origen y sus votos*, Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu (further cit. AHSI), [vol.] 33: 1964, no. 65, pp. 102–121; Ladislaus LUKÁCS, *De graduum diversitate intra sacerdotes in Societate Iesu*, ibid., [vol.] 37: 1968, no. 74, pp. 237–316.

<sup>34</sup> They were referred to with the formula *nondum est in gradus*.

<sup>35</sup> Manuel RUIZ JURADO, *La tercera probación en la Compañía de Jesús*, AHSI, [vol.] 60: 1991, no. 119, pp. 264–351.

<sup>36</sup> See: Monkiewicz (Mąkiewicz) Michał, [in:] EWJ, p. 437.

<sup>37</sup> The Orthodox believers evinced hostility towards Catholics, but they directed it mainly at the Uniate Church, not the Jesuits, comp. Edward LIKOWSKI, *Dzieje Kościoła unickiego na Litwie i Rusi w XVIII i XIX wieku*, pt. 1, Warszawa 1908, pp. 13–37. See also Aleksy DERUGA, *Piotr Wielki a unicy i unia kościelna 1700–1711*, Wilno 1936.

<sup>38</sup> S. ZAŁĘSKI, op. cit., vol. 4, pt. 2, Kraków 1904, pp. 912–913.

<sup>39</sup> About the disruption of the education system, see: A. KARPIŃSKI, *W walce z niewidzialnym wrogiem*, pp. 281–282.

The crisis of the traditional recruitment system made it practically impossible to offset the losses resulting from the natural deaths of older monks. The primary importance of biological factors and weather conditions are clearly evidenced by the fluctuations in the number of Jesuit deaths unrelated to the plague (Figure 1). The increased mortality in April and May should be explained by a kind of spring solstice. Changing auras negatively affected organisms weakened by the long winter. This phenomenon was further reinforced by the increased activity of the Jesuits who, around Easter time, intensively engaged in missionary work outside their religious house, travelling long distances in adverse weather conditions.



Figure 1. Number of deaths among the Jesuits (ARSI, Lithuania, nr 57)

The above-mentioned phenomena in the first decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century resulted in a significant decrease in the number of personnel in the Lithuanian Province: while in the school year 1700/1701 714 monks worked there,<sup>40</sup> in 1708, at the outbreak of the epidemic, the number dropped to about 680 people.<sup>41</sup> In the school year 1708/1709, the reduction in the number of Jesuits in comparison with the previous year was still relatively small. A year later, however, a loss of more than a hundred people was recorded, thus diminishing the assembly of the Provincial subjects to less than 580 people. The suddenness of this change becomes visible when comparing the situation of the Lithuanian Province to the Polish one.<sup>42</sup>

The occurrence of the plague posed a serious challenge to the Jesuit Province of Lithuania. The dimensions of this dramatic event are clearly demonstrated by

<sup>40</sup> Dispositio personarum provinciae Lituae Soc. Jesu facta anno 1700 (ARSI, Lituania, no. 57).

<sup>41</sup> Catalogus dispositionis personarum prov. Lithuaniae Societatis Iesu anni 1708 (ibid.).

<sup>42</sup> In this administrative unit the drop in the number of monks was of only 80 people in the period of 1705–1710, see: ARSI, Polonia, no. 45 (Catalogi breves provinciae Poloniae, 1686–1717), passim.



the number of casualties, which amounted to 131 people over three years, the maximum intensity of mortality coinciding with the year 1710 (Figure 2). This

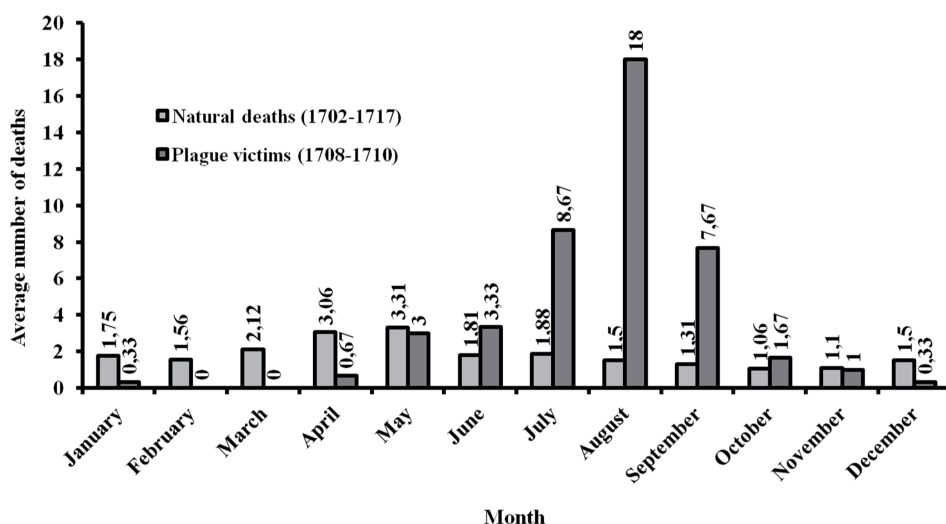


Figure 2. The absolute number of deaths among the Jesuits of the Lithuanian Province (ARSI, Lithuania, nr 57)

resulted in a substantial increase in the number of deaths as compared with the period of the Great Northern War, in which usually about twenty deaths per year were recorded among monks.<sup>43</sup> The intensity of the phenomenon is also indicated in Figure 1, which includes a summary of the average number of deaths resulting from the epidemic and those associated with other natural causes for each month of the year. It turns out that the plague, in its bubonic form, vanquished most lives throughout the summer season: July, August and September.<sup>44</sup> The analysis of the group of victims, to which a significant part of this dissertation is devoted, allows verifying the thesis stated on the basis of the narrative sources.

### THE JESUITS AND THE PLAGUE

The Fathers of the Society did not live in the isolation of the monastic cell, but witnessed the diverse attitudes of society towards the plague. The epidemics, causing disruption of the social, economic, and political lives provoked various reactions among people. While some, in the face of imminent death, lived to the fullest, exercised in debauchery, or saw the epidemic as an opportunity to get rich, others devoted their lives and jeopardized themselves to provide help. Against this background there was an increase in religious devotion as well as real examples of

<sup>43</sup> The year 1706 was the exception – the mortality rate show an almost twofold increase.

<sup>44</sup> See: C. KUKŁO, *op. cit.*, p. 147; E. SIENKOWSKI, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

true heroism.<sup>45</sup> While the most extreme behaviors took place on the opposite sides of the scale, the majority of the population was seized by panic and an extreme fear of contact with other people. An escape was attempted by those who could seek refuge in their other properties or close to their friends'. Thus, those who remained in town were primarily representatives of poorer social strata, whose situation worsened dramatically not only because of the plague, but also as a result of the fact that the city got cut off from its economic basis in the countryside. For this reason the plague became a sanitary problem as much as a social and humanitarian predicament. As a response, the authorities tried to tackle the matter by issuing appropriate regulations and the appointing of special forces.<sup>46</sup>

In ordinary circumstances, the Fathers of the Society attached great importance to personal hygiene and cared for the well-being of both the members of the religious Order and other people under their supervision. Moderate physical exercise and avoiding excessive forms of bodily penance was to increase academic achievement and the quality of pastoral activity. In each House the post of nurse (*infirmarius*) and the so-called prefect of health (*praefectus sanitatis*) were created. The duty of the latter was to monitor the health of the residents and to inform the superior about possible threats.<sup>47</sup>

During the epidemic, the lack of accurate knowledge about the reproduction of pathogens made the Jesuits consider "poisoned air" as the source of the plague. According to the miasma theory, based on the principles of Hippocrates and Galen, the chroniclers wrote that the monks breathed venom (*haurire* or *afflare venerium*).<sup>48</sup> The people of the early new age were influenced by yet another theory about the invisible germs, an idea attributed to Jerome Fracastoro.<sup>49</sup> There was in fact the awareness that the epidemic spreads fastest in large gatherings of people where the contact between the healthy and the sick is more frequent.<sup>50</sup>

Accordingly, with the news of the plague spreading through the country, the Jesuit chroniclers devoted close attention to the movements of the local population. In Vilnius, in the late spring of 1710, thousands of hungry people came from Lithuania and Samogitia. The Jesuits, within their means, were trying to help them.<sup>51</sup> Fearing the plague, and in accordance with the contemporary practice, the magistrate and the church elders decided to remove beggars from the urban areas, allocating a place for them on the opposite bank of the Neris river by the so-called

<sup>45</sup> Andrzej WYROBISZ, *Misericordia pestis tempore. Postawy i zachowania w czasie zarazy w Polsce nowożytnej (XVI–XVIII w.)*, [in:] *Charitas*, p. 210, 215.

<sup>46</sup> A. KARPIŃSKI, *W walce z niewidzialnym wrogiem*, p. 82.

<sup>47</sup> *Regulae praefecti sanitatis*, [in:] *Institutum Societatis Iesu*, vol. 2, Praga 1757, p. 151.

<sup>48</sup> See: Hist. coll. Polocensis 1710, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 82v; Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1708, *ibid.*, fol. 104v.

<sup>49</sup> Tadeusz BRZEZIŃSKI, *Historia medycyny*, Warszawa 1988, pp. 224–225.

<sup>50</sup> A. KARPIŃSKI, *W walce z niewidzialnym wrogiem*, p. 37.

<sup>51</sup> *Diarium Collegij Societatis Iesu ab anno 1710 ad anni 1723 septembrem exclusive*, p. 4.

Green Bridge.<sup>52</sup> Despite these efforts, in mid-July the plague broke out. In the face of the first signs of the epidemic, the Lithuanian Tribunal, representing the highest Justice Court in the Country, was resolved, and the city grew desolate.<sup>53</sup> In Nieśwież (Belarusian: Niasvizh) the plague had appeared a little earlier, at the end of June. It took its toll in rural areas first, and then in the city, where it occurred as a result of careless trade (*per incauta commercia*).<sup>54</sup> The pestilence reached Grodno (Belarusian: Hrodna) from Ducal Prussia, appearing first in The Holy Spirit hospital, and then on the outskirts on the river Horodniczanka.<sup>55</sup>

The Jesuit household chronicles contain valuable information about the circumstances of the outbreak, following its course, and sometimes giving an estimated number of victims. In Vilnius, including the suburbs, the toll was more than 33 000 deaths.<sup>56</sup> In Drohiczyn, the plague killed 350 inhabitants.<sup>57</sup> In Nieśwież, a thousand victims were recorded.<sup>58</sup> Even though in other cities as well the same number of victims was assumed, thus indicating the huge impact of the epidemic, in the case of Nieśwież data can be considered as reliable, given the fact that the city had about 3000 inhabitants.<sup>59</sup>

In the opinion of the Jesuit chroniclers, the epidemic intensity varied by locality. Apparently it took the gravest death toll in the regions adjacent to the Baltic: Samogitia, Livonia, and Courland, Lithuania, Warmia and Mazovia. While the Eastern Slavic lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were claimed to a lesser extent, and some cities farther east were spared. In one of these, Słutsk (Belarussian: Sluck) in 1710, a very high number of students was reported due to the closure of schools in other cities.<sup>60</sup> A significant influx of students was also noted in Orsza (Belarusian: Orsha).<sup>61</sup> The year 1710 passed relatively quietly in Pińsk (Belarusian: Pinsk), and although the Jesuit chroniclers recorded the occurrence of a variety of infectious diseases, the plague was not among them. In late autumn, the Lithuanian Tax Court was convened there for its deliberations.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>52</sup> It took place at the end of May (*ibid.*, p. 8, 10).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>54</sup> Hist. coll. Nesvisiensis 1710, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 44v.

