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Bishop Mikołaj Szyszkowski's Report to the Holy See about the State of the Warmia Diocese in 1640

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BISHOP MIKOŁAJ SZYSZKOWSKI 'S REPORT TO THE HOLY SEE ABOUT THE STATE OF THE WARMIA DIOCESE IN 1640

In 1585, Pope Sixtus V placed bishops under the obligation to regularly visit the tombs of the Apostles and give written reports on the state of their dioceses. Those reports constitute a highly valuable and authentic source for researchers investigating history of the Catholic church. The frequency of reporting duties was determined by the distance separating a given diocese from Rome. Polish bishops visited the Apostolic See (*visitatio liminum*) and reported on the state of their congregation (*relatio status*¹) to the Roman Congregation every four years. Not all members of the clergy observed those duties promptly, but the surviving reports deliver a detailed account of dynamic changes taking place in the diocese over the centuries.

The focus of this article is on the diocese of Warmia (Ermland). Similarly to other Polish congregations, Warmia's bishops visited the Holy See every four years to give an account of the state of their dioceses. The reports submitted in the 17th and the 18th century according to the norms imposed by Pope Sixtus V have been discussed by Professor Alojzy Szorc². His accounts indicate that the first written statement had been delivered by Bishop Piotr Tylicki in 1604, and more than 20 reports documenting the state of affairs in Warmia's dioceses have survived to this date. Several texts have been published³, and some were subjected to a detailed analysis⁴. A captivat-

¹ This matter is discussed at length by T. Długosz, *Biskupia visitatio liminum*, Collectanea Theologica, 1933.

² A. Szorc, *Relacje biskupów warmińskich XVII i XVIII wieku do Rzymu o stanie diecezji*, "Studia Warmińskie", vol. 5, 1968, pp. 201–239.

³ Ibidem.

⁴ J. Obłąk, *Życie kościelne na Warmii w świetle "Relatio status" biskupa Wacława Leszczyńskiego z r. 1657*, "Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne", No. 6, 1960, vol. 3, pp. 5–31. See also:

ing account of 15th century Warmia has also been preserved. On 23 January 1432, Cardinal Franciszek Condolomario, prefect of the Roman Congregation, presented Bishop Franciszek Kuhschmalz (1424–1457) with a written statement indicating that Warmia canon Jan Wichard (Heilsberg)⁵ had presented Rome with a report on the diocese's affairs⁶. At the time, bishops were under obligation to deliver their reports every two years (*singulis biennis*), counting from Pentecost. The report covered a period of two years ending on Pentecost in 1431. It constitutes proof that written statements had been submitted already before Sixtus V's papal bull, but they were probably delivered sporadically and not by all dioceses, therefore an official declaration was issued in the 16th century to regulate the matter. No other historical documents suggesting that Warmia's bishops had submitted regular written reports before the 16th century have survived to this date.

As regards the communication that followed in the successive centuries, Professor Szorc discusses a report of 1640 which is one of the longest and most captivating documents of the type. This historical record will be analyzed in greater depth in this article. It was authored by Bishop Mikołaj Szyszkowski who was appointed to the Warmia diocese in 1633 after his predecessor, Jan Olbracht Waza, bishop of Warmia from 1621 to 1633, had been promoted to the Cracow bishopric⁷. Szyszkowski assumed his post in the spring of 1634 under highly unfavorable circumstances. The first Swedish war had been waged on his territory in 1626–1629 with devastating consequences for Warmia. The Swedish invaders plundered and inflicted vast damage on the region. The years that directly followed the war were a bleak period. The truce with Sweden remained in force until 1635, and the political situation after its expiry remained unclear. An armed solution to the conflict, anticipated by both parties, raised the greatest fears. In the period of armistice, Braniewo, the largest town in Warmia, remained under Swedish control. Szyszkowski had to undertake an immense effort to raise Warmia from the ruins. He carried out the reconstruction project in collaboration with the chapter during his ecclesiastical appointment of ten years. Warmia's economy and religious order had to be restored, and Szyszkowski made an outstanding contribution to this diocese. He was a wealthy man who donated private funds to the revival effort. There was not a single church in Warmia

I. Makarczyk, *Relacja biskupa Michała Radziejowskiego do Rzymu z 1685 r. o stanie diecezji*, in: *Życie codzienne na dawnych ziemiach pruskich. Ziemie pruskie w oczach polskich i obcych*, collective work, ed. S. Achremczyk, Olsztyn 2006, pp. 81–98 (contains the text of the statement).

