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## THE POLISH VILLAGE IN THE FACE OF POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES FROM 1772-1815

A STUDY OF WESTERN LESSER POLAND (MAŁOPOLSKA)

### Abstract

The article examines the impact of social, economic and political changes of the second half of 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century on the functioning of rural society of Lesser Poland province. The study considers the situation of peasants, nobles and the clergy. The first part of the article presents the state of research on the problem and the available sources. The second part is devoted to the presentation of selected examples of social relations observed in contemporary Lesser Poland rural society. Conflicts between landowners and lease owners over abused peasant labour, debates over tithes, abuses of state officials and peasant resistance (i.e. peasant desertions, court cases) are discussed.

**Key words:** Lesser Poland, village, peasants, nobility, clergy, society

**Słowa kluczowe:** Małopolska, wieś, chłopci, szlachta, duchowieństwo, społeczeństwo

The purpose of this article is to examine the influence of the social, economic and political changes occurring in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century on how the institution of the village functioned in Lesser Poland (Małopolska).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The article presents the initial results of research within the research project "The manor, the presbytery and the village in the social community of Western Lesser Poland in the years 1772-1815," financed by the National Science Centre (UMO-2011/03/B/HS3/00754) and fulfilled in the History Institute of the Jagiellonian University. The final research results shall be presented in a book planned for 2015, entitled *The Manor, the Presbytery and the Village in the Social Community of Western Lesser Poland in the Years 1772-1815*.

The article focuses particularly on presenting: the functioning of the manor, the presbytery and the village in the legal and political conditions existing prior to and after the Partitions; the effect of the epoch's social change upon the social and economic domains (among other things, the influence of the change of the country's borders upon the legal and political situation and socioeconomic activity of particular social groups and individuals, the forming of village elites and the shaping of social awareness); and the influence of the social and economic reforms of the 1780s and '90s upon the relations between the nobles, the peasants and the clergy.

This perspective on the subject seems justified mainly because the research encompasses a long period of time, allowing us to compare social relations in the First Republic of Poland to those that took shape in post-Partition times. Research on the area of Lesser Poland, repeatedly divided by boundary cordons within the years 1772-1815, enables us to compare the situation of people in the Republic with that of people in Galicia and to state how the Josephinian and Kosciuszko reforms<sup>2</sup> influenced the social space of the village. Moreover, such a study of the social relations of the Lesser Polish village has fundamental value to the extent that it improves our understanding of events taking place in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as the Ściegienny uprising and the Peasant Uprising (the Galician Slaughter) in Galicia. It may also allow us to determine the reasons for the failure of manor and village to form common ground for social coexistence in the territories annexed by Austria and Russia.

The research to be discussed here covers the area of the southern-western part of Lesser Poland that in pre-Partition times included two voivodeships, Cracow and Sandomierz (until 1795), during the Partition period: the western part of Galicia (the Wadowice, Sącz, Bochnia, Tarnów, Rzeszów and Jasło *cyrkuls* or districts), in the years 1795-1809: the southern and western parts of the New Galicia (the Cracow, Sandomierz, Końskie, Kielce and Radom *cyrkuls*), the Częstochowa powiat, New Silesia from the area of the Second and Third Prussian Partitions; and, in the times of the Duchy of Warsaw: two departments, i.e. Cracow and Radom. The chronological frame of the research encompasses the years 1772-1815. The first date – determined by the First Partition of Poland – does not require detailed justification. The second is determined by the Congress of Vienna, during which the new boundaries of Polish territory (after the Napoleonic wars period) were established; they proved to be lasting.

## I. The State of Research and Sources

Studies of the history of village life in Lesser Poland have been produced since the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A range of monographs were published at that time, dealing with the history of individual landed properties or particular issues. One should mention

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<sup>2</sup> See the glossary of terms at the end of the article.

here, among others, works by R. Rozdolski<sup>3</sup> and works published within studies carried out in the Agrarian Research Department of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) in Cracow.<sup>4</sup> In the last three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century studies of the social history of the Lesser Polish village declined in popularity. However, that topic of research was present in the works of A. Falniowska-Gradowska<sup>5</sup> and – with reference to New Galicia – of T. Mencil<sup>6</sup> and Z. Stankiewicz.<sup>7</sup> References to the situation in the Lesser Polish village can be found in some collective works and fragmentary studies.<sup>8</sup> Currently, the subject is rarely mentioned, e.g. sometimes in marginal notes to research on the history of towns and their inhabitants.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> R. Rozdolski, *Stosunki poddańcze w dawnej Galicji*. Warszawa 1962.

<sup>4</sup> W. Urban, *Poddani szlacheccy w województwie krakowskim w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku i ich opór antyfeudalny*. Wrocław 1958; I. Rychlikowa, *Klucz wielkopoleński Wodzickich w II połowie XVIII wieku*. Wrocław 1960; M. Zgórniak, *Relikty średniowiecznych powinności skarbowych na wsi małopolskiej XVI-XVIII wieku*. Wrocław 1960; A. Falniowska-Gradowska, *Świadczenia poddanych na rzecz dworu w królewskich województwach krakowskiego w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku*. Wrocław 1964; *Studia z dziejów wsi małopolskiej w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku*, ed. by C. Bobińska. Warszawa 1957.

<sup>5</sup> A. Falniowska-Gradowska, *Studia nad społeczeństwem województwa krakowskiego w XVIII wieku. Struktura własności ziemskiej i użytkowanie gruntów w świetle katastru józefińskiego*. Warszawa 1982; A. Falniowska-Gradowska, F. Leśniak, *Struktura własności ziemskiej i użytkowania gruntów w Galicji w cyrkulach rzeszowskim, sanockim i tarnowskim w świetle katastru józefińskiego (1785-1787)*. Warszawa 2009.

