

UDK 94(438.14):2-523:42"13/20"

Anna Madej

The outline of history of Roman Catholic parishes in Łuków until 1939

Based on various historical sources, the connection of the city of Łuków with church organizations is studied. It is established that the sources contain mentions regarding plans to establish a bishopric here. In Łuków, there was one of the oldest Catholic parishes located west of the Vistula River. The parish was the centre which was basis of future parish network in the region. However, it did not contribute to the development of Łuków. It is stated, that it was the appearance of religious orders that was a new impulse in the life of the town. In the 19th century, monastic churches replaced the parish church, but as late as 1920, the second parish was erected in Łuków. The situation did not change until 1939.

Keywords: history of Łuków, church, history of parish, parishes in Łuków

Анна Мадей

Контур історії римо-католицьких парафій у Лукові до 1939 р.

На основі різних історичних джерел досліджено зв'язок міста Луков з церковними організаціями. Встановлено, що джерела містять згадки щодо планів створення тут єпископства. У Лукові була одна з найстаріших католицьких парафій, розташована на захід від річки Вісли. Парафія була центром, який був основою майбутньої парафіяльної мережі в регіоні. Однак це не сприяло розвитку Лукова. Обґрунтовано, що поява релігійних орденів стала новим імпульсом у житті міста. У XIX столітті монастирські церкви замінили парафіяльний костел, але вже в 1920 р. в Лукові була зведена друга парафія. Ситуація не змінилася до 1939 р.

Ключові слова: історія Лукова, церква, історія парафії, парафії в Лукові

Łuków is a powiat town located in northern part of Lublin Province. Four parishes are located in the powiat. Two of them were established towards the end of the 20th century, i.e. the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church canonically erected in 1989 [16] and Church of St Brother Albert canonically erected in 1992 [17]. The other two have longer history, but they also were not the first ones. Therefore, the goal of this work is to present the outline of history of parishes in Łuków till the outbreak of II World War.

The beginnings of Łuków date back to the 13th century. The existence of Łuków is confirmed by the documents from 1257 [21, p. 72–73], 1258 and 1286 [6, p. 63–64; 7, p. 137–141]. The sources testify to quite significant role of Łuków, described as a castellan's town, and allow us to assume that this town has a longer history [4, p. 288–289; 11, p. 284]. It is significant as regards the determination of the date of erection of the first parish, especially as no documents containing information on the date of canonical erection of the parish.

According to sources from the first half of the 20th century the parish church in Łuków existed as early as 1250 [10, p. 54]. The indirect confirmation of the history dating back to

at least 13th century is, i.a. pope's tithes register from 1326 [13, p. 171]. Due to considerable political and administrative importance of Łuków (castellany) as well as the fact that Łuków was a royal town, according to Stanisław Litak, the parish church in Łuków may have been founded earlier, as early as the end of the 12th century [11, p. 285; 10, p. 55–56]. An attempt to establish a bishopric in Łuków also seems an extremely important circumstance. It was established by pope Innocent IV in the bull *Ad audientiam nostram pervenit* issued on 13th July 1254 [21, p. 57–58]. Efforts by the Teutonic Knights resulted in the initiative being suspended. Nonetheless, Bolesław Wstydiwy (Bolesław the Chaste) never ceased the efforts to establish a new diocese, with the aim of Christianisation of neighbouring pagan territories. As a result of his efforts, Pope Alexander IV issued a bull *Dilectus filius nobilis vir* in 1257 [21, p. 72–73] establishing a bishopric of Łuków. A Franciscan, Bartholomew of Prague who never came to Łuków was nominated a bishop. Again, the actions by the Teutonic Knights destroyed Polish efforts. However, it seems very unlikely that an attempt was made to establish a bishopric in a town where there was no church. The term “parish” and its semantic scope in the Middle Ages is controversial [10, p. 5–8]. Therefore, the date 1250 should be considered as the latest possible date of canonical erection of a parish church in Łuków.

