

POLISH AND LITHUANIAN STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BASEL FROM THE SIXTEENTH TO THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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This article examines the question of the participation of students from Poland and Lithuania in the academic life in Basel from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Because the article is a prosopographic study, the group of surveyed students is presented in the context of their ethnicity, territorial and social origins, confession and field of studies. Two figures from Poland (Jan Osmólski and Marcin Chmielecki) most distinguished for intellectual contacts with Basel are also presented.

Keywords: Basel University – Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth – Marcin Chmielecki – Jan Osmólski – history of universities – peregrinatio academica

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Introduction

The international educational tours undertaken by young people from Poland and Lithuania were extremely popular in the early modern period. The main purpose of such trips was to gain social familiarity, broaden one's intellectual horizons, to gain knowledge of the world and culture, explore famous cities (the cognitive aspect), as well as to engage in the social networking of the courts. Regular studies were often undertaken at famous universities or academies, and this type of travel became a kind of institution.¹ For example, the French writer, historian and traveller Jean le Laboureur (1623–1675) called the Poles *les plus grands voyageurs de l'Europe*.² The tours abroad undertaken by the Poles and Lithuanians took various forms, as different terms were used to describe same. This was because sometimes the young men went abroad to be educated at universities (*peregrinatio academica*), and sometimes to gain knowledge of the world and culture, to broaden their horizons of thought or to get to know royal and princely courts (*Grand Tour*, *Kavalierstour*). Mixed forms were not uncommon, which guaranteed foreign education and entertainment. The aim of the paper is therefore to address two different types of such journeys (following German historiography): *Ausbildungsreise* (educational journey) and *Fortbildungsreise*

¹ Dorota ŻOŁĄDŹ, *Idealy edukacyjne doby staropolskiej. Stanowe modele i potrzeby edukacyjne szesnastego i siedemnastego wieku*, Warszawa–Poznań 1990, p. 65.

² Władysław ŁOZIŃSKI, *Życie polskie w dawnych wiekach*, Kraków 1958, p. 224.

(further educational journey)³, which were undertaken by the Poles and Lithuanians. Also, for obvious reasons, this matter must be limited to one academic centre of early modern Europe, the University of Basel, and to a statistical data relating to the Poles and Lithuanians who studied there.

This article is an attempt to make a summary in reference to the subject which has not yet been carried out by researchers who deal with the Polish-Swiss educational relationships. The issue of academic journeys of the Poles and Lithuanians in the early modern period has been a subject of research undertaken by several scholars⁴, however there is no in-depth study of Polish-Swiss intellectual relations in the chronological framework, as specified above. Furthermore, as Polish historiography lacks a complete analysis of the educational contacts of the poles and Lithuanians with the oldest university in Switzerland, the University of Basel, this paper aims to investigate these relations in the period from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century.

The links between Basel and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth go back quite a long way, but one could say that they intensified with the participation of the Polish delegation at the Council of Basel in 1431.⁵ From that moment on, numerous social and professional groups began to build networks between the two political entities. To name but a few: groups of Basel students studying at the University of Cracow in the fifteenth century⁶, religious refugees from Italy, who travelled via Basel to tolerant Poland in the early sixteenth century⁷, the correspondence and intellectual circle of Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536)⁸, the links between Basel and Poland in printing, literature, and culture⁹, and finally in reference to the many Polish and Lithuanian students who have studied at Basel University since the fifteenth century. Relations of this kind, mainly academic, created permanent networks

³ Antoni MAĆZAK, *Peregrynacje, Wojaże, Turystyka*, Warszawa 1984, p. 123.

