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The Educational Activity of the Piarist Order in the Lithuanian Province in the 18th Century

*Działalność oświatowa litewskiej prowincji pijarów
w czasach Komisji Edukacji Narodowej*

ABSTRACT

The article outlines the educational activities of the Piarist Order in the Lithuanian province in the 18th century. The curricula for each period are presented. The 18th century was an age of educational reforms and one of the first and most important was the reform of Father Stanisław Konarski, which also influenced the reform of Piarist schools in the Lithuanian province. From 1773, the Lithuanian Piarists began working according to the changes introduced by the Commission of National Education.

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STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł przedstawia zarys działalności edukacyjnej zakonu pijarów w prowincji litewskiej w XVIII w. Przedstawiono programy nauczania w poszczególnych okresach. Wiek XVIII w. to czas reform oświatowych. Jedną z pierwszych i ważniejszych była reforma ks. Stanisława Konarskiego, która także miała wpływ na reformę szkół pijarskich w prowincji litewskiej. Od 1773 r. pijarzy litewscy rozpoczęli pracę według zmian wprowadzonych przez Komisję Edukacji Narodowej.

Słowa kluczowe: pijarzy, prowincja litewska, edukacja, szkoły, Komisja Edukacji Narodowej

The Piarist Order arrived in Poland in 1642 and opened colleges¹ in Warsaw and Podoliniec in the Spiš region. Prior to 1662, the Polish Piarist colleges fell under the jurisdiction of the German province. The establishment of an independent Polish province, sanctioned by Pope Alexander VII in that year, also brought the Hungarian vice-province under its administration. In 1692, the Hungarian colleges formed their own province, and in 1696, the Lithuanian vice-province was created. In 1736, the order's authorities established an independent Lithuanian province. Evidently, the order was developing dynamically. The Piarists played an important role in the history of Polish education, with the most prominent figure undoubtedly being Fr. Stanisław Konarski, who reformed Piarist schooling and founded the famous Collegium Nobilium in Warsaw in 1740. However, other Piarist colleges and schools also made a significant contribution to this undertaking. The Piarists were a teaching order and developed their own educational principles for both monks and students.

The functioning of the order, including its educational mission, was regulated by the religious constitutions written by Joseph Calasanz and proclaimed in 1622. These were later supplemented by resolutions of the General Chapter and the Provincial Chapters. According to the rules, in addition to the three evangelical vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, the Piarists took a fourth vow – dedication to upbringing and education of children². Like in other religious orders, the constitutions defined the hierarchy within the congregation, including its educational institutions. The order was headed by a General Superior (praepositus

¹ Colleges, i.e. institutions housing schools.

² *Konstytucje szkół pobożnych napisane przez św. Józefa Kalasancjusza* (1622), Kraków 2007, p. 50.

generalis), assisted by four councilors and a Procurator General (Calasanz, the founder of the order, performed this function and was appointed as the lifelong General of the order in 1631). The General Superior and other authorities of the order were elected by the General Chapter, convened every few years, which consisted of the main governing body and the provincials together with delegates from each province. The General Superior oversaw the Provincials (*praepositus provincialis*), elected for three-year terms, who managed the provinces along with all colleges and schools. The Provincials were elected by the delegates who generally held leadership positions in individual houses. The qualifications for higher positions within the order were determined by the length of the so-called 'educational service' and annual evaluations³.

The duties of the Provincial encompassed visiting colleges, receiving reports on their activities, appointing teachers and determining their placements. Each college and school were headed by rectors elected for a three-year term. In view of a rector's numerous responsibilities, he was assisted in school administration by a prefect, equivalent to what would now be called a school principal. Prefects customarily were professors of rhetorics or philosophy. Their responsibilities included: daily supervision of classes, monitoring of both students and teachers, admitting and expelling students, imposing disciplinary measures, oversight of boarding facilities, caring for the sick, and granting or withholding student promotions to higher grades⁴.

Piarist teachers were divided into *magistri* and *professores*. The *magistri* (generally clerics before priestly ordination) taught in the lower grades, while the professors taught in the higher ones. The typical pedagogical career of a Piarist followed the following path: after completing a two-year novitiate (with the most talented candidates having their novitiate shortened to one year according to the constitution of the order), a teaching candidate would begin studies at a religious seminary (*profesoria*). From 1683 onward, the General Chapter extended this training to four years: a two-year course in the humanities followed by a two-year philosophy course. The humanities curriculum, referred to by Polish Piarists as *studium humanitatis, bonarum artium, or studium retorica*, concluded with an examination determining advancement to the philosophy course. After completing the philosophy course, a two-year teaching practicum was required, aimed at assessing a young Piarist's pedagogical skills. Upon completing the practicum, the provincial superior would confer the title of *magister* on the religious brother. The next step involved being assigned

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ S. Biegański, *Szkoły pijarskie w Polsce*, Lwów 1898, pp. 6–7.

to theological studies. After completing these, the brother was ordained as a priest and returned to his teaching duties. If a teacher maintained an impeccable record for ten years, he could be elected to the position of a rector, vice-rector, or prefect. Those who did not qualify to teach in the higher grades had to complete sixteen years of exemplary teaching performance before becoming eligible for these administrative positions⁵.

Piarist teachers in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth acquired their professional qualifications within the order's own educational institutions. More talented individuals furthered their education at domestic and foreign universities. The first profesorium (seminary for teacher training) in the Commonwealth was established at the novitiate in the Podoliniec College in 1648. The second teacher training college, established by a decision of the 1714 Warsaw Provincial Chapter, was opened in Rzeszów – where studies of the humanities (*humanioria*)⁶ were conducted. Another seminary was created in 1729 at the Międzyrzecz College, specializing in philosophy studies⁷. Regarding theological studies, during the initial period of their activity in Poland, the Piarists relied on theological institutes operated by the Carmelites and Dominicans. The order established its first advanced theological study center in Warsaw, called the Study of Speculative Theology, in 1679, due to the efforts of Provincial Superior Michał Kraus, and the institution remained active until the suppression of the order. Another center was established in Kraków and it operated between 1724 and 1785⁸. Basic theological studies, focusing primarily on moral theology, were temporarily conducted in Chełm, Piotrków Trybunalski, Radom, and Waręż⁹. In the Lithuanian province, the novitiate was located in Lubieszów, while humanities, philosophy, and theology studies were distributed across various colleges, such as Dąbrowica and Vilnius, due to multiple factors. After acquiring the former Jesuit monastery and the Church of St. Raphael in Śnipiszki

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ A. Pitala, *Pijarskie zakłady kształcenia nauczycieli w dawnej Polsce – profesoria*, in: *Wkład pijarów do nauki i kultury w Polsce XVII–XIX w.*, ed. J. Stasiewicz-Jasiukowa, Warszawa-Kraków 1993, p. 391; idem, *Przyczynki do dziejów Polskiej Prowincji Pijarów 1642–1992*, Kraków 1993, pp. 7–9.

⁷ A. Pitala, *Przyczynki*, p. 10.

⁸ A. Pitala, *Kolegium Pijarów w Krakowie*, Kraków 1994, *passim*.

⁹ J.I. Buba, *Pijarzy w Polsce (Próba charakterystyki)*, "Nasza Przeszłość" 1962, 15, p. 19. After the Partitions and the 1782 transfer of the Podoliniec College to the Hungarian Province, the novitiate was relocated first to Łuków, then to Drohiczyn. When the Rzeszów College was dissolved in 1784, its humanities program was transferred to Szczuczyn Mazowiecki, and philosophy instruction began in Łomża.

(a suburb of Vilnius at that time), the Piarists transferred their philosophy and advanced theology studies¹⁰ there.