⁵ For biographical information, refer to *Słownik biograficzny kapituły warmińskiej*, Olsztyn 1996, p. 274.

⁶ *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensis*, vol. 4, No. 397A, pp. 442–443.

⁷ For updated biographical information on both bishops, refer to: D. Bogdan, *Jan Albert Waza (1612–1634) biskup warmiński w latach 1621–1633*, in: *Poczet biskupów warmińskich*, ed. S. Achremczyk, Olsztyn 2008, pp. 223–228; idem, *Mikołaj Szyszkowski (ok. 1590–1643) biskup warmiński w latach 1633–1643*, in: idem, pp. 229–242.

that did not benefit from the bishop's generosity. He purchased paraments and liturgical vestments, he financed the reconstruction of war-damaged churches and the erection of new shrines⁸. His most notable contribution was the construction of a Baroque pilgrim's church in Stoczek in 1639–1641. The shrine was financed entirely out of the bishop's private funds, and it became the seat of Bernadine monks in Barczewo. Szyszkowski built the bishop's palace in Frombork, and he donated substantial amounts to the reconstruction of the Frombork cathedral which was severely damaged and plundered during the war. The bishop's efforts brought about the revival of Braniewo's high schools – the Jesuit college and the seminary. Szyszkowski also spared no expense on secular buildings, mostly bishop's castles in Reszel, Jeziorany and Lidzbark. The economic affairs of both domain were discussed by Warmia's regional council (sejmik) which convened eight times during the bishop's 10-year reign. The relations with Ducal Prussia concerning trade, the prices of craft services, the rules governing the flight and extradition of peasantry were regulated by a national act adopted by Warmia and the Duchy of Prussia in January 1637 in Hawka Pruska. The same year also witnessed the establishment of the Warmian-Prussian border along the Vistula Lagoon. Those accomplishments fully assert Warmia bishop's reputation of a keen manager and effective organizer.

In 1637, Szyszkowski performed a general inspection of his diocese to assess the extent of damage wrought by the Swedish war. He used the resulting information to compile a report for the Holy See in 1640. The previous written account of the state of the Warmia diocese dates back to 1624. It was delivered by Bishop Jan Olbracht Waza who was bound by the quadrennial reporting obligation, therefore his reign should have been covered by two or even three reports, the last falling in 1633. Documented sources indicate that Waza had observed this duty only once. The period that separates the two bishops' reports indicates that the Holy See had no insight into Warmia's affairs for 16 years. Szyszkowski was keen on observing his reporting duties, but he was not entirely successful in his efforts. According to the prescribed quadrennial intervals, the thirteenth report was due in 1637. Szyszkowski did not submit the document that year, but he had no intentions of ignoring his duties, and he asked the Congregation to prolong the deadline. The reply was probably much delayed, and it was only in early 1639 that the bishop dispatched canon Przeclaw Szemborowski on a mission to Rome⁹. The Roman Congregation sent out an official document on 18 July

⁸ His efforts are described in greater detail in: J. Obłak, *Działalność biskupów warmińskich w zakresie sztuki w połowie XVII wieku*, Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne, vol. 11, book 4, pp. 51–86.

⁹ This fact was recorded in the minutes of the chapter meeting of 18 August 1639: "Ad instantiam illustrissimi unanimi consensu delatum est admodum reverendo domino Preclao Szemborowski canonico et confratri nostro eunti Romam nomine celsitudinis suae ad visitanda limina Apostolorum" – Archive of the Warmia Archdiocese in Olsztyn (AAWO), AK, Acta Cap. 6, col. 32.

1639 which granted a prolongation for one year. The bishop diligently satisfied the requirement in 1640.

The decision to set out on a pilgrimage to Rome was made in August 1640. Szyszkowski had no intentions of making the visit in person, and he dispatched his envoy to the Holy See, a measure that was allowed under canonical legislation. As previously, the Warmia diocese was represented by Przeclaw Szemborowski¹⁰. As the bishop's chancellor and one of his most trusted aides, Szemborowski assisted Szyszkowski in trips to the meetings of the Prussian council and the Sejm, and he often represented the chapter before the bishop¹¹. Szemborowski was an educated man with doctoral degrees in law awarded by the universities of Cracow and Bologna. His qualifications and accomplishments made him the most suitable candidate for Warmia's envoy to Rome.