⁴ Theodor WOTSCHKE, *Polnische Studenten in Altdorf*, Jahrbücher für Kultur und Geschichte der Slaven (further referenced as JKGS) 4, 1928, pp. 216–232; IDEM, *Polnische Studenten in Frankfurt*, JKGS 5, 1929, pp. 228–244; IDEM, *Polnische Studenten in Heidelberg*, JKGS 2/3, 1926, pp. 46–67; IDEM, *Polnische Studenten in Leiden*, JKGS 3, 1927, pp. 461–486; IDEM, *Polnische Studenten in Leipzig*, JKGS 7, 1931, pp. 61–81; IDEM, *Polnische Studenten in Wittenberg*, JKGS 2/2, 1926, pp. 169–200; IDEM, *Polnische und litauische Studenten in Königsberg*, JKGS 6, 1930, pp. 428–447; Henryk BARYCZ, *Polacy na studiach w Rzymie w epoce Odrodzenia (1440–1600)*, Kraków 1938; Marian PAWLAK, *Studia uniwersyteckie młodzieży z Prus Królewskich w XVI–XVIII w.*, Toruń 1988; Dorota ŻOŁĄDŹ-STRELCZYK, *Peregrinatio academica. Studia młodzieży polskiej z Korony i Litwy na akademiach i uniwersytetach niemieckich w XVI i pierwszej połowie XVII wieku*, Poznań 1996; Zdzisław PIETRZYK, *W kręgu Strasburga. Z peregrynacji młodzieży z Rzeczypospolitej polsko-litewskiej w latach 1538–1621*, Kraków 1997; Anna MARKIEWICZ, *Podróże edukacyjne w czasach Jana III Sobieskiego. Peregrinationes Jablonovianae*, Warszawa 2011; Adam KUCHARSKI, *Theatrum peregrinandi. Poznawcze aspekty staropolskich podróży w epoce późnego baroku*, Toruń 2013; Robert T. TOMCZAK, *Kontakty edukacyjne Polaków z uniwersytetami praskimi w XVI–XVIII wieku. Studium prozopograficzne*, Poznań 2021.

⁵ Teofil ZEGARSKI, *Polen und das Basler Konzil*, Posen 1910.

⁶ Sven STELLING-MICHAUD, *L'Université de Cracovie et la Suisse au temps de l'humanisme (1450–1520)*, in: Aleksander Gięysztor (ed.), *Echanges entre la Pologne et la Suisse du XIVe au XIXe siècle*, Genève 1964, pp. 53–66.

⁷ Henryk BARYCZ, *Die ersten wissenschaftlichen Verbindungen Polens mit Basel*, *Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki* (further referenced as KHNiT) 5/2, 1960, pp. 25–47.

⁸ Leszek HAJDUKIEWICZ, *Im Bücherkreis des Erasmus von Rotterdam. Aus der Geschichte der bibliophilen Beziehungen zwischen Polen und Basel im 16. Jahrhundert*, KHNiT 5/2, 1960, pp. 49–102; Maciej PTASZYŃSKI, *Reformacja w Polsce a dziedzictwo Erasma z Rotterdamu*, Warszawa 2018.

⁹ Waldemar VOISÉ, *Prace polskich uczonych w oficynach bazylejskich epoki renesansu*, *Roczniki Biblioteczne* 4, 1960, pp. 25–43; Maciej WŁODARSKI, *Dwa wieki kulturalnych i literackich powiązań polsko-bazylejskich 1433–1632*, Kraków 2001, pp. 249–304.

that linked Basel with Lithuania and Poland (especially through the large cities of Gdańsk, Cracow and Elbląg). The Poles and Lithuanians could therefore count on the kind support of Basel professors during their studies in the city (e.g. Polish and Lithuanian students in the circle of Celio Secundo Curione, Sébastien Castellion, Emmanuel Stupanus, Gaspard Bauhin or Johann Jakob Grynaeus), and for this kindness Basel's academic community received great benefits (interdependence). Long-lasting ties and personal relations were thus established, thanks to which later generations of the Poles and Lithuanians could come to Basel and rely on a friendly welcome at the university.

