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The practice of faith in everyday life based on the metrical books of various denominations in the period of Galician autonomy (as illustrated by Rzeszów)

This article aims to highlight aspects of religious life based on metrical records. The research focuses on religious communities in Rzeszów: the Roman Catholic parish of Farna, the Jewish metrical district, and the Greek Catholic parish in Zalesie. In all of these communities, the choice of wedding dates was in accordance with the liturgical calendar, including holidays and fasting periods. Illegitimate births indicated that relationships typical of marriage were also established before the formal wedding ceremony. Illegitimate births were more common among Jews due to marriages concluded only according to their own ritual. Illegitimate births were also more prevalent in the urban-like Farna parish compared to the rural Greek Catholic parish, where their percentage was the lowest. Records of administering sacraments to the dying were also indicative of religiousness.

Keywords: Galicia, metrical records, religiosity, Latin Catholics, Greek Catholics, Jews.

Wojciech Giertych, a Dominican, emphasises that ‘classical theology values both faith and religiosity, but does not identify one with the other’ (transl. mine),¹ as faith is an attitude of openness to God and of moving towards him, made possible by supernatural grace. It takes place in the space where the human psyche and divine power meet and leads to a personal relationship with God. Religiosity, on the other hand, is the offering of due reverence to God, internally and externally through culturally conditioned gestures. It contributes to the perpetuation of social order.

In the past, in social life, less importance was attached to the individual experience of the God-human relationship and therefore to faith, but more to the

¹ W. Giertych OP, *Religijność a wiara*, “L’Osservatore Romano” 2019, no. 7/8, p. 58, <https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/Z/ZS/osservatore/osservatore072019> [access: 27.02.2023].

daily observance of the precepts arising from it, i.e. religiousness. Not without significance was the fear not only of sin and its consequences for salvation, but also the fear of the condemnation by the public opinion, already experienced in the earthly life. An opportunity to see how these mechanisms worked among representatives of different faiths can be found in places where these communities existed in a common space, sometimes living together and sometimes side by side. Galicia is an example of such an area in which multiculturalism and multi-confessionalism was a characteristic feature. On a smaller scale, similar examples were Galician cities such as Rzeszów in Western Galicia.

According to the state census of 1910, there were 23 688 inhabitants, including 13 872 Latin Rite Catholics (58.6%), 8,785 Jews (37.1%) and 951 Eastern Rite Catholics (4.0%). Representatives of other faiths, 37 in number, made up only a fraction of a percentage (0.3). Compared to 1900, the number of Latin and Eastern Rite Catholics increased slightly (from 54.7% and 2.8% respectively) at the expense of the Jewish population (down from 42.1%). The proportion of other faiths remained virtually unchanged (0.4% in 1900).² This was a consequence of the inclusion within the administrative boundaries of the city of the Ruska Wieś municipality and the hamlets of the Staroniwa municipality (Wygnaniec, Psiarnisko, Podzamcze, Stajnie, Rudki) and the hamlet of the Drabinianka municipality (Maćkówka), which practically formed part of the city (especially Ruska Wieś), and their inhabitants, as argued by the City Council, benefited from various urban amenities without incurring any costs for their upkeep. These areas were inhabited mostly by Catholics of the Latin rite, which slightly changed the religious structure of Rzeszów.³

The Constitution of 1867 provided the subjects of Franz Joseph I with democratic rights and religious freedom, and the autonomy gained by Galicia enabled the development of self-governing institutions and gave impetus to the revival of social, national, cultural as well as religious life. This was experienced, to a greater or lesser extent, by the three largest religious communities in Rzeszów.

The largest was the Roman Catholic Farna Parish in Rzeszów. It had an urban-rural character, because apart from Rzeszów, it included the surrounding villages: Ruska Wieś (incorporated into the administrative borders of Rzeszów in 1902), Pobitno, Staroniwa, Załęże, Zwiężczyca, Wilkowyja⁴. The parish

² I. Weinfeld, *Ludność miejska Galicji i jej skład wyznaniowy (1881–1910)*, „Wiadomości Statystyczne o Stosunkach Krajowych”, ed. T. Pilat, vol. XXIV, z. 2, Lwów 1912, p. 32.

³ The incorporation was decided by the National Sejm on 24 June 1901, and the decision was approved by the National Department and the Governorate in March of the following year. See A. Codello, *Samorząd miasta Rzeszowa 1867–1914*, Lublin 1967, pp. 110–111.

⁴ *Schematismus Universi Venerabilis Cleri Dioeceseos Premisliensis tum Saecularis tum Regularis Ritus Latini (1913)*, Przemyśl 1913, p. 181.

church of St. Adalbert and St. Stanislaus (since 1754)⁵ and part of the property such as the presbytery, garden, orchard, fish pond were located in the city centre on 3 Maja Street (in the past these were the outskirts of the parish cemetery, through the area of which now ran part of the new Imperial Road).⁶ In addition, the parish estate included a manor with a garden and plots of land located in Ruska Wieś – a total of over 93 hectares before 1914. The income of the parish was high, for example, in 1900 it was 1,662 zlotys. Only the cathedral parish in Przemyśl and the parishes in Przeworsk and Łańcut had higher ones at that time. It should be added, however, that some parsonage buildings were in a poor state of repair. This was partly due to the fact that parish priests involved in social activities did not have time to personally look after issues regarding property.⁷

During the autonomy period, the parish priest were Rev. Jan Gruszka (1860–1891), Rev. Stanisław Gryziecki (1892–1911) and Rev. Michał Tokarski (1911–1949).⁸ They were assisted in their pastoral work by vicars (in 1913, Rev. Stanisław Machnik and Rev. Stanisław Warchołowski). Also assigned to the parish were catechist priests teaching in Rzeszów schools (seven in 1913), retired priests (two) and priests temporarily performing other functions (one).⁹ Thus, the pastoral team was numerous, composed of educated people, performing multifarious and important functions in education and, oftentimes, participating in the social life of the city (e.g. as councillors in the city council, initiators and activists of companies and savings banks and merchants' associations).¹⁰ There were also various religious associations in the parish, usually also carrying out charitable activities, such as the Brotherhood of the Rosary, the Apostolate of the Heart of Jesus, the Holy Family, Sobriety, St. Vincent á Paulo, the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament.¹¹ In political matters, the clergy took a conservative stance and tried to restrain the radicalism of the popular movement led by Father Stanisław Stojałowski, while they strongly supported the national cause, which they expressed through participation in patriotic manifestations and anniversary celebrations.¹² As emphasised by J. Świeboda, the Church 'shook off its sealed inwardness and loyalist activities towards Austria

⁵ Ibid, p. 180.