Szemborowski's journey to Rome took several months. The canon was obliged to take permanent residence in the cathedral, and the Warmia chapter strictly adhered to this principle. Szemborowski would be deprived of his income in the period of absence. He traveled on a mission to Rome on the bishop's orders, and the chapter generally never declined the principal's requests. Canons who were required to vacate the post for longer periods of time were presented with a set of assignments, and they had to represent the chapter's interest on the mission to give it a semblance of business travel. This was also the case in 1640. The chapter instructed Szemborowski to take care of three matters in Rome. He was to audit the accounts of a scholarship fund started by Warmia canon Jan Preuck, he was to acquire a papal brief (at the bishop's expense) confirming the chapter's former right and privilege to freely choose its bishop, and he was to request permanent "privileged" status for the high altar in the cathedral with a plenary indulgence for the deceased¹². Szemborowski departed for Rome in August 1640. He attended his last chapter session on 8 August¹³, and he left Frombork four days later¹⁴.

¹⁰ This information is provided by the minutes of the chapter's meeting of 8 August 1640. The relevant entry states that in the presence of canons: "[...] recitate sunt littere ab illustrissimo ac reverendissimo domino episcopo evocantes admodum reverendum dominum Preclaum Szemborowski canonicum et confratrem nostrum itineri Romano destinatum. Eadem facultas, instante illustrissimo, antea in actis de anno 1639 die 18 Augusti in generali capitulo expressa, quae sic incipit: «Ad instantiam illustrissimi», admodum reverendi domini confratri nostro data, confirmatur in omnibus punctis et clausulis, ablegaturque ad iter prosequendum cum benedictione, quae a nobis ipsi uberime ex charitate fraterna non ficta elargitur" – Olsztyn, AAWO, AK, Acta Cap. 6, col. 52.

¹¹ For biographical information, refer to: T. Oracki, *Słownik biograficzny Warmii, Prus Książęcych i Ziemi Malborskiej od połowy XV do końca XVIII wieku*, vol. 2, Olsztyn 1988, p. 175; *Słownik biograficzny kapituły warmińskiej*, Olsztyn 1996, pp. 246–247, biographical information by A. Kopiczko.

¹² AAWO, AK, Acta Cap. 6, col. 32.

¹³ *Ibidem*, col. 52.

¹⁴ The exact date of his departure follows from the minutes of the chapter's meeting stating that on 12 August, Szemborowski would be granted 30 days of paid leave, *ibidem*.

Szyszkowski's report on the state of Warmia's diocese, drafted in Lidzbark on 26 August 1640, was addressed directly to the Pope in the following inscription: "Sanctissime ac Beatissime in Christo Pater, Domine Domine clementissime". The entire report comprises more than thirty pages¹⁵, and it contains accessory documents, including Szyszkowski's authorization for Szemborowski (*mandatum procurae*)¹⁶, the bishop's letters to the Pope and cardinals, written confirmation of Szemborowski's visitation to the Apostolic tombs and a draft of the Congregation's reply to Szyszkowski. The title page features the Congregation's annotation: "Relatio status Ecclesiae Varmiensis pro decimo quarto quadriennio", with "1640. WARM. 4" written in the margin. The number "4" denotes the quadrennial reporting duty.

The reports dispatched from Warmia are very similar in content and structure. Historical information is combined with recent news. The reports would begin with an outline of the diocese's history, and they would proceed to describe the main churches, i.e. the Frombork cathedral and the collegiate church in Dobre Miasto, the cathedral and collegiate chapters, the parochial network, monasteries, pilgrimage sites, education as well as charitable institutions such as shelters and hospitals. Szyszkowski's report adheres to the same model. Before delivering the status report, he justified his inability to undertake the *visitatio liminum* in person. The bishop offered several reasons to explain his absence, including his duties of senator and president of the Prussian provinces, fears of military invasion from Sweden and the threat to the Catholic church posed by the heretic state of Ducal Prussia. The bishop also suffered from various health problems that led to his premature death only three years later.

The main body of the report begins with several important dates in the history of Warmia's diocese. In his statement, Szyszkowski went back to the time when Konrad Mazowiecki had brought the Teutonic Knights to the Chełmno region to protect Christians against the attacks staged by Prussia's pagan tribes and to Christianize the latter. The bishop also reminisced about the establishment of dioceses on conquered territories in Prussia. He wrote that Wilhelm of Modena, the papal legate, had founded four bishoprics in Culm, Pomesania, Sambia and Warmia in 1234. Two-thirds of their territory were placed under secular rule of the Teutonic Knights in compensation for the conquest of Prussia, while one-third was awarded as benefices for the bishops. Church control over the four dioceses was exercised by their respec-

¹⁵ Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, Archivum Congregationis Consilii, Relationes Varmienses, col. 466, 469–477, 510–514.