Wide-ranging intellectual relations between Poland-Lithuania with the University of Basel were examined in a number of now outdated publications, covering mainly the period of the sixteenth century,¹⁰ the period when mutual relations were the most developed. On the other hand, the bibliography for the baroque period is less extensive, and there have been no separate studies regarding the Enlightenment period. The above research results were published mainly at the time of celebrating the 500th anniversary of the University of Basel (in 1960). Later, this subject was not interesting for researchers for many years. Only a few decades later new publications appeared.¹¹ Although they concern literary and cultural aspects, they are not strictly dedicated to academic relations between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Switzerland and between Poland and Basel. It is worth noting, however, that the only researcher who described the relations of the Poles and Lithuanians with the University of Basel in the sixteenth century, in the most diligent manner, was Stanisław Kot (1885–1975).¹²

Research into the relationships and connections of individual noble families with the University of Basel has also remained on the margins of historical research in Poland. Only Maria Sipayłło (1905–1990) referred to the contacts of the Leszczyński family with this university,¹³ although this is only one of many well-known Polish and Lithuanian families, whose representatives (of various generations) studied in Basel (e.g. the Ossolińskis, Tyszkiewicz, Ostroróg, Myszkowskis, Tęczyńskis, Radziwiłł, Potockis, Firlej and Massalskis). Some of these families (especially their protestant branches) regarded their studies in Basel as a kind of family tradition. Research on students studying at Basel from other European countries is equally scarce. For instance,

¹⁰ Józef KALLENBACH, *Polacy w Bazylei w XVI wieku*, Archiwum do Dziejów Literatury i Oświaty w Polsce, 6, 1890, pp. 1–9; Stanisław KOT, *Polen in Basel zur Zeit des Königs Sigismund August 1548–1572 und die Anfänge kritischen Denkens in Polen*, Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde 41, 1942, pp. 105–153; IDEM, *Basel und Polen (XV.–XVII. Jh.)*, Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Geschichte 30/1, 1950, pp. 71–91; Stanisław SOKÓŁ, *Polnische Mediziner in Basel im XVI–XVII Jahrhundert*, KHNiT 5/2, 1960, pp. 175–190; H. BARYCZ, *Die ersten wissenschaftlichen*, pp. 25–47; L. HAJDUKIEWICZ, *Im Bücherkreis des Erasmus*, pp. 49–102; W. VOISÉ, *Prace polskich uczonych*, pp. 25–43.

¹¹ Maciej WŁODARSKI, *Polsko-bazyłejskie więzi kulturalne i literackie w XVI wieku*, Kraków 1987; IDEM, *Polen und Basel – kulturelle und literarische Verbindungen im 16. Jahrhundert*, in: Stephan Füssel – Jan Pirożyński (Hgg.), *Der polnische Humanismus und die europäischen Sodalitäten*, Wiesbaden 1997, pp. 91–100; IDEM, *Dwa wieki*; IDEM, *Polsko-szwajcarskie związki literackie w dobie baroku*, in: Alina Nowicka-Jeżowa (ed.), *Barok polski wobec Europy. Kierunki dialogu*, Warszawa 2003, pp. 333–363.

¹² See footnote no. 10.

¹³ Maria SIPAYŁŁO, *Stosunki Leszczyńskich z uniwersytetem bazyłejskim*, *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* (further referenced as ORP) 8, 1963, pp. 110–124.

a rather short article was written about Hungarian students of the reformed faith¹⁴ and about theology students in general.¹⁵

Therefore, there is a justified need for more detailed research regarding participation of Poles in the academic life of Basel in the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. On the one hand, such an undertaking – focused on the inhabitants of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in reference to the University of Basel – will fill the important gap in Polish and European historiography. On the other hand, this study will show the complex relations which linked this university with Poland and Lithuania from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. Poland's rich intellectual relations with Basel are in fact part of the contemporary scientific quest for a better understanding of the role of Central European countries in the European history of the Republic of Knowledge,¹⁶ as this issue has so far received little attention.¹⁷ Nevertheless, in this article, the issues must inevitably be presented briefly. Therefore, the article will emphasize the results of quantitative research.