A source from the second half of the 15th century [3, p. 567] mentions a parish Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Łuków. It is the earliest mention of the patron of the parish in Łuków. It is possible that this parish was dedicated to the patron from the very beginning [10, p. 56].

The parish in Łuków belonged to the Diocese of Kraków until the third division of Poland. At first, it was one of biggest parishes territorially, as it comprised the whole territory of the 13th century castellany of Łuków. Parish in Kock (was a foundation of bishops of Płock), which comprises the southern part of the castellany, has equally long history [6, p. 63–64]. It was erected independently of the parish in Łuków. It is unique, as the parish network in the castellany and later in Łuków Land was formed directly or indirectly from the church in Łuków [10, p. 55–56].

Together with the development of the parish network in Poland, a territorially large parish in Łuków started to be divided. As early as the first half of the 14th century, in western and south-western part of the castellany there was erected a parish in Tuchowicz. Its existence is confirmed by the registers of Alms of St Peter from 1350–1351 i 1355 r. [14, p. 372, 432, 439]. The second parish that was made of the territories belonging to the parish in Łuków was erected in 1418 in Zbuczyn. The erection document of this parish of 9 July 1418 by the bishop of Cracow Wojciech Jastrzębiec survived. Between July 1418 and 13th March 1430, another parish in Trzebieszów, east of Łuków, was erected. The exact date of erection is not known, as the erection document did not survive, and it might not have existed at all [10, p. 63]. The source to determine the date is the foundation document issued by Władysław Jagiełło (the king of Poland) in 1430 [25, p. 285–286], who *post factum* endows the already existing parish church in Trzebieszów.

Next parish erected on the territory previously belonging to the parish in Łuków was a parish in Ulan. It was erected between 1418 and 1443, although the earlier date might be postponed to 1424 – after Ulan village was given Magdeburg law [11, p. 295]. Slightly later,

a parish in Kozirynek (today: Radzyń Podlaski) was erected between 18th June 1456 [10, p. 64] and September 1460. Both parishes comprised south-eastern part of Łuków Land.

The last parish, at least partially comprising the territories which once belonged to the parish in Łuków was erected in Domanice. Stanisław Litak gives 1711 as the date of erection of the parish in Domanice [10, p. 66]. Since the church in the village of Domanice formally became the church of basic administrative unit, people living close to the church found pastoral care in the church, at least from the end of the 16th century, or even earlier, from mid-16th century. Earlier, due to the distance between their villages and Łuków, it was often the case that children died before they were baptized, and people did not receive the last sacrament before death, and the dead were buried in forests [1, k. 446v–447]. This was the most important reason for dividing the Łuków parish into a few parishes with separate churches located in other villages. Territorial vastness did not allow for efficient pastoral care. In the 16th century, in Łuków Land there were erected a few other parishes such as (1430) [24, p. 128–129], Wojcieszków (1437) [24, p. 24–27], Siedlce (1532) [22, p. 86], Serokomla (1545), Adamów (1545) [10, p. 74–75], Radoryż (1588) [10, p. 76], Stanin (1599). Efforts were made to erect a parish in Stanin as early as 1555. However, the attempts were unsuccessful and the parish was erected almost half a century later, in 1599 [10, p. 78–79]. Nevertheless, they comprised territories that did not belong to Łuków parish [10, p. 69–79]. New parishes were erected after a long time, in the 19th century.

Despite three-century long process of erection of new parishes, Łuków parish remained the vastest one of all parishes in Łuków Land. According to the data from mid-18th century, Łuków parish comprised 355.5 km², while two next largest parishes in Zbuczyn and Trzebieszów – 286.2 i 276.3 km², respectively, and the area of the smallest ones was equal to 45.9-54.9 km² [10, p. 89]. It means that the parish in Łuków was not a town or castellan's town parish. Under its pastoral care there was a considerably large territory with 34 towns and villages (44 prior to the erection of the parish in Domanice) [10, p. 89], some of which were more than 10 km away from the church in Łuków (straight line distance). It must have been difficult for the parish priests and vicars to perform pastoral care in the parish. The moral and intellectual condition of the priests [10, p. 122–124] was lower than those in larger cities, in cathedral chapters also was worrying.