¹⁶ The letter of authorization had to be drafted by a notary public in the presence of witnesses, and the notary's powers had to be confirmed by the bishop. Szemborowski's authorization was issued by Walenty Lüdicius, notary public of Lidzbark, in the presence of two witnesses: Piotr Domisławski, canon of the collegiate chapter in Dobre Miasto, and Wojciech Białobrzski, the bishop's secretary. The powers conferred to the notary by the Holy See were confirmed by Bishop Szyszkowski.

tive bishops. In successive parts of his report, Szyszkowski addressed two very important matters, namely Warmia diocese's metropolitan status and the choice of the diocese's bishop. The information provided in the report is not highly accurate. The bishop wrote that Warmia had been exempt from the suffraganship of the Archbishopric of Riga, and it was placed under the direct supervision of the Pope from the beginning of its existence. The first theories claiming Warmia's direct subordination to the Holy See appeared only when Riga was dissolved in 1566 because Warmia was reluctant to be placed under the control of the Archdiocese of Gniezno and participate in its synods. Those arguments were cited to account for the fact that the diocese had been founded and endowed with rents (*fundata et dotata*) by the Pope, and Szyszkowski was probably referring to the above when writing about the exemption¹⁷. As regards the choice of bishop, Szyszkowski wrote that he had been initially appointed by Rome, then by the chapter, and when Warmia was incorporated into Poland – the bishop was elected by the chapter from among four canons proposed by the king. It should be noted that only the first bishop, Anzelm, had been appointed by the Holy See. In the light of recent research and Professor Szorc's findings, Warmia's chapter had never been fully free to appoint its bishop¹⁸. The choice of bishop was first dictated by the great Teutonic masters, and beginning with Warmia's incorporation into Poland in 1466, it became a privilege of the Polish king. Beginning in 1466, the chapter's powers were limited to the group of candidates proposed by the monarch. In the section discussing Warmia's history, Szyszkowski also made a reference to 1525 when the Monastic State of the Teutonic Knights had been secularized during the Protestant Reformation and replaced by the Duchy of Prussia. Warmia lost most of its territory (controlled by the Teutonic Knights) to the new state. The sources of Szyszkowski's historical accounts remain unknown. Various scholars have suggested the chronicles of Warmia, and in matters related to the political and religious system in Warmia, the bishop was probably aided by one of the canons. In the section dedicated to current affairs, the bishop reported mostly on the damages wrought by the first Swedish war. He mentioned that nearly a century earlier, Warmia had had a suffragan bishop who received a benefice in Kiwity¹⁹. Suffragans were not appointed ever after, and bishops reigned over the diocese single-handedly. Szyszkowski had a curious relationship with Michał Działyński who had been appointed suffragan bishop in 1624, i.e. during the reign of Jan Ol-

¹⁷ As discussed by: J. Obłąk, *Egzempcja diecezji warmińskiej i jej obrona za biskupa Szyszkowskiego*, "Polonia Sacra", No. 7, 1955, p. 133. See also: R. Bodański, *Dzieje walki diecezji warmińskiej o niezależność od synodów metropolii gnieźnieńskiej 1563–1728*, "Studia Warmińskie", vol. 19, 1982, pp. 157–164.

¹⁸ A. Szorc, *Wybór biskupa warmińskiego przez kapitułę warmińską w teorii i praktyce*, in: *Warmińska Kapituła Katedralna. Dzieje i wybitni przedstawiciele*, collective work, eds. A. Kopiczko, J. Jezierski, Z. Żywica, Olsztyn 2010, pp. 233–255.

¹⁹ His name was Jan Wilde, and he held the office in 1499–1532.

bracht Waza. Szyszkowski referred to Działyński as a person who had been assigned to young Waza by Rome, rather than as his suffragan. When the adolescent Jan Olbracht Waza had been placed in charge of the Warmia diocese in 1621, the Holy See appointed Działyński the diocese's administrator (*in spiritualibus*) and the co-administrator of the dominion together with Jan Olbracht Waza. Upon the request of King Zygmunt III Waza, Działyński was appointed titular bishop of Hippo three years later. He was ordained, he performed a suffragan's duties, therefore, he deserved to be recognized as a fully-fledged auxiliary bishop. Szyszkowski's account of Działyński's position in the church remains unexplained, yet even more surprisingly, the bishop never solicited his suffragan's services. Perhaps he looked to Działyński not as his assistant but as Waza's bishop. After Szyszkowski had assumed his post in Warmia, Działyński became more active in the Frombork chapter. He administered the capitular chamber of Pieniężno in 1635-1638 and the capitular chamber of Frombork in 1640-1642. It is possible that there existed a certain degree of animosity between Szyszkowski and Działyński, both of whom competed for the Warmia diocese after Jan Olbracht Waza had departed for the Cracow bishopric. Those are only presumptions, nonetheless, Działyński did limit the extent of his canonical work under Szyszkowski's reign. He was able to resume that activity only after the bishop's death when the chapter elected him the diocese's administrator *sede vacante*²⁰.