<sup>55</sup> Hist. coll. Grodnensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 15r. See: Przemysław BOROWIK, *Jurydyki miasta Grodna w XV–XVIII wieku*, Supraśl 2005, p. 47.

<sup>56</sup> Hist. coll. Vilnensis 1710, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 128r.

<sup>57</sup> Hist. resid. Drogicinisensis 1709, *ibid.*, fol. 180v.

<sup>58</sup> Hist. coll. Nesvisiensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 44v.

<sup>59</sup> The plague consequences are evident in the inventory of the town of Nieśwież from the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Many empty tenement houses are recorded there. See: Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie, Archiwum Radziwiłłów [The Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, Radziwiłł Family Archive] (further cit. AGAD, AR), dział [section] XXV, no. 2690/1.

<sup>60</sup> Hist. resid. Slucensis 1710, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 102r.

<sup>61</sup> Hist. coll. Orsensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 58r.

<sup>62</sup> Hist. coll. Pinscensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 66v. See also: AGAD, AR, dz. VI, no. II-79 (Diariusz Karola Stanisława Radziwiłła, 1689–1718), fol. 96.

The aforementioned examples make evident that the Jesuits were well aware of the dangers. According to the notions about the disease it seemed necessary to search for places characterized by a healthier environment, away from large population centers. Self-preservation, and protection against the effects of the plague coexisted with the other, oppositional effort. This fitted not only in the primary vocation of the Order, but also to the Ignatian spirituality, according to which a Jesuit should see the image of Christ in every creature.<sup>63</sup> According to this view, the epidemic became an opportunity to provide charity deeds and ensure the salvation of souls. For those who were involved in this task, death did not mean defeat, but the accomplishment of the greater good. For others, the epidemic was an ordeal through which God exposed a sinful man.

Under the conditions of the epidemic it was difficult to provide pastoral care and offer material help without establishing closer contacts with infectious patients. Since the provision of these services could jeopardize the safety of the whole community, the superiors issued regulations which envisaged that the care of the infected would be entrusted to a few monks, who were isolated from the other brothers.<sup>64</sup> Separation principles were also obeyed in the event of infectious diseases occurring in the monastery.<sup>65</sup> Taking such steps, the superiors were guided by the idea of prudent love, which “reveals not only the desire for the greater glory of God and the greater good of the people, but also the ability to select what is most useful and helpful for this purpose.”<sup>66</sup>

At the news of the impending plague, immediate religious initiatives aimed at propitiation of God's wrath were undertaken.<sup>67</sup> In 1708 in Łomża, the Blessed Sacrament was displayed for three days before the worshippers who wept bitterly and called upon God.<sup>68</sup> Two years later, facing the recurrence of the pestilence, the Blessed Sacrament was carried in procession around the city, and at the request of a local official, the rector Teofil Zabłocki celebrated Mass in the parish church.<sup>69</sup> The sermon was delivered by another Jesuit. This was followed by another procession through the city, where five altars had been erected. At each of the stops, the same monk gave exhortations. After returning to the parish church, *Te Deum* was sung.<sup>70</sup> In Pułtusk, the procession in honor of Bl. Stanislaus Kostka headed

<sup>63</sup> See: Ignacy LOYOLA, *Ćwiczenia duchowne*, transl. Jan Ożóg, Kraków 1996, § 235.

<sup>64</sup> “Tempore pestis aliqui ab eo designerentur, qui separati ab aliis, proximis iuvandis vacent” (*Regulae p. provincialis*, [in:] *ibid.*, p. 86).

<sup>65</sup> “Si morbus sit contagiosus, supellex separari debet, ne cuiquam noceat. [...] Quemadmodum autem diligenter curare debet, ne debita ministeria aegrotis desint, ita etiam animadvertere, ne nimiae vigiliae, immoderatique labores, aut morbi contagio, vel propriae ipsius, vel sociorum saluti noceant” (*Regulae infirmarii*, [in:] *Institutum Societatis Iesu*, p. 156).

<sup>66</sup> L. GRZEBIEŃ, *Jezuici polscy wobec epidemii*, p. 247.

<sup>67</sup> See: A. KARPIŃSKI, *W walce z niewidzialnym wrogiem*, p. 118; M. JASZCZUK, *op. cit.*, pp. 46–53.

<sup>68</sup> Ann. coll. Lomzensis 1708, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 224v.

<sup>69</sup> Ann. coll. Pultoviensis 1708, *ibid.*, fol. 270v. See also: *Kacice (Kaczyce)*, [in:] EWJ, p. 258.

<sup>70</sup> Ann. coll. Lomzensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 226v.

for Kaczyce, where his holy picture was kept. A similar initiative was carried out in Warsaw. The procession in the capital marched from the Town Hall of the Old City to the altar dedicated to the Polish novice in the Jesuit church of the Holiest Virgin Mary. The silver *ex-voto* was carried personally by the mayor (proconsul) Jan Loupia. The sodality of German burghers went in procession to the altar of St. Francis Xavier in the same church.<sup>71</sup> In Polotsk, at the request of the local ordinary bishop Kazimierz Konstanty Brzostowski, they resumed the liturgy in the church of the Saviour (Spasa) in the octave of the Transfiguration of the Lord (13 August). Three days later, on the occasion of the commemoration of St. Roch, people went in procession from the Jesuit church to the Dominican church after a Mass in honor of St. Francis Xavier. During the ceremony, three images were carried: those of St. Sebastian and St. Roch, the patrons of plague, as well as of the Holy Virgin Mary. This happened in the presence of not only Catholics, but of the Orthodox believers as well.<sup>72</sup> Also in Nieśwież the bishop's order was heeded, and the townspeople flocked to approach confession.<sup>73</sup>

Apart from organizing solemn ceremonies, the Jesuits fasted and devoted themselves to the worship of Saints. In honor of St. Roch, for example, the Fathers of the Łomża college fasted in 1708.<sup>74</sup> The scholastics of Vilnius Academy did the same on 23 July 1710 in the suburban villa of Łukiszki (Lithuanian Lukiškės); however, since they lacked fish, dairy products were consumed.<sup>75</sup> In Warsaw they made vows to Francis Xavier, to Josaphat Kuncewicz, the martyr.<sup>76</sup> In Drohiczyn they begged the intercession of Bl. Aloysius Gonzaga.<sup>77</sup>

When the plague began to appear in the city, the school was immediately closed and the students were sent home. This decision was to protect monks against accusations from the parents of responsibility for the possible death of their children. In Warsaw, it was decided to take that step at the request of the magistrate in late June 1708, shortly before the end of school year.<sup>78</sup> A similar decision was taken one month later in Łomża.<sup>79</sup> There the promotion was held earlier than usual, in an atmosphere of solemnity and great alarm. Sadly, the precautions did not prevent a tragedy and just before the closing of schools, a nobleman of Italian descent, named Principatti, fell ill with the plague.<sup>80</sup> After giving him all the sacraments, on

<sup>71</sup> Ann. coll. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1708, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 281v.

<sup>72</sup> Hist. coll. Polocensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 82r.

<sup>73</sup> Hist. coll. Nesvisiensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 44v.

<sup>74</sup> Ann. coll. Lomzensis 1708, *ibid.*, fol. 224v.

<sup>75</sup> *Diarium Collegij Societatis Iesu ab anno 1710 ad anni 1723 septembrem exclusive*, p. 16. The fast was announced again on 20 August; see: *ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>76</sup> Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1708, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 104v.

<sup>77</sup> Hist. resid. Drohicinensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 181v.

<sup>78</sup> Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1708, *ibid.*, fol. 104r.

<sup>79</sup> Hist. coll. Lomzensis 1708, *ibid.*, fol. 27r.

<sup>80</sup> He was probably a member of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Jesuits considered him pious and diligent in catechism teaching. People bearing this surname were ennobled by the



his deathbed, the young man asked to join the Jesuit Order.<sup>81</sup> In Braniewo, schools remained closed from 8<sup>th</sup> November 1709 to February 1710.<sup>82</sup> In Reszel they had already been deserted at the beginning of the school year 1709/1710, before the Jesuits decided to close them, mainly because of the disturbing news coming from the Święta Lipka, where the plague had already taken its toll late in the summer 1709.<sup>83</sup> The plague reached Reszel only in the second half of September 1710. This time, the school closed for three weeks after the so-called *renovatio studiorum*.<sup>84</sup>

The next step for the Jesuits was to seek refuge. Initially they moved to the nearest farm. The residents of the college in Warsaw, for instance, went to Białołęka.<sup>85</sup> In the case of larger communities their moving took place gradually, as is evidenced by the example of the Vilnius Academy. At first, scholastics left for Łukiszki with the Minister James Wołodkowicz.<sup>86</sup> Elder monks remained in the college, increasing their alertness. However, the separation was not adhered to rigorously. The rector, Tobias Arent, still residing in the infected zone in the city, visited religious youth in Łukiszki. Despite the plague-induced death of a lady in the neighborhood, the monks celebrated St. Ignatius Day. The minister came to the city on July 30 to oversee the kitchen work and issue invitations. The next day the scholastics returned to the college and stayed till Sunday, 3 August.<sup>87</sup>

The monks were accompanied by the students of the musical boarding school.<sup>88</sup> Along with them they evacuated other inhabitants connected with the educational institutions ran by the Jesuits. For instance, in Vilnius the alumni of the Papal Seminary, together with Ignacy Bukaty,<sup>89</sup> moved to Resza (Latvian: Riešē), an estate of the Vilnius Academy. The house servants only partially left with the Jesuits. Most of them still lived in the college, to ensure the continuity of its functioning. This procedure was also associated with the risk of many deaths.<sup>90</sup>

When the situation deteriorated, the farms were abandoned in pursuit of more distant estates. A significant role was played by geographical barriers. The Jesuits of the Minsk college retreated to a property situated on the eastern bank of the Ber-

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Sejm of 1768, see: *Album armorum nobilium Regni Poloniae XVI–XVIII saec. Herby nobilitacji i indygenatów XVI–XVIII w.*, prepared by Barbara TRELIŃSKA, Lublin 2001, p. 565, no. 1718.

<sup>81</sup> Hist. coll. Lomzensis 1708, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 27r.

<sup>82</sup> Hist. coll. Brunsbergensis 1710, *ibid.*, p. 163; BMW, no. 6, p. 159. See also: S. FLIS, *op. cit.*, p. 511.

<sup>83</sup> Hist. coll. Reseliensis 1709, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 93v.

<sup>84</sup> Hist. coll. Reseliensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 94v.

<sup>85</sup> Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1708, *ibid.*, fol. 104v.

<sup>86</sup> It took place on July 20<sup>th</sup>, a week after the first symptoms of the disease had been noticed in the town, see: *Diarium Collegij Societatis Iesu ab anno 1710 ad anni 1723 septembrem exclusive*, p. 16.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> This was the case for many Vilnius professors (Hist. domus professae Vlnensis 1710, ARSI, Lituania, no. 62, fol. 115v).