From the point of view of the parish, an extremely important element was the church, which was its central point. Very often the building of the church indicated the wealth of the whole parish. Unfortunately, in case of Łuków, very little is known about not only about its churches but also about the topography of the town prior to the 18th century. Certainly, the buildings were made of wood, which made it susceptible to fire and resulted in massive damages. The church in Łuków burned several times, i.e. during great fire in 1533. It was rebuilt in 1588 [12, p. 14; 15, p. 51–52], and it was burned together with the whole town by Rakoczy's army again in 1656 [20, p. 822]. At the same time, the small wooden church dedicated to St. Leonard (in some sources Holy Ghost church) together with the adjoining hospital for the poor was destroyed [12, p. 14; 20, p. 822]. However, it could not have been the second parish in Łuków as it simply did not exist. J. S. Majewski mentions the existence of the second parish in Łuków in 15th–17th centuries. However, the existence

of the parish is not confirmed by any ecclesiastical sources, which describe parish network in Łuków Land in 15th-18th centuries in a rather detailed way.

After the Swedish Deluge, the Blessed Virgin Mary chapel was built, which provided pastoral care for the townsmen and people living in neighbouring villages. It served as a parish church until a land judge (Lat. *iudex terrestris*) Jan Jezierski of Łuków and a steward Krzysztof Jezierski of Kiev ca. 1700 founded a Shrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was also a wooden building and was destroyed by the fire in 1782 [12, p. 14]. For some time a small wooden church dedicated to St Leonard, located outside the town. Later, Maksymilian Szaniawski, a Łuków parish priest, built a temporary chapel there. Finally, all wooden buildings were destroyed by a fire in 1803, and efforts to collect money to rebuild them were unsuccessful. Although there was not a parish church in Łuków, townsmen were not left without pastoral care.

As early as 1626, the Łuków starost and royal equerry Erazm Domaszewski invited the Order of Bernardines to Łuków and gave them the estate outside the town (to the north) [9, p. 3]. In 1627 the foundation was ready [19, p. 196], and comprised the land and wooden buildings of the monastery and the church, which were formally granted to the order in 1629 [12, p. 16–17]. The Bernardine church, just outside the town of Łuków, must have been also visited by local parishioners, especially as it was founded by a nobleman. It might be due to that reason that the Bernardines as the first ones undertook to build a brick church. Piotr Głębiński, bishop of Cracow issued permission to consecrate the foundation stone in 1648 [12, p. 17], and the construction of the church started in 1655. The works stopped soon and the construction was resumed in the second half of the 18th century. The church was built in the years 1766–1770, and the construction was financed from donations of many lesser founders [20, p. 822; 5, p. 143]. Next to the impressive Church of Feast of the Cross, a monastery and a bell tower were erected. The buildings have survived until now.

At the same time, another brick church was being built at the northern outskirts of Łuków. This parish was also not a part of the parish of Łuków since it was a foundation for the Order of Piarsists (Order of Poor Clerics Regular of the Mother of God of the Pious Schools, Lat. *Ordo Clericorum Regularium Pauperum Matris Dei Scholarum Piarium*). The Piarsists came to Łuków in 1695 by Jan Dominik Jezierski, a land judge [20, p. 822; 5, p. 141; 8, p. 532–533]. In 1697 they started to build a wooden monastery. Since 1701, the Piarsists started a four grade school. In the years 1704–1712, they built the first, wooden church – the Transfiguration Church [8, p. 534]. After the fire of 1724, which destroyed the church, the school and other buildings, the decision was made to build a brick church. The church was constructed by two famous architects: Antonio Solari (royal architect) and Paolo Fontana [8, p. 536]. The works lasted from 1733 to 1762, and the result was a church in a late Baroque style, with a splendid facade and two towers. The decorations of the three-nave inside with thick columns and lavish gildings have survived until now.