Szyszkowski proceeded to describe the current state of affairs as well as the history of the diocese's chapters, the cathedral chapter in Frombork and the collegiate chapter in Dobrze Miasto. He mentioned Warmia's first bishop, Anzelm, and the cathedral chapter founded by the bishop in Braniewo in 1260 upon Rome's approval. The bishop erected a cathedral in Braniewo, but the shrine was damaged before completion by Prussian tribes during numerous uprisings. During the reign of Bishop Henryk Fleming, the chapter was transferred to a safer location in Frombork where a new, magnificent shrine was erected on a hill. Curias were built to provide housing for canon priests, and the bishop's residence, known as the Ferber palace, was erected at a later date. According to Szyszkowski's report, the chapter comprised 16 canons. It initially consisted of 24 canonries, but successive popes had reduced their number to the original 16. This information requires some clarification. The document issued in 1277 to restore and revise the act of 1260 erecting the Warmia chapter indicated that sufficient funding had been available to build 16 canonries. With time, as the chapter generated more revenues, the number of canonries was to be increased to 24. The decision to erect additional eight canonries was made by Bishop Jan Stryprock in a document dated 24 February 1363. They comprised four medium-sized buildings and four small canonries. In a letter dispatched from Avignon on

²⁰ The appointment took place during the chapter's meeting of 13 February 1643 – AAWO, AK, Acta Cap. 6, col. 116.

3 November 1372, Pope Gregory XI instructed Stryprock to equate the incomes of the eight canonries with those of the original 16 canonries, but this was never accomplished due to a shortage of funding. In 1410–1411, the minor canonries demanded an equation of incomes in a series of legal suits instituted in Rome. To put an end to the dispute in Warmia's chapter, on 27 April 1426, Pope Martin V annulled the eight minor canonries, reinstating their number to the original 16²¹. Szyszkowski also reported that four of the 16 existing canon priests had been awarded the rank of prelate (provost, dean, curator and cantor).

The bishop went on to discuss the principles of making appointments to canon benefices falling vacant in papal months (odd months) and capitular months (even months). He wrote that in observing its daily duties, the chapter was guided by the statutes approved by papal legate Franciszek Commendone in 1572. Szyszkowski listed the four prelates' duties, he described the matters placed on the agenda of chapter meetings and the financial sanctions imposed on canons who had failed to take residence in the cathedral. The bishop gave an account of liturgical order on weekdays and holidays, German language sermons delivered on Sundays and holidays, the canons' duties in the cathedral and vicars who said mass during a canon priest's absence at his altar. Szyszkowski also provided an important piece of information relating to Frombork's congregation. Only the residents of the cathedral hill were the cathedral's parishioners, while Frombork's inhabitants attended St. Nicholas' parish church.

In his account of the state of affairs in the cathedral and the chapter, the bishop focused mostly on the damage wrought by the first Swedish war. The cathedral had been plundered of altars, the organ, bells, the clock, liturgical vessels and vestments, even holy relics. Canon curias and the bishop's palace had been destroyed, and Frombork had been occupied by the Swedish army. Canon priests left Frombork, and only two or three vicars had remained behind, taking residence near the cathedral. The war prevented Szyszkowski from conducting the ingress ceremony in the cathedral in 1634. The bishop performed the ceremony only on 31 October 1636 after Frombork had been returned to Poland under the truce of 1635. He stayed in Frombork for several days to inspect the cathedral and the chapters. Szyszkowski instructed the cathedral to supplement the number of vicars and bring them under one roof. He ordained changes in the cathedral choir, and he requested that Corpus Christi processions be held in a more ceremonious manner. The bishop revisited the Frombork cathedral in March 1639, shortly before drafting his report for Rome. He gave out several orders, including for the appointment of the cathedral's first Polish priest (St. George's chapel)²². Szysz-

²¹ The relevant documents can be found in: *Codex diplomaticus Warmiensis*, vol. 2, No. 339, pp. 348–349; No. 468, pp. 473–474; No. 470, pp. 475–482.