<sup>6</sup> T. Mencil, *Polityka chłopska władz austriackich w Galicji Zachodniej (1796-1809)*. *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych* 1973, 34.

<sup>7</sup> Z. Stankiewicz, *Szlachta – ziemianie w świetle ankiety włościańskiej 1814 roku*. In: *Ziemiaństwo polskie 1772-1945*, ed. by J. Leskiewiczowa. Warszawa 1985.

<sup>8</sup> Among them, one should mention: C. Bobińska, *Wieś niespokojna. Studia małopolskie z XVIII-XIX wieku*. Warszawa 1979; J. Chlebowczyk, *Wpływ reform tereziańsko-józefińskich i polityki agrarnej ery Metternicha na sytuację wsi cieszyńskiej*. In: *Studia i materiały z dziejów Śląska*, vol. 4. Wrocław 1962; *Dwór – wieś – plebania na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku*, ed. by M. Piątkowska, commented by W. Caban. Kielce 2003; *Dwór a wieś na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku*, ed. by W. Caban, M.B. Markowski. Kielce 1999. *Dwór, plebania, rodzina chłopska. Szkice z dziejów wsi polskiej XVII i XVIII wieku*, ed. by M. Ślusarska. Warszawa 1998; S. Grodziski, *Galicyjskie projekty reform pańszczyźnianych na początku XIX w.* *Studia Historyczne* 1970, 13, 4; H. Lepucki, *Działalność kolonizacyjna Marii Terezy i Józefa II w Galicji 1772-1790*. Lwów 1938; L. Mises, *Die Entwicklung des Gutsherrlich-Bäuerlichen Verhältnisses in Galizien (1772-1848)*. Wien–Leipzig 1903; T. Opas, *O kierunkach awansu społecznego chłopów z dóbr prywatnych w XVIII w.* In: *Społeczeństwo polskie XVIII i XIX wieku*, vol. 6, ed. by W. Kuła, J. Leskiewiczowa. Warszawa 1974; E. Puczyński, *Gospodarstwo folwarczne z początku XIX wieku na podstawie księgi rachunkowej z Moczerad od 1789 do 1829*. *Roczniki Dziejów Społeczno-Gospodarczych* 1935; K. Sójka-Zielińska, *Prawne problemy podziału gruntów chłopskich w Galicji na tle austriackiego ustawodawstwa agrarnego*. Warszawa 1966; W. Styś, *Metryki gruntowe józefińskie i franciszkańskie jako źródła do historii gospodarczej Galicji*. *Roczniki Dziejów Społeczno-Gospodarczych* 1932-1933, 2; K. Zamorski, *Folwark i wieś. Gospodarka dworska i społeczność chłopska Tenczynka w latach 1705-1845*. Wrocław 1987.

<sup>9</sup> Ł. Jewuła, *Galicyjskie miasta i miasteczka oraz ich mieszkańcy w latach 1772-1848*. Kraków 2013; P. Miodunka, *Społeczność małych miast południowej Małopolski w XVI-XVIII wieku*. Kraków 2010 (a doctoral thesis).

The contemporary state of knowledge on the subject of the role and meaning of the manor, the presbytery and the village in the social communities of western Lesser Poland is therefore limited thematically, chronologically and geographically. The research carried out so far present the relationship between the manor and the village in terms of people, families, family lines, places or landed properties. Moreover, studies on Galicia are limited to the period of autonomy, ignoring the years 1772-1861.

Scholars of the 1772-1815 period have hitherto been interested mainly in political events, including the political causes and consequences of the Partitions and stages of the struggle for independence. Historians seem much less often inclined to study the social relations and reforms introduced in Poland by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Publications on the subject were written mainly in the 1930s-50s and in many cases they applied Marxist methodology. Moreover, in the scholarship of that period, a longer time frame was not taken into account, the focus being either on the situation of peasants within the systemic conditions of the First Republic or on the implementation of the Josephinian reforms as such. The research carried out by the authors of this study fills in the gap between the conclusions of the older historiography that accented antagonisms of the Polish countryside in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and created a negative image of the noble class (landlords, land-owners) and the those of contemporary studies that ignore conflicts between the manor and the serfs or later freed peasants, or sometimes mythologize the relationships between landlords and peasants.

The basis of the research presented in this study consists of data gathered in three groups of archives. The first group belongs to the no longer functioning Archives of the Agrarian Research Department of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) in Cracow. The sources gathered in the archive, now kept in the Institute of History of Jagiellonian University, contain a selection of many archival collections from the archives and libraries of Cracow, Wrocław, Lublin, Katowice, Tarnów and Rzeszów, as well as from the municipal registers of Cracow, Sącz, Biecz and Auschwitz among other places, land registers of Cracow and Czychów, village court registers of several dozen Lesser Polish villages, crown property surveys, registers of the Crown Referendaries, and ex-manorial files of various land properties of the Lesser Poland area.