Apart from the church, a monastery and a church school called a college were built. The Piarsists' college in Łuków was known for its high education standards up to at least mid-18th century [18, p. 148–150], which had a positive impact on the development of the city. The college also had a boarding-house for students.

I. РЕЛІГІЙНІ ПРОЦЕСИ В ІСТОРИЧНОМУ РОЗВИТКУ

The two monastic churches described above seemingly did not have any connection to the parish of Łuków as initially there were built outside the town. Also, the main task of the orders was not pastoral care. However, this began to change in the 19th century, at first because of the fire in 1803, which destroyed the parish church and other churches. As a result the only churches that survived were two brick monastery churches just outside the town. From this moment, for a few decades, the devotions took place in the Church of the Feast of the Cross [5, p. 141]. The religious were also responsible for parish registers according to the decree of 23rd February 1809, issued by king Fryderyk August [2].

In 1838, a St Roch chapel was built at the cemetery (it exists until now), where some devotions were celebrated there [9, p. 3]. However, it was a temporary solution. In 1859, when the Tsar administration closed the Piarists' college and removed religious orders from Łuków, the parish of Łuków was transferred to the Transfiguration Church [5, p. 141]. In this way the Piarists Church became the parish church.

In the second half of the 19th century, new parishes were built, including those which at least partially comprised the territories of the former parish of Łuków. In 1875, a parish of Wola Gułowska was erected [5, p. 145], in 1886 – Jeleniec [5, p. 147], in 1914 – Zofibór [5, p. 157], in 1921 – Zarzec Łukowski [5, p. 156], and in 1927 – Wiśniew [5, p. 62]. However, the most important change was the erection of the second parish in the town of Łuków.

After the dissolution of religious orders by Russians in 1864, the Bernardines had to leave Łuków, and their church was taken over by secular clergy. For a few decades it was administered by the Transfiguration Parish Church [9, p. 4]. A new parish came into being after Diocese of Podlachia was formed, and it became reality when, on 24th 1920, Bishop Henryk Przeździecki issued the erection decree making the Bernardine Church of the Feast of the Cross a new parish church. The decree emphasised the necessity to divide the existing parish due to its territorial vastness in order to facilitate parishioners' access to pastoral care [9, p. 6]. The parish began its functioning at the beginning of 1921.

Both parishes of Łuków in the interwar period were different than in the earlier period. Due to smaller territories they began to be more municipal in character, although they had pastoral care over a number of local villages. For instance, the Transfiguration Parish Church comprised 20 villages, 3 settlements, with a total number of parishioners in 1929 equal 10613 [5, p. 142]. The Parish Church of the Feast of the Cross comprised 15 villages and 2 settlements – 9013 parishioners [5, p. 144]. The Transfiguration Church was considered more representative one due to the fact that it was older. The Transfiguration parish priest was also the dean of the Deanry of Łuków, and all occasional devotions, in which the government of the town and the powiat of Łuków participated, were celebrated in the church. The parish of the Feast of the Cross had under its care a small wooden St Roch Church at the cemetery. Such a system has survived until now.

From the 20s of the 20th century two Roman-Catholic parishes functioned in Łuków, which was a result of development of a Christian community in Łuków. It had taken a lot of time before brick churches were built in Łuków, which increased the prestige of the city. Not surprisingly, they eventually became parish churches. It seems that in the interwar period, the existing parishes were enough to provide pastoral care to the parishioners. Over sixty years had passed before the church organization in the city underwent further changes.

