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FUNDING OF CATHOLIC CLERGY IN THE KLAIPĖDA REGION BETWEEN 1923 AND 1939

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Introduction

Historical studies on clergy as a distinct social group have garnered much scholarly interest. Historians have been more and more eagerly employing the prosopographic method in order to describe members of the clergy in terms of their origin, education, held offices, positions, social and political activity, etc. It seems that an important aspect of these investigations is the economic status of priests that are financial guarantees that ensure them a steady income. Even though Arūnas Streikus has never directly engaged in the prosopography of the Catholic clergy from the Klaipėda Region, in his inestimable publication, entitled *Die Integration der memelländischen Katholiken in die Kirchenprovinz Litauen 1926–1939*, he provides a great deal of details about this social group¹. Furthermore, many aspects of its prosopography have been explored by Rev. Andrzej Kopiczko, inspired by his other research concerning the clergy of the Warmian Diocese². It should be noted that as a result of the Treaty of Versailles, the administration of the Klaipėda

¹ A. Streikus, *Die Integration der memelländischen Katholiken in die Kirchenprovinz Litauen 1926–1939*, Annaberger Annalen 2013, Bd. 21, pp. 100–127.

² Especially cf. A. Kopiczko, *Die katholische Kirche in Memelland (1923–1939)*, Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis 2015, Vol. 30, pp. 101–125; Cf. also the biographical entries of Klaipėda clergymen published by the same author in: *Duchowieństwo katolickie diecezji warmińskiej w latach 1821–1945*, part 2, Słownik, Olsztyn 2003.

Region was handed over to the League of Nations, excluding it at the same time from the jurisdiction of the Weimar Republic. In 1923, the Lithuanians sparked a revolt in this area, and a year later, they signed the Klaipėda Convention in Paris that declared the region an integral part of Lithuania albeit autonomous from the legal perspective³. Simultaneously, the ecclesial status of the Memel Territory was defined by Pope Pius IX in his bull *Lituanorum gente* from 4 April 1926, by means of which he established the Klaipėda Prelacy administered by the bishop of Telšiai⁴. Thus, the papal bull sealed the separation of the Klaipėda parish from the Warmian Diocese. Nevertheless, the German provenience of the local clergy encouraged the maintenance of its former connection with the mother church.

The publications mentioned above fail to exhaust the topic of Catholic clergy from the Klaipėda Region in years 1923–1939, and especially its financial security. In order to conduct a more in-depth investigation of this area, it is necessary to analyse the materials amassed in the archive of the St. Boniface Association General Council located at the Bonifatiuswerk in Paderborn, as well as those deposited in the Bundesarchiv in Berlin. The financial status of the Klaipėda clergy mainly depended on the income they earned in the place of their pastoral service, as well as on the obligation of state authorities towards this social group. With regard to this fact, it is perhaps advisable to begin the present consideration with a presentation of the material status of parishes in the Niemen area, as well as an overview of state subsidies designated to the Klaipėda priests.

Financial situation of pastoral institutions in the Klaipėda Region

In 1923, the Roman Catholic Church in the Klaipėda Region held the following institutions: parishes in Klaipėda, Robkojen, Šilutė and a parish mission in Wischwill⁵. The parish in Klaipėda was founded in 1784, and sanctioned by the state in 1842⁶. In 1926, it occupied an area of 19 square miles. Its territory included one town, 207 villages and 37 estates. Most of these localities was inhabited by Catholics, whose number at that time amounted to approx. four thousand. 375 Catholics were registered in the Lutheran parish in Dawillen, while 350 in the Lutheran parish in Plicken. A large number of Catholics also lived in the Lutheran parish of Karkelbeck⁷. In this period, clerical personnel of the Catholic parish in

³ S. Mikulicz, *Klaipėda w polityce europejskiej 1918–1939*, Warszawa 1976, pp. 44, 72–73, 115–116; J. Ochmański, *Historia Litwy*, 2 edition, Wrocław 1982, pp. 318–319.

⁴ A. Kopiczko, *Duchowierstwo katolickie diecezji warmińskiej w latach 1821–1945*, part 1, *Studium propozograficzne*, Olsztyn 2004, pp. 246–247; idem, *Die katholische Kirche in Memelland (1923–1939)*, p. 105.

⁵ Bundesarchiv in Berlin (further: BAB), R 5101/21807, k. 186.

⁶ Cf. Archive of the St. Boniface Association General Council in Paderborn (further: Arch. Paderborn), File: Memel, Missionsbericht 1929.

⁷ Arch. Paderborn, File: Memel, Rev. Dannelautzki to the Association of St. Boniface in Paderborn, 19 December 1926.

Klaipėda consisted of one Catholic priest, one Lithuanian and two German vicars, and one Lithuanian military chaplain. A year earlier, the revenues from the collection of church tax totalled 6000 litas which was equal to 2400 Deutsche marks⁸. In 1929, only 3 priests remained in the parish⁹. This year, the expected revenue from church tax was 7000 litas, while only 6000 were obtained from this source¹⁰.