The complete and final organization of the Piarist teacher seminary system in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was ultimately achieved owing to the initiative of Stanisław Konarski and the Ordinances of the Apostolic Visitation. According to this Act, after a two-year novitiate, the religious formation continued with three years of religious studies – one year of humanities and two years of philosophy (logic and physics)¹¹. Upon completion, the Piarists were to proceed directly to theological studies, which lasted two (most commonly) or three years. The order faced staffing shortages, so the Ordinances allowed, with the provincial superior's consent, for clerics to be assigned to teaching work before commencing their theological studies, though for no longer than three years. It was common practice that students of theology (except in Kraków, where the order had no school) simultaneously served as teachers and educators, primarily in elementary and lower grades. Konarski placed even greater emphasis than his predecessors on foreign education for the most talented young monks (on October 4, 1753, a special scholarship fund was established for the Polish province, ensuring funding for three years of study abroad)¹². Additionally, the most talented Piarists were granted permission to travel overseas as private tutors of the children of the nobility. The educational journeys lasted from one to three years. The Piarists not only cared for their charges but also pursued their own studies alongside them or during their free time.

Until the mid-18th century, Piarist schools did not differ significantly from Jesuit schools in terms of their educational system.

The daily schedule in a Piarist school in the mid-18th century was as follows:

6:00 AM – wake-up, prayers, review of lessons, breakfast

7:00 AM – Mass

8:00 AM – 10:00 AM – lessons

¹⁰ Detailed information on the locations of the colleges and the formation of the Lithuanian Province, see: M. Ausz, *Rozwój sieci kolegiów w litewskiej prowincji pijarów w XVIII w.*, "Res Historica" 2023, 56, pp. 205–224.

¹¹ However, there were instances where individuals began teaching at the school as early as their second year of novitiate or immediately after completing it. Instead of proceeding directly to religious studies, a cleric would first spend a year teaching in the lower grades before being sent for ecclesiastical education. There were also cases where the studies were undertaken at other colleges, as well as instances where the philosophy course was shortened to just one year.

¹² R. Stępień, *Współpraca pijarów z Komisją Edukacji Narodowej na terenie Korony*, "Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis. Prace Pedagogiczne" 1994, 102, p. 18.

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM – return to the boarding house, preparation for lessons

12:00 PM – 2:00 PM – lunch, rest, review of lessons

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM – lessons

4:00 PM – 7:00 PM – return to the boarding house, afternoon snack, study time

7:00 PM – 9:00 PM – supper, relaxation, study

9:00 PM – evening prayers, bedtime¹³.

In the Piarist schools, pupils started their education from the elementary level, which clearly distinguished them from the Jesuits, who only admitted students to their schools after they had completed primary education. Over time, Piarist schools matched the level of the Jesuit institutions, though they also replicated some of their flaws and shortcomings¹⁴. It was also believed that the Piarists did not develop their own distinct educational and pedagogical system, unlike the Jesuits, who had their *Ratio atque Institutio Studiorum Societatis Jesu*, a system gradually refined through religious constitutions. However, Jacek Taraszkiewicz challenged this view in his work, arguing that the Piarists did have an equivalent to the *Ratio Studiorum*. Yet, it granted them more freedom in selecting teaching materials and methods, as well as the ability to introduce modifications to the curriculum¹⁵.

In Poland, until the reforms of Stanisław Konarski, the Piarists taught according to the principles outlined in the constitutions of the order. A distinctive feature of Polish Piarist schools was that, before Konarski's reforms, Greek was not taught in them. Polish Piarists, having obtained permission from church authorities, focused on secondary education rather than just elementary schooling, although Pope Clement XII officially granted the order such rights only in 1731¹⁶.

According to the constitution of the order from 1694, a Piarist school consisted of nine levels. The first three were elementary: *infima legentium*, *media legentium*, and *suprema legentium*. Classes were usually held in one lecture hall, which is why they were often treated as a single unit, so they were commonly and collectively referred to as *parva*. This also led to confusion – some studies erroneously claim that, at that time, Piarist schools had a full curriculum of seven grades rather than nine.

¹³ Archiwum Polskiej Prowincji Zakonu Pijarów [hereinafter: APPZP], Collegium Lideense [hereinafter: CL], ref. no. 2, sheet 72.

¹⁴ S. Biegański, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–12.

¹⁵ J. Taraszkiewicz, *Edukacja historyczna w szkolnictwie pijarskim Rzeczypospolitej 1642–1773*, Gdańsk 2011, pp. 22–23 and next.

¹⁶ *Podręczna Encyklopedia Kościelna*, vols. XXXI–XXXII, p. 136; S. Biegański, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

The next three levels were grammar classes: *infima grammaticae*, *media grammaticae*, *suprema grammaticae*. The final three were: *humanitas*, *rhetorica et poesis*, and *philosophia*.

The syllabi for the subsequent levels were structured as follows:

1. *Infima legentium* – students were taught reading and principles of the faith.

2. *Media legentium* – in addition to religious instruction and reading, students were taught writing and the four basic arithmetic operations. Every Saturday, 'catechetical instruction' was held.

3. *Suprema legentium* – students practiced correct writing, emphasis was placed on learning arithmetic. In elementary grades, religious instruction was based on *Summa doctrinae christianaæ* by Canisius.

4. *Infima grammaticae* – foundations of Latin grammar were taught, using, among others, fables by Phaedrus and works of Nepos.

5. *Media grammaticae* – students learned grammatical rules and began studying syntax. The following texts were used: Cicero's *Epistolae Familiares*, Ovid's *Tristia*, as well as works of Juan Luis Vives, Eutropius, and Julius Caesar.

6. *Suprema grammaticae* (also called *syntaxa*) – grammar was reviewed, syntax studies continued, students also learned prosody, the structure of poetry, and wrote fables. Simple Latin texts were also read. Classical authors were used, including: Cicero's *Epistolae Familiares* and Laelius de amicitia; excerpts from Valerius Maximus; Virgil's *Eclogae* and *Georgica*; and Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto* (at the teacher's discretion). Works by Livy, Horace, Curtius, Claudian, and Lucan were also analyzed. The teacher had the freedom to choose the textbook for syntax instruction.

7. *Humanitas* – after reviewing the knowledge from the three grammar classes, students refined the rules of correct writing, composed letters, studied metaphors and stylistic figures, practiced quoted and indirect speech (*oratio recta* and *oratio obliqua*). Works of Cicero were used, with a choice between *De officiis* or *De amicitia*, as well as Horace's *Ars poetica* and *Odes*, Martial's epigrams, Ovid, and Virgil's *Aeneid* (one book). Ancient historians Sallust and Curtius were also studied. The grammar textbook was selected by the school prefect.

8. *Rhetorica* – works of classical authors were analyzed, then students wrote essays based on provided models. Universal and Polish history, law, and geography were also taught. The choice of the rhetoric textbook was left to the teacher's discretion. In Poland, works by Fr. Michał Kraus¹⁷,

¹⁷ M. Kraus, *Manuductio institutionum rhetoriarum*, Varsoviae 1687.