²² The orders were recorded in the minutes of the chapter's meeting – AAWO, AK, Acta Cap. 6, col. 21–24.

kowski was greatly impressed by the fact that canon priests had personally contributed to the reconstruction of the cathedral and the curias. The bishop also made generous donations to the undertaking. By the time the report on the state of the diocese was delivered in 1640, much had been done by the bishop and his chapter to restore the cathedral to its former glory, to reconstruct curias, the bishop's palace, and to begin the construction of the vicars' residence. The bishop and the chapter spent more than 70,000 zloty on the reconstruction project. In the report, Szyszkowski also made a reference to an issue that had been frequently addressed by Rome, namely the establishment of a benefice for a chapter theologian. The matter had to be approached very cautiously in order not to offend the chapter or the pope. A new benefice would lower the canons' income, but on the other hand, writing to the Pope that the cathedral had no need for a theologian would be a serious blunder. Szyszkowski wrote that he expected detailed instructions from the Pope, adding that the chapter had "many men educated in earthly and heavenly sciences". Five canons had been awarded doctorates in theology, and all priests had completed a three-year university course.

The following part of the report discusses the collegiate chapter in Dobre Miasto. The description is rather brief, and the bishop focused most of his attention on the liturgical order in the collegiate. He mentioned that the collegiate chapter had not been destroyed by the Swedish army, and that it was well equipped with liturgical paraments. The only damage was inflicted on the chapel opposite to the city gate. The bishop noted that the collegiate chapter comprised 12 canon priests, two of whom had been awarded prelate ranks of provost and dean. Seven priests were fellow canons who resided in the chapter and were remunerated by it accordingly. The remaining five priests were honorary canons who could be nominated for the chapter by the bishop in the event of a vacancy. Szyszkowski concluded this part of the report with a brief description of the two prelates' duties.

The cathedral and the collegiate church were the important shrines in a diocese. They open the list in the bishop's report, but Szyszkowski also devoted a long passage to other churches and parishes in Warmia. During the reign of Albert of Prussia at the time of the Protestant Reformation, Warmia lost 77 parishes to the Duchy of Prussia which were incorporated into the Lutheran church. According to the report, Warmia's diocese consisted of 93 parishes at the time the report had been written²³. Szyszkowski opened the list with deaneries seated in the parishes of Braniewo, Frombork, Pieniężno, Orneta, Jeziorany, Reszel, Barczewo, Olsztyn and Lidzbark. He mentioned that all churches were brick structures, and they were provided with sufficient quantities of liturgical paraments, excluding the shrine in Orneta which had been plundered by the Swedes. Those churches were

²³ This number probably accounts for other churches in the parish, as the diocese usually consisted of around 80 parishes.

administered by deans who were assisted in their daily duties by vicars. Municipal parishes were congregations of 2,000-3,000 people. The bishop gave a lengthy account of the liturgical order throughout the year, the delivered teachings and the catechization of children and adults. As regards rural parishes, Szyszkowski mentioned that they were congregations of 300 to 600 members, that village churches were built of brick or timber framing, they were equipped with liturgical paraments in sufficient quantities, and that their liturgical order and catechization efforts resembled those of municipal parishes. The bishop also wrote about the massive damages inflicted by the Swedish war and the difficult situation of villagers who were unable to fulfill their duties to the church.

The report also describes the situation of the Catholic parish in the Protestant Königsberg. The church was built in 1614-1616 with the support of Warmia's Bishop Szymon Rudnicki and King Zygmunt III Waza²⁴. The duke of Prussia was the secular head of the church, and he made annual donations of 1,000 zloty to support its operations. Church jurisdiction was exercised by the bishop of Warmia. Szyszkowski gave an account of the church's liturgical order and the sermons delivered in German, Polish and Lithuanian. In successive parts of the report, the bishop made yet another reference to the state of the Catholic faith in Königsberg. He expressed his regrets that the Elector of Brandenburg had failed to respond to the harassment against the Catholics from Königsberg's authorities and members of the local community. To back his claim, Szyszkowski pointed to the elector's indifference to the construction of a Calvinist church next to a Catholic shrine. The bishop referred to it spitefully as "the synagogue". Szyszkowski was also concerned about the growing popularity of Calvinism in the Duchy of Prussia. His fears were raised by the fact that the religion received the support of the elector and the ducal court who demonstrated a somewhat discriminating attitude towards Lutheranism, the official religion of Ducal Prussia. The elector was hoping to equate the status of the two denominations, but his intentions did not receive public support since the predominant majority of Duchy's nobility had been opposed to Calvinism. Szyszkowski wrote that in an effort to overcome the nobility's attitude, the elector gave priority to members of the Calvinist congregation during nomination for public offices. The bishop reported on the elector's strategy to King Władysław IV, and in his report to Rome, he expressed his belief that the matter had been discussed by the king and the elector two years earlier during a meeting in Grodno. Szyszkowski was appalled by the construction of a Calvinist shrine next to a Catholic church in Königsberg. He referred to