<sup>89</sup> Apart from the above mentioned monk, five seminar students passed away (*Compendium vitae p. Ignatii Bukaty*, *ibid.*, p. 798).

<sup>90</sup> For example, in Pozsawsze 20 servants died (Hist. coll. Possaviensis 1710, *ibid.*, no. 45, fol. 85v).

eżyna river.<sup>91</sup> Apart from fearing the bubonic plague, they were sometimes forced to travel long distances due to the deplorable state of the Jesuit estates, which could not provide food to a large number of people. The residents of the Vilnius novitiate moved to Litwiany (Belarusian: Litsviany), about 55 kilometers from Vilnius.<sup>92</sup> The Jesuits of Łomża college went to Niestępowo (today Niestępowo Włościańskie), located about 100 kilometers from their home estate.<sup>93</sup> Such cases include the decision of the Polotsk Jesuits, who, due to the occupation of the Spas farm (today Spas Slabada in the outskirts of Polotsk) by Russian troops, had to go in the north-east direction to reach Stajki Newelskie (Russian: Stajki), over a distance of almost 80 kilometers. This choice forced the reconstruction of farm buildings to provide housing for the monks.<sup>94</sup> Sometimes they were hosted in estates belonging to another college. As in 1709, while facing the re-emergence of the plague, the Warsaw Jesuits once again left the capital, and with the consent of the rector of the college in Pułtusk, were accommodated in Kaczyce, a mission station belonging to the Pułtusk organization.<sup>95</sup> These journeys were occasionally burdensome for older monks. On the way to Daniuszów (Belarusian: Daniushevo) Andrzej Molski, the deputy provost of the Vilnius professed, fell terminally ill.<sup>96</sup>

The occurrence of the plague among the college members usually meant leaving the property. In such difficult circumstances, it was necessary to divide the community and accommodate its members to various estates. For example, when in Białoleka peasants fell ill, monks were divided into two groups: one went to Wysock (Belarusian: Vysotsk) in the district of Pińsk, and the other (students of theology) to Czernichów (Belarusian: Chernykhovo), in the Nowogród district.<sup>97</sup> A similar decision was made by the newly appointed rector of the Vilnius Academy, Maciej Karski, who took office after Tobias Arent, on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1710. On September 6<sup>th</sup>, the alarming situation in the remaining Jesuit houses, the mounting of casualties, and the deaths of several peasants in Łukiszki prompted the decision to send the theology students to Dworzyszcz (Lithuanian: Dvarkščiai), the scholastics attending the course in metaphysics to Janiszki (Lithuanian: Janiškis) and those studying logics to Bezdany (Lithuanian: Bezdony). Only the scholastics attending the course in Aristotelian physics remained in the estates near Vilnius.<sup>98</sup> Exceptionally, individual trips by professors were allowed. Such examples include the transfer of Stefan Puzyna, professor of theology and canon law in Braniewo, to

<sup>91</sup> Hist. resid. Minscensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 36v.

<sup>92</sup> Hist. domus primae et secundae probationis Vilmensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 183r.

<sup>93</sup> Hist. coll. Lomzensis 1708, *ibid.*, fol. 27v.

<sup>94</sup> Hist. coll. Polocensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 82v.

<sup>95</sup> Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1709, *ibid.*, fol. 106v.

<sup>96</sup> He was buried near the guesthouse and the cross was placed there (Hist. domus professae Vilmensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 114v).

<sup>97</sup> Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1708, *ibid.*, fol. 105r.

<sup>98</sup> *Diarium Collegij Societatis Iesu ab anno 1710 ad anni 1723 septembrem exclusive*, p. 20.

Vilnius, where he was to meet with the canon Ludwik Karol Ogiński.<sup>99</sup> In the next school year, Puzyna lectured in the college of Pińsk.<sup>100</sup>

Regardless of the epidemic, the efforts to maintain a normal lifestyle and follow monastic rules prevailed. In the rural estates, the scholastics still pursued their education with the guidance of the same professors and under the supervision of the prefect of studies. Nominations for the posts of House Superior issued by the Father General were also executed. On the occasion of taking office as the rector of the Vilnius Academy the nominee Maciej Karski held a banquet in the college.<sup>101</sup> Krzysztof Limont began his term as rector of the Płock college in Leszczyna, where the Jesuits had already been evacuated by his predecessor.<sup>102</sup> The stays in the countryside allowed conducting wide-ranging missionary activities, as in the case of the Vitebsk Jesuits, who not only taught catechism in the Uniate churches, but also fought against the superstitious practices that they considered a kind of response to the plague threat among the rural population.<sup>103</sup> In Litwiany the residents of novitiate were not idle.<sup>104</sup>

The epidemic impacted the economic situation of the facilities due to the depopulation of the Jesuit rural estates. In Hołny, an estate of the Grodno college, 628 victims were recorded.<sup>105</sup> In Gilwicz (Lithuanian: Gilvičiai), an estate belonging to the college of Krože, out of the one hundred twenty families only two survived.<sup>106</sup> Moreover, because of the lack of supervision, cattle often scattered. This occurred in Poszawsze (Lithuanian: Pašiaušė) and Iluksza (Latvian: Ilūkste).<sup>107</sup> The situation of the Mitawa residence was particularly difficult. The inhabitants of Kliwenhoff (Latvian: Klivenumuiža), an estate mortgaged to the Jesuits, and Łauksoda (Latvian: Lauksodis) were decimated, and the treasury of Duke of Courland ceased to pay the monks the salary for their religious service in the parish church.<sup>108</sup>

Apart from landownership and commissions paid by persons or institutions holding the Church patronage, the Jesuits had other forms of income at their disposal. Enterprises of great economic importance, especially during the plague, were the Jesuit pharmacies – facilities existing next to the colleges. The medicines

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<sup>99</sup> The Jesuit was accompanied by a Tyszkiewicz. He might have been Antoni Dominik, the future bishop of Samogitia (Hist. coll. Brunsbergensis 1709, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 161r; BMWM, no. 6, pp. 159–160).

<sup>100</sup> *Catalogus dispositionis personarum provinciae Lithuaniae Societatis Iesu ab anno 1711 in annum 1712*, ARSI, Lituania, no. 57, fol. 5.

<sup>101</sup> *Diarium Collegij Societatis Iesu ab anno 1710 ad anni 1723 septembrem exclusive*, p. 18; Hist. coll. Bilnensis 1710, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 128r.

<sup>102</sup> Hist. coll. Plocensis 1709, *ibid.*, fol. 67v.

<sup>103</sup> Hist. coll. Vitebscensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 144v.

<sup>104</sup> *Ann. domus primae et secundae probationis Vilnensis 1710*, *ibid.*, fol. 292v.

<sup>105</sup> Hist. coll. Grodnensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 15v.

<sup>106</sup> Hist. coll. Crosensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 174r.

<sup>107</sup> Hist. coll. Possaviensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 85v; Hist. resid. Illuxtanae 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 19v.

<sup>108</sup> Hist. resid. Mitaviensis, *ibid.*, fol. 37r.

there prepared were supplied both to the residents of the monastic house, and the citizens. If they were poor, Jesuits distributed them for free.<sup>109</sup> Since, however, the wealthier clients were expected to pay for their medicine, the pharmacies brought considerable profits. In 1708, for instance, after the recovery of the Warsaw pharmacist Maciej Kasner, the income of the local pharmacy enabled to mend the budget of the college.<sup>110</sup> In addition, the donations made by the dying improved the financial position of many houses. Particularly skillful in obtaining the alms was a lay coadjutor of the Nieśwież college: Michał Rohr.<sup>111</sup>

In spite of the Jesuits' resourcefulness during the bubonic plague, there were sometimes difficulties in obtaining food, especially for the monks residing in the countryside. This problem was mentioned in relation, among other communities, to the Warsaw Jesuits residing in Białoleka as a result of a shortage of cart drivers.<sup>112</sup> In relation to food supplies, it was particularly important for the monks that at least part of the servants remained in the city. During the stay of the Grodno Jesuits in Poniemunie (Lithuanian: Panemunė), their weekly bread supply came from the college, since the farm lacked a bakery oven.<sup>113</sup> Especially arduous was the situation in Drohiczyn, where the suburban farm ceased to provide board for the monks. An additional problem was the supply of drinking water. Since their well was not suitable for use, it was necessary to reach the banks of the Bug river, albeit strewn with decaying corpses, in order to draw water from the river bank despite the floating cadavers.<sup>114</sup> Some lay brothers engaged in farm work during the harvest.<sup>115</sup> To supplement their meager resources, the Jesuits would also turn to local gentry with a request to send victuals, as in the case of the Łomża college, on behalf of whom the brother Mateusz Austen applied to the neighbors for the supply of grain.<sup>116</sup>

The sense of danger increased further when symptoms of the disease occurred among the community members. In accordance with regulations, the patients were separated from the healthy. They were not, however, deprived of spiritual care, as they usually had a companion assigned to them. The Warsaw Jesuits residing in Białoleka found themselves in such a predicament when the professor of canon law Władysław Narewicz came back from Łomża.<sup>117</sup> It soon became apparent that on his way he had contracted the deadly disease. He was immediately sent back to

<sup>109</sup> L. GRZEBIEŃ, *Jezuici polscy wobec epidemii*, p. 249.

<sup>110</sup> Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1708, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 105r.

<sup>111</sup> Hist. coll. Nesvisiensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 44v.

<sup>112</sup> Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1708, *ibid.*, fol. 105r.

<sup>113</sup> Hist. coll. Godnensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 15v.

<sup>114</sup> Hist. resid. Drohicinensis 1709, *ibid.*, fol. 181v.

<sup>115</sup> Compendium vitae ch. Laurentii Gniewkowski, *ibid.*, no. 62, p. 699.

<sup>116</sup> Hist. coll. Lomzensis 1708, *ibid.*, no. 45, fol. 27v. According to the obituary it turns out that part of those donations was devoted to the poor. Compendium vitae ch. Matthaei Austen, *ibid.*, no. 62, p. 628.

<sup>117</sup> *Narewicz Władysław*, [in:] EWJ, pp. 450–451.