In 1926, 7 facilities offered religious education classes on the territory of the Klaipėdan parish. However, not all Catholic students were able to participate in them. Due to the staff shortage, pastoral care over the congregation was even more deficient. In Klaipėda, worship service was provided at 7:00, 8:30 (a mass for school children), 9:30 (solemn mass with sermon), 11:30 (service in Lithuanian), and in the afternoon, prayer services were held¹¹. In a trade town Prökuls, situated 22km away from Klaipėda, Catholic mass was celebrated once a month in the Lutheran parochial house. It was, however, expected that the Lutherans would revoke the permission to hold the service at their premises. In Dawillen, masses were celebrated in a humble inn house¹². That year, Klaipėdan parish priest, Rev. Albert Dannelautzki, intended to build a wooden chapel in the town. Its cost was at least 15000 marks¹³.

Three years later, Catholic service was still held at the Lutheran parochial house in Prökuls (once a month, on Sunday at 9:30), as well as at the inn house in Dawillen (once a month, on Sunday at 10:30). Since the Green Week (Pentecostal Sunday) of 1929, holy service was celebrated monthly in Plicken. Additionally, monthly masses were held at 8:00 in the municipal prison of Klaipėda¹⁴.

The pastoral facility in Robkojen was established in 1869. In 1892, its parochial rights were recognized by state authorities. It occupied an area of 320km². Within this area, 72 localities were situated. In 1926, 600 Catholics had a permanent residence on the territory of the Robkojen parish, while 200 additional faithful, usually seasonal workers, lived there temporarily. In that area, non-Catholic inhabitants amounted to 16 thousand. Lutheran schools were attended by 74 Catholic students, but only 58 of this number took part in catechetical classes. In order to reach the most remote outpost of his parish, the priest had to cover 18 km. Some faithful, who lived at a larger distance from the parish church, attended services in Lithuanian churches. Before the Klaipėda Region went over to the Lithuanian administration, mass was celebrated in Kallehnen four times a year. In Robkojen, holy

⁸ Arch. Paderborn, File: Memel, Missionsbericht 1926.

⁹ Arch. Paderborn, File: Memel, Missionsbericht 1929.

¹⁰ Arch. Paderborn, File: Memel, Missionsbericht 1929.

¹¹ Arch. Paderborn, File: Memel, Missionsbericht 1926.

¹² Arch. Paderborn, File: Memel, Rev. Dannelautzki to the Association of St. Boniface in Paderborn, 19 December 1926.

¹³ Arch. Paderborn, File: Memel, Rev. Dannelautzki to the Association of St. Boniface in Paderborn, 19 December 1926.

¹⁴ Arch. Paderborn, File: Memel, Missionsbericht 1926.

service was held daily. In 1926, the lease of parochial land brought the revenue of 2000 litas. The state subsidies totalled 6000 litas annually. The so-called *iura stolae* (pastoral services) afforded the clergy further 120 litas, and catechetical classes – 200 litas. A year earlier, the income from the church tax was estimated at 615.73 litas, while actual revenues totalled 580.15 litas¹⁵. In 1928, the church tax yielded 524 litas instead of the expected 612. In 1929, the parish was inhabited by 110 school children, including 22 in Robkojen. On weekdays, service was celebrated at 7:00, and at 10:00 on Sundays. In Kallehnen, Catholic mass was held twice a year¹⁶.

The pastoral facility in Šilutė was established in 1862. Its vicar had to travel 50km in order to reach its farthest end. In its area, 200 localities were situated. It was inhabited permanently by 2 thousand Catholics, and one thousand more declared a temporary residence. Lutheran schools were attended by 200 Catholic students, while 162 Catholic children participated in catechesis. 16 Catholic students attended high schools. From 1882, a Catholic orphanage was operating in Šilutė, which also served as a catechetical house. In 1926, the orphanage was inhabited by 27 children (including 20 coming from the parish). Additionally, in May and June, 20–40 children stayed at the house (on a one-day stay or during First Communion preparations). Two St. Katharina nuns and one lay person took care of the children. The house was maintained from donations and fundraisers. A daily food-accommodation allowance per orphan was 0.75 mark. The accommodation of 9 children was covered by the state (most likely by the communal government), while 10 children were sponsored by private entities (e.g. family and relatives). 26 residents of the house attended a Lutheran elementary school. They were not charged with tuition fees. The accommodation of children preparing for the First Communion was usually paid in natural supplies for the house¹⁷.

In Šilutė, on Sundays and holidays, holy service was celebrated at 8:30 (with a sermon in Lithuanian) and 10:30 (with a sermon in German). On the last Sunday of the month, the mass in German was not held. Apart from this locality, Catholic service was celebrated in Russ (on the last Sunday of the month in a court building) and in Pogegen. The lease of parochial lands brought the revenue of approx. 300 marks per month. The *iura stolae* generated hardly any income. In 1925, the potential revenue from church taxes was estimated at one thousand litas, while the actual inflows totalled 600 litas (that is 240 marks)¹⁸.

The parish mission in Wischwill encompassed half of the Pogegen District, a part of the Pillkallen District and Tilsit-Ragnit. On the Easter Day of 1922, 344

¹⁵ Arch. Paderborn, File: Robkojen, Missionsbericht 1926.

¹⁶ Arch. Paderborn, File: Robkojen, Missionsbericht 1929.

¹⁷ Arch. Paderborn, File: Heydekrug, Missionsbericht 1926.