Kamil Jodłowski¹⁸, and Jan Kalinowski¹⁹ were used. Recommended readings included: Cicero's *Pro Lege Manilia*, *Pro Archia Poeta*, *Laelius de amicitia*, *Cato maior*, *De officiis*; a selected ode by Horace, one tragedy by Virgil, and excerpts from Seneca, Suetonius, Puetanus, Claudian, Justus Lipsius, Lucian, and Pliny. For ancient history, works by Sallust, Livy, and Requere's history of Roman law were used; Polish history was taught based on Marcin Kromer's chronicle, while universal history followed Andrzej Puczyński's work. Piarist authors were also used: Samuel Jabłonowski's *Lucurationes oratoriae in materiis tum politicis, tum moralibus*, Warszawa 1715; Ignacy Zawadzki's *Gemmae latine*, Warszawa 1689, (works by Benedykt Zawadzki, who was not a Piarist, were also used); Ignacy Krzyszkiewicz's *Attica Musa et Progymnasmata*, Kraków 1669; Karol Boratini's *Latinitas selecta*, Warszawa 1700. The teachers selected the textbooks individually. Not all of them were used in a single school year, so readings in Piarist schools varied between institutions and years. The exception was Cicero's works, which were obligatory.

9. *Philosophia* – Thomistic philosophy, ethics, metaphysics, logic, geometry and other mathematical sciences were taught. This class was not offered in all Piarist colleges. Education often ended with the eighth grade, i.e. rhetoric²⁰.

Like in other schools, Latin dominated in Piarist institutions, the textbook written by Alvares was used for the instruction. To better assimilate this language, theatrical performances and school assemblies were organized, also wooden tablets were in use. A student caught speaking Polish would be given a wooden tablet, then pass it to another student committing the same offense. The student holding the tablet at the end of a lesson would receive corporal punishment. During the classes students were divided into two competing groups: *pars romana* and *pars graeca*.

Every day, instruction was delivered in two sessions: one in the morning and one in the afternoon, each lasting two and a half hours. Students spent the last fifteen minutes of the morning class reading religious texts or listening to a short moral lecture. After afternoon classes, students recited the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Every hour, a bell announced time for a prayer – the Hail Mary. Thursdays were free from studies, the day was reserved for recreation. Before Stanisław Konarski's reforms, Polish Piarist schools imitated Jesuit institutions and strove to match their significance. However, many new elements emerged as Piarist

¹⁸ K. Jodłowski, *Praeceptiones rhetoricae*, Varsoviae 1702.

¹⁹ J. Kalinowski, *Atomii minores*, Varsoviae 1731.

²⁰ S. Biegański, *op. cit.*, pp. 8–11; *Podręczna*, vols. XXXI–XXXII, pp. 169–170; J. Taraszkiewicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 23–25.

constitutions allowed considerable freedom in selecting methods, curricula and textbooks (unlike Jesuit schools). Despite the dominance of Latin, greater importance was attached to the native language of the students. The curricula and textbooks were adapted to contemporary times, national characteristics, and local conditions. The Piarists did not limit education to religious instruction or promote religious fanaticism, they also taught patriotism, respect for laws, and appreciation for national culture. Yet in the 17th century, Piarist colleges did not develop separate history instruction like leading Protestant schools in Gdańsk or Elbląg²¹. This subject, like geography, was taught within rhetoric classes, through composing panegyrics, epitaphs, odes, speeches, sermons, and staging theatrical performances²². The primary teaching methods in Piarist schools were memory exercises and those aimed at developing correct reasoning. The Piarists also emphasized the practical value of knowledge acquired by the students. In addition, education in Piarist schools was tuition-free.

Shortly after a separate province was established, the Piarists of the Polish Crown, under Stanisław Konarski's leadership, initiated reforms of their educational system and became a symbol of educational transformation in the 18th century. Konarski, for his merits in this field, was the only one to receive the *Sapere Aude* medal from the king. Having been exposed to Enlightenment ideas during his stay in Italy and travels through Western Europe, Konarski resolved to implement them in practice. Influenced by modern pedagogical views of John Locke and Charles Rollin, which emphasized practical knowledge, he gradually and selectively introduced their ideas into Piarist schools. The most important institution established for this purpose was Collegium Nobilium in Warsaw. A year after founding this model institution, Konarski undertook the reform of the entire Piarist system of education. At the general chapter in Łowicz in 1741, the use of the textbook by Alvares was prohibited and replaced with Konarski's Latin grammar²³. Latin instruction focused primarily on reading classical works. Konarski introduced new subjects to the curricula: universal and Polish history, geography, French and

²¹ L. Mokrzecki, K. Puchowski, *Pierwsi nauczyciele historii w szkolnictwie staropolskim*, in: *Nauczyciel historii. Ku nowej formacji dydaktycznej*, ed. M. Kujawska, Poznań 1996, pp. 7–15.

²² J. Taraszkiewicz, *Nauczanie historii i geografii w kolegiach pijarskich w Polsce do 1740 r.*, in: *Wkład pijarów do nauki i kultury w Polsce XVII–XIX w.*, ed. I. Stasiewicz-Jasiukowa, Warszawa–Kraków 1993, pp. 469–475; K. Puchowski, *Edukacja historyczno-geograficzna w kolegiach pijarskich i jezuickich w I Rzeczypospolitej. Próba porównania*, in: *Wkład*, pp. 477–487. Detailed studies on teaching of history in Piarist schools during the Old Polish period can be found in the work of J. Taraszkiewicz, *op. cit.*

²³ S. Konarski, *Grammatica in usum iuventutis Scholarum Piarum*, Warszawa 1741. The manual saw numerous reprints, reaching a total of 26 editions.

German languages. Polish language exercises were also implemented, with essay topics drawn from national²⁴ and world history, as well as from dialogues by Jan Amos Comenius and Juan Luis Vives. The reforms were first implemented at the Rzeszów college, followed by several others. Unfortunately, most rectors were intellectually unprepared for such radical changes and began to protest. Complaints were sent to Rome, reaching Pope Benedict XIV. A years-long struggle for reforms ensued and was ultimately won by Konarski and his supporters. In 1753, the opposition was defeated, and its leader, Provincial Valentin Kamieński, was removed from office. That same year, in Piotrków, rectors of all Piarist schools approved the reforms known as *Ordinationes Visitationis Apostolicae* (Ordinances of the Apostolic Visitation). In 1754, Konarski brought them to Rome, where they were approved by the authorities of the order and the Pope himself²⁵. This marked the first Polish educational reform which was conducted without reliance on foreign models. While the Enlightenment ideas came from abroad, the concept of the reform, the structure, and the programs of the new schools were entirely Polish in origin.

According to the new regulations, the structure of Piarist schools underwent minimal changes. Instruction continued in classes: parva, infima, grammar, syntax, humanitas, rhetorica, and philosophia. The program lasted eight or nine years, depending on whether the first two classes were combined (schools made this decision independently), while rhetoric and philosophy classes were two-year courses²⁶.

S. Konarski's reform involved limiting the use of Latin and, above all, incorporating the teaching of the Polish language²⁷. It could be argued that in this regard, Konarski lacked the courage to introduce Polish as the language of instruction. However, this move demonstrated that the changes were carefully designed. S. Konarski was aware of the opinions of the nobility and foresaw that abolishing Latin instruction would provoke massive protests, undermining the entire reform. His concerns were justified, as thirty years after his efforts, when the Commission of National Education (Komisja Edukacji Narodowej) restricted teaching of Latin, the

²⁴ In the canon of readings recommended to Piarist students by Stanisław Konarski was *Historia Lithuaniae*- the work of the Jesuit, Wojciech Kojałowicz.

²⁵ A. Wojtkowski, *Z dziejów szkolnictwa katolickiego dla świeckich*, in: *Księga tysiąclecia katolicyzmu w Polsce*, part 3, Lublin 1969, p. 50; S. Kot, *Historia wychowania*, vol. 1, Lwów 1934, pp. 384–386; J. Nowak Dłużewski, *Stanisław Konarski*, Warszawa 1989, pp. 60–73.

²⁶ The specific regulations are outlined in *Ordynacje Wizytacji Apostolskiej dla Polskiej Prowincji Szkół Pobożnych*, in: S. Konarski, *Pisma pedagogiczne*, introduction and annotations by Ł. Kurdybacha, Wrocław–Kraków 1959, pp. 118–259.