Turnout

The first student (Abraham Zbąski) from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth appeared at the University of Basel only in 1551.¹⁸ Of course, we are referring to matriculated students who had undertaken regular studies. Previously, Poles or Lithuanians came to study in this city to meet Erasmus from Rotterdam or visited Basel only by passing during the journey to France. They did not enrol in the university, because university studies in this city were not usually their goal.¹⁹ It was only after the adoption of the Reformation in 1532 by the University of Basel that there was an increase in interest in this city as an important centre of Calvinist learning. In the mid-sixteenth century, students from Poland and Lithuania began to appear, who wanted to meet famous professors, such as Celio Secondo Curione, Sebastian Castellio or Bonifacius Amerbach. Poles and Lithuanians, however, were not a large student group, and their interest in studying in Basel had never reached a mass scale. From 1551 to 1700, there were only 432 students in this city who came from Poland and Lithuania. They were therefore a marginal student group in Basel (3.5%), compared to the total number of students of that period (12,448).²⁰ However, given the considerable distance of Poland and Lithuania from Basel, the low percentage of students from these areas is not surprising. When considering the entire group of students coming from Central

¹⁴ Ádám HEGYI, *Die Universität zu Basel und die ungarischen Studenten reformierten Bekenntnisses*, in: Christine Christ-von Wedel – Sven Grosse – Berndt Hamm (Hgg.), *Basel als Zentrum des geistigen Austauschs in der frühen Reformationszeit*, Berlin 2017, pp. 339–355.

¹⁵ Amy Nelson BURNETT, *Local Boys And Peripatetic Scholars: Theology Students In Basel, 1542–1642*, in: Herman Selderhuis – Markus Wriedt (Hgg.), *Konfession, Migration und Elitenbildung. Studien zur Theologenausbildung des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Leiden 2007, pp. 109–139.

¹⁶ Gábor ALMÁSI, *The Uses of Humanism: Johannes Sambucus (1531–1584), Andreas Dudith (1533–1589) and the Republic of Letters in East Central Europe*, Leiden 2009; Elizabeth DILLENBURG – Howard LOUTHAN – Drew B. THOMAS (eds.), *Print Culture at the Crossroads. The Book and Central Europe*, Leiden 2021.

¹⁷ Paula FINDLEN (ed.), *Empires of Knowledge. Scientific Networks in the Early Modern World*, Oxford 2018.

¹⁸ Hans Georg WACKERNAGEL (Hg.), *Die Matrikel der Universität Basel. Im Auftrage der Universität Basel*, II, (1532/33–1600/01), Basel 1956, p. 70.

¹⁹ M. WŁODARSKI, *Dwa wieki*, pp. 83–84.

²⁰ Number based on own calculations and analysis of student registers in Basel from 1551 to 1700.

and Eastern Europe, Poles and Lithuanians were the most numerous ethnic group from this part of Europe.²¹

The small share of Poles and Lithuanians in the overall attendance of students at the University of Basel was due to several factors. First of all, Basel was a city quite far away from Poland and studies there were not considered to be easily affordable. Travelling to Switzerland generated large costs, which only privileged social groups could afford. Additionally, the university in Basel was a protestant institution, so the circle of potential students also narrowed significantly. In the graph (see Figure 1 in the Illustration section I), it is clearly visible that at the time of the greatest religious tolerance in the country, the number of students from Poland and Lithuania was increasing, and, when in the early seventeenth century the counter-reformation activities of the Roman Church intensified, their number decreased drastically. A slight increase of the interest in Basel among students in the mid-seventeenth century resulted from the growing religious emigration from Poland, that is as a result of the Polish-Swedish war (1655–1660), when anti-protestant sentiments grew in the country.²² However, the University of Basel was never one of the protestant universities (Lutheran or Calvinist) which were attractive for Polish and Lithuanian youth. Frankfurt (Oder), Königsberg, Leipzig, Jena, Wittenberg and Leiden were definitely more popular among students.²³ One of the Lithuanian travellers, Maciej Vorbek-Lettow (1593–1663), noted that when he visited Basel in October 1610, the city was overrun by the plague. So, he fled to a group of five Polish students who had taken refuge from the epidemic outside the city. However, the plague also reached there soon after, so the members of the group went either to Paris or returned to Poland.²⁴ Basel was often struck by epidemics, which on the one hand deterred students, and on the other hand had a positive effect on the development of medicine at the university, attracting doctors of the plague, also from Poland (see below).