The second group of archives includes documents kept in national archives and libraries and which were not taken into account in the research carried out by the Agrarian Research Department of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) in Cracow. From the Central Archives of Historical Records, one should mention the post-Partition records of the central authorities: the Secretariat of State of the Duchy of Warsaw, the Council of State and Council of Ministers of the Duchy of Warsaw and the Imperial Royal Court Chancellery (1795-1809). From the National Archives in Cracow, particularly valuable are the records of dominions and imperial royal *cyrkul* offices in Myślenice and Bochnia, records of the imperial royal Land Chancellery in Cracow (1796-1810), imperial royal

Cracow Land Court (1796-1797) and the Criminal Court in Wiśnicz (1786-1855).<sup>10</sup> One should also mention some of the ex-manorial archives: the Tarnowski Family Dzików Archives, the Konopka Family Archives of Modlnica and Mogilany, the Potocki Family Krzeszów Archives, the Sanguszko Family Archives, the Załuski Family Siedliszowice Archives and Zator Landed Property Archives. The sources particularly worth using from the State Archives in Kielce include the following state administrative archives: the Radom Governorate Government (for the years 1809-1815), imperial royal Land Chancellery in Cracow (1798-1810) and the ex-manorial archives, among others the Myszków Fee Tail Archives, the Małachowski Family Archives of Białaczów, the Staszów Landed Property Archives, the Dembiński Family Archives of Góry, the Records of the Stadnicki and Grabowski Family Records of Osmolice and Iżyce, the Skórkowski Family Archives of Wielka Wola and the Radziwiłł Family Archives of Nagłowice. It is also worth examining the church archives kept in the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow and the Tarnow Diocese Archives.

The third group of archives includes records kept in Ukrainian and Austrian archives and libraries, first and foremost in the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv. For instance, some particularly valuable records of the Galician Namestnichestvo (Viceroyalty) include: tax rates, inventories, circular letters, urbarial descriptions from 1789 and the Josephinian Cadastral Survey.

Printed resources, and above all, source publications are very helpful in conducting research on the Lesser Polish village at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The first group of such resources consists of the edited and printed village court registers of the following villages: Iwkowa (1581-1809), Zawada (1619-1788), the villages of the Jazów group (1663-1808) and the Łącko group (1528-1811).<sup>11</sup> The registers mentioned above, chronologically covering the era of the Partitions, allow us, in the words of Stanisław Płaza, to “confront the new legal principles and the policies of the Partitioning authorities with the recalcitrant village reality” and “throw light on the practices of the Austrian administrative authorities regarding the development of new legal and economic relations.”<sup>12</sup> Printed surveys of the crown lands of the Cracow<sup>13</sup> and

<sup>10</sup> The contents of these last archives are particularly valuable as they include documents illustrating social and economic relations during the period discussed, also reflected in crime rates among the village population. See: the National Archives in Cracow (further on referred to as: AN), *Inwentarz zespołu (zbioru akt) Sądu Kryminalnego w Wiśniczu z lata 1786-1855*, typescript, Cracow 1958, 6, 17.

<sup>11</sup> S. Płaza, *Księga sądowa wsi Iwkowej 1581-1809*. Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1969; A. Vetulani, *Księga sądowa Uszwi dla wsi Zawady 1619-1788*. Warszawa 1957; S. Grodziski, *Księgi sądowe wiejskie klucza jazowskiego*. Warszawa-Kraków 1967; A. Vetulani, *Księgi sądowe wiejskie klucza łąckiego*, vol. 1-2. Warszawa-Kraków 1962-1963.

<sup>12</sup> S. Płaza, *Źródła drukowane do dziejów wsi w dawnej Polsce. Studium bibliograficzno-źródłoznawcze*. Kraków 1974, pp. 154-155.

<sup>13</sup> *Lustracja województwa krakowskiego 1789*, part 1: *Powiat krakowski, proszowicki i ksiąski*, pub. by A. Falińska-Gradowska, I. Rychlikowa. Kraków 1962; *Lustracja województwa krakowskiego 1789*,

Sandomierz<sup>14</sup> voivodeships from 1789 are particularly valuable. The property inventories have comparable research value.<sup>15</sup>

## II. Initial Results of Research

As is clear from the current research on the local communities of western Lesser Poland, the relations between the manor, the village and the presbytery during the period in question developed in a dynamic way. We can conclude that the following issues were predominant: disputes between property owners and lessees over excessive exploitation of their subjects, disputes over tithes, abuses by state officials, peasant resistance to excessive exploitation (escapes, legal procedures), disputes over liquidations of village administrative offices called *solectwos* (involving the social and legal position of the owners of *solectwos*) and peasant mobility.

The situation of those subjects living in leased properties was the most difficult since they were excessively exploited by the lessees, against which both the subjects and the owners protested. For instance, in 1791 there was such a dispute between Józef Karwat, a lessee of the Czaple Wielkie in the Książ powiat and Łętkowice in Proszów powiat, and Paweł Popiel, the Sandomierz castellan and owner of the above mentioned estates.<sup>16</sup> Another example is a situation in the Przyłęczek group of the Książ powiat, in the Myszków fee tail that belonged to the Wielopolski family. The village of Przyłęczek in 1808 consisted of 21 homesteads inhabited by 142 people, including 2 persons of noble ancestry, 1 official, 13 peasants and 14 cottage workers.<sup>17</sup> In 1827 in Przyłęczek there were 19 homesteads and 148 inhabitants.<sup>18</sup> The above-mentioned estate was then leased to Antoni and Barbara Gołuchowski, who in pursuit of maximum income tended to excessively exploit the peasants,

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part 2: *Powiat lelowski oraz starostwo kłobuckie i brzeźnickie*, pub. by A. Falniowska-Gradowska, I. Rychlikowa. Wrocław 1963.