²⁷ D. Żołędź, *Ideaty edukacyjne doby staropolskiej*, Warszawa–Poznań 1990, pp. 100, 105; A. Brückner, *Dzieje kultury polskiej*, vol. III, Kraków 1931, p. 292.

nobility harshly criticized the idea. For example, some nobles from the Lublin Voivodeship sent their children to schools beyond the Austrian partition – to Zamość and Lviv – where Latin was still taught. The issue also affected the Piarist school in Chełm²⁸. Further achievements of the reform included introduction of history, geography, algebra, geometry, physics, and modern philosophy. The latter was taught based on the works of such eminent figures as John Locke, Francis Bacon, René Descartes, Christian Wolff, and Nicolas Malebranche. New textbooks were introduced, printed by the Piarists in Warsaw.

Konarski's reform was not entirely perfect, and its creator himself was well aware of this fact. It covered only secondary schools, leaving primary and higher education untouched. Therefore, Konarski emphasized that the teaching methods and tools recommended for the Piarists needed further refinement in practice. It was a private reform, implemented without the support of the state, so it did not encompass all schools. Its greatest merit was contributing to the growth of the educational institutions of the order, and the second half of the 18th century is referred to as the 'Golden Age of the Piarists'. Historiographers generally agree that the development of the order and its schools made the society realize the necessity of reforming education in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth²⁹. The Jesuits, the largest teaching order, recognized that they had to accelerate changes in their schools in order to stay competitive with the Piarists. They succeeded and, after some time, matched the Piarist schools in educational quality, even surpassing them in certain areas. Nevertheless, in the opinion of the majority of society, the Piarists remained the leading reformers of education. Wirydianna Fiszerowa, the wife of General Stanisław Fiszer, an aide-de-camp to Tadeusz Kościuszko, wrote about the Piarists: 'People clinging to old prejudices wanted to hear of nothing beyond the Jesuits. They were the most numerous. The Piarists were distinguished by ardent patriotism and adhered to republican principles. Their piety was free from superstition and they instilled such principles into their students. Among them was a man of genius, Father Konarski, who established the educational institution for noble youth and who would have succumbed to persecutors had it not been for royal protection.'

²⁸ This issue also arose in other Piarist schools. For instance, some children from Szczyzna Mazowiecki were dispatched to Prussia, and in Rydzyna, they were enrolled in Protestant schools. See: M. Ausz, K. Puchowski, *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej 1773–1794. Szkoły w Wydziale Pijarskim*, vol. 9, Warszawa 2018, p. 117.

²⁹ J. Nowak-Dłużewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 67–68; A. Wojtkowski, *Z dziejów*, pp. 51, 55; idem, *Z dziejów szkolnictwa jezuickiego i pijarskiego w Polsce*, "Zeszyty Naukowe KUL" 1966, 9, 1–2, pp. 99–115.

That protection shielded him until the moment when, following the dissolution of the Jesuit order, he no longer had to fear the competition. [...] He raised men of great talent and men renowned for virtue³⁰.

Stanisław Konarski knew that in order to reform the entire educational system in the country, decisive government action was necessary. Therefore, he also expressed hope that his reform would be continued by competent authorities and institutions, primarily by the state, as he wrote in *Ordinationes Visitationis Apostolicae*: 'In time, perhaps, another far better and more effective method of teaching will be found and implemented by proper authorities, developed either by scholars of our congregation or by secular experts...'³¹.

S. Konarski did not live to see such an institution, as he passed away shortly before its establishment. Yet, it was precisely his reform and the education of elites at the *Collegium Nobilium* that contributed to the creation of the Commission of National Education (Komisja Edukacji Narodowej), which included many Piarists, making a significant contribution to its functioning. Jan Nowak-Dłużewski stated, somewhat in an exaggerated manner, that what S. Konarski had dreamed of had come true—the education system of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth transformed a Sarmatian society into a modern European nation³².

The Lithuanian province of the Piarist Order also played a role in the educational transformation and reform, and although its achievements were more modest than those of the Polish province, they were nonetheless crucial in improving the quality of education in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The Piarists in Vilnius encountered resistance from the Jesuits and engaged in a years-long dispute over the right to provide educational services. Ultimately, they were granted permission to operate only a boarding school for noblemen, which they later organized following the model of *Collegium Nobilium* in Warsaw. With almost a decade of delay, changes to the teaching system were introduced in the Lithuanian province. Konarski's reform was adapted to the needs of the Lithuanian Piarist schools, and new teaching guidelines, titled *Methodus docendi pro Scholis Piis Provintiae Lithuniae*, were issued in the early 1760s. This was an adaptation of Konarski's *Ordinationes*, retaining the same division into grades but omitting many innovations and much of the latest literature. Konarski's name was also nowhere to be found. The new regulations were initiated by the then-provincial Kaspar Trzeszczkowski and drafted

³⁰ W. Fiszerowa, *Dzieje moje własne i osób postronnych. Wiązanka spraw poważnych, ciekawych i błahych*, Warszawa 1998, p. 166.

³¹ *Ordynacje*, chapter IV, point 271, p. 261.

³² J. Nowak-Dłużewski, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

by Jerzy Ciapiński³³. What motivated the Lithuanian Piarists to limit the reform? Łukasz Kurdybacha puts it this way:

'What were the reasons for concealing from readers, and especially from Piarist teachers in Lithuania, the name of the renowned reformer of Piarist colleges in the Crown – we cannot determine today due to the lack of any source data on the matter. Perhaps among conservative Piarist circles in Lithuania, the aversion to Konarski's reforms was so strong that an explicit acknowledgment, by the religious leadership, of following his example would have entirely endangered the success of reformist efforts. Or perhaps the kind of envy toward the Piarists in the Crown, though hidden from the world yet occasionally noticeable, prevented the Piarist elders in Lithuania from admitting to emulating the work of the founder of Collegium Nobilium. The fear that officially revealing attempts to partially implement Konarski's reforms in schools might provoke demands from his supporters to base Lithuanian Piarist schools on all the recommendations of their brethren in the Crown could also have played a role. Hypotheses could be proposed ad infinitum. While each may contain a grain of truth, none fully explains the matter'³⁴.

It is likely that all these factors played a role, the greatest of which was the fear of the nobility's resistance to such radical changes in schools, as well as a lack of funds and adequately trained teaching staff. Nevertheless, the reform did yield results – the Lithuanian Piarists implemented the new assumptions of the Commission of National Education without major difficulties.

From 1756, through the efforts of the distinguished Piarist Fr. Maciej Dogiel, the Vilnius boarding school was also reformed. The new program was based on the principles of Collegium Nobilium³⁵ in Warsaw. The school, like its Warsaw counterpart, was formally open to all sons of the nobility but in reality, it educated only the sons of magnates and wealthy noble class. Both the curriculum and living conditions met the needs and expectations of contemporary elites. The tuition was high – 55 red zlotys annually (compared to 80 zlotys at Collegium Nobilium in Warsaw). For this reason, the Piarists specified in detail what the tuition covered, so as to avoid accusations of seeking excessive profit.

³³ *Mokymo metodas lietuvių provincijos pijorų mokykloms. Apšvietos edukacijos naujovės*, transl. and prep. A. Vaškelienė, Vilnius 2024, p. 40 and next.

³⁴ *Reforma litewskich szkół pijarskich w 1762 r.*, in: Ł. Kurdybacha, *Pisma wybrane*, vol. 3, prep. J. Miąso, Warszawa 1976, pp. 129–130.