⁶ Z. Budzyński, T.J. Filozof, *Parafia Farna* [in:] *Encyklopedia Rzeszowa*, editor-in-chief J. Draus, Rzeszów 2004, p. 420.

⁷ J. Świeboda, *Stosunki wyznaniowe* [in:] *Dzieje Rzeszowa*, t. II, ed. F. Kiryk, Rzeszów 1998, p. 569.

⁸ Ibid, p. 534.

⁹ *Schematismus Universi Venerabilis Cleri Dioeceseos Premisliensis... (1913)*, p. 181.

¹⁰ J. Świeboda, *Stosunki wyznaniowe...*, pp. 538–549.

¹¹ *Schematismus Universi Venerabilis Cleri Dioeceseos Premisliensis... (1913)*, p. 181; J. Świeboda, *Stosunki wyznaniowe...*, pp. 569, 585.

¹² Z. Budzyński, T.J. Filozof, *Parafia Farna...*, p. 420.

and made its presence felt in almost all areas of social life' (trans. mine)¹³ and the Farna parish in Rzeszów was an example of this.

The Jewish community also played an important role in the life of the city. The exact date of the appearance of Jews in Rzeszów is not known, but the preserved traces of their presence date back to the mid-16th century. The influx of Jews was favoured by the owners of the town, and the news of their favourable attitude prompted the Jewish inhabitants of the royal town of Przemyśl to seek better living conditions under the protection of private owners. Over time, restrictions on how they could function in the city, such as on where they could settle or their occupations, were lifted. Formally, full equality was guaranteed to Jews by the Constitution of 1867. The statute defining the rules of functioning of the Rzeszów community was obtained in 1880, and in 1890 it was adapted to the new governmental legal regulations.¹⁴ Jews resided in the north-eastern part of the city (east of Baldachówka Street, the Town Square, the synagogues, Kolejowa Street), moreover near the commercial squares (the Town Square, the marketplace) and the thoroughfares (Lwowska Street, the railway station). The community's property included the Old Town synagogue, next to which there was the seat of the religious kehilla (*Bet Hamidras*), a cheder (elementary school of religious nature) and a rabbinical school, as well as a house of prayer (*Klaus*) that also served as a lodging house. There was an old cemetery and an old Jewish hospital next to the Nowomiejska synagogue. A new cemetery was established on Czekaj (now Rejtana Street). A kosher slaughterhouse was located on Budy (now Kochanowskiego Street) and a bathhouse (mikvah) was located next to the synagogues.¹⁵ The Jewish metric district in Rzeszów also included the surrounding villages.¹⁶

The duties of the community rabbi during the autonomous period were performed by Tzvi Hersch Orenstein (1871–1873), Isaac Wallerstein (1874–1904), Natan Lewin (1905–1926).¹⁷ As in the Roman Catholic parish, religious brotherhoods and societies were active at the synagogues and the kehillah, for example *Hevra Bikur Holim* supporting the old and the sick, *Hevra Zekenin*, whose

¹³ J. Świeboda, *Stosunki wyznaniowe...*, p. 549.

¹⁴ W. Wierzbieniec, *Żydzi rzeszowscy* [in:] *Encyklopedia Rzeszowa*, editor-in-chief J. Draus, Rzeszów 2004, pp. 820–823.

¹⁵ J. Świeboda, *Stosunki wyznaniowe...*, p. 602.

¹⁶ These were: Błędowa Zgłobieńska, Boguchwała, Bratkowice, Bzianka, Cierpisz, Dąbrowa, Drabinianka, Kraczkowa, Krasne, Łąka, Łukawiec, Malawa with Wilkowyja, Miłocin, Mrowła, Niechobrz, Nosówka with Zabierzów and Kielanówka, Ruska Wieś, Staromieście, Staroniwa, Świlcza, Terliczka, Trzciana, Woliczka, Wólka pod Lasem, Zaczernie, Zwiężczyca. See: K. Ożóg, *Ruch naturalny ludności żydowskiej w okręgu metrykalnym w Rzeszowie w latach 1842–1943*, „Prace Historyczno-Archiwalne” 2014, vol. XXVI, p. 68.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 534.

members visited old people's homes, *Hevra Gemilath Hesed* helping the poor, an orphanage.¹⁸ Intellectual movements among Jews in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were clearly seen also in Rzeszów: Haskalah, which aimed to bring Jews closer to the culture of their countries of residence, and the assimilation movement derived from it; mystical Hasidism, which assumed that in contacts between the Creator and man the function of intermediary is performed by a tzaddik endowed with special grace; Zionism promoting the idea of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine.¹⁹ The ideas of these movements were often at odds with each other, and mitigating the conflicts that arose from them and plagued the Jewish community required great tact and diplomacy on the part of the Rzeszów rabbis.²⁰ The intellectual potential of the Jewish community extended beyond the borders of the city and Galicia, its representatives were recognised and respected and, in the opinion of many, 'Rzeszów was above all the centre of world Hasidism' (transl. mine).²¹

Compared to the previously mentioned religious communities (Roman Catholic and Jewish), the importance and range of influence of the Greek Catholic parish was much smaller, which was mainly due to its considerably lower population. The parish proper, belonging to the Kańczuckie deanery of the Greek Catholic Diocese of Przemyśl, had an Orthodox church in Zalesie, a village 5 km from Rzeszów.²² In addition to Zalesie (321 worshippers in 1913), the parish proper included the neighbouring Biała (869) and Matysówka (112). The parish also included residents of the cities of Rzeszów, Tarnów, Kolbuszowa, Tyczyn, Łańcut and Ropczyce (1,020 people, including 664 Royal and Imperial Army soldiers of the Greek Catholic religion, stationed in Rzeszów) and the surrounding villages (50 people). The number of worshippers amounted to a total of 2,160.²³ The parish was thus situated somewhat on the outskirts of Rzeszów, and almost half of the worshippers lived in dispersion, which facilitated the process of Polonisation. The church probably existed as early as the 14th century and was one of the oldest in the Polish-Ruthenian borderland. Attempts to convert it into a Roman Catholic church only came to fruition in 1946, when, as a consequence of migration movements, the parish was liquidated.²⁴ The parish property in 1913 consisted of 15 morgens of fields, 12 morgens of meadows

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 603.

¹⁹ W. Wierzbieniec, *Żydzi rzeszowscy...*, pp. 820–823.

²⁰ J. Świeboda, *Stosunki wyznaniowe...*, pp. 604–606.

²¹ Ibid, p. 606.