<sup>14</sup> *Lustracja województwa sandomierskiego 1789*, part 1: *Powiaty sandomierski, chęciński, opoczyński i ziemia stężycka*, pub. by H. Mańdurowicz-Urbańska. Wrocław 1965; *Lustracja województwa sandomierskiego 1789*, part 2: *Powiat radomski*, pub. by eadem. Wrocław 1967; *Lustracja województwa sandomierskiego 1789*, part 3: *Powiat wiślicki*, pub. by eadem. Wrocław 1968; *Lustracja województwa sandomierskiego 1789*, part 4: *Indexes*, ed. by eadem. Wrocław 1971.

<sup>15</sup> Żywiec i Żywiecczyzna według swych inwentarzy z XVIII. *Studia Historyczne* 1973, 16, 1, pp. 91-107; *Inwentarze dóbr żywieckich z XVIII wieku zawierające obciążenia feudalne ich ludności*, pub. and ed. by F. Lenczowski. Żywiec 1980; *Inwentarz ekonomii koziennickiej z 1775 roku*, pub. by Z. Guldón. *Wiś Radomska* 2001, 6, pp. 85-152.

<sup>16</sup> Archives of the former Agrarian Research Department of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) in Cracow (further on referred to as: ABPBA), sign. 89/A, leaves 30-32.

<sup>17</sup> AN Cracow, Files of Antoni Schneider, sign. 1866.

<sup>18</sup> *Tabella miast, wsi, osad Królestwa Polskiego, z wyrażeniem ich położenia i ludności*, vol. 2: *M-Z*. Warszawa 1827, p. 123.



which in turn led to numerous escapes from the estate and at the same time harmed the interests of the Wielopolskis. Franciszek Wielopolski therefore took the Gołuchowskis to court. In the course of the trial it turned out that the lessees had taken possession of the equipment, tools and livestock left by the escapees, either for their personal use or for sale, and had also seized the peasants' lands. Other instances of abuse by the Gołuchowskis included imposing new obligations and pecuniary penalties (e.g. for dead animals), confiscating subjects' meadows, requiring more labor than required by the rules of serfdom, or imposing upon their serfs an obligation to transport corn to Jędrzejów, Wodzisław and Cracow (also on holidays).<sup>19</sup>

One can also learn about numerous instances of lessee abuse from the complaint lodged in 1774 by Prince Aleksander Czartoryski, the owner of the Tenczyn county, against Józef Konopka, the commissioner and administrator of the above-mentioned estate. Prince Czartoryski accused Konopka of running "multifarious forms of traffic" in the area, using the subject peasants. Apart from that, he used the landlord's carriages, tore the peasants away from their work and feudal duties, and turned all the income "to his own benefit." Konopka trafficked in lime, aniseed, salt, vines, hogs and barley, neglecting the estate administration at the same time. As Prince Czartoryski put it, "he [Konopka] led the estate to its ultimate downfall. Moreover, he did immeasurable harm to subjects who were craftsmen and Jews."<sup>20</sup>

Another instance of an owner-lessee court dispute took place in the village of Więckowice in the Proszowice powiat. Its landlord, Bogusław Śląski, leased the estate to Sebastian Burski, but in 1787 lodged a complaint against him, claiming that Burski wanted only quick benefits and had no respect for the subject peasants. Śląski wrote:

[...] he is ruining and destroying both the estate and peasant horses and carriages through excessive use and needless burden, forcing 12 bushels of heavy corn onto carts and sending them 3 times a week to Cracow for fodder and fairs, regardless of bad roads. In this way he has ruined some serfs and forced others to escape with their wives. And thus 4 farmers, the watchman's helper, the watchman and the manor stable-boy escaped, and the rest of the community, moaning under their yoke, all declared having been forced to make similar escapes because of the accused and his unjust and excessive beatings and oppressions.<sup>21</sup>

Thus Sebastian Burski's rule over Więckowice led not only to excessive exploitation of the serfs, but also, in consequence, to their desertion of the village.

A similar conflict took place in the estate of Lusławice in the Bochnia *cyrkul*. In 1775 the owner of the estate, Paweł Niemyski, protested against the lessee of the manorial farm

<sup>19</sup> ABPBA, sign. 90/A, leaves 68-78, 84-88.

<sup>20</sup> ABPBA, sign. 59/A, leaves 28-29.

<sup>21</sup> ABPBA, sign. 78/A, leaves 95-97.

Lusławice Dolne, Wawrzyniec Osiński leading the estate and subjects to ruin.<sup>22</sup> Mr Niemyski lodged a similar complaint against the lessee of his other estate: he accused Antoni Jabłoński, the possessor of Lubinka in the Tarnów *cyrkul*, of oppressing the serfs.<sup>23</sup>

It also happened that sometimes the lessee accused of ill-treating the serfs could be a member of the clergy. Such was the case in Śmiechowice in the Sandomierz powiat. In 1775 the lessee of the estate, Father Ignacy Odrzywolski, the Bobowa canon, was accused by the owners Andrzej and Rafał Szczepanowski of excessive exploitation of the peasants.<sup>24</sup>

Sometimes the lessees lodged complaints against the estate owners. In 1783 Kazimierz Pieniążek, the lessee of the Jawiszowice estate in the Wadowice *cyrkul*, accused the squire Kazimierz Szembek of depriving him of income and stirring up rebellion in the community. Pieniążek wrote: "the whole community of the leased estate, being deluded, obey the officials of the mighty squire rather than the possessor and do serf work for the squire and they do not want to leave for trade fairs at a decent time but only when they see it fit."<sup>25</sup> It seems the lessee was not even able to enforce his assigned feudal duties.