Social background

The majority of students from Poland and Lithuania who studied in Basel between 1551 and 1700 were of noble origin (51%). Most of the burghers (40%) came from wealthy patrician families, often also noble, of large urban centres (see Figure 2). It is most difficult to identify the peasant origin of individual students, but thanks to the cross referencing with other sources and literature, it was possible to determine that they constituted about 6% of all Polish and Lithuanian students in Basel. They were largely members of the retinues of wealthy magnates. This is an obvious observation, because the journey to this part of Europe was rather expensive, and most Poles and Lithuanians also visited – on their way – other European countries (Basel was just a stop) such as France or Italy. Not everyone could afford such an expense, so many of the less wealthy (poor nobility, peasants) decided

²¹ See: Á. HEGYI, *Die Universität zu Basel und die ungarischen Studenten*, p. 347, and Martin Holý's article in this volume of studies.

²² Mainly aimed at a branch of Calvinism in Poland – the Polish Brethren, see: Janusz TAZBIR, *Walka z Bracimi Polskimi w dobie kontrreformacji*, ORP 1, 1956, pp. 165–207.

²³ M. PAWLAK, *Studia uniwersyteckie*, tab. 4; D. ŻOŁĄDZ-STRZELCZYK, *Peregrinatio academica*, pp. 114–117; 129–134; 141–144.

²⁴ Maciej VORBEK-LETTOW, *Skarbnica pamięci. Pamiętnik lekarza króla Władysława IV*, edd. Ewa Galos – Franciszek Mincer, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków 1968, p. 39.

to serve in numerous retinues of wealthier students and on this occasion study abroad and explore Europe. As for the nobility itself, a large part of the students came from several noble families, which took on the role of promoters of Calvinism in Poland and Lithuania. The considered here were primarily the Radziwiłł family (3), the Leszczyńskis (5), Gorajskis (6), Ossolińskis (3), Ostroróg (4), Potockis (4), Słupeckis (3) or Myszkowskis (4).²⁵ The total number of their family members, protégés, mentees, servants, chaplains or members of their retinues entered in the registry consisted of another 90 enrolled (122 in total), i. e. almost a third (28%) of all students from Poland and Lithuania who were entered in the student's registry. Among the wealthiest noble families of Calvinist confession a family tradition emerged at that time, which directed the upbringing of sons to the Netherlands and Switzerland. Hence, such a large percentage of students coming from the nobility and wealthy burghers came to study in Basel. Therefore, one can risk the thesis that the studies in Basel were of a magnate-patrician character, at least in relation to the Poles and the Lithuanians.

Ethnicity

While analysing the university's registry (see Figure 3), it is worth noting that a group of students from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth identified themselves mainly as Poles (*Polonus*) or residents of Royal (*Pruthenus*) and Ducal Prussia (*Borussus*); only in a few cases as residents of Ruthenia (*Ruthenus*), Courland (*Curlandus*) or Polish Livonia (*ex Livonia*). The ethnicity declared by them is basically the only element enabling their identification as students from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It is worth adding that the term "Polish and Lithuanian students", used in the title of this article, is considered as the territorial origin of a given person from a state entity which was the direct legal successor to the medieval Crown of the Kingdom of Poland from the times of Kazimierz Wielki (Casimir the Great, 1310–1370). Since 1569, it had been known as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, because the Grand Duchy of Lithuania became an equal subject within the political structure of the Polish-Lithuanian Union (real union). Understandably, all territorial changes of the Polish state and fief relations (mainly permanent ones) between Poland and its subordinate state entities (Princely Prussia until 1657, all of Livonia until 1622) were taken into account. This decisive factor of nationality was therefore considered to be the source, which, due to the meticulousness of university writers, does not leave too much margin of error, while identifying the location of the state origin of the researched students.