³⁵ K. Puchowski, *Pijarskie Collegium Nobilium w Wilnie. Korzenie i konteksty*, "XVIII amžiaus studijos" 2019, 5, p. 119.

'For the everyday table: there are eight dishes per day – five dishes for dinner, three for supper, as well as breakfast and afternoon tea, also fruits, and wine on certain occasions, along with extraordinary recreations, kitchen utensils, and payment for kitchen staff.

For the sustenance of the Reverend Professors.

For board and payment to the masters of the French and German languages.

For lodging. For the doctor's regular visits.

For firewood for stoves and the kitchen, including payment for caretakers.

For table linen, platters, plates, porcelain, glassware, and a butler.

For candles, night lamps, ink, and hand soap.

For a barber, valet, and dance master.

For comforts during illnesses – tea, sugar, special dishes, etc.

For domestic service of the College, including the gentlemen's attendants, a steward, a housekeeper, a coachman, as well as maintaining two pairs of horses, which are indispensable.

For weekly Polish and French newspapers.

For games and amusements³⁶.

As Kazimierz Puchowski writes: 'The Vilnius Collegium Nobilium was an institution implementing a distinctly modified humanistic program of upbringing and education. The Piarists prepared carefully for opening this school by gathering the most important information about domestic and foreign educational institutions for the nobility. However, the selection of the curriculum was limited and considerably poorer than in the exclusive schools to which they referred'³⁷.

Although rhetoric remained the foundation of education at the Vilnius Collegium Nobilium, the curriculum also included geography, history, political and legal knowledge, civil and military architecture, as well as aristocratic skills – fencing, musical arts, and dancing³⁸.

When the Commission of National Education (KEN) was established, the Piarist schools submitted to the new institution and endeavored to implement its directives. Thus, the Piarist establishments lost their distinctive characteristics³⁹ from that moment. The schools of the Piarist order became subject to the same regulations as the academic schools.

³⁶ *Informacya wzgledem oddawania Ichmościow Panow Kawalerow zacnego urodzenia do Collegium Nobilium Wileńskiego Scholarum Piarum, Imprimatur Michael Episcopus Vilnensis*, quote for K. Puchowski, *Pijarskie*, p. 122.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 130.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ S. Biegański, *op. cit.*, pp. 15–16.

The Piarists promptly declared their willingness to cooperate and became an important link in the implementation of KEN's reforms. They actively engaged in preparing projects of the reform, writing textbooks, etc. Father Kazimierz Narbutt – the most distinguished Piarist of the Lithuanian province (as described by Ambroise Jobert) – was a member of the Society for Elementary Books (Towarzystwo do Księg Elementarnych) from the very beginning. The Lithuanian province, like the Polish one, reformed its schools in the early 1780s in accordance with the regulations of the Commission of National Education. At the session of the Commission on June 13, 1780, the 'Guidelines for the Piarist Fathers of the Lithuanian Province' were presented. The introduction explained: 'since the schools maintained by the Piarist Fathers in Lithuania, along with others, are to be subordinate, we hereby communicate to their congregation our unalterable disposition in advance'⁴⁰. This disposition, outlined in six points, concerned: the issuance of professorial patents by the Commission, leaving the selection of prefects and remuneration to the authorities of the order, teachers' salaries, the provincial superior's annual obligation to submit reports on school staff to the Commission, the mandatory public reading of patents in schools, as well as the requirement for annual inspections. These points primarily regulated personnel affairs, leaving curricular issues to the discretion of the inspector.

Three years later, in the published Ordinances of KEN, Chapter I, point 13 stated that monastic schools permitted by the Commission: 'regarding the rules of education and instruction, school governance, and inspections by the Principal School (Szkoła Główna), they shall be subject to closer oversight and visitation by faculty deans. In monastic schools, only those who have studied at the Principal School for at least three years and possess certificates of completed examinations, as prescribed for candidates in the Principal School, shall be appointed to prefectures and professorships'⁴¹. The purpose of this provision was to subordinate monastic schools to the authority of the Commission.

Indeed, not all monks were convinced of the new reform – some appreciated it fairly quickly, while others remained reluctant. As Kamilla

⁴⁰ *Protokoły posiedzeń Komisji Edukacji Narodowej 1773–1785*, prep. M. Mitera-Dobrowolska, "Archiwum dziejów oświaty" 1973, 5, pp. 182–183; *Ustawodawstwo szkolne za czasów Komisji Edukacji Narodowej. Rozporządzenia, ustawy pedagogiczne i organizacyjne (1773–1793)*, introduction and prep. J. Lewicki, Kraków 1925, pp. 151–153.

⁴¹ *Ustawy Komisji Edukacji Narodowej dla stanu akademickiego i na szkoły w krajach Rzeczypospolitej przepisane*, ed. K. Bartnicka, Warszawa 2015, p. 70.

Mrozowska wrote, some were 'initially resistant, later loyal and devoted'⁴². Some lacked the necessary education, others were unwilling to abandon routine, and still others, due to their conservatism, were unable to meet the new requirements of the Commission of National Education.

Within the territory of the Lithuanian province, the following Piarist colleges operated under the structures of the Commission of National Education (KEN): Szczuczyn Litewski, Lida, Vilnius (Collegium Nobilium; after 1773, they acquired the former Jesuit monastery and Church of St. Raphael in Śnipiszki, though they did not conduct pedagogical activities there), Łužki-Walerianów, Wiłkomierz, Rosienie, Lubieszów, Dąbrowica, and Poniewież. As a result of the First Partition of Poland, one school of the Lithuanian province, i.e. Vitebsk, found itself outside the borders.

The primary task was to train teachers in the new curricula and re-organize the operation of the schools according to the new regulations issued by the ministry.

In 1774, the Commission issued the *Regulations of the Commission of National Education for Provincial Schools*. These included the *Order and Structure of Studies in Provincial Schools* which outlined a division of education into three two-year grades. The curriculum was as follows:

First Grade:

First year: arithmetic, moral instruction, basics of Polish and Latin, Polish history and geography, introduction to gardening, Christian doctrine on Sundays and holidays—conducted at school: revision of the catechism and reading of the Gospels. Second year: continued arithmetic, introduction to algebra, moral instruction, continuation of Latin, study of tropes, translation of Latin texts, contemporary history with the geography of all Europe, basic agricultural instruction, Christian doctrine on Sundays and holidays—conducted at school: a brief overview of the Old and New Testament and the Acts of the Apostles.

Second Grade:

Third year: practical geometry with applications, moral instruction, logic, rhetoric, reading classical authors, applied logic, history combined with geography, elements of zoology, Christian doctrine—moral sermons at church.

Fourth year: trigonometry, natural law, metaphysics, poetics, reading major classical authors, natural geography, knowledge about natural resources (minerals), Christian doctrine—moral sermons at church.

Third Grade:

⁴² K. Mrozowska, *Funkcjonowanie systemu szkolnego Komisji Edukacji Narodowej na terenie Korony w latach 1783–1793*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1985, p. 114.

Fifth year: continued geometry, economics, general physics etc. as per instruction, spherical geography, elements of botany, Christian doctrine—moral sermons at church.

Sixth year: mechanics, political law, specialized physics, lectures in geometric astronomy, general continuation of natural history, Christian doctrine—moral sermons at school⁴³.

The Ordinances of KEN also outlined the duties of the rector, prefect, and directors, it also provided a template for reports. On August 29, 1774, letters were sent to the monks involved in teaching, instructing them to follow the new regulations and to introduce the study of several foreign languages – or at least one language in district schools⁴⁴. Due to the lack of a similar curriculum for district schools (and all Piarist schools in the Lithuanian province held district school status), they attempted to implement the program according to the above plan, insofar as the number of teachers allowed. In 1775, the curriculum for provincial schools was modified, with three two-year grades replaced by seven one-year grades. The curriculum was as follows:

Grade I: Latin, arithmetic, history with geography, elements of zoology.