In the area studied, the most frequent conflicts among villagers, landlords and clergymen involved disputes over tithing and duties collected for the benefit of the Church. Whole communities and members of the gentry conducted litigation against parish priests. For instance, in the Cracow powiat, in the Pleszów estate that belonged to the Czartoryski family, the dispute over rates of payments for the Church lasted for at least two years (1786-1788). The peasants, inspired by the estate administrators, protested against the assigned tithe, and this in turn led to a court dispute between the parish priest Andrzej Jurkowski and the Czartoryskis. Wojciech Paczkowski, appointed to collect the assigned tithe, testified that it was permissible to "assign" on the peasants' and manorial grounds, but under the condition that the tithe be transported to the manor barn and the peasant find another barn to store it in. The village administrator stated the village did not have a barn and would not build any. And so the peasants did not want to deliver the tithe.<sup>26</sup>

Another very interesting case involving tithe collection was the dispute between, on the one hand, the serfs and the owner of the village Błogocice in the Proszowice powiat, and on the other, the vicar of Niegardów, Józef Brygiewicz, and the Cracow ecclesiastical chapter. The serfs and their squire maintained that the vicar and the chapter were requiring an illegally assigned tithe. As follows from their statements, they had always paid the tithe and wanted to do so again in this instance. However, the clergymen did not want money

<sup>22</sup> ABPBA, sign. 57/A, leaf 3.

<sup>23</sup> ABPBA, sign. 127/A, leaves 74-75.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, leaves 67-68.

<sup>25</sup> ABPBA, sign. 60/A, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> ABPBA, sign. 90/A, leaves 47-49.



but required a tithe in kind, to which neither the squire nor the serfs agreed, demanding the clergymen abandon the unjust claim.<sup>27</sup>

An equally interesting dispute was that between the parson of Mstyczów, Jan Michalczowski, and the serfs and owner of the Krzelów estate in the Książ powiat. Father Michalczowski, having the tithe at his free disposal, sold it – before collecting it – to a certain Kaźmierski, most probably a merchant. Squire Wielowieyski, having learned of the fact, claimed that only a rector can collect tithes and ordered it to be returned to the serfs. In response, the priest lodged a complaint and stated that “the law that gave the tithe into his possession also gave him the power to dispose of it at will and no one heard of a law that forbade selling the tithe.” The priest demanded returning the tithe and compensation for damages.<sup>28</sup>

Disputes over tithes were one of the primary causes of aggravating conflicts between the village and the presbytery. Documentary records confirm many conflicts of this kind. For example, in 1777, a dispute concerning sheaf tithe broke out between the parson in Żarnowiec and the serfs and owners of the village of Kępie in the Książ powiat, belonging to the Pińczów margravate, the estate of Franciszek Myszkowski. Apart from parishes, monasteries and cathedral and collegiate chapters also collected tithes. In 1780, the Convent of the Sisters of St. Norbert in Zwierzyniec demanded both current and outstanding tithes from the villages of Braciejówka and Kolbark in the Cracow powiat.<sup>29</sup> The same year, the collegiate chapter in Skalbierz sued the community and the squire of the village of Przybenice in the Proszowice powiat for an outstanding sheaf tithe.<sup>30</sup> In 1777, the Cracow cathedral chapter had a court dispute over the tithes from the villages of Damienice and Piotrkowice in the Bochnia *cyrkul* and from the squire Jerzy Grabowski.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, the canons of the Wawel Cathedral had a court dispute over the sheaf tithe against the gentry and serfs of the village of Radwanowice in the Cracow powiat.<sup>32</sup>

Not only private property owners had court disputes over tithes, but also institutions such as the Cracow Academy. It took part in a dispute in 1791, together with the community of the village of Smroków in the Książ powiat, against the parish parson in Czaple Wielkie, Father Antoni Jarzęcki.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>27</sup> ABPBA, sign. 130/A, leaves 62-63.

<sup>28</sup> ABPBA, sign. 140/A, leaves 228-229.

<sup>29</sup> ABPBA, sign. 71/A, leaves 50-51.

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem, leaves 46-47.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem, leaves 26-27.

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem, leaves 48-49

<sup>33</sup> Antoni Jarzęcki (1729-1801) – Philosophiae Doctor, prebendary of the Church of the Virgin Mary’s Annunciation in Szczepanów, Canon of the All Saints collegiate church in Cracow, scholastic in Mstyczów, parson in Czaple and Secemin. ABPBA, sign. 89/A, leaf 27; J. Szczepaniak, *Duchowieństwo diecezji krakowskiej w XVIII wieku. Studium prozopograficzne*. Kraków 2010, p. 600.

Competition and disputes over property could be observed in Galicia as well. For instance, the income balance sheet and the parish rights prepared by the Siedliska parson in the Jasło *cyrkul* were challenged by the owners of estates from the parish area. The owner of Gruda Dolna, Eufrozyna Chwalibóg, claimed that the parson had no right to collect an assigned tithe in addition to the pecuniary tithe. Stanisław Bogusz, Eufrozyna Chwalibóg and Apolonia Bogusz née Stojowska, the joint owners of Siedliska, challenged several other of the parson's rights, such as the right to ownership of one area of land ("the Kaniów land"), or to cut down a forest. They claimed there were no documents to prove those rights, and rejected the idea of a claim "based on tradition."<sup>34</sup>

The relations between parsons and collators were characterized not only by tithe disputes but also by a certain amount of indifference towards parish matters. The Bestwina parson Tomasz Tabański, having taken up the benefice, reported in 1793: "The collator Piotr Małachowski, being only a lifelong lord, and an old man too, took less care with reparations, and the parishioners followed the Dominium example, did not want to take care of them themselves, and so the parson, whether he liked it or not, to have any comfort whatsoever, had to build the presbytery buildings at his own expense, apart from the above-mentioned financial support for plastering of the parish buildings."<sup>35</sup>

It is also worth mentioning that in politically unstable times, as we should perceive the period between 1772 and 1815 to be, there were people performing their obligations improperly or inciting village communities to rebel.