²² *Shimatism' Vsego Klira Greko-Katoličeskogo Eparhij Soedininyh' Peremyskoj, Samborskoj i Sanočkoj na God' ot' Rozd. Hr. 1913*, Peremysli, p. 174.

²³ *Shimatism' Vsego Klira Greko-Katoličeskogo Eparhij... 1913*, p. 174.

²⁴ J. Malczewski, *Cerkiew w Zalesiu* [in:] *Encyklopedia Rzeszowa*, editor-in-chief J. Draus, Rzeszów 2004, pp. 59–60.

and gardens, 2 morgens and 1,036 fathoms of pasture,²⁵ 8 piles of wood and other contributions in kind (rye, wool), as well as a state subsidy of more than 830 crowns, paid to parishes with modest incomes according to the established rates.²⁶ In 1889, a new Neo-Romanesque brick church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was built in Zalesie. It was consecrated in 1894 by Bishop Julian Pełesz.²⁷ The following confraternities were active at the parish: rosary, sobriety, Apostolate of Prayer. The Greek Catholics celebrated the same feasts as the Latin Catholics, only with a two-week delay, and the celebration itself had different forms, which was clearly visible, for example, on the Feast of Jordan, which for the Latin Catholics functioned under the name of Epiphany.²⁸

The parochial Greek Catholic priests were successively: Julian Hanasiewicz (1849–1881), Dr Dmitry Bilinskiy (1882–1887), Jan/Iwan Nehrebecki (1888–1906) and Jan Kamiński (from 1907).²⁹ Their example shows the impact of growing nationalistic tendencies among the Ruthenians on the Greek Catholic clergy, and through them on the parishioners – in Zalesie predominantly Polish. Julian Hanasiewicz represented the attitude of *Gente Ruthenus, natione Polonus*, and his family rendered great service to the development of Polish culture and the independence movement during the January Uprising. Dymitr Biliński, who came from Przemyśl, came into conflict with the Roman Catholic parish priest from Słocina, whom he accused of stealing “souls”. Jan/Iwan Nehrebecki was active in Ruthenian organisations, he organised the teaching of the Ruthenian/Ukrainian language for children at the presbytery, and lectures on Ukrainian national issues were held in the church. Jan Kamiński arranged a reading room for “Prosvita” in the house next to the vicarage. Services for soldiers of Ruthenian origin serving in regiments stationed in Rzeszów were given a national character. However, these actions did not fundamentally change the pro-Polish attitude of the faithful, but “only sowed ferment and unrest in a few cases”.³⁰

The life of these three religious communities was reflected in the metrical books kept by each of them, in which births and baptisms or circumcisions, marriages and deaths of their members were recorded. The obligation to keep them in the universal Church was imposed by the Council of Trent in 1563.

²⁵ The Lower Austrian morgen was 1,600 Viennese square fathoms, which was 5,755.4 square maters. I. Ihnatowicz, A. Biernat, *Vademecum do badań nad historią XIX i XX wieku*, Warsaw 2003, p. 46.

²⁶ *Shimatism' Vsego Klira Greko-Katoličeskogo Eparhij... 1913*, p. 174, J. Świeboda, *Stosunki wyznaniowe...*, p. 570.

²⁷ J. Świeboda, *Stosunki wyznaniowe...*, pp. 559–560.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 600.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 534, 550, 598.

³⁰ J. Świeboda, *Stosunki wyznaniowe...*, p. 552.

The Austrian state in the Polish territories, which were seized as a result of the partitions, reformed the method of registration (in 1776 and 1782) giving it the rank of state documentation, and the clergy of various denominations the status of civil servants.³¹ The metrics relate directly to demographic processes and characterise the natural movement, but the record forms also provide general information about their socio-behavioural conditions, which can become the basis for presumptions about, among other things, how religious precepts were followed in everyday life. The proportion of out-of-wedlock births, the seasonal distribution of weddings and the question of the provision of sacraments to the dying for their last journey (in the case of Catholics of the Latin and Eastern rites) were used as a way to make indirect inferences regarding the final data.

The metric books of the Parish of Farna constitute a group No. 1132 of the *Roman Catholic Parish Registry Records of Rzeszów*, consisting of 18 units.³² The extreme dates are 1854–1947, but there are gaps in the records, especially for the period of the Second Republic. A serious difficulty with some of the books is that they are too deeply stitched together, making it impossible to read some of the metrics in their entirety. The order of the villages in the parish also changes, partly as a result of administrative changes, which also complicates orientation in the records, some of which are repeated while others are omitted. These books formed the basis for the analysis of births and names given at baptism to children, deaths, the second demographic transition taking place in Rzeszów.³³ The archives has been made available as scans.

The metrics of the Jewish community can be found in the group No. 533 of *Israelite Metric Office in Rzeszów*, which includes 74 units.³⁴ The extreme dates mark the years 1842–1942, but the year 1842 is only reached by death metrics. The registration of births and deaths is in the form of bound books, while marriages are in the form of deeds. The sources have been partly scanned. On their basis, the natural movements of the Jewish population in the given period were

³¹ Z. Budzyński, *Ludność pogranicza polsko-ruskiego w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku*, vol. 1, Przemyśl–Rzeszów 1993, pp. 162–163.

³² State Archive in Rzeszów (AP), archive no. 1132 *Akta stanu cywilnego Parafii Rzymsko-katolickiej w Rzeszowie*.

³³ S. Rejman, *Imiona nadawane dzieciom w rzeszowskiej parafii farnej na początku XX wieku*, „Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski. Studia i materiały” 2017, vol. 39, pp. 253–282; S. Rejman, *The First Demographic Transition in Galicia as an element of modernisation – Rzeszów against the background of the largest cities in Galicia: Lviv and Kraków*, “Galicia. Studia i materiały” 2021, no. 7, pp. 327–342; S. Rejman, *Urodzenia w Ruskiej Wsi (parafia farna w Rzeszowie) w latach 1880–1900*, „Limes. Studia i materiały z dziejów Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej” 2018, no. 11, pp. 144–159; S. Rejman, *Zgony i ich uwarunkowania w parafii farnej w Rzeszowie w latach 1876–1913 w kontekście pierwszego przejścia demograficznego*, „Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski. Studia i materiały” 2018, vol. 40, pp. 245–272.