¹⁸ Arch. Paderborn, File: Heydekrug, Missionsbericht 1926.

faithful received here Holy Communion. The parish income was rather meagre. Rev. Leo Olschewski, a mission priest, complained that due to frequent migrations of Catholics, it was impossible to introduce the church tax¹⁹. In 1926, approx. 400 Catholics inhabited this parish. Apart from Wischwill, Catholic mass was celebrated in Smolniki and Kerkutwethen. 11 quintals of rye were obtained from the lease of land. Additionally, the mission priest charged approx. 1000 litas (400 marks) for catechetical tuition. According to a decree of the church council, landlords were obliged to donate rye to the parish. Workers paid the equivalent of one day wages²⁰.

In 1929, 82 localities belonged to the parish mission in Wischwill. The farthest end was removed 36km from the parish house. Wischwill was permanently inhabited by 50 Catholics, most of whom were poor. During the year, approx. one thousand seasonal workers stayed on the parish territory. 100 school children were registered, including 17 in Wischwill. Catechetical classes were attended by 60 children in four facilities: Wischwill, Szugken (11km away from Wischwill), Willkischken (20 km) and Schreitlaugken (27 km). Children preparing for the First Communion from distant localities stayed in Wischwill at the parish house with Rev. Leo Olschewski. In 1929 their number was 10. At that time, a growing need to celebrate Catholic mass in Willkischken was noted. In Wischwill, Sunday and holiday service with a sermon in Lithuanian and German was held at 10:00 (apart from Sundays, when the service was celebrated in other localities). Morning service was held on the first Sunday in the month and on feast days. Additionally, every two months, mass was celebrated on Sunday at 10:00 in Schreitlaugken and in Kerkutwethen (25 km away from Wischwill, at the house of a landlord Thomasa Lautzki). On the second feast days, Catholic service for the faithful from Smolniki was held in Pašventė in Lithuania, as Smolniki did not have an appropriate liturgical site at their disposal. In Schreitlaugken and Pašventė, mass was celebrated in a school building. In this parish, church tax was not charged. Collections during services yielded 500 litas, a value of 200 marks. These revenues were insufficient to finance thorough renovation works required in the parish²¹.

In Pogegegen, a church and parish were built between 1930 and 1931. Rev. Nikodemas Petkus took a loan from the Zemes-Bankas in the amount of 17400 litas for the construction works.²² The loan was secured by a lien upon his property that was located in Klaipėda at Grünestrasse 3. In 1932, an independent pastoral facility was opened in Pogegegen, managed by Rev. Pranciškus Bajerčius²³.

¹⁹ Arch. Paderborn, File: Wischwill, Missionsbericht 1923.

²⁰ Arch. Paderborn, File: Wischwill, Missionsbericht 1926.

²¹ Arch. Paderborn, File: Wischwill, Missionsbericht 1929.

²² Arch. Paderborn, File: Pogegegen, Rev. Marquardt to Rev. Steinki, 31 January 1940.

²³ A. Kopiczko, *Die katholische Kirche in Memelland (1923–1939)*, p. 110.

In November 1939, the authorities of the Warmian Diocese informed that a purchase of a car for the pastoral facilities in Pogegen and Wischwill was necessary. A loan from the diocesan funds in the amount of 1000 marks was designated for this purpose. Diocesan Diaspora Work (Diasporawerk) donated 1100 marks (600 for Wischwill and 500 for Pogegen)²⁴. In 1941, the Wischwill church and parish required renovation. It was noted in the records that renovation works had not been done for a longer period of time. Moreover, the poor economic condition of the parish was ascertained. The renovation costs amounted to 3238.58 marks, of which 1200 were reimbursed by the Warmian Diocese. The remaining funds were sought at the Bonifatiuswerk in Paderborn²⁵. Limited financial circumstances of the Wischwill parish are also attested by a donation made by the rector of St. Barbara orphanage in Koblenz, who decided to provide one of the poorest pastoral facilities in the diaspora with 1000 marks on the occasion of the golden jubilee of his ordination, and chose Wischwill for the beneficiary of the donation²⁶.

Financing clergy from the state funds

On 7 May 1923, The German Ministry of Science, Arts and Education decided to subsidize three Catholic priests from the Klaipėda Region that resided in Klaipėda, Robkojen and Šilutė. The legal justification of this decision was derived from the dispositions of the Ministry issued on 5 April 1920 and 28 April 1921, regarding subsidies for the German clergy based in that region²⁷. It should be noted that in 1923, the Klaipėda Region became an informal part of Lithuania. The subsidies granted by the Weimar Republic were still paid, as its authorities hoped to foster German identity among the population inhabiting the Memel Territory²⁸. In order to achieve this, the authorities strived to keep the territory within the Warmian Diocese. It was therefore resolved that the German state would subsidize the wages of Klaipėdan parish priests. It was stipulated, however, that the subsidies would not include the vicar in Klaipėda and the mission parish priest in Wischwill²⁹. On the other hand, in May 1923, Augustyn Bludau, a Warmian bishop, reported that the Directory of the Klaipėda Region undertook to subsidize the local clergy with equal sums as those they had received from the German government³⁰.

The declaration issued on 25 May 1923 by the Ministry of Finance that opposed any further subsidies for the clergy in Klaipėda, Robkojen and Šilutė came

²⁴ Arch. Paderborn, File: Wischwill, Rev. Steinki to Rev. Schäfers, 24 February 1940.