One person who can be considered such a "disturber of the peace" was Jan Nepomucen Czaki, a military man and land-surveyor. He was the son of Franciszek Florian Czaki, an engineer and cartographer. In 1786 Jan was appointed the royal land-surveyor and in 1792 made a major.<sup>36</sup> In the years 1790-1791 Michał Brzozowski, the owner of the Szklary estate in the Cracow powiat, accused Czaki of inciting people to riot while he measured peasants' and manorial grounds. As a result, Czaki was sentenced to a week in prison and fined in compensation for illegally cutting down a forest while measuring it.<sup>37</sup> Brzozowski wrote:

The nobleman Czaki, having no permission or decree from the high magistrate, dared to intervene on his private authority in the measuring of the grounds, lands and forests, and plotting

<sup>34</sup> The Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv (further on referred to as: CPAHU), fond 159, file 9, coll. 3188, leaves 4-7.

<sup>35</sup> The amount included several hundred Rhine guilders of dominium support from Bestwina and Bestwinka as well as from the villagers. CPAHU, fond 159, descr. 9, case 1351, leaf 1v.

<sup>36</sup> K. Buczek, Czaki (Csaky de Kerestszegh) Franciszek Florian. In: *PSB*, vol. 4. Kraków 1938, p. 162; H. Bartoszewicz, *Prace geometrów i kartografów pruskich na Mazowszu i ziemi dobrzyńskiej w latach 1793-1806. Rocznik Mazowiecki* 2009, 21, p. 55, [http://mazowsze.hist.pl/17/Rocznik\\_Mazowiecki/394/2009/12812/](http://mazowsze.hist.pl/17/Rocznik_Mazowiecki/394/2009/12812/) (last accessed: 21 III 2014).

<sup>37</sup> ABPBA, sign. 89/A, pp. 33-36.

with the Szklary community, without the plaintiff's writing, dared to measure the Szklary forest and other grounds, and they cut down across three cubits and a quarter of the forest and did great damage to the good trees, oaks and beeches and other trees [...] and also, having accepted payment, they corrupted the Szklary community and incited them to riot, thus it is now difficult for the plaintiff to request that the community execute their serf duties, and moreover, through libel they have slandered [the plaintiff] and removed [his] honor.<sup>38</sup>

Officials of higher ranks were also accused of various kinds of abuses. For one example that demonstrates this, consider the activities of Franciszek Błędowski, a deputy village administrator in the Jędrzejów commune that comprised the villages belonging to the Cistercian monastery in Jędrzejów. Błędowski was responsible for collecting levies and, apparently taking advantage of the unstable political situation in the years 1814-1815, he collected higher taxes from peasants in the villages: Łysaków, Łączyn, Raków and Skroniów than were stipulated by law. He was also alleged to have committed fraud against the local community.<sup>39</sup>

Peasants' changes of domicile were most often caused by exploitation or marriage. The case of Wojciech Lis and Jan Dukat, serfs from Młodziejowice in the Cracow powiat, provides an example of runaways. These two men fled to the villages of Szczotkowice and Prądnik (both settlements belonged to the Cracow Academy).<sup>40</sup> From the depositions made by the witnesses in the adjudication over the escapees' delivery between the Academy and Józef Borzęcki, the owner of Młodziejowice, we learn that "Mr. Borzęcki, having brought that hard-working Dukat to Młodziejowice, kept him in chains for four weeks and wanted to force him into serfdom, as the latter swore upon being freed of that imprisonment."<sup>41</sup> Lis had come to Młodziejowice as a young man, married a peasant's daughter, and after her father's death they had taken over his farm. Lis had earlier been a farmer on a manorial farm. After 37 years he escaped to Sieborowice and that was not his first time running away. Earlier, he had fled to Pielgrzymowice and then to Prądnik.<sup>42</sup>

The case of Tomasz Cholewa, a resident of the village of Gromiec in the Bobrek group in the Cracow powiat, shows us an example of a change of domicile as a result of marriage. In 1804 Cholewa married a peasant woman from the Dwory estate and decided to settle there. Asking for permission he stated his conditions: he wanted to use a 21-patch field and in exchange he promised to "diligently and at every call of his Suzerainty do any work one day per week, that is 52 days per year, for the manor." He also committed himself to

<sup>38</sup> ABPBA, sign. 130/A, pp. 60-61.

<sup>39</sup> The State Archives in Kielce, Radom Governorate, sign. 439, leaves 13-13v.

<sup>40</sup> ABPBA, sign. 72/A, leaves 1-2.

<sup>41</sup> ABPBA, sign. 90/A, leaves 13-14.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem, leaves 29-30.

fencing in the field. The manor suzerainty agreed; however, the amount of serf work had been reduced to 26 days (one day per fortnight).<sup>43</sup>

Runaway peasants were often a burden for estate owners, as they abandoned agricultural lands, thus decreasing the estate's profitability. Such a situation led to various conflicts as a result. For instance, in 1773, Feliks Niemojowski, the owner of Dalewice in the Proszowice powiat, accused one of the peasants from Łętkowice of helping one of his subject serfs to abandon his farm: "he dared to come to the village of Dalewice at night and take and transport the peasant named Stefan Starek with all his household furniture, grain, money and cattle." The squire also specified the amount of loss incurred as the result of the peasant's escape.<sup>44</sup>