Grade II: Latin, arithmetic, history with geography, continued elements of zoology.

Grade III: Latin, geometry, history with geography, knowledge about natural resources.

Grade IV: Latin, gardening.

Grade V: physics, algebra, agriculture.

Grade VI: logic, mechanics, hydraulics, knowledge about human health.

Grade VII: law, rhetoric, poetics, knowledge about sciences, arts, and crafts⁴⁵.

The curriculum for district schools was not issued until 1777. The regulations were approved by the Commission of National Education (KEN) on February 21 of that year. The *Curriculum for district schools* also envisioned a division into three two-year grades, to be taught by three professors.

⁴³ Porządek i układ nauk w szkołach wojewódzkich, in: *Pierwiastkowe przepisy pedagogiczne Komisji Edukacji Narodowej z lat 1773–1776*, introduction and ed. Z. Kukulski, Lublin 1923, pp. 18–19.

⁴⁴ R. Stępień, *Z dziejów szkolnictwa pijarskiego w czasach Komisji Edukacji Narodowej*, "Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis. Prace Pedagogiczne" 1996, 109, p. 8.

⁴⁵ Układ nauk i porządku między nimi w szkołach wojewódzkich dla piszących książki elementarne, in: *Pierwiastkowe*, pp. 76–77.

Christian and moral instruction was to be conducted throughout all years. The following subjects were obligatory in each grade:

Grade I

first year: Latin and Polish language, arithmetic, elementary zoology;

second year: Latin and Polish language, continued arithmetic, continued elementary zoology, geography and Polish history;

Grade II

first year: Latin and Polish language, continued arithmetic, elementary botany, elementary gardening, geography with history;

second year: Latin and Polish language, arithmetic, elementary botany, elementary gardening, geography with history;

Grade III

first year: geometry, geography with history, elementary botany, elementary agriculture;

second year: geometry, botany, elementary agriculture⁴⁶.

In the third grade, Latin instruction continued in the form of reading and translating classical authors. Since the classes spanned over two years, the teachers divided the time between subjects and grades. Both first- and second-year students had some lessons in the morning and some in the afternoon⁴⁷.

Students and professors were required to work 20 hours per week. A student's daily schedule was as follows: wake-up at six in the morning, Mass and breakfast at seven, lessons from eight to ten. From ten AM to two PM—break for individual study, meals, and recreation; from two to four PM—lessons; after four—foreign language classes, homework, supper, prayers, and bedtime at nine PM. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, physical education⁴⁸ was conducted in the morning.

Further changes occurred in 1783, requiring schools to adapt to the new 'Ordinances' of the Commission of National Education. According to these, secondary schools were divided into six-grade departmental schools (formerly provincial) with six professors, and sub-departmental schools (formerly district schools – all Piarist schools in the Lithuanian province had this status), which were either three-grade schools with three professors or four-grade schools with four professors. Education in a departmental school lasted seven years (with Grade V being two years long). In sub-departmental schools, it lasted six years; in three-grade schools, all grades were two-year, whereas in four-grade schools, Grades II and III lasted two years, while Grades I and IV were one-year only.

⁴⁶ *Układ nauk na szkoły powiatowe*, in: *Ustawodawstwo*, p. 125.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 125.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 140–144.

The curriculum in the departmental school:

Grade I (taught by one professor) – grammar, Latin excerpts – 9 hours; arithmetic – 6 hours; character development – 2 hours; introduction to contemporary geography – 2 hours; moral instruction and Latin excerpts – 1 hour.

Grade II (taught by one professor) – Continuation of Grade I curriculum.

Grade III – professor of rhetoric: grammar, excerpts from Cornelius Nepos, letters of Cicero and Pliny – 8 hours; professor of mathematics: review of arithmetic – 2 hours, first part of geometry – 4 hours; professor of physics: natural history of gardening – 2 hours, Latin excerpts for natural history – 1 hour; professor of law: Assyrian and Persian history with geography and Latin excerpts – 2 hours, moral instruction and Latin excerpts – 1 hour.

Grade IV – professor of rhetoric: excerpts from the authors studied in Grade III, oratory practice – 3 hours; professor of mathematics: continuation of geometry – 4 hours, algebra – 4 hours; professor of physics: natural history of agriculture and Latin excerpts – 2 hours, introduction to physics – 4 hours; professor of law: Greek history with geography and Latin excerpts – 2 hours, moral instruction and Latin excerpts – 1 hour.

Grade V

First Year: professor of rhetoric: excerpts from classical poets, speeches – 3 hours (joint classes for first- and second-year students); professor of mathematics: second part of geometry – 4 hours; professor of physics: review of introduction to physics, first part of physics – 6 hours, natural history of natural resources and Latin excerpts – 2 hours, botany – 1 hour; professor of law: Roman history with geography and Latin excerpts – 2 hours, moral instruction and Latin excerpts – 1 hour.

Second Year: professor of rhetoric: excerpts from classical poets 'of various genres', speeches – 3 hours. (joint classes for first- and second-year students); professor of mathematics: final part of algebra course – 2 hours, surveying plans and 'other necessary' skills – 2 hours; professor of physics: review of introduction to physics, second part of physics – 6 hours, health education and Latin excerpts – 2 hours, botany – 1 hour; professor of law: moral instruction and law – 3 hours, Latin excerpts for moral instruction – 1 hour.

Grade VI – professor of rhetoric: observations and commentaries on rhetoric and poetry, speeches of Cicero, Livy, Curtius, Tacitus, Horace's *De arte poetica* – 6 hours; professor of mathematics: logic – 2 hours; professor of physics: history of arts and crafts, Latin excerpts – 2 hours; professor of law: moral instruction and law – 7 hours, national history – 2 hours, Latin excerpts for moral instruction and law – 1 hour.

Additionally, Christian instruction was scheduled for every Sunday and festive day. Modern language instruction was provided for 12 hours a week⁴⁹.

The curriculum in sub-departmental schools was essentially a narrower repetition of the departmental school program, also the same textbooks were used⁵⁰.

The weaker Lithuanian province did not manage to secure a separate Piarist department, as was the case in the Crown. Its schools were administratively subordinated to individual departments. All Piarist schools in the Lithuanian province were classified as sub-departmental schools.

The network of schools in Lithuania during the time of the Commission of National Education (KEN):

Lithuanian Department:

Departmental school: Grodno; sub-departmental schools: Białystok, Merecz (Bernardines), Lida (Piarists), Widze, Wilno, Wiszniew, Postawy, Szczuczyn Litewski (Piarists), Wołkowysk;

Samogitian (Żmudź) Department:

Departmental school: Kroże; sub-departmental schools: Kowno, Kretynga, Rosienie (Piarists), Wiłkomierz (Piarists), Poniewież (Piarists), Wierzbów (Dominicans);

Nowogródek Department:

Departmental school: Nowogródek; sub-departmental schools: Bobrujsk, Chołopienicze, Mińsk, Mozyrz, Nieswież, Słuck, Jurewicze, Łužki (Piarists), Berezwecz (Basilians), Dzisna (Franciscans), Uszacz (Dominicans);

Polesia (Polesie) Department:

Departmental school: Brześć Litewski; sub-departmental schools: Pińsk, Biała Podlaska, Słonim, Dąbrowica (Piarists), Lubieszów (Piarists), Żyrowice (Basilians)⁵¹.