²⁵ Arch. Paderborn, File: Wischwill, parish in Wischwill to Episcopal Curia in Frombork, 27 February 1941.

²⁶ Arch. Paderborn, File: Wischwill, vice-president to the parish mission in Wischwill, 6 April 1943.

²⁷ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 176.

²⁸ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 176v.

²⁹ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 176v–177.

³⁰ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 186–187.

as a surprise to the Ministry of Science, Art and Education that monitored the situation of clergy in this area³¹. The continuation of subsidies was, however, advocated by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which argued that in order to uphold German traditions in that region, it was necessary to maintain the connection between the Warmian Diocese and Klaipėda parishes. It was feared that the withdrawal of the subsidies would threaten the already precarious links with Germany³². On 6 July 1923, the Minister of Science, Art and Education deplored the decision made by the Ministry of Finance. He pointed out that the Lithuanians would attempt to incorporate the Catholic parishes in the Klaipėda Region to the Lithuanian diocese. This could be prevented, he argued, if Catholic priests in that area received German funding guarantees. The Minister renewed his requests for state funding several times³³.

The key decision regarding the funding for Klaipėda clergy was formulated on 13 July 1923 in a joint decree issued by the Reich Cabinet (Reichskabinett) and the Prussian Ministry of State (Preußisches Staatsministerium). The decree concerned, in fact, the German officials in the Klaipėda Region. Although the document did not directly refer to clergy, according to the social politics adopted by the Ministry, priests were treated as state officials. And state officials did not lose rights and privileges conferred upon them by the German state³⁴. Eventually, on 31 July of the same year, the German Minister of Finance consented subsidizing the priest wages in Klaipėda, Robkojen and Šilutė³⁵. Nevertheless, until the end of that year, the allowances were not assigned. This matter was carefully followed by Rev. Albert Dannelautzki, a parish priest at Klaipėda. He suggested that the amounts, increased by the amount of devaluation, be sent directly to the German General Consulate in Klaipėda³⁶. At the end of October 1923, it was announced that the subsidies in the amount of 3 million marks which also included bonuses for the Klaipėda clergy, were transferred to the diocesan authorities in Frombork³⁷.

In March 1925, the Bishop Curia in Frombork reported that, although the Directory of the Klaipėda Region paid salaries to the Catholic priests, their amount was lower than it had been agreed. Dean Dannelautzki was assigned to the 9th salary group of the Klaipėda Region. Instead of 396 marks, he was granted 820 litas monthly, a value of 328 marks. The diocesan authorities suggested that the lacking amount be paid to all Klaipėda parish priests by the German State Treasury³⁸.

³¹ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 183.

³² BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 184.

³³ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 189–190.

³⁴ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 191.

³⁵ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 193.

³⁶ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 196.

³⁷ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 200.

³⁸ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 220.

They argued that the Lutheran clergy was subsidized by the government in Berlin. Lutheran pastors, however, also struggled with an unclear funding system. Like the Catholic priests, they received bonuses to salaries from the Directory in Klaipėda. After a conflict between the Directory and the General Lutheran Church Council in Berlin broke out, the subsidies were stopped. From that point onwards, the surcharges came from the German church funds³⁹.

The same month, during the visit the Catholic Church Council delegation from Klaipėda paid to the bishop of Warmia attended by a German Vice-Consul in Klaipėda Adolf Windecker, the ordinary emphasised that the Klaipėda Region should remain within the jurisdiction of the Warmian Diocese. This declaration was fully approved by the German government. With regard to this, the German general consul in Klaipėda supported the previous postulates of Dean Dannelautzki that Catholic and Lutheran clergy should receive equal salaries. Owing to the surcharges from the German state budget, Lutheran pastors in the Klaipėda Region received the same salaries as those working in Prussia⁴⁰.

In November 1925, Bishop Augustyn Bludau sent a list of annual income of Catholic priests in the Klaipėda Region to the Minister of Science, Art and Education in Berlin.

Table 1. Salaries of Catholic priests in the Klaipėda Region in 1925

Place of employment	Salary group	Salary amount	Income from the parish included in the salary	Subsidy from the Klaipėda Region funds	Guaranteed income according to Prussian income regulations
Klaipėda	11	11448 litas = 4672 marks	–	Salary amount	6930 marks
Robkojen	10	9924 litas = 4050 marks	33,33% of salary amount = 1350 marks	66,66% of salary amount = 2700 marks	5940 marks
Šilutė	10	9924 litas = 4050 marks	20% of salary amount = 810 marks	80% of salary amount = 3240 marks	5940 marks
Wischwill (parish mission)	9	7155 litas = 2920 marks	20% of salary amount = 584 marks	80% of salary amount = 2336 marks	3828 marks

Source: BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 236.

The data included in Table 1 suggests that the parish priest of Klaipėda earned the highest salary (4672 marks), while the priest of the parish mission in Wischwill

³⁹ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 221.

⁴⁰ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 228.