²⁴ The history of the Catholic parish in Königsberg is discussed by: A. Szorc, *Dzieje parafii katolickiej w Królewcu 1614–1650*, *Studia Warmińskie*, 1995, vol. 32, pp. 129–183; idem, *Dzieje parafii katolickiej w Królewcu 1650–1780*, "Mragowskie Studia Humanistyczne", 2005/2006, vol. 5/6, pp. 36–92.

it twice in his report, but he also expressed his hopes that the Polish king, an experienced protector of the Catholic faith, would prevent the project from being completed. Szyszkowski considered both Lutheranism and Calvinism to be heretical denominations. He was less opposed to Lutheranism, and regarded Calvinism as a much greater threat for the Catholic Warmia.

The following shrine described in Szyszkowski was St. Nicholas' church in Elbląg, a royal city found within the Warmia diocese, but outside the limits of the Warmia dominium. Bishops were unable to exercise secular power over Lutherans in Elbląg. Szyszkowski made a reference to the situation before the Protestant Reformation when the Elbląg deanery had comprised eight parish churches. During the reformation, the shrines, including St. Nicholas' church in Elbląg, had been taken over by the Protestants. Warmia's successive bishops made efforts to recover those churches, and this goal was accomplished by Bishop Rudnicki with the vast support of King Zygmunt III Waza²⁵. Szyszkowski wrote that there were no Catholics among Elbląg's permanent inhabitants, and the congregation of St. Nicholas consisted mostly of Polish merchants. He noted that the parish had not demonstrated any growth tendencies. The last two churches described by the bishop were pilgrim sanctuaries. The first was a church in Święta Lipka, situated close to the border of the Warmia bishopric in the Duchy of Prussia. The original chapel with the miracle-working figure of the Holy Mary had been destroyed by the Protestants a century earlier, and the site was acquired by royal secretary Stefan Sadorski in 1619²⁶. He financed the construction of a new chapel which he then donated to Warmia's chapter together with the land. The chapter had entrusted the chapel to the Jesuits in Reszel. Szyszkowski wrote that the site had been visited by numerous pilgrims, including Protestant. The other center of the Holy Mary cult and a popular pilgrimage site was Stoczek where Szyszkowski had replaced a small chapel with a new church, placing it in the care of Bernadine monks in Barczewo.

Having discussed the status in Warmia's churches and parishes, Szyszkowski proceeded to describe the situation of secular and monastic clergy based on the findings of a general inspection of his diocese that had been performed in 1637. The diocese suffered from a shortage of priests, many of whom had been killed during the Swedish war. The war had also inflicted a blow on the morale of the surviving clergy. The bishop noted that addiction to alcohol and concubinage had been frequent vices of Warmia's priests. Szyszkowski attempted to remedy those problems during his inspection. He gave fatherly reprimand to some priests, he transferred selected members of the clergy to different parishes, and he removed the worst transgressors

²⁵ For more information on the recovery effort, refer to: *Rywalizacja katolików z luteranami o kościół św. Mikołaja w Elblągu 1520-1621. Źródła do dziejów reformacji w Prusach Królewskich*, collected and edited by A. Szorc, Olsztyn 2002, p. 537.

²⁶ The chapel's history is discussed by: A. Szorc, *Stefan Sadorski (1581-1640) fundator Świętej Lipki*, Olsztyn 1996.