The Piarists, from both the Polish and Lithuanian provinces, continued striving for independence from the Main Schools (Szkoły Główne) and sought direct subordination to the Commission of National Education (KEN). These attempts began in the mid-1780s. Owing to the persistent efforts of both provinces, they eventually gained a degree of autonomy – albeit in organizational and supervisory matters, not in curricula design. The change occurred on April 20, 1790, when the autonomous Department of Piarist Schools was established. Thereafter, Polish and Lithuanian

⁴⁹ *Ustawy*, p. 161.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 166–170.

⁵¹ J. Kamińska, *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej 1773–1794. Szkoły w Wydziale Litewskim*, Warszawa 2018, pp. 29–31.

Piarists were no longer subordinate to the Main Schools but came under the direct management of KEN. Fr. Tadeusz Lang, a Piarist from the Lithuanian province, was appointed General Visitor of Piarist Schools. Thus, the Piarists gained considerable autonomy, creating a unique union between the order and the Commission of National Education. Most importantly, the schools of the Lithuanian province were no longer scattered across different departments, allowing for a unified structure to be established. Undoubtedly, this facilitated the supervision and management of the schools by the monastic authorities. Due to a lack of surviving documents, it is difficult to determine what ultimately led to the Piarists' being granted such privileges⁵².

The preserved inspection reports from the KEN era enabled us to trace how the Lithuanian Piarists implemented its educational program⁵³. Unfortunately, the inspectors sent by the Main School of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania did not devote as much attention to monastic schools or describe them in as much detail as they did in the case of academic institutions. Most often, they limited themselves to statistical summaries of the number of students in a given year, listing the more talented and *Diligentiae* medal-winning students, while occasionally adding brief remarks about teachers – such as 'capable' or 'incapable' in fulfilling their duties. The Lithuanian Piarists complied with the KEN's directives, although not all teachers managed to promptly adapt to the new curricula. Some of them were resistant to change, others were simply poor educators, and in the case of some others, routine and old habits⁵⁴ prevailed. A major obstacle was a lack of textbooks and modern teaching aids, which significantly delayed the implementation of the new content and teaching methods. Staff shortages were another issue, leading to excessive workload for teachers, which negatively affected their professional dedication and attained results. Inspector Jan Erdman commented on this situation during his visit to the school in Rosienie. While he highly praised its prefect and Grade III professor, Fr Wiktor Borowski⁵⁵, he noted that the

⁵² M. Ausz, K. Puchowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 130–131.

⁵³ Detailed analyses of the inspections and evaluations of Piarist schools during the Commission of National Education (KEN) period can be found in the following publications: I. Szybiak, K. Buczek, *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej 1773–1794. Szkoły w Wydziale Żmudzkim*, vol. 10, Warszawa 2018; J. Kamińska, *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej 1773–1794. Szkoły w Wydziale Wileńskim*, vol. 11, Warszawa 2018; J. Jamrożek, J. Szablicka-Żak, *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej 1773–1794. Szkoły w Wydziale Nowogródzkim*, vol. 12, Warszawa 2018; S. Walasek, *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej 1773–1794. Szkoły w Wydziale Poleskim*, vol. 13, Warszawa 2018.

⁵⁴ M. Ausz, *The Piarist school in Raseinai, "Res Historica"* 2021, 51, p. 300.

⁵⁵ Fr Victor Borowski of the Mother of God, secular name: Victor (1756–1815).

educator was overburdened with administrative duties, which impaired his teaching effectiveness: 'The students of the professor of mathematics and natural history showed considerable progress in their studies, which would have been even greater had their professor not also been the prefect. Although he teaches diligently and zealously, he is often distracted by the duties of his administrative role, preventing him from fully meeting the demands of his professorial position'⁵⁶. Staff shortages may have also contributed to critical remarks regarding bureaucratic obligations; therefore, inspectors frequently accused the Piarists of inadequate record-keeping in school ledgers. Nevertheless, the inspection reports reveal that by the late 1780s, the situation gradually improved. Piarist schools were increasingly fulfilling their duties effectively and were classified as the highest-rated religious schools⁵⁷. 'They mastered the teaching methods quite well, probably owing to the order's long educational tradition as well as the guidelines contained in the fourth part of the *Ordynacjach wizytacji apostolskiej dla Polskiej Prowincji Szkół Pobożnych*, titled *O szkołach*, which outlined how lessons should be conducted. Probably due to the aforementioned factors, they also faced no major disciplinary issues, although occasional student insubordination and mischief did occur'. In the late 1780s, the Lithuanian Piarists sought to loosen their ties with the Main School in Vilnius and establish a separate Piarist school department in Lithuania, like it had been done in the Crown. This was achieved in 1790 with the establishment of the Department of Piarist Schools, which placed the schools under the direct authority of the Commission (KEN). Thereafter, it was the Commission that appointed inspectors and was in power to oversee educational matters⁵⁸. Undoubtedly, the greatest challenge was the low income of the college, especially as it was one of the most recently established and smallest monastic houses.

In order to summarize the evaluations of schools by inspectors, we can refer to Hanna Pohoska's thorough analysis which categorized the schools based on the inspectors' assessments.

Out of 74 secondary schools in the Crown and Lithuania, only six were classified as the most outstanding: Nowogródek, Warszawa (Piarist Collegium Regium), Poznań, Mińsk, Grodno, and Radom. The Warsaw school ranked second in the country, receiving nine grades in total: three 'very good', five 'good' and one 'fairly good'. It is worth noting that the Collegium Nobilium received identical ratings, meaning that if included,

⁵⁶ *Raporty*, p. 325.

⁵⁷ H. Pohoska, *Wizytatorowie Generalni Komisji Edukacji Narodowej. Monografia z dziejów administracji Komisji Edukacji Narodowej*, Lublin 1957, p. 172.

⁵⁸ I. Szybiak, K. Buczek, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

Table 1. Enrollment in Piarist Schools of the Lithuanian Province (1782–1798)*

Year	Dąbrowica	Lubieszów	Lida	Łuzki	Szczuczyn Litewski	Poniewież	Rosienie	Wilkomierz
1782	50	60	over 58**	130	99	87	107	91
1783	ND	ND	99	121	109	74	129	85
1784	121	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
1785	ND	ND	ND	105	ND	ND	ND	ND
1786	121	60	86	102***	91	61	165	ND
1787	107	80	62	113	94	ND	153	ND
1788	112	75	73	92	69	81	173	74
1789	106	70	60	ND	69	86	80	100
1792	ND	ND	ND	133	ND	ND	ND	ND
1798	127	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND

ND – no data available

* These figures are frequently underreported. The inspectors often failed to record the total number of enrolled students, providing instead only attendance counts during visitation. In most cases, they also omitted data for the preparatory grade, which fell outside the educational scope mandated by the Commission of National Education. The student numbers in the table are quoted according to: *Raporty generalnych wizytatorów szkół Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim* (1782–1792), prep. K. Bartricka, I. Szybiak, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1974, passim; O. Hede-mann, *Szkoły walerjanowskie x.x. pijarów łużeckich*, Wilno 1937, pp. 8–9 and next; J. Hoffmann, *Księga wizyt generalnych szkoły OO. Pijarów w Dąbrowicy z lat 1782–1804*, “Rocznik Wołyński” 1934, 3, pp. 261–296.

** No student count is provided for Class III.

*** Total count including the preparatory grade.

the Piarists would have had one more school in this elite group. The second Piarist school in this category, the institution in Radom, placed sixth among the best schools in the Commonwealth, earning eight positive ratings, including one ‘very good’, five ‘good’, and two ‘fairly good’ grades. All these schools belonged to the top 34 best-performing and leading schools in the Crown and Lithuania. Apart from Warsaw and Radom, the list included seven more Piarist schools: Piotrków Trybuński, Szczuczyn Mazowiecki, Łuków, Międzyrzec Korecki, Dąbrowica, Lubieszów and Drohiczyn⁵⁹. It should be noted that Collegium Nobilium in Vilnius was not included in this evaluation.