– the lowest (2920 marks). Salaries of the Klaipėdan clergy were generally lower than those granted by the Weimar Republic. According to relevant salary groups, the parish priest of Klaipėda would be paid 6930 marks by the German authorities, while the mission parish priest in Wischwill – 3828 marks. The Klaipėda Region Directory funded the entire salary of the Klaipėdan priest, while the parish priest of Šilutė and Wischwill received from this source 80% of their remuneration, and the parish priest of Robkojen received $\frac{2}{3}$ of his. The parish priest of Klaipėda did not receive any donations from the parish, while the parish priest of Robkojen – 1350 marks. Additionally, the Klaipėda Region Directory paid the salary of two vicars working at Klaipėda. The first vicar (salary group 10) received 9084 litas which amounted to 3707 marks, while the second (salary group 9) – 6576 litas, that is 2684 marks⁴¹.

The authorities of the Warmian Diocese expected that the subsidies to the salaries of the Catholic clergy in the Klaipėda Region would be paid from the German state treasury before the end of 1925. These amounts would cover the difference between the wages guaranteed by the Directory and clergy rates effective in Prussia. Unfortunately, the money was not transferred by the expected date on the excuse of budget shortages and unclear legal solutions. The Minister of Science, Art and Education addressed the German Foundation (Deutsche Stiftung) with a request that it reimbursed the subsidies. However, until February 1926, he did not receive any answer⁴².

On 25 February 1926, the Prussian government sent an explanation to Rev. Dannelautzki. It included a reassurance that, according to a decree of 14 January 1921, Catholic clergy working in the Klaipėda Region had a right to all the privileges conferred on the state officials of a middle rank by a decree of the German State Ministry issued on 26 July 1919. They regarded compensations for relocations and temporary unemployment in case of a sudden necessity to leave the Klaipėda County. Moreover, officials and clergy were assured of a particular support of the German authorities. The German Ministry of Science, Art and Education conceded that in the case of severance of Memel parishes from the Warmian Diocese, the local clergy would maintain the access to the pension funds of the mother church. In this manner the rights of the Klaipėdan clergy to the pension benefits from the German State were confirmed⁴³. In case of the necessity to leave the Klaipėda Region, the Ministry undertook to transfer the priests to the area of the Warmian Diocese, or its environs⁴⁴. Unfortunately, the German State often failed to respect the resolutions of its own decree⁴⁵.

⁴¹ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 236.

⁴² BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 245.

⁴³ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 336.

⁴⁴ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 336.

⁴⁵ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 337.

A circular issued on 3 May 1928 by the Prussian Ministry of Finance regarding the instructions about the care of the former officials from the Memel Territory (“Richtlinien für die Betreuung der im Memelgebiet wohnenden ehemaligen Beamten”) disregarded the Catholic clergy. Similarly, a letter issued on 18 May 1928 by the Ministry of Finance that contained lists of officials qualified for state assistance of the Weimar Republic dismissed Catholic priests in silence⁴⁶. On the other hand, the Republic subsidized German priests working in Poland. In March 1928, a representative of the German Foundation assured that 16 clergymen from Eupen–Malmedy (a German-speaking territory in eastern Belgium), 2 from Denmark and 6 from the Klaipėda Region could also count on the financial support of that organisation. In fact, only the priests from Eupen–Malmedy and North Schleswig received the promised assistance⁴⁷. On 25 February 1929, a representative of the Ministry of Finance held a conversation with the German Foreign Ministry regarding the benefits and allowances for the Catholic clergy from the former German regions. The Ministry did not, however, approve of the proposed remuneration amounts for the clergy from the Klaipėda Region, as they exceeded the amounts granted to clergy working in Poland⁴⁸.

Until 1 January 1929, the German Foundation regularly paid subsidies to the German clergy from the Klaipėda Region that compensated the difference between the salary rates paid there and in Prussia. Rev. Dannelautzki proposed to raise them, arguing that the newly introduced Prussian rates were higher⁴⁹. He also emphasised the fact that the financial situation of the Catholic priests deteriorated since the region had been separated from the Warmian Diocese⁵⁰. On 6 May 1929, the German Foundation promised that the subsidies for the Catholic clergy would be further continued. It also stated that the priests were protected from poverty⁵¹.

In a disposition issued on 13 April 1929 by the German Ministry of Finance, the problem of salaries for the Catholic clergy from the Klaipėda Region was sorted out. Priests in office were assigned to 9 salary groups related to annual salary rates. They also received compensation for the differences between the German rates and the amounts paid in the Memel Territory⁵².

⁴⁶ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 325.

⁴⁷ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 325.

⁴⁸ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 325v.

⁴⁹ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 317.

⁵⁰ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 317v–318.

⁵¹ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 321.

⁵² BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 329.

Table 2. Salaries of Catholic priests in the Klaipėda Region according to Prussian remuneration rates in 1929

Salary group	Basic salary rate (in marks)
1	4400
2	4900
3	5400
4	5800
5	6200
6	6600
7	7000
8	7400
9	7800

Source: BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 329.