Warsaw, where he died shortly after. However, before taking these actions, many domestic servants maintained contact with him, as he was considered a deserving person. This sparked fears of a further spread of the plague among the community. Eventually, they were wrong, which was perceived as the merit of St. Francis Xavier and Josaphat Kuncewicz.<sup>118</sup> However, this event fostered the decision to leave Białolęka, which happened after the occurrence of the disease among the peasants. Similarly, a scholastic, Stanisław Karwowski, who became ill while travelling from Połotsk to Stajki Newelskie, was isolated from the other brothers. He died in Obolce (Belarusian: Aboltsy). Also in this case the quick decision by the superiors saved the rest of the Jesuits from contagion.<sup>119</sup> This isolation rule applied even in the case of the highest-ranking in the hierarchy of the Order, as in the event of the Kroże college, whose rector Aleksander Kasztela was sent to the countryside.<sup>120</sup>

Cases of moral collapse among the Jesuits happened very rarely, which demonstrates that, generally, religious discipline stood the test of the challenging circumstances. An exception is represented by the events that occurred in the circle of the Łomża community. There, in the absence of rector Teofil Zabłocki, the monks forced his deputy to refer teachers of rhetoric, poetry and syntax along with the prefect of the lower classes and the preacher to Niestępowo.<sup>121</sup> A similar decision had to be taken by the deputy to the rector on the insistence of another monk, the teacher of the *infima* class, frightened by his brother's death. Together with a secular coadjutor responsible for vestments (*vestiarius*), he was first sent to Olszyn, and after the plague had arrived there, to Chmielówka.<sup>122</sup>

The dedicated, who sacrificed most, were those who remained in the city to care for the infected and in order to watch over the college and the church. A concern for the provision of pastoral service among both sick and healthy was sometimes evinced by local church dignitaries. In Grodno, Jerzy Szczuka, canon of Vilnius and parson Grodno, on the eve of the plague outbreak, summoned the representatives of various religious orders to the Jesuit College, asking them to ensure spiritual care for the population. A Jesuit chronicler claimed that because of their limited involvement the brunt of the work fell on the Fathers of the order.<sup>123</sup> Also in Reszel, church authorities interfered with the personnel policy of the order. In this case, the parson asked to entrust the care for the infected to Jerzy Krautt, as indeed the Jesuit willingly accepted.<sup>124</sup> Pastoral activity in the cities under the strong influence of Protestants was considered a priority. For example, in Königsberg,

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<sup>118</sup> Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1708, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 105r-v; Compendium vitae p. Ladislai Narewicz, *ibid.*, no. 62, p. 752.

<sup>119</sup> Hist. coll. Polocensis 1710, *ibid.*, no. 45, fol. 82v.

<sup>120</sup> Compendium vitae p. Alexandri Kasztela, *ibid.*, no. 62, p. 587.

<sup>121</sup> Hist. coll. Lomzensis 1708, *ibid.*, no. 45, fol. 27r-27v.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 28r.

<sup>123</sup> Hist. coll. Grodnensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 216r.

<sup>124</sup> Hist. coll. Reseliensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 95r.



after the death of three local missionaries,<sup>125</sup> a request for their successors was issued to the Provincial by both the bishop of Warmia Andrzej Chrysostom Załuski and Catholic parson Jan Chrysostom Drescher.<sup>126</sup> To complete the picture it should be emphasized that the Church hierarchy did not solely depend on the Jesuits' generosity, but also tried to provide logistical help. Thus, for example, the Drescher provided horses and wagons for a swifter movement of missionaries in the city.<sup>127</sup>

Despite the pressure from the heads of the Church, the monastic authorities were aware of the need to leave a few monks in plagued cities. As reported by chroniclers, since staying meant almost certain death, the decision was voluntary rather than imposed by the superiors.<sup>128</sup> According to the idea of obedience, the superior would discreetly suggest the care of the infected, which was enough for the monk to endorse the task.<sup>129</sup> Sometimes, due to hampered communication, the monks themselves decided to stay thus anticipating arrangements by their superiors. This was the case of Herman Holtz, chief of the Königsberg mission, who informed his direct superior, the rector of the Braniewo college, that in the face of the plague he would not leave.<sup>130</sup> The elderly monks displayed particular dedication. The commitment of Baltazar Jaworski, a sixty-three year old Father, former chaplain in the Lithuanian army and a close collaborator of its commander Jan Paweł Sapieha, was exemplary. On the eve of the outbreak he held the office of Prefect of the garden in the Vilnius house of professes.<sup>131</sup> The mindset of the monks involved in the ministry among the infected was reinforced by appropriate spiritual preparation. Jan Kos of the Nieśwież college, for instance, took Ignatius' spiritual exercises and made a general confession.<sup>132</sup>

The decision to serve the plague victims was also determined by the nature of office held by Jesuits. Much depended on whether it involved incumbent contacts

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<sup>125</sup> They were Wawrzyniec Gostowski, superior Herman Holtz and Andrzej Brandt (ibid., no. 62, p. 548).

<sup>126</sup> Hist. coll. Brunsbergensis 1709, ibid., no. 45, fol. 160v; BMW, no. 6, p. 159. About Drescher see: Alojzy SZORC, *Dzieje parafii katolickiej w Królewcu 1650–1780*, Mrągowskie Studia Humanistyczne, vol. 6–7: 2004–2005, pp. 71–72.

<sup>127</sup> ADWM, no. H 204, p. 7.

<sup>128</sup> The word "involuntarily" appeared very often (*sua sponte*) in reference to the decision of staying in the town, see: Hist. coll. Lomzensis 1708, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 28r; Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1708, ibid., fol. 104v. Similar information was provided in the obituaries e.g. they write about Benedykt Bykowski: "Ad spirituale ministerium peste infectorum a provinciali destinari petiit, et impetravit" (Compendium vitae p. Benedicti Bykowski, ibid., no. 62, p. 756). See also: L. GRZEBIEŃ, *Jezuici polscy wobec epidemii*, col. 250.

<sup>129</sup> For example, the author of the postmortem eulogy of Karol Dowkont from the college of Kroże stated: "P. Carolus vix instillata sibi rectoris mente, sed ad id arduum negotium libenter se obtulit" (Compendium vitae p. Caroli Dowkont, ARSI, Lituania, no. 62, p. 577).

<sup>130</sup> Compendium vitae p. Hermanni Holtz, ibid., p. 548.

<sup>131</sup> Catalogus dispositionis personarum provinciae Lithuanae Societatis Iesu ab anno 1709 in annum 1710, ibid., no. 57, p. 13; Compendium vitae p. Balthasari Jaworski, ibid., no. 62, pp. 765–768.

<sup>132</sup> Hist. coll. Nesvisiensis 1710, ibid., no. 45, fol. 44v.

with the local community. This phenomenon is particularly evident in smaller missions, such as Merecz (Lithuanian: Merkinė) and Wornie (Lithuanian: Varniai), as well as the estates where the monks conducted pastoral activity among the rural population. This applies to larger cities as well. Dawid Scharff, preacher and prefect of the congregation of German burghers in Warsaw, asked for permission to continue to serve the members of this religious association.<sup>133</sup> The geographical provenance of the monks was another factor. A native of Kowno (Lithuanian: Kaunas), Józef Dębkowski, undertook the work in his city, in spite of his mother and acquaintances who tried to dissuade him.<sup>134</sup>

Confronted by the death of monks, the efforts to find their substitutes were made. The municipal authorities of Pułtusk are recorded to have taken such actions.<sup>135</sup> It was relatively easy to appoint monks in larger cities in which Jesuit institution consisted of a few dozen monks. Even in these cases, priests from other colleges were gathered. When all the clerics ministering the sick in Warsaw had died, Ignacy Heinrich was brought in from Braniewo to provide pastoral care in both German and Polish.<sup>136</sup> He did his duty as a chaplain so well that when the plague recurred in Warsaw at the turn of 1711 and 1712, he was again employed in this work.<sup>137</sup> In smaller locations with transportation difficulties and a limited number of personnel it was impossible to provide manpower. Consequently, if a college and a church lacked supervision, the post remained at the mercy of a hungry populace. Usually it ended in plunder. In Pułtusk, after the death of Kazimierz Nasierowski, the haggard population usurped the paraphernalia of the church.<sup>138</sup> In Kowno the same situation was prevented by a thoughtful, though unnamed Franciscan, who sealed the church and the college after the death of all the Jesuits in town.<sup>139</sup>

The narrative sources enable to analyze the forms of Jesuits' engagement in the city affected by the plague. Essentially, the existence of a division of competences should be emphasized. Superintendence of the Jesuit properties was principally separate from celebration of mass for the healthy and provision of care for the ill, be it physical or spiritual. These activities were only complementary, though, because the proper functioning of the college was connected with its facilities and material maintenance of the Jesuits engaged in pastoral work. Another aspect of the division of tasks was to do with the services provided by priests and secular coadjutors. Since only the priests were ordained, the main burden of spiritual care rested on their shoulders, while the lay brothers engaged in procuring material assistance. Moreover, the effort of burying the dead in consecrated soil was also

<sup>133</sup> *Compendium vitae p. Davidi Scharff*, *ibid.*, no. 62, p. 752.

<sup>134</sup> *Compendium vitae p. Josephi Dębkowski*, *ibid.*, p. 560.

<sup>135</sup> *Hist. coll. Pultoviensis 1708*, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 87r.

<sup>136</sup> *Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1708*, *ibid.*, fol. 105r.

<sup>137</sup> *Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1712*, *ibid.*, no. 46, fol. 122r.

<sup>138</sup> *Hist. coll. Pultoviensis 1708*, *ibid.*, fol. 87r.

<sup>139</sup> *Hist. coll. Caunensis 1710*, *ibid.*, fol. 169r.

primarily the duty of secular coadjutors.<sup>140</sup> That division of competences did not rule out the involvement of secular brothers in spiritual matters. Marcin Nieczaj of the Vilnius professed house, for instance, helped in preparing patients for confession by invoking so-called acts of repentance (*actus contritionis*).<sup>141</sup> It happened also that the priests delivered medicine, as evidenced by the preparation of cataplasms by Jan Świlewski of the Grodno college.<sup>142</sup> Furthermore, in several cities, the plague led the Jesuits to broaden the scope of their activities and commitment associated with parish ministry, as happened in the church of Saint Johns in Vilnius, which served both as a parish and Jesuit church. Due to the deaths of vicars, the Jesuits performed baptisms, marriages, and declared public announcements.<sup>143</sup>

In the cities inhabited by heterogeneous nationalities there was yet another kind of division of competences among priests. In Warsaw, for example, Dawid Scharff and Szymon Prebot, born in Warmia, conducted pastoral work among the German community, while Marcin Eliasiewicz took care of the Poles. Franciszek Żaki in turn preached in the collegiate church, and Marcin Niewiadomski in the Jesuit church.<sup>144</sup> In Königsberg, among the monks sent from Braniewo after the local missionaries had perished, Jan Fitkau provided spiritual care to the sick, while Piotr Lingk was in charge for the church, and the ministry among healthy people. A third monk, Piotr Elert, who came from Reszel, held the ministry in the circle of the local community of Poles and Lithuanians.<sup>145</sup>

Special attention should be devoted to the places of residence of the Jesuits providing ministry among the infected. Their accommodation depended, on the one hand, on the religious legislation, and on the other hand, on local conditions. As already mentioned, in accordance with the regulations, the superiors used the principle of strict separation of those monks in contact with the sick from the rest of the community. This phenomenon was already evident in the early stages of the epidemic, when the college was still inhabited by some of the staff. Fathers assigned to plagued resided in the immediate vicinity of the religious house, or within it, but did not take part in joint activities of the community. On August 29<sup>th</sup> 1710 in Vilnius, Jan Narbutowicz with the lay brother Marcin Bognowski moved from the college to the neighboring building in order to better carry out pastoral work among the plague victims.<sup>146</sup> In Braniewo, due to a lack of appropriate accommodation outside the college, Jerzy Krautt received permission to live further within the monastery although at the condition that he would not sit at the

<sup>140</sup> Compendium vitae p. Joannis Koss, *ibid.*, no. 62, p. 650.

<sup>141</sup> Hist. domus professae Vlnensis 1710, *ibid.*, no. 45, fol. 115r.

<sup>142</sup> Hist. coll. Grodnensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 216r.

<sup>143</sup> Ann. coll. Vlnensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 290r.

<sup>144</sup> Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1708, *ibid.*, fol. 104r.