The remaining 40 schools were categorized by H. Pohoska into: schools of average quality, mediocre schools, and failing institutions. The first group included schools that received between two to five negative

⁵⁹ H. Pohoska, *op. cit.*, pp. 168–175.

ratings. This category contained 19 colleges, including seven Piarist establishments: Góra Kalwaria, Łowicz, Chełm, Łomża, Rydzyna, Łužki, and Wieluń⁶⁰. The mediocre schools were those with an equal number of positive and negative ratings, featuring five Piarist schools from the Lithuanian province: Lida, Wiłkomierz, Szczuczyn Litewski, Poniewież, and Rosienie. Notably, no Piarist institutions appeared in the 'failing schools' category where negative ratings predominated⁶¹. According to the inspectors' evaluations, Piarist schools generally fulfilled their duties well, with a significant number ranking among the best and leading educational centers. No other monastic schools could match the Piarists' teaching standards. However, when analyzing these assessments, one must consider the fact that the inspectors may not have always maintained complete objectivity in their judgment.

It should also be remembered that the Piarist order underwent a major revolution within its structures. The implementation of Konarski's reforms did not proceed without resistance from some of the brothers, and only the determination of Konarski and his closest collaborators led to imposing the reforms 'through deceitful means'. Not everyone accepted them enthusiastically- neither the clergy nor the parents. There was also a shortage of qualified teaching staff and resources. The Lithuanian province provides a telling example, as it only adopted the limited version of the reform in 1762. The example of Lithuanian schools is particularly noteworthy – it appeared that the Crown province, which had earlier adopted and fully implemented Konarski's reform, was better prepared to enact the directives of the Commission of National Education (KEN). Piarist schools in the Crown received higher ratings from inspectors, with only two Lithuanian institutions, Dąbrowica and Lubieszów, ranking among the more highly assessed schools, they were colleges that housed novitiates and monastic studies, which guaranteed that the lecturers were usually the most outstanding educators. Among the poor-performing schools, there were no Piarist schools from the Crown, however there were five institutions from Lithuania. However, it should be noted that the Piarist schools in the Lithuanian departments were among the leading ones, enacting the new regulations of KEN without major difficulties. The crucial issue for Piarist schools in the Lithuanian province was their limited funding and low income. Resistance to educational innovations was also more pronounced among the nobility in these areas. Another significant factor was that the territories of the Lithuanian province were diverse in terms of ethnicity, language, and religion.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 171–172.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 172–173.

The Targowica Confederation marked the end of KEN's activities. After the fall of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795, the entire Lithuanian province and one institution from the Polish province, Międzyrzecz Korecki, found themselves within the territories seized by Russia. In this situation, the authorities of the order decided to incorporate this school into the Lithuanian province. A similar approach was taken with the Drohiczyn College, which also became part of the Russian state after the Treaty of Tilsit (Tylża). Initially, the new authorities did not interfere much with the work of Piarist schools, and modified KEN programs were implemented. The spirit of the Commission, however, was maintained. The curriculum was largely based on KEN's programs, and Polish was the language of instruction. There is no doubt that Polish educationalists, including the Piarists, played a significant role in the reform of Russian education in 1803⁶².

SUMMARY

In conclusion, it should be stated that despite the aforementioned challenges faced by the Lithuanian province, the Piarist monks played a crucial role in promoting education and culture in the 18th century. The effects of their work were particularly evident during the partitions—Piarist schools became a stronghold of Polish identity and patriotism in the eastern borderlands. The order was not devoid of enlightened individuals, 'sons of Konarski's reform', luminaries, and proponents of new Enlightenment ideas. Many Piarists studied abroad in France, Italy, Germany, Austria, and England. In the second half of the 18th century, the order also became a significant academic community. The Piarists followed new pedagogical trends and translated foreign scientific publications, which were employed to varying degrees in their curricular and extracurricular work.

The Tsarist government viewed Piarist schools with suspicion, believing that they fostered patriotic attitudes among the youth. As it became apparent, the concerns were not unfounded. The participation of many students in the uprisings, as well as the involvement of some monks in the November Uprising, became an expedient excuse for the closure of Piarist schools in both the Polish and Lithuanian provinces. In the Polish province, all schools were closed in 1832, while in the Lithuanian province they were gradually liquidated. As stated in a letter from Prince Ivan Paskevich to Stroganov on August 26, 1832: '[...] it is the Emperor's

⁶² S. Truchim, *Współpraca polsko-rosyjska nad organizacją szkolnictwa w początkach XIX wieku*, Łódź 1960, *passim*.

will that the Piarist Order, in particular, be removed from the education of youth⁶³.

Thus, the Piarist colleges and schools in the Lithuanian province were gradually shut down in the 1830s and 1840s. The longest-surviving institution was the college in Międzyrzecz Korecki, which became a refuge for the Piarists after the dissolution of their province. The last Lithuanian provincial superior, Fr. Joachim Dębiński, was elected in 1841 and served until May 24, 1843, when the Russian authorities disbanded the province. The last Lithuanian Piarist, Fr. Augustyn Weryha, died in 1894⁶⁴.

As Daniel Beauvois wrote: 'Although Piarist schools did not always meet the expectations of the University, they seem to have made every effort to adapt as much as possible. In any case, after the loss of Połotsk (Połock), the Piarists found themselves among the religious orders that Muravyov, the civil governor of Mogilev, sought to eliminate first (in late 1830). Indeed, on December 2, 1830, he sent a memorandum to the ministry about the dangers of Catholic fanaticism, which later served as justification for the repressions of 1832. To prevent the corruption of the 'Russian people', he proposed depriving the Catholic clergy of all influence over Belarusian schools and replacing them with secular Russian institutions. Furthermore, in his view, Catholic priests should be prohibited from serving as private tutors. Thus, the Piarists are paying the price for their long tradition of fostering Polish civic spirit.'⁶⁵.

The Piarists strove to adapt to the changes taking place in education, which distinguished them from other monastic institutions and allowed them to significantly surpass those schools in terms of quality. Within the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Piarist schools were among the finest in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Prominent figures were found among both their faculty and alumni. The Lithuanian province had numerous outstanding monks to their credit, such as Kazimierz Narbut, Maciej Dogiel, Stanisław Bonifacy Jundziłł, Aleksy Kotużyński, Tadeusz Lang, Bernard Siruć, Ferdynand Serafinowicz, Hieronim Stroynowski, Rafał Czerwiakowski, Anioł Dowgird, and many others. They educated several generations of students, among the most eminent alumni being Tadeusz Kościuszko, Ignacy Domeyko, Cyprian Godebski, Jan Kazimierz Wilczyński, Alojzy Feliński, Łukasz Gołębiowski, Hieronim Kajsiewicz, and many others. All things considered, the activities of the Piarists in the

⁶³ J. Kucharzewski, *Epoka paskiewiczowska. Losy oświaty*, Warszawa–Kraków 1914, p. 119.

⁶⁴ Katalog Polskiej Prowincji Zakonu Kleryków Regularnych Matki Bożej Szkół Pobożnych (ojców pijarów), Kraków 1982, p. 12.

⁶⁵ D. Beauvois, *Szkolnictwo polskie na ziemiach litewsko-ruskich 1803–1832*, vol. 2, *Szkoły podstawowe i średnie*, Lublin 1991, p. 177.

eastern territories of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth still await a thorough and comprehensive study.

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