³⁴ State Archive in Rzeszów (AP), archive no. 533 *Urząd Metrykalny Izraelicki w Rzeszowie*.

characterised by Karolina Ożóg, who also analysed them in terms of the first demographic transition.³⁵

After the liquidation of the Greek Catholic parish in Zalesie, the parish archive was dispersed and is now located in at least three places: State Archive in Rzeszów,³⁶ in the Registry Office in Rzeszów³⁷ and in the Registry Office in Tyczyn.³⁸ Pursuant to *the Law on Civil Status Records* Article 28,³⁹ civil status records and collective records of civil status registration are kept by the head of the civil status office for a period of 100 (birth records; collective records of civil status registration regarding birth) or 80 years (marriage certificates; death certificates; collective records of civil status registration regarding marriage and death). After this time and before civil status records and collective records of civil status registration are transferred to the relevant state archive, they are made available by the head of the civil status office according to the rules set out in the Act of 14 July 1983 on the national archival resource and archives.⁴⁰ These deadlines are calculated from the date of the last entry in a given metric book. These legal conditions are a significant impediment and sometimes prevent access to relevant data, which makes any assistance in accessing them all the more worthy of praise. For the purposes of this article, summarised data from the Registry Office in Rzeszów were obtained courtesy of and with the help of its staff.⁴¹

For the analysis, the ten-year period 1904–1913 was chosen, i.e. the time before the outbreak of the First World War ending the long nineteenth century, in which symptoms of the first demographic transition taking place in Galicia

³⁵ The author also used the metric books of the Jewish religious community stored at the Registry Office in Rzeszów. See: K. Ożóg, *Ruch naturalny ludności żydowskiej w okręgu metrykalnym w Rzeszowie w latach 1842–1943*, „Prace Historyczno-Archiwalne” 2014, vol. XXVI, pp. 67–100.

³⁶ State Archive in Rzeszów (AP), archive No. 1319 *akta stanu cywilnego Parafii Greckokatolickiej w Zalesiu*, extreme dates 1880–1903, available in the form of scans.

³⁷ Civil Registry Office in Rzeszów, *Wykaz ksiąg stanu cywilnego będących w zasobach archiwalnych USC w Rzeszowie, Księga urodzeń 1903–1945 – Biała (Greek Catholic), Księga małżeństw 1906–1945 – Biała (Greek Catholic), Księga zgonów 1888–1945 – Zalesie (Greek Catholic)*. In addition, there are items in the list where it is not indicated which denomination they refer to. See <https://bip.erzeszow.pl/273-urząd-stanu-cywilnego/2093-informacje-o-wydziale.html> [access: 30.09.2022].

³⁸ There is no list of metric books in the resources of the Civil Registry Office in Tyczyn.

³⁹ *Law on Civil Status Records* [Prawo o aktach stanu cywilnego], Journal of Laws 2018, item 2224, with further amendments.

⁴⁰ *Act on the National Archive Resource and Archives* [Ustawa o narodowym zasobie archiwalnym i archiwach], Journal of Laws 2019, item 553, as amended.

⁴¹ Special thanks to Mr Jerzy Wiktor, Head of the Registry Office in Rzeszów, his deputy Ms Marzena Czach-Szaro and all those who contributed to the compilation of the statistics provided in the letter of 8.09.2022.

could be seen. Practical considerations were also decisive – overlapping series of data (with some gaps) for the three religious communities.

Out-of-wedlock births were a visible sign of the transgression of the commandments of the Decalogue (the sixth or ninth) and the establishment of a relationship ascribed to marriage outside of it. This fact usually could not be concealed and the condemnation of public opinion fell on the mother and the born child. The offspring was often accompanied by negative terms referring to their origin from an extramarital union until their death. The father most often remained unknown in the case of the Latin Catholic and Greek Catholic denominations. The situation was different in the case of the Jewish population, who often entered into ritual marriages without them being officially registered, so that the children born of these unions had the status of being extramarital, although the father acknowledged his paternity. Parents were also able to complete the formalities by marrying in the form prescribed by law, which enabled the legitimacy of the offspring.

In the parish of Farna in Rzeszów between 1904 and 1913 (excluding the year 1907), there were 5,846 births, of which in the city alone there were 3,855 and in the villages belonging to the parish 1,991. There were a total of 640 extra-marital births, which accounted for about 11% (an average of 71 per year). However, there was a marked discrepancy between the town, where the percentage averaged 14%, and the villages, where it was much lower, with an average of 5%. There were also differences between villages, with the lowest percentage of illegitimate births recorded in Wilkowyja (average 3.30%) and Zwiężczyca (3.67%), higher in Pobitno (5.01%) and Załęże (5.72), and the highest in Staroniwa (6.07%).⁴² The city provided far more opportunities to cross the standard boundaries set by morality. It provided greater anonymity, in the countryside the social control of family, neighbours and the local community was more influential, and the judgement formed by it was more respected. The city also offered a richer range of cultural entertainment and social gatherings, providing opportunities for private relationships. The presence of two socio-professional groups, namely servants, coming from the surrounding villages in search of work, and soldiers from the regiments stationed in Rzeszów (the 6th Uhlan regiment, the 40th and 17th infantry regiments)⁴³ also increased the rate of extra-marital births. Female servants were furthermore exposed to unwanted advances from their employers, and the only effective form of defence would

⁴² Data calculation based on raw statistical material.

⁴³ For more on this subject see: J. Majka, *Garnizon Rzeszów w latach 1918–1939*, Rzeszów 2005; S. Szuro, *Informator statystyczny do dziejów społeczno-gospodarczych Galicji. Ludność wojskowa Austro-Węgier rekrutująca się i stacjonująca na terenie Galicji w latach 1869–1913*, Kraków 1990, pp. 84–87.

have been to resign from their jobs, which most could not afford, and there was no guarantee that a new post would protect them from such dangers.

In the Greek Catholic parish of Zalesie, 588 births were recorded in the years in question, including 19 out-of-wedlock births (an average of just under 2 out-of-wedlock births per year), an average of just over 3%. The rural nature of the parish and the decidedly smaller number of worshippers and births (almost tenfold), as well as the lower accessibility to urban attractions, were conducive to the observance of morality. There were years when extramarital births did not occur at all (1906, 1909) or there were isolated cases (1907, 1912).