Serfs who abandoned their villages were often people of particular qualifications and their absence caused tangible damage. Thus in 1780 a peasant craftsman, blacksmith Józef Styrylski, fled from the village of Korabniki in the Wadowice *cyrkul* and moved to Wola Justowska near Cracow. The owner of Korabniki, Józef Waxmann, therefore initiated litigation against Urszula Moszkowska nee Jaszewska, the owner of Wola Justowska, demanding the quickest possible return of the blacksmith.<sup>45</sup>

Suffering peasants sometimes tried to assert their rights in court, which meant long-lasting and financially exhausting proceedings. Often serfs appealed to the king himself. One such example is the case of the complex litigation between the royal village of Czubrowice in the Cracow powiat and the lessees, originally Józef Wytyszkiewicz and then the Radwańskis, which took place in the 1780s and '90s. The serfs made many accusations against the lessee. Among other things, they claimed Wytyszkiewicz collected an unjustly large rye levy, imposed additional serf work days and forced the peasants to work in the forest and transport wood with their own carts, causing many animals to die of exhaustion. The gravest charge was that the lessee ordered serfs to be beaten with extreme cruelty and as a result four men died. The lessee denied these accusations and claimed the peasants were at fault by virtue of their own impudence.<sup>46</sup> Similar accusations were brought against Feliks and Elżbieta Radwański.

A similar case took place in the years 1774-1777 in the village of Osobnica in the Jasło *cyrkul*. Local serfs accused the lessee Józef Lipiński of exploitation. At first the *cyrkul* authorities, relying on the decision of the Lviv Gubernium, issued an order forbidding the exploitation of serfs. However, Lipiński appealed against the verdict accusing the community

<sup>43</sup> AN Cracow, coll. No. 462: Imperial royal courts of the Cracow appeal region (sądy okręgu apelacji krakowskiej – zespoły szczątkowe), sign. 403, no pagination. The case is interesting inasmuch as the village of Gromiec was located in the Third Austrian Partition (the former Cracow powiat), while Dwory was located in the area of the First Partition (the Wadowice *cyrkul*).

<sup>44</sup> ABPBA, sygn. 143/A, leaves 4-5.

<sup>45</sup> ABPBA, sygn. 71/A, leaf 52.

<sup>46</sup> ABPBA, sygn. 142/A, leaves 58-59.

of “not coming to perform serf duties at daybreak but at 8, they do not send fit and suitable men to work but flee from the serf work to their flock, they do not come to tally. When 100 workmen, or 200 or 300, have been ordered, only 10 or 18 or 20 come. They are not obedient at all, do not want to do their serf work in the manorial fields, others do not want to perform their serf duties and so do not.”<sup>47</sup>

Sometimes the communities took legal action against their priests as well. Such was the case in Kobylanka in the Jasło *cyrkul*. In 1782 the serfs from the village accused their parson of getting them drunk and forcing them to sign unfavourable documents. The serfs, frightened by the consequences of their recklessness, demanded that the document be annulled.<sup>48</sup>

Individual serfs injured by members of the gentry also lodged complaints in courts. For example, in 1781 Franciszek and Tomasz Góra, millers from the village of Zawada in the Sącz *cyrkul*, were assaulted by a nobleman, Ignacy Witwicki. The forensic examination carried out during the procedure revealed the following bodily injury: “a single mark on the back, deep blue in colour.”<sup>49</sup> In 1788 Marcin Kozak, a serf from the village of Dojazdów in the Cracow powiat, was driving his cart when he met a nobleman Anotni Targowski, the administrator of the Kościejów estate. The peasant asked the nobleman to step away from the road, or otherwise he would have to pull the cart back uphill. Targowski considered the request to be impertinent and offensive. “He first insulted him with obscene words, then hit him several times in the face and pulled his hair. He said he would kill him and pay a thousand zlotys in compensation. Then hit him on the head with his stick until he injured him.” The incident reached its conclusion in the law court. Marcin Kozak demanded punishment for Targowski and compensation for the harm done to him.<sup>50</sup>

A very interesting question, of paramount importance in relations between the manor and the village, was the issue of the liquidation of privileged voytships and *solectwos* existing in many villages of Lesser Poland. Liquidation was usually entailed by a change of the legal status of the owners, who could be members of the gentry or the peasantry. Often peasants sought the liquidation of a *solectwo* and division of its land among themselves.

Evidence of conflicts between the serfs and owners of *solectwos* can be found in many court records. In 1775 a nobleman Stanisław Haison, the voytship owner in the village of Kołkówka in the Jasło *cyrkul*, accused his serfs from the Rzepiennik Biskupi estate of “doing permanent wrong to the voythship.”<sup>51</sup> A similar situation took place in 1774 in the village of Kryg in the Jasło *cyrkul*, where the possessors of the *solectwo*, the Pijanowski brothers,

<sup>47</sup> ABPBA, sygn. 67/A, leaves 8-11.

<sup>48</sup> ABPBA, sygn. 70/A, leaves 16-18.

<sup>49</sup> ABPBA, sygn. 26/A, leaf 4.

<sup>50</sup> ABPBA, sygn. 140/A, leaves 259-260.