The basic salary rate was increased after two years until it arrived at 6200 marks (that is the level of 5th salary group). Further groups were available for those priests who had served three years each time, until they attained the highest salary rate (after 20 years of professional activity). The list presented above does not include accommodation fees, as priests were provided with parish lodgings, or paid the rental fees from other sources of income⁵³. Subsidies to salary were granted to 40% of priest positions in the Klaipėda Region, which on 1 October 1927 were either occupied or vacant. If latter was the case, the church authorities were obliged to prove an intention to nominate a candidate. The right to complementary subsidies in an annual amount of 600 marks was granted to the following clergymen:

1. Deans, archpresbyter, episcopal commissioner during the performance of their offices
2. Priests appointed on particularly difficult, responsible, and exhausting positions (anstrengend)

With accordance to the disposition mentioned above, on 20 June 1929, the Prussian Minister of Finance made a decision regarding the salary rates of the German Catholic clergy from the Klaipėda Region. Rev. Dean Albert Dannelautzki from Klaipėda was granted the highest basic salary rate, a value of 7800 marks, and 600 marks subsidy. The basic salary of Rev. Franz Schacht from Šilutė was 7400

⁵³ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 329.

marks and 600 marks subsidy, and from 1 May 1930 – 7800 marks and 600 marks subsidy. The value of the rate granted to Rev. Richard Rischewski from Robkojen was 7800 marks without the subsidy, and to Rev. Leo Olschewski from Wischwill – 6200 marks, also without the subsidy. On 1 May 1932, the basic rate of the latter was raised to the amount of 6'600 marks without the subsidy. According to the reports recorded by the Klaipėda dean, the Catholic clergymen priests mentioned above had the following monthly incomes at their disposal (excluding subsidies and allowances paid from the Prussian budget): Rev. Dean Dannelautzki – 558.33 marks, Rev. Parson Schacht – 515 marks, Rev. priest Rischewski – 515 marks and Rev. priest Olschewski – 348.75 marks. Vicars Paul Wermter and Anton Ziganski received monthly 831 and 641 litas respectively⁵⁴. Until 31 March 1930, they were granted a monthly subsidy of 68.71 marks and 40 marks from the Prussian budget. Rev. Wermter received those allowances until 1 May 1930⁵⁵. A year later, he complained that as the first vicar of the Klaipėda parish he was assigned to the 10th salary group, while his wages were much lower than the average income of the vicars based in Germany⁵⁶.

At the beginning of 1929, the Episcopal Curia in Frombork informed the Ministry of Science, Art and Education about the salary of Rev. Rischewski. The clergyman complained that the state authorities did not recognise his right to the subsidy for which he was eligible due to the number of years in pastoral service. He requested a 600 mark subsidy – the same amount as was granted to Rev. priest Schacht from Šilutė who was in a similar situation. The salary of Rev. Rischewski consisted of the following components: revenues relevant to the held pastoral office (including the revenues from 150 morgen of farmland, partly barely fertile) – 1200 marks, subsidy from the Klaipėda County – 9600 litas (that is 4'000 marks) and benefits from the Prussian government – 1392 marks. Annually, he earned a total of 6592 marks. However, according to the Prussian system of salary rates, he should have received 7'800 marks of a basic salary and 600 marks subsidy for the number of served years⁵⁷.

The German General Consulate in Klaipėda intervened in the case of subsidies for Rev. Paul Wermter and Meinrad Stenzel, emphasising the importance of their work for the sake of the development of German culture in the area. It also pointed out that the region faced in increase of immigration of Lithuanian Catholic population who often adhered to nationalistic views, which threatened the status of German people among the Klaipėda society⁵⁸. Since Rev. Stenzel worked in this

⁵⁴ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 329–329v, 337.

⁵⁵ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 340.

⁵⁶ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 338.

⁵⁷ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 327.

⁵⁸ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 339.

area only from 1929, he was not eligible for the subsidies granted by the Weimar Republic⁵⁹.

At the end of 1932, the German Foundation endorsed the maintenance of financial subsidies for the Catholic clergymen from the Klaipėda Region. The Prussian Ministry of Finance was also supportive of this scheme. It should be noted that until this time the majority of officials who were granted financial benefits, received a severance pay. For this reason, they did not receive more subsidies. Catholic priests, however, were not beneficiaries of the severance pay⁶⁰. At that time, only the salary of Rev. Dannelautzki and Rischewski granted by the Klaipėda Region was comparable to the Prussian salary standards. Thus, the addition of the subsidy to their salaries seemed unjustified. In the case of two other priests, the resultant difference in wages between the Klaipėda Region and the Weimar Republic obliged the German treasury to uphold the benefits. Hence, Rev. Schacht still received 38.50 marks of monthly allowance from this source, while Rev. Olschewski – 87.75 marks⁶¹.

Unfortunately, in the beginning of January 1933, the German Ministry of Finance challenged the scheme of financial subsidies for the Catholic priests in the Klaipėda Region. It also strongly opposed the compensations paid to Rev. Olschewski on the ground that he moved to the region after its separation from the Warmian Diocese⁶². In turn, a year later, the bishop of the Telšiai Diocese asked the governor of the Klaipėda Region, Jonas Navakas, to discharge the Directory from funding of the Klaipėdan priests. He supported his request by recalling the regulations of a Concordat Agreement between Lithuania and the Holy See concluded on 27 November 1927. According to Arūnas Streikus, these measures were taken in order to deprive Rev. Dannelautzki of the Klaipėda Prelacy. The authorities in Telšiai believed that his position might be challenged by limiting the privileges granted to Catholic priests by the autonomy government. This assumption seems, however, unjustified. It should be noted that the bishop's request was most likely ignored⁶³.