In the Jewish metric district, the proportion of extramarital births was significantly higher – out of 2,251 births between 1904 and 1910, 883 took place in extramarital unions, which accounted for 39% and translated into an average annual number of 126 extramarital births. This high rate was due to the way in which Jews treated the obligation to marry in front of an official – a metrician – or rather to complete the formalities and registration required by law. What was deemed essential was the ritual wedding concluded in the face of God and the Jewish community – meanwhile, for the wedding to be valid in the face of civil law, the presence of a rabbi was required. According to M. Śliż, “the different role of the rabbi, or rather its irrelevance for the legitimacy from the religious point of view of the nuptial rite, was the cause of numerous irregularities”.⁴⁴ The fact that, in fact, the children recorded as extramarital came from ritual marriages is evidenced by the fact that the father’s details were recorded in almost half of the cases (the percentage ranged from 37 to 49% depending on the year, the highest being at the beginning and end of the analysed period). If those births with no record of the father’s details were treated as extramarital births, their percentage would continue to be high, averaging almost 17% (383 extramarital births without the father’s entry out of 2,251 total births). This figure is more in line with the 14% of extra-marital births in Rzeszów in the Farna Parish, but still significantly higher than the 11% for the parish as a whole. The lower percentage was influenced by the villages belonging to the parish, where extra-marital births were fewer, but the Jewish metric district also included villages. It is to be presumed that in this 17% some of the births may also have come from ritually contracted marriages.

For Latin Rite and Eastern Rite Catholics, the percentage of extra-marital births in the annual distribution remains more or less the same, increasing or decreasing; however, these changes do not translate clearly into an upward or downward trend. In the case of the Jewish population, the changes look similar

⁴⁴ M. Śliż, *Galicyscy Żydzi na drodze do równouprawnienia 1848–1914. Aspekt prawny procesu emancypacji Żydów w Galicji*, Kraków 2006, p. 131.

with the exception of 1904, which is characterised by a higher value that deviates markedly from the other years (Table 1). On the other hand, in the case of extra-marital births, for which there is no father data, a clearly higher percentage is displayed in 1904 and 1910, the first and last of the analysed years. Thus, in the three described religious communities, extra-marital births were a constant feature of their lives and there was no indication of impending change.

Table 1. Extra-marital births in Rzeszów between 1904 and 1913 by religion

Year	Roman Catholic Parish of Farna								
	Rzeszów			All villages in total			The whole parish		
	Total number of births	including extra-marital	i.e. %	Total number of births	including extra-marital	i.e. %	Total number of births	including extra-marital	i.e. %
1904	425	65	15,29	215	12	5,58	640	77	12,03
1905	402	59	14,68	209	10	4,78	611	69	11,29
1906	354	64	18,08	221	7	3,17	575	71	12,35
1907	No reliable data								
1908	404	49	12,13	204	10	4,90	608	59	9,70
1909	453	55	12,14	207	10	4,83	660	65	9,85
1910	422	57	13,51	224	12	5,36	646	69	10,68
1911	470	63	13,40	216	15	6,94	686	78	11,37
1912	460	60	13,04	258	10	3,88	718	70	9,75
1913	465	71	15,27	237	11	4,64	702	82	11,68
Average	428	60	14,17	221,22	10,8	4,90	649,6	71	10,97
Total	3855	543	x	1991	97	x	5846	640	x

Greek Catholic Parish in Zalesie				Jewish religious community					
Year	Total number of births	including extra-marital	i.e. %	Total number of births	including extra-marital	i.e. %	including acknowledgement of paternity	including without acknowledgement of paternity	i.e. % (of all births)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1904	57	2	3,51	346	155	44,8	79	76	21,97
1905	61	2	3,28	314	119	37,9	66	53	16,88
1906	55	0	0,00	322	126	39,13	77	49	15,22
1907	59	1	1,69	326	127	38,96	74	53	16,26
1908	65	4	6,15	303	116	38,28	68	48	15,84
1909	62	0	0,00	325	120	36,92	75	45	13,85

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1910	60	3	5,00	315	120	38,1	61	59	18,73
1911	62	3	4,84	-	-	-	-	-	-
1912	47	1	2,13	-	-	-	-	-	-
1913	60	3	5,00	-	-	-	-	-	-
Average	58,80	1,90	3,16	321,57	126,14	39,16	71,43	54,71	16,96
Total	588	19	x	2251	883	x	500	383	x

Source: State Archive in Rzeszów (AP), archives no. 1132 *Akta stanu cywilnego Parafii Rzymskokatolickiej w Rzeszowie* [Files of the civil registry office of the Roman Catholic parish in Rzeszów], File no. 5, 8, 10, 12; State Archive in Rzeszów (AP), archives no. 533 *Urząd Metrykalny Izraelicki w Rzeszowie* [The Jewish Metric Office], File no. 70, 72, 74; Civil Registry Office in Rzeszów, Registry of Births 1903–1945 – *Biała (Greek Catholic)* – based on the specification of data submitted in a letter of 8.09.2022.

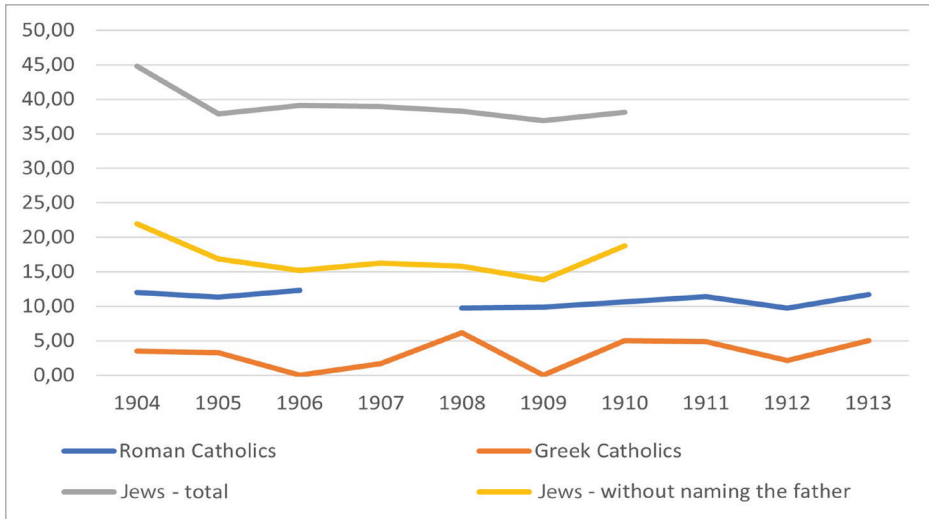


Chart 1. Percentage of extra-marital births in Rzeszów between 1904 and 1913 by religion

Source: State Archive in Rzeszów (AP), archives no. 1132 *Akta stanu cywilnego Parafii Rzymskokatolickiej w Rzeszowie*, File no. 5, 8, 10, 12; State Archive in Rzeszów (AP), archives no. 533 *Urząd Metrykalny Izraelicki w Rzeszowie*, File no. 70, 72, 74; Civil Registry Office in Rzeszów, Registry of Births 1903–1945 – *Biała (Greek Catholic)* – based on the specification of data submitted in a letter of 8.09.2022.