<sup>51</sup> ABPBA, sygn. 57/A, leaf 1.

having accused Jan Witek, a serf from the community, of causing damage, claimed they had been victimized by “damage to the cattle on [their] grounds, pasturing in [their] meadows, and other countless harms.”<sup>52</sup> Also, Wojciech Grochowski, the owner of the *sołectwo* in the village of Chelm in the Cracow powiat and a lieutenant in the royal army, accused the serfs, the innkeeper and the farm helpers of stealing his hay, draining his pond, pasturing in his meadows and ploughing his grounds.<sup>53</sup> In 1776 Stanisław Popławski, the owner of the voytship in the Siary estate of the Jasło *cyrkul*, had a dispute with local community serfs over some of the grounds on the border of the estate.<sup>54</sup>

Some *sołectwos* were often leased by their owners. And so, for instance, in 1773 the owner of the village Dwory in the Wadowice *cyrkul*, Jan Jaworski, leased a part of the *sołectwo* to the peasant Franciszek Sulig. As it turned out, Sulig not only failed to pay the agreed sum, but also took actions towards proving that the part of the *sołectwo* in question was his own property.<sup>55</sup>

Peasants often sought the liquidation of a privileged *sołectwo* in order to take over its grounds. Such was the case in Czubrowice in the Cracow powiat, where the village serfs and possessor divided the *sołtys lan* (the land belonging to the *sołectwo*) among themselves without any right. That made the owner of the *sołectwo*, the nobleman Stanisław Lingienen, accuse them of violating the law. In his complaint to the king he wrote: “the serfs of Czubrowice should present documents that guarantee their right to the chosen *lan*. If they have no such rights, they have to withdraw from the appropriated *lan* and return it to the lessee.”<sup>56</sup>

There were also instances of the owners of estates attempting to liquidate *sołectwos*. One such case took place in the village of Troks in the Cracow powiat, part of a wide-spread Braciejówka group that belonged to the Sisters of St. Norbert’s Convent in Zwierzyniec. In the years 1776-1777 the steward of the estate made an attempt to take over the *sołtys* grounds and force the owners into serfdom. In response, the owner of the *sołectwo*, Tomasz Sołtys vel Sołtysik, wrote a complaint to the Great Chancellor of the Crown, Andrzej Młodziejowski, accusing the steward of illegal activity.<sup>57</sup> However, one must emphasize that such incidents did not happen everywhere. For example, in the village of Widelka in the Rzeszów *cyrkul*, the owners of the *sołectwo* were not obliged to deliver any levy to the manor.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> ABPBA, sygn. 66/A, leaves 19-20.

<sup>53</sup> ABPBA, sygn. 130/A, leaves 55-57.

<sup>54</sup> ABPBA, sygn. 57/A, leaf 7.

<sup>55</sup> ABPBA, sygn. 54/A, leaf 1.

<sup>56</sup> ABPBA, sygn. 143/A, leaves 17-18.

<sup>57</sup> ABPBA, sign. 7/A, leaves 1-8.

<sup>58</sup> CPAHU, Galician Namestnichestvo: fond 146, descr. 18, case 2632, leaves 3-24.



The above examples, while illustrating the social relations existing in western Lesser Poland in the period in question, most certainly do not exhaust the subject. Nevertheless, they indicate the most prevalent types of goings-on that could be observed, with varying levels of intensity, both in the part of Lesser Poland that was annexed after the First Austrian Partition, that is, in Galicia, and in the part that remained within the borders of the First Polish Republic until 1795.

One must also mention that even our initial research reveals the undeniable influence of the era's sweeping changes on the social and economic domains. This applies particularly to two matters: the situation of the Catholic church and the position of the peasantry. In the former case, one cannot help noticing the difference between the economic conditions prevailing in monasteries in Galicia (regression caused by the dissolution of monasteries in the Josephinian era) and those at monasteries in the Republic (striving to maintain or improve their financial status). In the latter case, the important thing to notice is the durability of the Josephinian reforms and the established and stable character of the range of peasant duties in the Austrian Partition as opposed to the situation in the area of the Republic, where abuses by estate owners and lessees in the form of escalating serf duties or imposing new ones were a common practice.

*Translated from Polish  
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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

*Cyrkuł* – administrative unit in Galicia comprising 300-400 towns/settlements, which was headed by a *starosta*.

*Dziesięcina* (sheaf tithe) – a tax payable to the church based on the collected agricultural production – usually  $\frac{1}{10}$  of collected crops.

*Łan* – unit of measurement of territorial area; on Polish territories *łan* differed from one region to another – in Lesser Poland 1 *łan* comprised 23-28 hectares.

*Namiestnictwo galicyjskie* (the Government of Galicia, the Governorship of Galicja) – governance of the province of Galicia; it was headed by *namiestnik* (up till 1648 governor).

*Powiat* (district) – in pre-partition Poland *powiat* was an administrative unit, which constituted part of a voivodeship.

*Reformy józefińskie* – Josephine reforms were administrative, religious, social, church, judicial, educational and military reforms enacted in Austria by the emperor Joseph II in the years 1780-1790. They included agricultural reforms.

*Reformy Kościuszkowski* – Kościuszkowski reforms refers to social reforms realized in Poland by Tadeusz Kościuszkowski during the Kościuszkowski Insurrection in 1794. In order to acquire the backing of peasants Kościuszkowski issued the Połaniec proclamation, in which he abolished personal serfdom and lowered peasants obligations towards landowners.

*Sąd Referendarski* (Crown Referendaries) – the highest royal court for peasants from royal estates.

*Solectwo* – land property associated with the function of a *soltys*. *Soltys* received it from the landlord. It comprised land and was hereditary. In larger villages *soltys* could organize his own manor. In the early modern period the privileges linked with *solectwo* were limited, their number dropped and they decreased in size. In royal estates *solectwo* was often bestowed on the nobles.

*Soltys* – in the Middle Ages a representative of the feudal lord in a specific village; he would head the local village council.

*Soltysi lan* – an area of one or two *lan* of arable land, which constituted part of a *solectwo* which was the property of the *soltys*.

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