<sup>145</sup> Hist. coll. Brunsbergensis 1709, *ibid.*, fol. 161r. He replaced Kazimierz Dąbkowski, who had failed to arrive (BMWM, no. 6, p. 159).

<sup>146</sup> *Diarium Collegij Societatis Iesu ab anno 1710 ad anni 1723 septembrem exclusive*, p. 16.

common table nor have conversations with the other residents.<sup>147</sup> Taking accommodation in houses located outside the monastic facility resulted from the closing of the church and college in the face of growing threats. In Grodno, for example, Jan Świlewski, lived in the Jesuit pharmacy, built up in brick a year earlier.<sup>148</sup> In Reszel, Jerzy Krautt slept in the boarding school building for poor nobility.<sup>149</sup> The supervisor of church buildings in Święta Lipka, Friedrich Bartsch, built himself a hut on one of the nearby hills, where not only he could breathe fresher air, but also had a better view of the church and the monastic building complex.<sup>150</sup>

Jesuit chroniclers widely described the pastoral work of the monks, praising their achievements. As already mentioned, they had a dual dimension: regular celebration of the liturgy for the healthy, and preparation of the sick for death. In relation to the first occupation, one should notice that because the church was usually closed, the Jesuits celebrated Mass in different places. Primarily, they chose city squares, but sometimes also assigned a special room in the vicinity of the monastery, like in Grodno, where the previously-mentioned Jan Świlewski arranged an improvised chapel in the building of the old pharmacy, which in 1707 was looted by the Russians. There, by an open window, he celebrated Masses both on weekdays and holidays. The people gathered below and eagerly participated in the service.<sup>151</sup> An exception from the practice of out-of-church sermons was the mission in Königsberg, where the Catholic parson decided not to close the local parish church. For this reason, the Jesuits who assisted diocesan clergy still celebrated ordinary masses.<sup>152</sup>

The Jesuits approached the issue of sacraments with special attention. Accordingly to the laudatory elements of Jesuit house chronicles, their number was sometimes quoted. The basis for this type of records were the lists drawn up by the monks themselves, which reflect the passion of the Jesuits for gathering statistical data.<sup>153</sup> Stanisław Lipski of the Vilnius professed house heard 1500 confessions. When ill and unable to walk, he demanded to be carried in a sedan chair (*sedia gestatoria*).<sup>154</sup> In Kroże, in addition to preaching, Wojciech Hryszkiewicz heard 250 confessions during 50 days, an average of five a day.<sup>155</sup> Even in conditions of poor health, the Fathers did not stop working. For example, in Warsaw, a delirious

<sup>147</sup> BMW, no. 6, p. 161.

<sup>148</sup> Hist. coll. Grodnensis 1710, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 216r. See also: *Grodno*, [in:] EWJ, p. 197.

<sup>149</sup> Hist. coll. Reseliensis 1710, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 95r.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., fol. 94v. Zob. S. Flis, op. cit., pp. 502–503.

<sup>151</sup> Hist. coll. Grodnensis 1710, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 216v; *Compendium vitae p. Joannis Świlewski*, ibid., no. 62, p. 611.

<sup>152</sup> Additionally, penitential psalms, litanies to Jesus and the prayer to St. Rock were sung, with the image of the Saint being displayed to the believers (ADWM, no. H 204, p. 7).

<sup>153</sup> The chronicler from the Warsaw college wrote about collecting the information (*Ann. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis* 1708, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 282r).

<sup>154</sup> Hist. domus professae Vilmensis 1710, ibid., fol. 115r.

<sup>155</sup> *Compendium vitae p. Alberti Hryszkiewicz*, ibid., no. 62, p. 582.

Marcin Eliaszewicz (*in phrenesi*) blessed the surrounding crowd.<sup>156</sup> The efforts of the Jesuits sometimes led to conversion. This was the case of Anna neé Łapicka, the wife of the Nieśwież mayor Michał Nieczaj, who, together with his sister, converted from Orthodoxy to Catholicism.<sup>157</sup>

Charitable acts and pastoral services often resulted in the contraction of the deadly disease. The analyzed source material does not reliably allow determining whether the Jesuits used any prophylactic means.<sup>158</sup> The fact that in the obituaries there are mentions about renouncing them may suggest that some means were generally in use.<sup>159</sup> In other sources, as in the *litterae annuae*, there is a reference about sprinkling Saint Ignatius water on the patient, which must have given a placebo effect.<sup>160</sup> Wherever possible, however, they observed certain rules of a prophylactic nature, consisting in maintaining a physical distance from penitents and worshippers. Baltazar Jaworski listened to confessions from a church window,<sup>161</sup> which was a common procedure in such circumstances.<sup>162</sup> A big risk was associated with hearing an auricular confession, and with feeding patients. In Nieśwież, the sacristan of the Corpus Christi church, Stanisław Lisowski, contracted the plague giving food to a servant “in a manner more merciful than prudent.”<sup>163</sup> Jakub Bartsch, professor of philosophy at the Academy of Vilnius, fell ill with plague while visiting a burgher, Gorius, who had recently converted to Catholicism.<sup>164</sup> The aim of Jakub Bartsch’s visits was to hinder the efforts of Lutheran ministers to persuade the plagued to return to the old religion. Another obvious risk was associated with physical contact with sick monks or their corpses. A coadjutor, Jerzy Hertl, who took on the task of washing and dressing the dead brothers, also fell victim

<sup>156</sup> Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1708, *ibid.*, no. 45, fol. 104v. On the basis of the obituaries it may be concluded that it was Paweł Zembrzuski (*Compendium vitae p. Pauli Zembrzuski, ibid.*, no. 62, p. 754).

<sup>157</sup> Hist. domus tertiae probationis Nesvisiensis 1710, *ibid.*, no. 45, fol. 49v–50r.

<sup>158</sup> About this subject, in general see: Monika GAJEWSKA, *Epidemia dżumy w Rzeczypospolitej w świetle XVI–XVII-wiecznych traktatów medycznych i zielników. Profilaktyka indywidualna*, [in:] *Wśród córek Eskulapa*, pp. 20–49; M. JASZCZUK, *op. cit.*, pp. 41–44; A. KARPIŃSKI, *W walce z niewidzialnym wrogiem*, pp. 168–183.

<sup>159</sup> Wojciech Hryszkiewicz collected communion wafers which had been vomited by the sick. Probably, his behavior was affected by the fact of his surviving the plague in Tylża a year earlier (Russian: Sovetsk). *Compendium vitae p. Alberti Hryszkiewicz, ARSI, Lituania*, no. 62, p. 583.

<sup>160</sup> Ann. coll. Reseliensis 1709, *ibid.*, no. 45, f. 276r; Ann. domus professae Vilnensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 286r.

<sup>161</sup> *Compendium vitae p. Balthasari Jaworski, ibid.*, no. 62, p. 766.

<sup>162</sup> Andrzej KARPIŃSKI, *Opieka nad chorymi i ubogimi w miastach polskich w czasie epidemii w XVII–XVIII w.*, [in:] *Charitas*, p. 239.

<sup>163</sup> Hist. coll. Nesvisiensis 1710, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 44v. See also: *Compendium vitae ch. Stanisłai Lisowski, ibid.*, no. 62, p. 650.

<sup>164</sup> Hist. coll. Vilnensis 1710, *ibid.*, no. 45, fol. 129r; Ann. coll. Vilnensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 290r. The person bearing the surname of Gorius mentioned in the chronicle might have been Jan Golius (Lithuanian: Jonas Golijus). See: Deimantas KARVELIS, Raimonda RAGAUSKIENĖ, *Iš Radvilų giminės istorijos: Dubingių Kunigaikštystė 1547–1808*, Vilnius 2009, p. 245, fn. 643.



himself.<sup>165</sup> The Superior of the Königsberg mission, Herman Holtz, contracted the disease while anointing his fellow Jesuit Lawrence Gostowski.<sup>166</sup> In Dyneburg, Jan Burski became infected by carrying a scholastic, Jedliński, to his cell.<sup>167</sup> In a similar manner, in Kroże, the rector Aleksander Kasztela caught the disease taking part in the burial of his friend, the archdeacon of Samogitia.<sup>168</sup>

When the Jesuits felt the first symptoms of the disease, they remained at the infirmary and began adequate preparations for death. Touching descriptions of these individual behaviors are found in the obituaries. First of all, they proceeded to a general confession and communion, which was repeated if the agony was extensive.<sup>169</sup> Jakub Bartsch and Józef Sierkuczewski absolved one another.<sup>170</sup> Then, voluntarily, they went to a suburban farm to await death. Baltazar Jaworski from the Vilnius professed house<sup>171</sup> and the aforementioned Bartsch and Sierkuczewski of the academy did so.<sup>172</sup> Asking fellows for forgiveness was considered mandatory. They did this by letter, like Kazimierz Szczytt,<sup>173</sup> or addressed the community through the confessor, as in the case of Alexander Kasztela.<sup>174</sup> Due to the lack of a priest by their deathbed, they had to accept the sacraments from themselves. Rarely do we find mentions of the last anointing, which as a sacrament only became widespread in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>175</sup> Aleksander Kasztela received it.<sup>176</sup> The dying priests also used the situation to enhance the religious devotion of the community.<sup>177</sup> The act of Marcin Romanowski who summoned the house servants, and anointed himself in their presence, should be interpreted in this way.<sup>178</sup> It should also be noted that soon before their deaths, the monks cared about the protection of the property of the college. So did Ignacy Bukaty who, thanks to an exceptionally mild conduct of the disease, managed to write the inventory of the papal seminar, and send it to the rector of the Vilnius Academy, who resided in Łukiszki.<sup>179</sup>

<sup>165</sup> Compendium vitae ch. Georgii Hertl, ARSI, Lituania, no. 62, p. 807.

<sup>166</sup> Compendium vitae p. Hermann Holtz, *ibid.*, p. 548.

<sup>167</sup> Compendium vitae p. Joannis Burski, *ibid.*, p. 596.

<sup>168</sup> Compendium vitae p. Alexandri Kasztela, *ibid.*, p. 587. See also: S. ZAŁĘSKI, *op.cit.*, vol. 4, pt. 2, p. 1016.

<sup>169</sup> It was the case of Aleksander Kasztela, who first confessed his sins in the college, and later during his stay in the countryside.

<sup>170</sup> Compendium vitae p. Josephi Sierkuczewski, ARSI, Lituania, no. 62, p. 796.

<sup>171</sup> Compendium vitae p. Balthasari Jaworski, *ibid.*, p. 768.

<sup>172</sup> Hist. domus primae et secundae probationis Vilnensis 1710, *ibid.*, no. 45, fol. 129r.

<sup>173</sup> Compendium vitae p. Casimiri Szczytt, *ibid.*, no. 62, p. 699.

<sup>174</sup> Compendium vitae p. Alexandri Kasztela, *ibid.*, p. 587.

<sup>175</sup> Bogdan ROK, *Duszpasterstwo chorych i umierających w okresie staropolskim*, Medycyna No-wożytna, vol. 3: 1996, issue 1–2, pp. 60–62.

<sup>176</sup> Compendium vitae p. Alexandri Kasztela, ARSI, Lituania, no. 62, p. 587.

<sup>177</sup> For example, Kazimierz Szczytt from the Płock college administered the viaticum to himself. (Compendium vitae p. Casimiri Szczytt, *ibid.*, p. 699).