While examining the ethnicity of a group of Polish and Lithuanian students in Basel, it was necessary to take an individual approach to some of the entries placed in the register, as an incorrect determination of origin occurred on occasion. For example, one of the students from 1600, Rafał Rutter, traveling as a tutor to Mikołaj Bogusław Zienowicz from

²⁵ See: M. SIPAYŁŁO, *Stosunki Leszczyńskich*, pp. 110–124; Mariola JARCZYKOWA, *Radziwiłłowie birzańscy jako protektorzy wyznania ewangelicko-reformowanego w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku*, in: Dariusz Champerek (ed.), *Ewangelicyzm reformowany w Pierwszej Rzeczypospolitej. Dialog z Europą i wybory aksjologiczne w świetle literatury i piśmiennictwa XVI–XVII wieku*, Warszawa 2015, pp. 104–129.

Lithuania, was described, like his mentee, as a Lithuanian (*Raphael Rutter Litanus*).²⁶ It is known, however, that he was an Englishman.²⁷ In turn, a student from 1549/50, Jan Rokita/Rokyta (*Joannes Rockita ex Prussia*),²⁸ did not come from Prussia but from Bohemia, more precisely from Litomyšl. He was a religious emigrant expelled from Bohemia as a member of the Czech Brethren.²⁹ In the register of the University of Wittenberg, he was entered in 1544, however, under the proper place of origin (*Joannes Rochita Litomisliensis, Boemus*).³⁰ Determining the ethnicity of some students therefore requires a cross referencing of records from the registries with other available sources, to include literature.

Territorial origin

Polish and Lithuanian students, understandably, came from territories strongly associated with Calvinism, such as Małopolska (Cracow – 11), part of Wielkopolska (Leszno – 9, Poznań – 3), Podlasie (Lublin – 7) or Lithuania. This was especially true of those students who came from the nobility, although their estates were sometimes scattered throughout several provinces. Hence, it is difficult to indicate one specific place of their origin. Among the students, who came from urban communities, dominated representatives of the largest and wealthiest cities, especially Prussian cities, such as Gdańsk – 72 students, Königsberg – 32, Toruń – 9, Elbląg – 6, Malbork – 6. The social and intellectual elites of these cities were mostly Calvinists; as in Gdańsk, where the Calvinist urban patriciate ruled over the Lutheran majority. It is important to emphasize here that Calvinism in Poland and Lithuania was highly elitist, like the entire Reformation in general. This was due to the strong position of the nobility in Poland and Lithuania, especially the magnates, and until its members opted for the Reformation, the poorer parts of society feared repression without the support of privileged groups. At the time, Calvinism met with the greatest interest of the wealthy nobility and the patriciate, which made the richest social groups in Poland and Lithuania, and focused in educating their sons at Calvinist universities, such as Basel.

Confession

The vast majority of students coming from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were protestant, mainly Calvinists (86%). However, there was no shortage of small groups of Catholics (4%), members of the Czech Brethren (4%), Polish Brethren (3%), orthodox Christians (2%) or Lutherans (1%). One of the students was a convert from Judaism, which was clearly indicated in the register (*Johannes Carolus Michaelis, Ex-Judaeus Cracoviensis*). A large part of the students, as many as 24 (6%), changed their religion after returning

²⁶ H. G. WACKERNAGEL (Hg.), *Die Matrikel der Universität Basel*, p. 491.

²⁷ Marian CHACHAJ, *Metryki zagranicznych uniwersytetów i akademii jako źródło do dziejów kultury polskiej (XVI–XVIII w.)*, in: Henryk Barycz (ed.), *Studia z dziejów epoki Renesansu*, Warszawa 1979, p. 51.

²⁸ H. G. WACKERNAGEL (Hg.), *Die Matrikel der Universität Basel*, pp. 64, 491.

²⁹ Jolanta DWORZACZKOWA, *Rokita (Rokyta), Jan*, in: Emanuel Rostworowski (ed.), *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, XXXI, Wrocław 1989, pp. 527–528.