At the beginning of 1935, the Directory of the Klaipėda Region, neglecting the legal regulations pertaining to remuneration, as well as the long-standing practice in this regard, lowered the category of salary groups for the newly appointed parish priests Pranciškus Bajerčius in Pogege and Kazimieras Steponavičius in Wischwill. The latter claimed that the actions of the Directory were deliberate. In this manner, he indicated that he expected an agreement of the church authorities

⁵⁹ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 340.

⁶⁰ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 347–348, 351.

⁶¹ BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 348–349.

⁶² BAB, R 5101/21807, k. 355v.

⁶³ A. Streikus, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

concerning new nominations to pastoral positions. According to the priest, previous candidacies to ecclesiastical offices were chosen by the bishop of Warmia in agreement with the dean of Klaipėda. In spite of protests raised by the Telšiai Curia and the priests mentioned above, the Directory did not withdraw its decision⁶⁴.

In 1935, Rev. Leo Olschewski was expelled from the Klaipėda Region. The remaining German priests still paid pension contributions to the pension fund of the Warmian Diocese (Ruhegehaltskasse). On 2 February 1937, its vicar general, Rev. Alois Marquardt reported that Rev. Dannelautzki paid his obligations to this fund until 1934, Rev. Schacht – until 1933, and Rev. Rischewski – until 1936. The former two priests had difficulties obtaining hard currency⁶⁵.

The Directory of the Klaipėda Region appreciated the work performed by Rev. Dean Dannelautzki in Klaipėda. On 17 March 1938, it admitted the priest to the 12th salary group for which only the highest ranking officials were eligible. He was also granted a right to a pension counted from 1 July 1902⁶⁶. The next decision concerning Rev. Dannelautzki as well as Rev. Franz Schacht from Šilutė, issued on 2 May 1938, secured their right to salaries and retirement benefits. Such decisions were issued for specific persons, independently from their professional positions⁶⁷. In the case of Rev. Schacht, the state authorities recognised that in 1912, he was legitimately appointed to the office of a parish priest in Robkojen, and in 1920 – in Šilutė⁶⁸.

Just before the annexation of the Klaipėda Region to the German Reich, the Directory paid Catholic clergy salaries in the amounts presented below:

Table 3. Monthly salaries of Catholic clergy in the Klaipėda Region at the beginning of 1939

	Priest's name and surname	Held office	Place of employment	Salary group	Salary in litas	Equivalent in marks
1.	Albert Dannelautzki	parish priest	Klaipėda	12	866	346.40
2.	Franz Schacht	parish priest	Šilutė	11	698	279.20
3.	Pranciškus Bajerčius	parish priest	Pogegen	9	642	256.80
4.	Juozas Ruibys-Rodavičius	parish priest	Robkojen	9	415	166
5.	Juozas Lechavičius	parish priest	Wischwill	9	388	155
6.	Meinrad Stenzel	vicar	Klaipėda	9	516	206.40
7.	Juozas Juknevičius	vicar	Klaipėda	8	423	169.20

⁶⁴ Ibidem, pp. 119–120.

⁶⁵ BAB, R 5101/21808, k. 27.

⁶⁶ BAB, R 5101/21808, k. 56v–57.

⁶⁷ BAB, R 5101/21808, k. 62.

⁶⁸ BAB, R 5101/21808, k. 64.

	Priest's name and sur-name	Held office	Place of employment	Salary group	Salary in litas	Equivalent in marks
8.	Jonas Maknavičius	vicar	Klaipėda	8	450	180
9.	Jonas Staškevičius	vicar	Šilutė	8	388	155

Source: BAB, R 5101/21808, k. 56.

Rev. Dannelautzki received the highest monthly salary (866 litas) from the budget of the Klaipėda Region, while Rev. Juozas Lechavičius from Wischwill – the lowest (388 litas). The difference between these two amounts was 478 litas. The income earned by vicars was usually lower than those of priests, as the vicars were classified in the 8th or 9th salary group. Among them, the highest salary was granted to Rev. Meinrad Stenzel (516 litas), while the lowest – to Rev. Jonas Staškevičius (only 388 litas). The difference between those earnings was 128 litas. It should be noted that the lowest salary of a priest was equal to the lowest salary of a vicar.

The Directory of the Klaipėda Region paid the priests their salaries corresponding to the wages of state officials classified in the relevant salary groups. This classification was usually conducted according to the number of years of professional experience. The salary was decreased if the beneficiary owed some farmland⁶⁹. It should be noted that the Directory transferred 100 litas monthly for the sake of the decanal office in Klaipėda and church officials⁷⁰. It also designated 3000 litas annually for the renovation and construction works in the Klaipėda Prelacy. A year before the outbreak of World War II, this subvention was decreased to 2000 litas. Additionally, the dean of Klaipėda received 300 litas annually for the care and education of young people⁷¹.

The budget plan drafted by the Directory of the Klaipėda Region, adopted just before the region's annexation to the German Reich, included a number of expenses for the sake of the Lutheran and Catholic Church. Since the two religious organisations shared a common fund designated for renovation and construction works, their expenses may be compared.

⁶⁹ BAB, R 5101/21808, k. 56.

⁷⁰ BAB, R 5101/21808, k. 56v.

⁷¹ BAB, R 5101/21808, k. 56v.