from office. In an effort to fill the depleted ranks of the clergy, the bishop attempted to revive the seminary in Braniewo. In his description of monastic clergy, Szyszkowski gave an overview of selected facts from their history in Warmia's diocese. Braniewo was the seat of a Franciscan monastery which had grown deserted in the mid 16th century due to the shortage of candidates. In 1565, Warmia's bishop Cardinal Stanisław Hozjusz placed the monastery in the hands of the Jesuits who opened a college in Braniewo, ran the diocese's seminary and initiated a papal seminar (Papal Aluminate). The former Franciscan monastery in Barczewo had been entrusted to the Bernadine monks by Warmia's bishop, Cardinal Andrzej Batory. In 1632, the Jesuits took residence in the former Augustinian monastery and church in Reszel. With time, the Jesuit house was transformed into a college, and the monks performed missionary work along the border with the Duchy of Prussia. The Jesuits also initiated a vast number of parochial missions. According to Szyszkowski, their work had resulted in many conversions, and it increased the number of parishioners attending mass and taking communion at Easter. A different situation was encountered in Elbląg where the deserted Dominican monastery had been adapted by the Protestants for welfare purposes. A similar fate had befallen the deserted Bridgettine convent in Elbląg. The bishop's report pointed to the absence of female monasteries in the Warmia diocese which hosted only congregations of pious women, sisters of St. Catherine, in Braniewo, Lidzbark, Orneta and Reszel. In their work, the sisters were guided by the statutes of the church, they educated girls and they earned their own living. The sisters of St. Catherine did not have their own chapels, and they attended parish churches. All monasteries and religious congregations received financial and material support from Warmia's bishop.

Secular parishioners were the last social group discussed in Szyszkowski's report. The bishop's description paints a rather grim picture of the secular community. Its members were characterized by a very low level of religious awareness. Occult practices, devil worshiping, blasphemy, failure to observe fasting periods, drunkenness, rape and crime were frequently encountered. This state of affairs created favorable ground for the infidels whose number had grown after the Swedish war. In line with the regulations imposed by Bishop Kromer, infidels were allowed to give their services to the diocese for up to three months, but due to the population drop caused by the war and the plague, many of them stayed on for longer periods of time and popularized their religious beliefs. Szyszkowski made attempts to put an end to this situation, and during inspections of the diocese, he appealed to members of the congregation to improve their conduct. In the report for the Holy See, the bishop described the positive outcomes of his work, including pilgrimages to Święta Lipka and Stoczek as well as 80 conversions to Catholicism. Szyszkowski praised the community of Braniewo. Although the town had been occupied by the enemy for the longest period of time, its people

remained faithful to their religion, save for one resident. This piece of information concludes the bishop's account of the state of Warmia's diocese in 1640.

In the final part of the report, Szyszkowski made several requests to the Holy See. He asked for holy relics as Warmia's artifacts had been largely plundered by the Swedish army. The bishop also requested permission to fill a vacant canonry in a papal month. The remaining requests were to be presented in person by the bishop's envoy to Rome, Przeclaw Szemborowski. Historical evidence indicates that Szemborowski reached Rome and took care of all matters relatively quickly. Already on 10 November 1640, the Congregation formally approved Szyszkowski's report, implying that the document had been delivered and read by that date. A member of the Congregation instructed his office to issue a written reply to the bishop of Warmia in which he commended Szyszkowski for the zeal with which he had performed his ecclesiastical work. He assured the bishop that the Congregation would lobby for the Pope's permission to fill a vacant canonry in Warmia's chapter in a papal month, and that it would bring up the matter of procuring new relics for the Frombork cathedral and other churches in the diocese.

Szemborowski returned to Warmia after nine months, and he attended the chapter's meeting on 6 May 1641. Szyszkowski's letter concerning Szemborowski was read at the meeting, suggesting that the envoy had visited the bishop immediately after his return. The envoy's journey back from Rome had been less fortunate. The objects carried by Szemborowski to Warmia had been confiscated in Ferrara and placed under arrest²⁷. The envoy's trunks were filled with relics, religious paintings and ornaments for the Frombork cathedral. At the bishop's request, the chapter allowed Szemborowski to travel to Ferrera to reclaim those possessions. The outcome of his journey will not be investigated in this paper, it should only be noted that Szemborowski did not travel to Ferrara in 1641 or 1642 as he attended all chapter meetings during those two years. The envoy reported on the remaining assignments that had been entrusted to him in Rome during a chapter meeting of 25 May 1641²⁸. Despite many efforts, he was unable to obtain a permanent "privileged" status for the high altar in the cathedral. The privilege had been granted only for a period of ten years. Szemborowski had successfully audited the accounts of Jan Preuck's scholarship fund.

Bishop Mikołaj Szyszkowski's report on the state of Warmia's diocese of 1640 and the accompanying events provide researchers with an in-depth insight into the history of the Catholic church in Warmia. This paper discusses only the general facts outlined by the report, and it does not extract detailed information which could be used in research studies focusing on various aspects of Warmia's history.

²⁷ AAWO, AK, Acta Cap. 6, col. 77.

²⁸ Ibidem, col. 79.