1. Archiwum Kapituły Metropolitalnej w Krakowie, AV 32.
2. Archiwum Państwowe w Siedlcach, Akta stanu cywilnego parafii rzymskokatolickiej w Łukowie, Inwentarz zespołu.
3. Długosz J. Liber beneficiorum dioecesis Cracoviensis. Kraków, 1863. Vol. II / wyd. A. Przeździecki. 576 s.
4. Gomółka M. Kasztelania łukowska w średniowieczu – powstanie, działalność likwidacja. *Drohiczynski Przegląd Naukowy*. 2018. Vol. 10. S. 283–306.
5. Katalog kościołów i duchowieństwa Diecezji Siedleckiej czyli Podlaskiej na rok 1929. Siedlce, 1929. 328 s.
6. Kodeks Dyplomatyczny Małopolski. Kraków, 1876. Vol. I / wyd. F. Piekosiński. 552 s.
7. Kodeks dyplomatyczny Polski. Warszawa, 1858. Vol. III / wyd. J. Bartoszewicz. 484 s.
8. Krupiński F. Pijarzy w Łukowie. *Pamiętnik religijno-moralny*. 1859. Vol. 11. S. 528–548.
9. Kwiatkowski K. Erekcja i Historia Rzymsko-Katolickiej parafii Podwyższenia Św. Krzyża w Łukowie. Łuków, 1947. 24 s.
10. Litak S. Formowanie sieci parafialnej w Łukowskim do końca XVI wieku. Studium geograficzno-historyczne. *Roczniki Humanistyczne*. 1964. Vol. 12.2. S. 5–136.
11. Litak S. Powstanie organizacji parafialnej a rozwój osadnictwa w ziemi łukowskiej XII–XVI w. *Roczniki Humanistyczne*. 2000. Vol. 48.2. S. 283–307.
12. Majewski J. S. Łuków. Miasto powiatowe w woj. Lubelskim: monografia z 26 ilustracjami, jedną tablicą barwną i 3 planami miasta. Łuków, 1930. 120 s.
13. Monumenta Poloniae Vaticana. Kraków, 1913. Vol. I / wyd. J. Ptasnik. 564 s.
14. Monumenta Poloniae Vaticana. Kraków, 1914. Vol. II / wyd. J. Ptasnik. 620 s.
15. Orłowski R., Szaflik J. R. Dzieje miasta Łukowa. Lublin, 1962. 169 s.
16. Parafia NMP Matki Kościoła, Łuków. URL: <https://diecezja.siedlce.pl/parafie/parafia-nmp-matki-kosciola/> (dostęp 3.01.2021 r.).
17. Parafia pw. Św. Brata Alberta w Łukowie. URL: <https://www.albert.lukow.pl/historia-parafii> (dostęp 3.01.2021 r.).
18. Postek S. Dzieje szkoły pijarskiej w Łukowie 1701–1833. *Analecta*. 1996. Vol. 5.2. S. 141–169.
19. Rusecki I. M. Z dziejów ojców bernardynów w Polsce 1453–2003. *Łódzkie Studia Teologiczne*. 2002/2003. Vol. 11/12. S. 190–224.
20. Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich. Warszawa, 1880–1914. Vol. V. 960 s.
21. Vetera Monumenta Poloniae et Lithuaniae gentiumque finitimarum illustrantia collecta. Romae, 1860. Vol. I / wyd. A. Theiner. 788 s.
22. Woźnica K. Wieś Siedlce w ziemi łukowskiej. *Historia i Świat*. 2014. Vol. 3. S. 73–95.
23. Zbiór Dokumentów Małopolskich. Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków, 1962. Cz. I: Dokumenty z lat 1257–1420 / wyd. S. Kuraś. 442 s.
24. Zbiór Dokumentów Małopolskich. Wrocław-Warszawa, 1963. Cz. II: Dokumenty z lat 1421–1441 / wyd. S. Kuraś. 388 s.
25. Zbiór Dokumentów Małopolskich. Wrocław, 1975. Cz. VII: Dokumenty króla Władysława Jagiełły z lat 1418–1434 / wyd. S. Kuraś, I. Sułkowska-Kurasiowa. 438 s.