<sup>178</sup> Compendium vitae p. Martini Romanowski, *ibid.*, p. 623.

<sup>179</sup> Compendium vitae p. Ignatii Bukaty, *ibid.*, p. 798.

The Jesuits who died during the plague appeared in the dreams of their brothers, or of other persons closely related to the Order. Jan Małachowski asserted that thanks to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Ignatius, he only spent three days in purgatory.<sup>180</sup> Jan Brictius of the Braniewo college was seen during dream by his sister, a nun in Reszel.<sup>181</sup>

The Fathers of the Society who died during the plague were given a specific burying place. In ordinary circumstances, the bodies were buried in the crypt of the Jesuit church. However, at the beginning of the epidemic, in order to prevent the so-called miasma, other measures were taken. Corpses were then allocated either in another site of the temple, or in a common grave. The deceased lay brothers from the Vilnius professed house were buried in the St. Benno chapel of the St. Casimir church, in August 1710.<sup>182</sup> In Braniewo, a special place was assigned at the entrance to the choir area.<sup>183</sup> In Mitawa, due to the lack of a Jesuit church, the burials took place in the local parish church or the Jesuit church in Szomberga.<sup>184</sup>

Meanwhile, as the plague took a even higher toll, churches were closed, and the organization of burials became very difficult. As a result, the monks buried their dead on the outskirts, as in the case of the Jesuits associated with the Vilnius academy. Jakub Bartsch and Józef Sierkuczewski were buried along road leading out of the city, in Łukiszki, by the column which commemorated the Jesuits who died during the previous epidemic.<sup>185</sup> The vice-prefect of the printing house Jakub Moller was buried by the bridge over the river Neris.<sup>186</sup> The coadjutor Jerzy Ciesielski was laid to eternal rest in the cemetery by the St. Szczepan church in the suburb Rudniki, where there was also a plague hospital.<sup>187</sup> In Warsaw, all the dead monks were buried at the Holy Cross church.<sup>188</sup> The aforementioned Michał Austen from the Łomża college was buried in the parish cemetery.<sup>189</sup>

The healing of particular individuals was attributed to the intercession of saints. Thus, for example, Ignatius Heinrich, who worked in Warsaw, ordered his

<sup>180</sup> *Compendium vitae* ch. Joannis Małachowski, *ibid.*, p. 771.

<sup>181</sup> *Compendium vitae* p. Joannis Brictii, *ibid.*, pp. 550–551.

<sup>182</sup> *Hist. domus professae Vilnensis 1710*, *ibid.*, no. 45, fol. 114v. See also: Vladas DRĖMA, *Vilniaus bažnyčios: iš Vlado Drėmos archyvu*, sud. Audronė LĖVERIENĖ, Arturas MICKIEVIČIUS, Rita MOSIEJENĖ, Vilnius 2009, pp. 457, 459.

<sup>183</sup> Jan Brictius and Jan Alshut were buried there (ARSI, Lituania, no. 62, pp. 550–551).

<sup>184</sup> In Szomberga the superior Ernest Szturm, Szymon Widmann, Michał Them and Grzegorz Boltz were buried. Kazimierz Michniewicz was buried in the church of Mitawa at the entrance to the choir area (*ibid.*, pp. 639–641).

<sup>185</sup> *Compendium vitae* p. Josephi Sierkuczewski, *ibid.*, p. 796; *Compendium vitae* p. Jacobi Bartsch, *ibid.*, p. 795.

<sup>186</sup> *Hist. coll. Vilnensis 1710*, *ibid.*, no. 45, fol. 129r; *Diarium Collegij Societatis Iesu ab anno 1710 ad anni 1723 septembrem exclusive*, p. 18.

<sup>187</sup> *Hist. coll. Vilnensis 1710*, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 129v.

<sup>188</sup> The people who dug graves demanded 10 zlotys for each burial. *Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1708*, *ibid.*, fol. 105r.

<sup>189</sup> *Hist. coll. Lomzensis 1708*, *ibid.*, fol. 27v.

servant to cut open his bubo, and thanks to the intercession of St. Francis Xavier, he was cured.<sup>190</sup> The healing of the Warsaw pharmacist Marcin Kasner was regarded as an effect of the intervention of Stanisław Kostka.<sup>191</sup> Jesuits attributed to the protection of saints also the safety of a certain community, and its paraphernalia. The fact that the plague bypassed Kotra, a mission of the Grodno College, was believed to have happened due to the famous image of the Virgin Mary preserved there.<sup>192</sup> Similarly, the reasons for the salvation of the novices from was sought in the intercession of the Virgin Mary of Troki (Lithuanian: Trakai).<sup>193</sup>

Jesuit house chronicles also point out the influence on other religious groups. The generosity of the Fathers of the Society prompted attitudes of various assemblies and individual clergy to play a more active role. This can be seen in the example of Warsaw where, following the footsteps of the Jesuits, the representatives of other religious Orders came out into the streets to preach the Word of God, rather than lock themselves up in the monastery.<sup>194</sup> The Fathers of the Society were also helped by secular priests serving as the altar prebends in Jesuit churches.<sup>195</sup> As part of a competition in the “government of souls” the Jesuit activity also mobilized the Protestants, as seen in Königsberg, where Lutheran pastors, despite the magistrate’s calls, refrained from working among the sick, under the pretext of having wives and children. In view of the increasing popularity of the Jesuits the municipal authorities had to appoint school teachers to preach in the infected city.<sup>196</sup>

Another interesting aspect of Jesuit activity were their attempts to discipline so called vespilloes, people in charge for taking the bodies of the plagued from their homes and bury them, who often, as a result of the disruption of social ties, appropriated the goods of the deceased.<sup>197</sup> Sometimes the Jesuits themselves fell victim to such proceedings. This conclusion emerges from the example of Marcján Talarzewicz, a secular priest who served the Stanisław Kostka altar in the Corpus Christi church in Nieśwież. He also helped the Jesuits provide service among the infected. Before he died, he bequeathed seventy gold coins and a few belongings to the Jesuits. The monks, however, did not receive their possession, because the money was taken away by a person who stood by the deceased. The vespilloes were suspected.<sup>198</sup> For trading objects once owned by the infected, the punishment was

<sup>190</sup> Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1708, *ibid.*, fol. 104r.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 105r.

<sup>192</sup> Hist. coll. Grodnensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 15v.

<sup>193</sup> Hist. domus primae et secundae probationis Vilmensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 183v.

<sup>194</sup> Ann. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1708, ch. 281v–282r; *Compendium vitae* p. Martini Niewiadomski, *ibid.*, no. 62, p. 753.

<sup>195</sup> One of them was Marcján Talarzewicz in Nieśwież (Hist. coll. Nesvisiensis 1710, *ibid.*, no. 45, fol. 44v).

<sup>196</sup> ADWM, no. H 204, p. 7.

<sup>197</sup> A. WYROBISZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 216–217; A. KARPIŃSKI, *W walce z niewidzialnym wrogiem*, p. 93.

<sup>198</sup> The investigation was not conducted after all due to the absence of Walenty Fornalski (Hist. coll. Nesvisiensis 1710, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 44v).

usually severe.<sup>199</sup> In Warsaw, the monks prepared for death those vespilloes who were caught red-handed.<sup>200</sup> The activity of the Jesuits manifested itself not only in counteracting practices unworthy of a good Christian, but also in setting a good example and providing financial assistance to the vespilloes, which allowed them living honestly. In Grodno, for example, Jan Świlewski gave them a wage drawn from the income of the pharmacy, and thus prevented thefts.<sup>201</sup> In Vilnius, the exemplary death of Jerzy Ciesielski strengthened the faith of the vespilloes who came to fetch his body.<sup>202</sup>

The plague was an opportunity to raise the prestige of the congregation. In Königsberg, the Fathers of the Society received appreciation of the Lutherans for their generosity.<sup>203</sup> Also, in Warsaw, the magistrate issued a positive assessment of the monks' activities, which the house chronicler emphasized quoting from a letter addressed by the municipal authorities to Father General Michelangelo Tamburini.<sup>204</sup> The positive attitude of the public towards the Society of Jesus was reflected by the appearance of new benefactors. In Łomża, Jan Zaczko contributed with his alms to construction of the altar of the Bl. Stanisław Kostka and the martyrs Zeno and Thecla.<sup>205</sup> The mayor of Nieśwież, Michał Nieczaj, who lost his entire closest family, founded an altaria in the Corpus Christi parish church.<sup>206</sup> The Jesuits assigned him a grave in the cemetery, as in the case of councilman Barszcz. To ensure dignified burials for the town officials, alabaster crosses were brought from Königsberg. Eventually they were usurped by Mikhail Szeremietiew, the son of the Russian general Boris.<sup>207</sup>

The chroniclers also described the return of the community to the city. Shortly before the scheduled arrival, a few monks were sent ahead to re-open the college. This was the case of the Vilnius St. Casimir professed house, which was properly

<sup>199</sup> A. KARPIŃSKI, *W walce z niewidzialnym wrogiem*, pp. 122, 272.

<sup>200</sup> Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1710, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 104v.

<sup>201</sup> Hist. coll. Grodnensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 216v; Compendium vitae p. Joannis Świlewski, *ibid.*, no. 62, p. 611.

<sup>202</sup> He gave them a crucifix, which they worshipped (Compendium vitae p. Georgii Ciesielski, *ibid.*, p. 797).

<sup>203</sup> ADWM, no. H 204, p. 7. See also: S. ZAŁĘSKI, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, pt. 3, Kraków 1905, pp. 1468–1469; Franz DITTRICH, *Die katholische Kirche und Gemeinde zu Königsberg (1614–1914)*, Königsberg 1914, pp. 45–46.

<sup>204</sup> Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1710, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 105v.

<sup>205</sup> Hist. coll. Lomzensis 1708, *ibid.*, fol. 28v. See also: Jerzy PASZENDA, *Budowle jezuickie w Polsce XVI–XVIII wieku*, vol. 2, Kraków 2000, pp. 200–201.

<sup>206</sup> Hist. coll. Nesvisiensis 1710, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 44v–45r; Российский государственный архив древних актов, Москва, ф. 1603, оп. 1, no. 51a (Inventory of the College and the Corpus Christi church in Nieśwież, 1773), fol. 74v. See also: S. ZAŁĘSKI, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, pt. 1, Kraków 1905, p. 450.