In all religious communities, the wedding was an important event for the newlyweds, their families and the community as a whole, which was often involved to a greater or lesser extent in the event at its various stages. The date of the wedding was determined on the basis of personal considerations, but, above all, on the basis of an established custom that took into account the religious

norms in force as well as practical considerations regarding the organisation of the ceremony. In the liturgical year, there were months in which weddings were either inadvisable or forbidden due to holidays or fasts. In the case of Latin or Eastern Rite Catholics, these were Advent (December) and Lent (March and April, sometimes February due to Easter being a moveable feast, with a two-week postponement in the case of Greek Catholics). In the case of Jews, fasting periods were December-January (commemorating the siege of Jerusalem), June-July (commemorating the capture and destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC and by Titus in 70 AD), July-August (commemorating the capture and destruction of the two temples).⁴⁵ In addition, the major religious festivals required the believers to focus on the celebration, which was not conducive to ‘tying the knot’ or organising weddings.

Catholics of both rites followed the precepts of the religion. In the Farna parish, 989 couples were married between 1904 and 1913. However, the year 1905 was excluded from the analysis because dates were illegible for some of the records, making it impossible to examine the seasonal distribution. As a result, 912 metrics were left for examination. In March, there were either no or few weddings at all (7 in total), in April slightly more (30), but their number clearly did not reach the values of the other months (with a monthly average of 76 weddings). In December, weddings were virtually non-existent (there were 4 such cases in the analysed time frame). On the other hand, the peak of weddings traditionally fell on the autumn period (September, October and November), which was typical for rural communities – although the parish had an urban-rural character – and at the time of the carnival (January-February). There were 101 weddings in the Greek Catholic parish of Zalesie between 1904 and 1913. Their seasonal distribution was similar to that of the Farna parish, with a notable shift in the timing in relation to Latinists. For this reason, there were few weddings in January, while February had the highest seasonal rate of the year at 290 (23 weddings). There were no weddings at all in March, just like in December. The autumn accumulation was spread over September, October and November (a total of 46 marriages). Compared to Latinists, a lot of marriages were also concluded in July, also a time of the Kupala festival (equivalent to Midsummer night).⁴⁶

The Jewish liturgical year and therefore the seasonal distribution of weddings were different. As with the seasonality of births, the distribution of weddings is characterised by less variation throughout the year than for Catholics.

⁴⁵ I. Ihnatowicz, A. Biernat, *Vademecum do badań nad historią XIX i XX wieku*, Warszawa 2003, p. 33; M. Siemieński, *Księga świąt i obyczajów żydowskich. Było, minęło...*, Warszawa 1993, p. 95.

⁴⁶ M. Łesiów, *Lipiec w ludowo-religijnej tradycji Ukraińców*, <https://grekokatolicy.pl/grekokatolicy/lipiec-w-ludowo-religijnej-tradycji-ukraincow/> [access: 7.10.2022].

Many holidays were movable, so the seasonal distribution of weddings is not so clear-cut. The lowest number of weddings occurred in May (26 out of 593) and October (28). Holidays rather than fasting times were an obstacle. In May-June, Jews celebrated Shavuot, a holiday associated with ancient agricultural customs and the commemoration of the revelation of the Torah. September and October, on the other hand, were marked by several festivals: Rosh Hashanah, or New Year's Day, Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), Sukkot (Feast of Booths).⁴⁷ The highest number of weddings was celebrated in June (80, seasonality indicator 164), which would indicate the urban nature of the Jewish community, entangled in urban activities and therefore having free time during the summer field-work period. August was also a popular choice (58 weddings). A large number of weddings also took place in December (67, seasonality indicator 133), which significantly differentiated the Jewish community from the Catholics. The joyous and family festival of Hanukkah fell on November-December. At the beginning of the year, February and March were slightly more popular than average (52 weddings each). These months included the Jewish carnival (Purim), which contrasted with the Lenten season for Catholics.

Table 2. Marriages and seasonality rate of marriages in Rzeszów between 1904 and 1913 by religion

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Roman Catholics													
Number of births	89	136	7	30	67	57	47	58	77	142	198	4	912
Seasonality indicator	114	191	9	40	86	75	60	74	102	182	262	5	1200
Greek Catholics													
Number of births	4	23	0	3	4	6	10	5	13	18	15	0	101
Seasonality indicator	46	290	0	36	46	71	115	57	154	207	178	0	1200
Jews													
Number of births	48	52	52	36	26	80	50	58	43	28	53	67	593
Seasonality indicator	95	113	103	74	51	164	99	115	88	56	109	133	1200

[Note – data for Roman Catholics without 1905]

Source: State Archive in Rzeszów (AP), archives no. 1132 *Akta stanu cywilnego Parafii Rzymskokatolickiej w Rzeszowie*, File no. 15–16; State Archive in Rzeszów (AP), archives no. 533 *Urząd Metrykalny Izraelicki w Rzeszowie*, File no. 7–13; Civil Registry Office in Rzeszów, Registry of Marriages 1903–1945 – *Biała (Greek Catholic)* – based on the specification of data submitted in a letter of 8.09.2022.

⁴⁷ I. Ihnatowicz, A. Biernat, *Vademecum do badań nad historią XIX i XX wieku*, Warszawa 2003, p. 33; M. Siemieński, *Księga świąt i obyczajów żydowskich. Było, minęło...*, Warszawa 1993, p. 95.

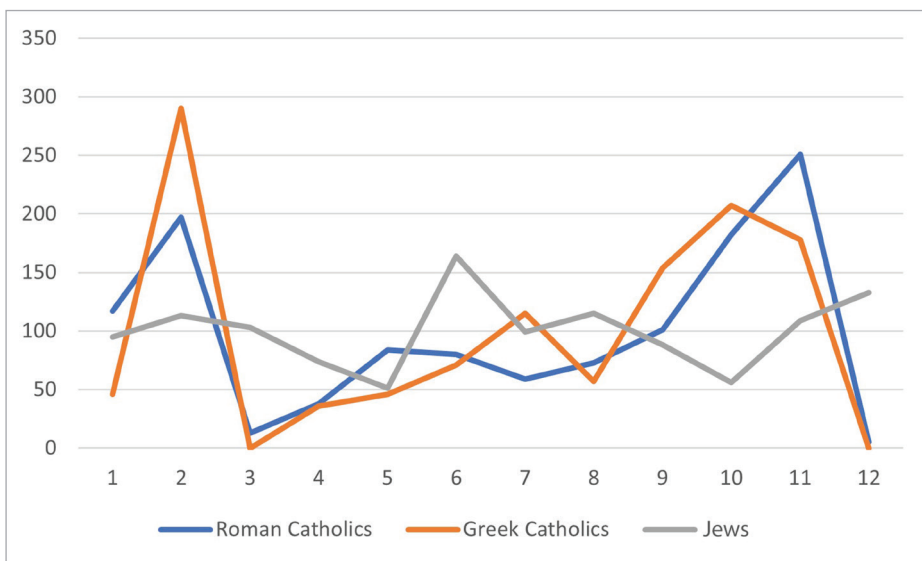


Chart 2. Marriage seasonality indicator by religion in Rzeszów between 1904 and 1913