Table 4. Expenses from the budget of the Klaipėda Region for the benefit of the Lutheran and Catholic Church just before the outbreak of World War II

Classification of expense division	Beneficiary and the type of budget expenses	Expenses amount (in litas)
I	EXPENSES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH	
1	Subsidy to the salaries of 39 priests	22847
2	Allowance for the sake of the remuneration of organists	6000
3	Allowance toward the administrative expenses of the consistory	55986
4	Pensions and benefits for the family of a deceased	96732
	Total:	386565
II	EXPENSES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH	
1	Subsidy to the salaries of 9 priests	57000
2	Allowance for an organist and for the decanal office	2400
	Total:	59400
III	PATRONAGE FEES AND BUILDING EXPENSES	
1	State Patronage Fees	8000
2	Construction allowance	45000
	Total:	53000
IV	OTHER EXPENSES	
1	Gifts for the 50 th Wedding Anniversary	5000
2	Other	6500

Source: BAB, R 5101/21808, k. 71.

386565 litas from the budget of the Klaipėda Region were designated for the Lutheran Church, while 59400 litas for the Catholic Church. The patronage expenses and building allowances absorbed 53000 litas. The golden wedding anniversaries were expected to cost 5000 litas, while other expenses – 6500 litas. A total of 510465 litas (the equivalent of 204186 marks) was designated from the budget for both religious organisations⁷².

On the basis of a forced treaty concluded on 23 March 1939 between the German Reich and Lithuania, the Klaipėda Region was incorporated into Germany. From 1 May 1939, the new authorities intended to withdraw the payments of salaries for Catholic priests serving in the region. Rev. Alois Marquardt, a vicar

⁷² BAB, R 5101/21808, k. 71. At that time, the conversion rate was 0.40 marks=1 lit; cf. ibidem.

general of the Warmian Diocese, indicated that several priests originated from the Warmian Diocese that was located within the borders of Prussia and should therefore retain the right to the salary guaranteed by the state. It should be noted that the salaries of Lutheran clergy inhabiting that area, were soon legally regulated⁷³.

Conclusion

The Klaipėda Region belonged to the diaspora of the Catholic Church. Only few pastoral facilities located in this area were unable to ensure a fair income to their parish priests. The guarantee of providing a livelihood for the priests was taken over by the Directory of the Klaipėda Region which, following the solutions earlier adopted in Prussia, committed to the payment of their salaries. Their amount depended, above all, on the appointment to an appropriate salary group. Unfortunately, most of these wages were lower than the pastoral revenues received by clergymen working in the Weimar Republic. The difference was often reimbursed by the German State, which saw the funding of Prussian clergy as an important element of German national policies that were expected to protect the Klaipėda Region from Lithuanisation. Owing to the support received from the Weimar Republic, as well as the connections maintained with the mother church (pension contributions from the pension fund of the Warmian Diocese), these priests certainly identified very little with the Lithuanian national views, and did not spread those among their congregations in the Klaipėda Prelacy, even though it was administered by a Lithuanian bishop residing in Telšiai located on the Lithuanian territory.

Marek Jodkowski, *Finansowanie duchowieństwa katolickiego w Okręgu Kłajpedy w latach 1923–1939*

Streszczenie

W 1923 r. w Okręgu Kłajpedy znajdowały się następujące katolickie parafie: Kłajpeda, Robkojen, Szyłokarczma i parafia misyjna w Wischwill. W 1932 r. utworzono jeszcze samodzielną placówkę duszpasterską w Pogegen. Ze względu na ich niski status materialny, nie były w stanie zapewnić pracującym w nim duszpasterzom należnego wynagrodzenia. Pensje otrzymywali oni m.in. z budżetu Okręgu Kłajpedy. O ich godziwe uposażenie troszczyła się diecezja warmińska, której podlegały parafie Nadniemna do czasu ogłoszenia bulli Piusa XI *Lituanorum gente* z 4 kwietnia 1926 r. Mimo zmiany przynależności politycznej tego regionu wsparcie finansowe na rzecz pruskiego duchowieństwa katolickiego gwarantowała również Republika Weimarska, która zabiegała o krzewienie niemieckości w Okręgu Kłajpedy.

Tłumaczenie Marek Jodkowski

⁷³ BAB, R 5101/21808, k. 54.

Marek Jodkowski, Förderung des katholischen Klerus im Kreis Klaipėda in den Jahren 1923–1939

Zusammenfassung

In der Region Klaipėda befanden sich 1923 die folgenden katholischen Gemeinden: Klaipėda, Robkojen, Szyłokarczma und die Missionsgemeinde in Wischwill. In Pogegegen wurde 1932 eine unabhängige pastorale Einrichtung gegründet. Sie waren aufgrund ihres geringen materiellen Status nicht in der Lage, die darin tätigen Geistlichen angemessen zu entlohnen. Ihre Gehälter erhielten sie unter anderem aus dem Budget des Bezirks Klaipėda. Die Diözese, der die Pfarreien von Memelland bis zur Bekanntgabe des Pius XI. Stiers *Lituanorum gente* vom 4. April 1926 unterstellt waren, kümmerte sich um Auszahlung der Gehälter. Trotz des politischen Zugehörigkeitswechsels dieser Region wurde die finanzielle Unterstützung des preufsisch-katholischen Klerus auch von der Weimarer Republik garantiert, welche das Deutschtum im Kreis Klaipėda fördern wollte

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