<sup>207</sup> They did not reach Moscow, however, as they burnt down along with the stable, where they had been stored temporarily (Hist. coll. Nesvisiensis 1710, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 45r).

prepared, mainly thanks to the efforts of the lay brothers.<sup>208</sup> In most colleges the return took place between October 1710 and March 1711, most intensively, however, in the months of December, January and February, when due to the frost the plague ceased. At the same time, the schools opened again, although sometimes the attendance was poor.<sup>209</sup> The dates for coming back were sometimes chosen according to the liturgical calendar. In Kroże and Żodziszki, the return took place as soon as October 5<sup>th</sup>, the day of St. Thaddeus.<sup>210</sup> To the Vilnius professed house, as well as to Warsaw, the community came back during Christmas.<sup>211</sup> A little later, the Jesuits re-inhabited the Academy (1–5 January), and the novitiate of Vilnius (14 January).<sup>212</sup> The Polotsk monks returned from Stajki Newelskie on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>213</sup> The fathers from Łomża stayed the longest outside the college. They remained in Niestępowo until the beginning of Lent.<sup>214</sup> The reopening of the facility was usually celebrated solemnly with a ceremony of thanksgiving. A *Te Deum* was sung, e. g. in Vilnius on 14 January.<sup>215</sup> In Kroże, the reopening of the monastic house after a three-month absence of monks took place with the participation of the Jesuit musical boarding school.<sup>216</sup> Sometimes, out of the fear of the plague, public celebrations were purposely delayed, as in the Vilnius professed house, where the ceremonial service on January 1<sup>st</sup> did not take place. The public obsequies for the deceased monks proceeded a few days later.<sup>217</sup>

The return to normality was reflected in the strengthening of the religious feelings. The salvation of individuals or entire communities was attributed to the Virgin Mary, or to Jesuit saints or blessed; first of all, to Francis Xavier or Stanislaus Kostka, and other saints, like St. Roch, the patron saint against the plague, and St. Thaddeus, the patron in desperate causes. The increase in worship of these

<sup>208</sup> On 6 December 1710 Bazyli Truchoniewicz with Maciej Niberle and Michał Bałtowicz returned from Daniuszowo to ventilate the house and facilities. On December 20<sup>th</sup> the preachers Piotr Hammelton and Piotr Grymski along with the monk Jan Szeffers came back. Four days later the superior Jan Bielski returned (Hist. domus professae Vilmensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 115v).

<sup>209</sup> The chronicler of the Vilnius Academy noted down that there were few young people in the town due to the plague, while noblemen hesitated to send their sons to Vilnius (Hist. coll. Vilmensis 1711, *ibid.*, no. 46, fol. 137r).

<sup>210</sup> Hist. coll. Crosensis 1710, *ibid.*, ch. 174v; Hist. coll. Zodiscensis 1710, *ibid.*, fol. 146v.

<sup>211</sup> Hist. domus professae et coll. Varsaviensis 1708, *ibid.*, fol. 105v.

<sup>212</sup> *Diarium Collegij Societatis Iesu ab anno 1710 ad anni 1723 septembrem exclusive*, p. 21.

<sup>213</sup> Hist. coll. Polocensis 1711, *ibid.*, no. 46, fol. 83r.

<sup>214</sup> Hist. coll. Lomzensis 1711, *ibid.*, fol. 45r. The spiritual retreats, preceded by the renewal of the religious vows, took place in Pułtusk upon the agreement of the rector Aleksander Sawicki (Hist. coll. pułtoviensis 1711, *ibid.*, fol. 92r).

<sup>215</sup> Hist. domus primae et secundae probationis Vilmensis 1711, *ibid.*, fol. 145r.

<sup>216</sup> Hist. coll. Zodiscensis 1710, *ibid.*, no. 45, fol. 146v.

<sup>217</sup> This happened in the Vilnius professed house (Hist. domus professae Vilmensis 1711, *ibid.*, no. 46, fol. 131v).



Saints was visible not only among the Jesuits, but also in a wider circle of the faithful. In Nieśwież, a special role was played by St. Michael the Archangel, who was worshiped on the so-called Angelic Hill, in the sanctuary under Jesuit supervision.<sup>218</sup> In 1711, the Nowogródek local gentry flocked on a pilgrimage to the miraculous image of Mary, displayed in the Jesuit church.<sup>219</sup> Especially noticeable is the growing importance of Stanislaus Kostka in Mazovia.<sup>220</sup> In Łomża there were some miraculous healings, and the Jesuit chronicler, not without a certain distance, stressed that the local population began to define the Jesuit novice who died in Rome in 1568 as the Saint of Łomża (*sanctus Lomzensis*).<sup>221</sup>

### GROUP STRUCTURE OF THE PLAGUE VICTIMS

Jesuits of the Lithuanian Province paid a high price during the epidemic between the years 1708–1711. In fact the plague caused the death of almost a fifth of the personnel in the administrative unit of the Order. In the absence of data on mortality among civil population in the surveyed areas, it is not possible to determine whether the monks suffered greater or smaller losses than other groups of the population. However, there is no doubt that the majority of the Jesuits dead as a result of the plague, took care of sick, or provided their religious ministry in the infected city. Incidents of accidental contagion were very rare. They were mainly related with travels, during which occasional contacts with the outside world intensified. Among these victims was the professor of canon law Władysław Narewicz from the college in Warsaw and theology scholastic Jerzy Karwowski, associated with the facility in Polotsk. An estimation of the risk to which they were exposed as a result of their engagement in pastoral work in the villages affected by the plague, is hindered by the lack of the total number of monks involved. Statistical data can however cast some light on this group of Jesuits, which suffered the greatest losses because of its activity in the field of pastoral and social work during the plague.

Table 1 shows that the distribution of victims in relation to the geographical area was not even. This is made visible by the direct correlation between the number of Jesuits who died during the bubonic plague and those regions where plague hit the most. In relation to the number of religious personnel operating in the area, the greatest losses were suffered by the colleges located in proper Lithuania (excluding Vilnius), in Samogitia as well as Livonia and Courland. Many vic-

<sup>218</sup> Hist. domus tertiae probationis Nesvisiensis 1710, *ibid.*, no. 45, fol. 49v–50r; Hist. domus tertiae probationis Nesvisiensis 1711, *ibid.*, no. 46, fol. 71r.

<sup>219</sup> Hist. coll. Novogrodensis 1711, *ibid.*, fol. 61r.

<sup>220</sup> About the worship in general see: Monika MOSSAKOWSKA, *Mazowiecki kult świętego Stanisława Kostki*, *Rocznik Mazowiecki*, vol. 16: 2004, pp. 245–258. However, it was not the only region where the Jesuit novice had deserved the opinion of the patron of the plague. The same happened in Lvov, see: A. KARPIŃSKI, *W walce z niewidzialnym wrogiem*, pp. 243–247.

<sup>221</sup> Hist. coll. Lomzensis 1708, ARSI, Lituania, no. 45, fol. 28r–28v.

tims compared with the number of those involved perished in the epidemic in Mazovia and Podlachia, as well as in Warmia and Ducal Prussia. The Jesuits in the East Slavic speaking parts of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania experienced minor losses. Finally, there is a quite surprising outcome of the situation in the three Houses in Vilnius (the academy, the professed house and the novitiate) as well as their estates. In this case, due to the large number of Jesuits assigned to the monastic houses, and despite the large number of victims, the toll was not as high as it could be expected.

Table 1. Geographical distribution of plague victims

	Plague victims		Monks at the time of outbreak*	
	L	%	L	%
Livonia and Courland	21	16,0	35	5,2
Lithuania and Samogitia	31	23,7	63	9,3
Mazovia and Podlasie	24	18,3	103	15,3
Warmia and Prussia	15	11,4	59	8,8
Vilnius	31	23,7	184	27,3
Ruthenia Pol.-Lith. Commonwealth	9	6,9	230	34,1
General <sup>(a)</sup>	131	100,–	674	100,–

\*Based on *Catalogus dispositionis personarum prov. Lithuanæ Societatis Iesu anni 1708*, ARSI, Lituania, nr 57.

<sup>a)</sup> Omitted the provincial curia and persons outside the borders of the province.

An analysis of Table 2 determines that all layers of the Order, in terms of the type of vows made, were represented among the victims of the plague. Considering the absolute numbers and percentages, one may notice that the highest toll was paid by the priests, who represented more than half of the Jesuit victims of the plague, as well as the lay brothers, which made up more than one-third of the dead during the epidemic. A little more than ten percent of the victims were members of other groups, such as scholastics and novices. When comparing sections of the religious community to its structure on the eve of the epidemic outbreak in 1708, it turns out that the percentage of victims among secular coadjutors and priests was much higher than the number of these two groups within the personnel of the Province. In the circle of novices, a different situation appears: while the novice coadjutors devoted themselves to sacrifice, among the so-called *noviti scholastici*, only one person died, because of accidental infection. This difference is explained by the social background of candidates for the Order: while future priests descended mostly from the nobility, secular coadjutors belonged to the lower social strata. The number of victims among the scholastics, in comparison to their total number, was decidedly small. To complete the outlined image, one should still take into account the differences within the group of priests. It turns out that the biggest losses

occurred among those who professed the four vows. The second place is occupied by the coadjutor clergy. The newly ordained priests described as *nondum in gradus* are even fewer. Such a division of ordained personnel reflected the structure of the Lithuanian Province at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It can therefore be concluded that the professed of the four vows, although the most qualified, in the face of the Black Death were not privileged in relation to other clerical layers.

Table 2. Structure of the victim group acc. to their position in the hierarchy of the Order

	Plague Victims		Monks at time of outbreak*	
	N	%	N	%
Priests	71	54,2	324	47,9
Scholastics	6	4,6	118	17,4
Lay brothers	46	35,1	180	26,6
Scholastic novices	1	0,8	37	5,5
Secular Novices	7	5,3	18	2,6
General <sup>(a)</sup>	131	100,–	677	100,–

\*Based on the Catalogus dispositionis personarum prov. Lithuaniae Societatis Iesu anni 1708, ARSI, Lituania, nr 57.

<sup>a)</sup> Omitted: persons residing outside of the province borders.

In reference to the offices, the group structure of the victims was uneven. The data of the Table 3 are indicative. In fact, the same person held at the same time many posts of a different nature. If one considers only the offices requiring more time and effort, certain groups appear to be exceedingly ready to self-sacrifice. As a result of the plague, the monastic house managers and those involved in pastoral ministry suffered greatly. The first group was largely made up of lay brothers, and the other of preachers and missionaries, as well as several elder monks who, before the epidemic outbreak, supervised the spirituality of the confreres within the monastic house. A relatively small number of victims can be noted among the Jesuits serving the most challenging tasks of the Province management, or House superiors. Teachers and religious youth during training were the privileged ones. The collected data leads to the conclusion that the ministry among the plagued was to some extent associated with the current profile career of a monk. The monastic authorities generally tried to protect from the devastating effects of the epidemic those responsible for governing the Province and its Houses, and lecturers who constituted the intellectual elite of the Order. Slightly different motives hid behind the evacuation of the scholastics. Since they did not yet fully belong to the Society, exposing them to the risk of infection could cause complaints from the families. In this regard the authorities were clearly farsighted, and in regards to the difficult conditions of recruitment sought to minimize the risks to future candidates for priesthood.

Table 3. Group structure of the plague victims according to position held in the administration of the Order

	Plague Victims		Monks at the time of the outbreak*	
	No.	%	No.	%
House and Province leadership	6	4,6	34	5,1
House Management	57	43,5	239	35,3
External pastoral ministry	27	20,6	114	16,8
House pastoral ministry	11	8,4	29	4,2
Teaching	17	12,9	113	16,7
Receiving education	10	7,7	141	20,8
Unspecified tasks	3	2,3	7	1,1
General <sup>(a)</sup>	131	100,–	677	100,–

\*Based on the *Catalogus dispositionis personarum prov. Lithuanae Societatis Iesu anni 1708*, ARSI, Lithuania, nr 57.

<sup>a)</sup> Omitted: persons residing outside of the Jesuit province.