Source: State Archive in Rzeszów (AP), archives no. 1132 *Akta stanu cywilnego Parafii Rzymskokatolickiej w Rzeszowie*, File no. 15–16; State Archive in Rzeszów (AP), archives no. 533 *Urząd Metrykalny Izraelicki w Rzeszowie*, File no. 7–13; Civil Registry Office in Rzeszów, Registry of Marriages 1903–1945 – *Biała (Greek Catholic)* – based on the specification of data submitted in a letter of 8.09.2022.

On the threshold of death, questions of the final settlement of matters between God and man in the perspective of eternal life took on special significance. But they were also important for the family – the pious departure of a member of the family from this world was in line with public expectations, while death in other circumstances gave cause for scorn, and the deceased and his family became the subject of all sorts of suspicions.

With regard to Catholics, the formula in the book of the dead which reflected whether the death had occurred in accordance with the notion of a good death was the annotation *Sanctis Sacramentis provisus* (provided with the holy sacraments, which was abbreviated *SS. prov.*), or alternatively *non provisus*. This applied to people who had already made their first confession and communion, or at least had a discernment of good and evil, i.e. people over the age of seven – the youngest for whom the information about the provision of sacraments for the last journey was recorded were 8 years old.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ D. Pietras, *Ostatnie sakramenty w życiu katolika – Namaszczenie chorych*, <http://pietras-dawid.pl/kazania-konferencje/pisane/wiecznosc/ostatnie-sakramenty-w-zyciu-katolika> [access: 11.10.2022].

In the case of Jews, there was no relevant formula in the books of the dead, so this issue cannot be analysed. According to Karolina Ożóg, between 1902 and 1911, the annual average of deaths in this community was just over 152.⁴⁹ There was a custom according to which members of the *Chevra Kadisha* (Holy Brotherhood of the Last Service) appeared at the bed of the deceased. Their task was to wash the corpse, carry it to the grave and bury it. The funeral had to be organised as soon as possible.⁵⁰

Table 3. Deaths of Greek Catholics in the Zalesie parish between 1904 and 1913 according to records of provided holy sacraments

Year	Total number of deaths	Records of people over 7 years of age					
		SS provisus	i.e. %	non provisus	i.e. %	No data	i.e. %
1904	33	0	0,00	0	0,00	14	42
1905	38	0	0,00	0	0,00	15	39
1906	39	0	0,00	0	0,00	12	31
1907	37	0	0,00	0	0,00	16	43
1908	33	0	0,00	0	0,00	16	48
1909	39	0	0,00	0	0,00	11	28
1910	44	0	0,00	0	0,00	20	45
1911	34	0	0,00	0	0,00	16	47
1912	29	0	0,00	0	0,00	14	48
1913	30	0	0,00	0	0,00	13	43
Total	356	0	0,00	0	0,00	147	41

Source: Registry of Deaths 1903–1945 – *Zalesie (Greek Catholic)* – based on the specification of data submitted in a letter of 8.09.2022.

In the Greek Catholic parish of Zalesie between 1904 and 1913, out of 356 persons who died between 1904 and 1913, those over 7 years of age accounted for 41%. In no case, however, was there any information on whether or not they had been supplied with sacraments. It is presumed that this meant that such provision took place and was taken for granted. D. Olszewski points out that according to the sources, “three sacraments: baptism, marriage and anointing

⁴⁹ In the years 1842–1941 this was one of the lowest averages, with a lower value only in the period of the Second Republic in the years 1922–1931 – an average of 116 deaths per year. See: K. Ożóg, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

⁵⁰ M. Siemieński, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

of the sick were administered to the faithful regularly”.⁵¹ However, it cannot be ruled out that the summoning of a clergyman was avoided for fear of death, which was to be heralded by his appearance.⁵²

The records of the Farna parish in Rzeszów are the basis for the inference. Between 1904 and 1913, 3,335 deaths were recorded there. At the beginning of this period, differences in the approach to recording information about the provision of the sacraments to the dying persons are evident. In 1904, the formula *SS. provisus* or *non provisus* was recorded until mid-July, thereafter the question was not referred to, as it was throughout 1905. In 1906 and 1907, records appeared inconsistently: they were recorded only at some times. Systematic record-keeping was restored from mid-May 1908. Persons over 7 years of age accounted for a total of one third of the deceased (1,115 persons, or 33.4%). The vast majority (almost 29%) departed this world after being supplied with the sacraments. For 132 of the deceased (almost 4%) no information is available. *Non provisus* was recorded for 23 people (just over 0.5%). This formula was used reluctantly, as if it could determine the eternal life of the deceased already on earth. Obviously, there were cases of suicide or sudden death caused by heart disease, internal bleeding or accidents. More often, however, an attempt was made to soften the impact by emphasising that the death was unexpected. No mention was then offered about the provision of holy sacraments. Such cases also concerned people suffering from chronic illnesses (e.g. tuberculosis) or senile dementia, where the patient’s condition deteriorated unexpectedly and the family, accustomed to the patient’s infirmity, failed to react in time to call a priest. Suicide cases were also sometimes left unreported. The apparent great caution and even avoidance of the form *non provisus* in the records shows that the moment of transition from life to death was taken very seriously and care was taken to ensure that it took place in accordance with the idea of a good death. An important element of this was the sacraments, which were intended to preserve the dying person from eternal damnation and to lead him, through purgatory, to heaven. However, “the Catholic Catechism was clear: This Sacrament [of the Last Anointing] is not necessarily necessary for salvation, but it must not be neglected”.⁵³

⁵¹ D. Olszewski, *Polska kultura religijna na przełomie XIX i XX wieku*, Warszawa 1996, p. 165.

⁵² This attitude of the Uniates in the Chełm eparchy a century earlier is mentioned by W. Bobryk. See: idem, *Świadomość religijna ludności unickiej na terenie eparchii chełmskiej w XVIII wieku* [in:] *Kościół unicki w Rzeczypospolitej*, scientific edition by W. Walczak, Białystok 2010, p. 11.

⁵³ P. Gasparri, *Katechizm katolicki*, from the fourth Latin edition translated by x. J. Korzonkiewicz, Warsaw 1941, p. 165.

Table 4. Deaths in the Parish of Farna in Rzeszów between 1904 and 1913 according to records of provided holy sacraments

Year	Total number of deaths	Children up to 7 years of age	i.e. %	SS provisus	i.e. %	non provisus	i.e. %	No data	i.e. %
1904	344	253	73,55	77	22,38	8	2,33	6	1,74
1905	347	No records							
1906	333	320	96,10	5	1,50	3	0,90	5	1,50
1907	300	289	96,33	7	2,33	-	0,00	4	1,33
1908	297	173	58,25	110	37,04	3	1,01	11	3,70
1909	308	120	38,96	163	52,92	5	1,62	20	6,49
1910	309	136	44,01	149	48,22	2	0,65	22	7,12
1911	296	101	34,12	173	58,45	1	0,34	21	7,09
1912	392	227	57,91	149	38,01	0	0,00	16	4,08
1913	409	254	62,10	127	31,05	1	0,24	27	6,60
Total	3335	1873	62,37	960	28,79	23	0,69	132	3,96

Source: State Archive in Rzeszów (AP), archives no. 1132 *Akta stanu cywilnego Parafii Rzymsko-katolickiej w Rzeszowie*, File no. 11.

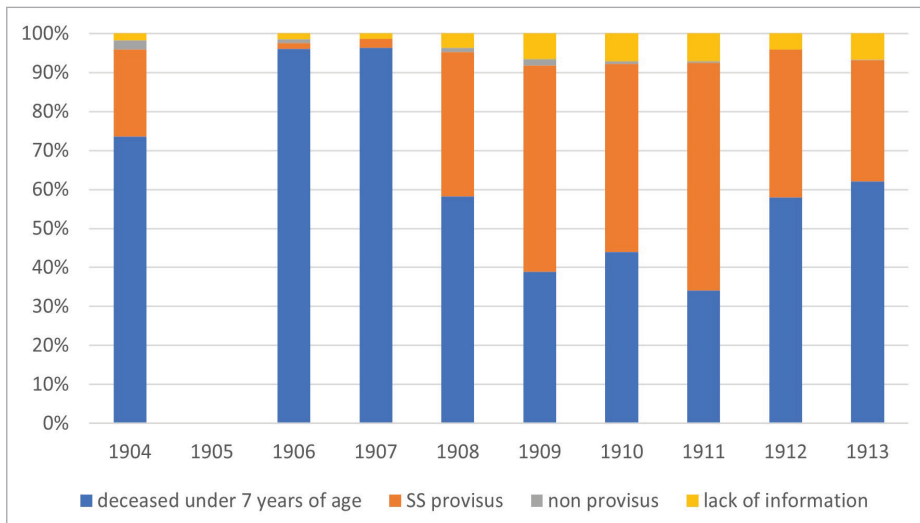


Chart 3. Deaths in the Parish of Farna in Rzeszów between 1904 and 1913 according to records of provide holy sacraments [%].

Source: State Archive in Rzeszów (AP), archives no. 1132 *Akta stanu cywilnego Parafii Rzymsko-katolickiej w Rzeszowie*, File no. 11.

Summary

The picture of the religiosity of the three religious groups, reconstructed on the basis of the metrical books, is of an indirect nature, as the records concerned demographic facts, while conclusions about the adherence to religious precepts were derived from the circumstances that accompanied these events. On the other hand, the value of the source is its large-scale character and the fact that it shows religiousness in its practical rather than declarative dimension. It should also be remembered, as T. Wiślicz emphasises, that religiosity “played an essential role as a factor, organising the local community by giving it a ceremonial and ideological basis for functioning”.⁵⁴ The fear of God’s wrath and the condemnation of public opinion complemented each other, which was particularly evident at the most important moments in a person’s life, such as birth, marriage and death. The decision to get married, entailing the decision as to which month should be chosen for this special event, depended on the preferences of the newlyweds.

In all three faith communities, they took into account the holidays and fasts of the liturgical year. In addition to religious considerations, social considerations also weighed in – family and neighbours were invited to the wedding, who would probably have declined the invitation had it taken place at an unfavourable period of time. The wedding was not always the beginning of married life, as evidenced by extramarital births. They occurred in all denominations, each taking on its own characteristic: in the case of Jews, the percentage was inflated by ritual marriages, which in the eyes of the law were extra-marital unions; in the case of Catholics, the urban nature of the parish increased the percentage of extra-marital births, while it was lowest in the case of Greek Catholics, which can be explained by greater control in rural communities. Death, as the final stage of earthly life, was seen as a predictor of whether or not eternal salvation would be achieved, which is why special care was taken to ensure that it took place according to the patterns set by religion. Only the books of the Catholic faiths, mainly of the Latin rite, serve as a basis for inference, but changes in the approach to recording, the desire to clarify the circumstances of deaths without the provision of holy sacraments and the avoidance of the formula *non provisus* prove that a good death was important both for the deceased person and for the bereaved family. Thus, at the most important moments of life, people tried to be in harmony with the precepts of religion, although this was not always successful.

⁵⁴ T. Wiślicz, *Zarobić na duszne zbawienie. Religijność chłopów małopolskich od połowy XVI do końca XVIII wieku*, Warszawa 2001, p. 200.

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Wiara a praktyka życia codziennego na podstawie ksiąg metrykalnych różnych wyznań w okresie autonomii galicyjskiej (na przykładzie Rzeszowa)

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł ma na celu ukazanie aspektów życia religijnego w świetle akt metrykalnych. Przedmiotem badań są wspólnoty wyznaniowe w Rzeszowie: rzymskokatolicka parafia Farna, żydowski okręg metrykalny i greckokatolicka parafia w Zalesiu. We wszystkich terminu ślubu wybierano zgodnie z rozkładem świąt i postów w roku liturgicznym. Urodzenia pozamałżeńskie dowodziły, że relacje typowe dla małżeństwa nawiązywano też przed ślubem. Urodzenia pozamałżeńskie zanotowano u Żydów z powodu małżeństw zawieranych tylko rytualnie. Więcej było ich też w parafii Farnej o miejskim charakterze, inaczej w wiejskiej parafii greckokatolickiej, gdzie udział procentowy urodzeń pozamałżeńskich był najniższy. Na religijność wskazywały również zapisy o zaopatrzeniu umierającego sakramentami.

Słowa kluczowe: Galicja, metryki, religijność, łacinnicy, grekokatolicy, Żydzi