The loss of life is revealed not solely in numbers, but also in regards to the skills of the dead monks. In Courland the death of the long-time superior of the Mitawa residence, the Austrian Ernest Szturm, and his companion Szymon Widmann was acutely felt.<sup>222</sup> In Kroże death came to rector Aleksander Kasztela, a Father highly respected in the Order, with close contacts to the Radziwiłł family.<sup>223</sup> The epidemic also took a toll among lay brothers skillful in various crafts. These included the vice-prefect of the Vilnius printing house, Jakub Moller, a turner, Jerzy Hertl, Grzegorz Marderwaldt, a bricklayer, as well as a painter, Jan Małachowski, and a sculptor, Jakub Pflieger.<sup>224</sup>

The losses were so substantial that it took a long time before the personnel of single houses returned in numbers to its state before the epidemic (Table 4). The fastest to rebuild their position were the colleges admitting candidates for the Order and educating the future generation of the Society. This process took place in the mid Tens. In minor houses, the increase in the number of personnel was much slower: in some cases the state prior to the epidemic was reached only in the second half of the Twenties. The efforts of the monastic authorities was to provide an adequate number of priests while taking into account the financial capacity of these monastic houses. The privileged status belonged to missions in Livonia and Courland, situated on the border between Protestant and Catholic confessions. There, the Jesuits traditionally played a vicarial role due to the feasible number of Catholic diocesan clergy. As a result of the huge losses the Society suffered in these

<sup>222</sup> *Compendium vitae p. Ernesti Sturm*, *ibid.*, no. 62, p. 637; *Compendium vitae p. Simoni Widmann*, *ibid.*, p. 638.

<sup>223</sup> AGAD, AR, dz. V, no. 6515.

<sup>224</sup> Jan POPŁATEK, Jerzy PASZENDA, *Słownik jezuitów artystów*, Kraków 1972, pp. 155–156, 158.

areas, already a year after the outbreak, the Provincial Krzysztof Łosiewski tried to send a number of monks close those who had perished. Although it failed to immediately restore levels prior to 1710, the situation was not too bad. This happened at the expense of other regions, including Samogitia, where a large number of the Jesuits serving in the monastic houses of Livonia and Courland came from.<sup>225</sup>

Table 4. The number of staff at the Jezuit posts before and after the outbreak\*

Region	House <sup>(a)</sup>	Number before the outbreak	Number after the outbreak	Year when the level from before the outbreak was reached or exceeded
Livonia and Courland	Dyneburg	14 (1709/10)	6 (1710/11)	1722/1723
	Ilłusztā	13 (1709/10)	6 (1710/11)	1727/1728
	Mitawa	8 (1709/10)	6 (1710/11)	1714/1715
Lithuania and Samogitia	Kowno	15 (1709/10)	8 (1710/11)	1728/1729
	Kroże	32 (1709/10)	18 (1710/11)	1748/1749
	Poszawsze	15 (1709/10)	7 (1710/11)	1732/1733
Mazovia and Podlachia	Drohiczyn	13 (1709/10)	10 (1710/11)	1714/1715
	Łomża	18 (1709/10)	13 (1710/11)	1720/1721
	Płock	14 (1709/10)	12 (1710/11)	1715/1716
	Pułtusk	18 (1707/08)	15 (1708/09)	1711/1712
	Warszawa	47 (1707/08)	41 (1708/09)	1714/1715
Warmia and Prussia	Braniewo	31 (1708/09)	27 (1709/10)	1720/1721
	Reszel	26 (1709/10)	20 (1710/11)	1726/1727
Vilnius	Vilnius – Professed House	29 (1709/10)	20 (1710/11)	Not reached
	Vilnius – The Academy	77 (1709/10)	70 (1710/11)	1714/1715
	Vilnius – novitiate	77 (1709/10)	55 (1710/11)	1712/1713
Eastern Slavic speaking territories	Grodno	23 (1709/10)	28 (1710/11)	1710/1711
	Mińsk	13 (1709/10)	12 (1710/11)	1711/1712
	Nieśwież	24 (1709/10)	26 (1710/11)	1710/1711
	Polotsk	32 (1709/10)	27 (1710/11)	1714/1715
	Vitebsk	8 (1709/10)	8 (1710/11)	1710/1711

\*Based on the Catalogus dispositionis personarum prov. Lithuaniae Societatis Iesu anni 1708, ARSI, Lithuania, nr 57 and 58.

<sup>225</sup> A. MARIANI, *Personaleinsatz*, pp. 198–199 (Tables 9–10); idem, *Jezuici w Inflantach i w Kurlandii (1700–1773). Między wielką polityką a elitą lokalną*, *Zapiski Historyczne*, vol. 77: 2012, no. 4, pp. 127–128.



In the longer term, there was a rapid increase in the number of lay brothers in the second half of the Tens. This process can be explained not only by the substantial losses among this group resulting from the plague, but also by their significance for the reconstruction of the material basis of the monastic houses affected both by the epidemic and military operations. The number of priests grew more slowly due to the lengthy religious formation. In this respect, the consequences of admitting a greater number of candidates became evident only after several years. The shortage of ordained priests was felt most in the first years after the epidemic. To counter this problem, temporary solutions were implemented. For example, between 1713 and 1715, scholastics received the priesthood already in the second year of the course in scholastic theology and not, as was the case before, during the third year.<sup>226</sup>

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In summary, the plague in the Baltic region at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century provided the Jesuits with an opportunity to bring spiritual and material assistance to representatives of various social strata, especially including the poor. Through their activity, the Jesuits were trying to set a model of ethical behavior in the face of deadly threat, affecting both the clergy and civil authorities. At the same time, they contributed to the maintenance of social order and alleviated the difficult situation of the inhabitants of the plagued cities, which brought recognition to the religious congregation by the authorities. However, Jesuit activity came at a price: because of the strong commitment, the Fathers suffered considerable losses both in terms of personnel, as well as in the material sphere. Even though the latter were at least partly compensated by alms, the gaps in the ranks of the Society were only to be filled after years.

According to the pragmatism of the Jesuit Order, the Fathers skillfully combined self-sacrifice with self-preservation. The first manifested itself mainly in the search of refuge away from infected villages and in the application of procedures designed to isolate the sick from the healthy. Such efforts were not completely abandoned even in the case of those Jesuits who chose the ministry among the plagued. In addition, Order's authorities sought to counter the devastating impact of the epidemic on the unity of the religious community. In the face of a serious threat, a key aspect of the functioning of the Order was to maintain discipline and efficiency in decision-making at different levels of the hierarchy of the religious congregation. Due to the hindered communication between the provincial and his subordinates, a key role was played by house superiors.

The actions taken by the Jesuits during the plague reveal a kind of long-term thinking and planning skills, which religious authorities were sometimes alleged not to have.<sup>227</sup> The Fathers regarded that each member of the Society should strive

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<sup>226</sup> S. ZAŁĘSKI, op. cit., vol. 4, pt. 1, p. 154.

<sup>227</sup> Markus FRIEDRICH, *Der lange Arm Roms? Globale Verwaltung und Kommunikation im Jesuitenorden 1540–1773*, Frankfurt am Main – New York 2011, p. 435.

not only for Good in general, but for the greatest possible Good, choosing the means that best suit this purpose. According to this principle, efforts were made to ensure the preservation of the Order's manpower in the period after the epidemic. This was mainly the Order's youth and intellectual elite of lecturers, whose reconstruction would require much time and effort in the event of it being stricken by the plague. However, one should not think that this layer was a privileged group, panicky feeling from danger and protecting itself selfishly before any incumbent risk. On the contrary, being a respected Jesuit required a willingness to sacrifice their own lives. In the narrative of the Fathers of the Society from the time of pestilence, there are elements typical of the Jesuit worldview. A rational approach to the challenges and threats, and their religious vision of the world do not exclude each other. According to the idea that human life was supposedly the work of Divine Providence, the Jesuits thought that the setbacks and successes coexist and together bear witness to God's intervention in the world. The Jesuits did not seek death during the plague; on the contrary, they tried to protect themselves against it, using the measures that the medical knowledge of the time recommended. At the same time, according to the Christian vocation of the Jesuit Order, one should devote himself to his neighbor, even at the cost of his own life. The laudatory tone used in obituaries and house chronicles, represented the death of Jesuits while caring for the sick as the achievement of the highest Good.

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## DIE JESUITEN DER LITAUISCHEN PROVINZ UND DIE PESTEPIDEMIE VON 1708–1711

### Zusammenfassung

**Schlüsselwörter:** Gesellschaft Jesu, Infektionskrankheiten, Großfürstentum Litauen, 18. Jahrhundert, Großer Nordischer Krieg (1700–1721)

Der Artikel handelt von der Aktivität der Jesuiten während der Pestepidemie, die sich während des Großen Nordischen Kriegs auf dem Gebiet der alten Adelsrepublik verbreitete. Die Aufmerksamkeit des Autors konzentriert sich auf die litauische Provinz der Gesellschaft Jesu, auf deren Gebiet die Seuche besonders viele Todesopfer forderte. Vor dem Hintergrund der Personalstruktur und der Sterblichkeit unter den Jesuiten in der Zeit vor

dem Ausbruch der Seuche wird die vielfältige Tätigkeit der Ordensleute beschrieben. Ihr Ziel war einerseits die Erfüllung der Mission der Gesellschaft, indem man den Nächsten geistliche und materielle Hilfe brachte, und andererseits der Schutz der materiellen und menschlichen Ressourcen der Vereinigung. Angesichts der Seuche verließ die Mehrheit der Gemeinschaft das Kolleg, um Schutz in einer der Besitzungen der Niederlassung zu suchen. Doch einige Jesuiten beschlossen freiwillig zu bleiben, um den Erkrankten und den Einwohnern der Stadt zu dienen, die sich nicht durch die Flucht retten konnten. Im Einklang mit der Wertehierarchie des Ordens und den laudatorischen Gepflogenheiten, die in den Chroniken der Häuser üblich waren, wurde es als das Erreichen des höchsten Guts dargestellt, wenn diese Jesuiten den Tod erlitten. Die Jesuiten bezahlten für ihren Einsatz einen hohen Preis: Die materiellen und geistlichen Folgen der Epidemie war noch viele Jahre später sichtbar.

JESUITS OF THE LITHUANIAN PROVINCE  
IN THE FACE OF THE EPIDEMIC OF PLAGUE  
IN THE YEARS 1708–1711

Summary

**Key words:** the Society of Jesus, contagious diseases, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Great Northern War (1700–1721)

The article presents the activity of the Jesuits during the epidemic of plague in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the Great Northern War. The author focuses mainly on the Lithuanian province of the Society of Jesus, where the epidemic took the highest death toll. After describing the structure of the personnel and the mortality rate among the monks prior to the outbreak of the epidemic, the author characterizes the variety of activities undertaken by the Jesuits. On the one hand, the aim of the Jesuits was to fulfill the mission of the Society, which consisted in providing spiritual and material help to fellow human beings. On the other hand, it was necessary to protect the material and human resources of the Society. In the face of the epidemic most members of the Society left the college to seek shelter in one of the estates belonging to the Jesuits. Several Jesuit monks decided to stay to serve the plagued and the inhabitants of the town who were unable to escape. According to the Jesuit hierarchy of values and the laudatory purpose of the home chronicles, the death of those Jesuits was presented as the achievement of the highest Good. The Jesuits paid a high price for their material and spiritual involvement – the consequences of the epidemic were still visible many years after the outbreak of the plague