³⁰ Karol Eduard FÖRSTEMANN (ed.), *Album Academiae vitebergensis ab a. Ch. MDII usque ad a. MDCLX (1502–1560)*, I, Leipzig 1841, p. 214.

to the country. Most of them abandoned the Calvinist denomination (20) and became Catholics, although there were also other conversions. These were mainly from Calvinism to the Polish or Czech Brethren. The change of religion to Catholicism was dictated by the desire for social advancement and taking up important official positions in the country. King Zygmunt III Waza (Sigimund III Vasa; 1566–1632), despite his declared religious tolerance, he promoted Catholics and preferred to surround himself with officials of the same faith as him. This monarch also did not react to the destruction of protestant congregations and did not respect religious freedoms, especially in the years 1610–1631.³¹ For example, Waclaw Leszczyński from Wielkopolska, a wealthy nobleman and a Basel student, was a Calvinist, therefore, did not hold any official functions in the state. However, after his return from studies, at the age of 25, he became a Catholic, and his career accelerated (from 1616 onwards). He became an MP, a senator and finally a grand chancellor.³² He became one of the most important figures after the king. Changes of religion after returning to the country were always made by the wealthiest nobility. An opportunistic approach sometimes prevailed in the decision to change religion. However, this does not change the fact that the students, who came from families associated with Calvinism (Lithuanian magnates and nobility, Małopolska – Lesser Poland – nobility and Gdańsk patricians), were primarily interested in studying in Basel.

Fields of study

Basel, as an academic centre, was famous primarily for its medical sciences, thanks to the reputation of Paracelsus and Gasparda Bauhin. It should not be surprising, therefore, that many students of urban origin studied medicine in this city (50 students). It was also related to the model of educating medics, which comprised their study abroad (*peregrinatio medica*). In 1674, the Danish anatomist Thomas Bartholin (1616–1680), in his *De peregrinatione medica*,³³ expressed the opinion that “no one believes in the authority of a doctor who has not set foot outside his country”.³⁴ However, we are considering here students who had entered the registers of individual faculties, not just the main, university record. Therefore, the largest number of students completed medical studies and were later promoted to doctors of medicine (41). They became the most important doctors in Poland and Lithuania. They were the court physicians of all the kings of Poland (Wawrzyniec Lemka, Paweł Kleofas Podchocimski, Hieronim Schultz, Ludwik Hammen, Samuel Makowski or Jerzy Seger, who treat as many as three Polish kings), the richest magnates (the Zbarskis, Sapieha, and Zasławskis), and the main city physicians in the largest cities (Gdańsk, Toruń, Königsberg, Vilnius, Lublin, Cracow, Bydgoszcz, Poznań,

³¹ Tomasz KEMPA, *Wobec kontrreformacji. Protestanci i prawosławni w obronie swobód wyznaniowych w Rzeczypospolitej w końcu XVI i w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku*, Toruń 2007, pp. 261–376.

³² Włodzimierz DWORZACZEK, *Leszczyński Waclaw*, in: Emanuel Rostworowski (ed.), *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, XXVII, Wrocław 1972, pp. 147–149; Jolanta DWORZACZKOWA, *Konwersje na katolicyzm szlachty ewangelickiej wyznania czeskiego w Wielkopolsce w XVI i XVII wieku*, ORP 50, 2006, p. 90.

³³ Thomas BARTHOLIN, *De peregrinatione medica*, Hafniae 1674.

³⁴ Thomas BARTHOLIN, *On medical travel*, in: Charles D. O'Malley (trans.), *On the burning of his library and on medical travel*, Kansas 1961, p. 50.

Malbork).³⁵ Most often they specialized in anatomy and epidemics. It is worth noting that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the outbreaks of plagues in Basel were the most frequent in Switzerland (1563, 1576, 1582, 1593, 1609, 1629, 1634, 1667)³⁶, so students from Poland learned from experienced specialists. A doctor of medicine promoted in Basel, Jan Kitloff from the Leklow family (†1641), was known in Poland (Bydgoszcz) as a specialist in epidemic diseases.³⁷

Fields of study and received degrees

Field of study	Number of students
Medicine	50
Law	25
Liberal Arts	24
Theology	15
University degrees	Number of students
Doctor of Medicine	41
Doctor of Law	25
Doctor of Theology	4
Master of Philosophy	1
Doctor of Medicine and Doctor of Philosophy	1

Law studies were also popular among Polish students, due to the reputation of the Amerbach family, who placed great emphasis on practical activities. Many burghers from Gdańsk or Königsberg (25 students) willingly studied law in Basel, where they became perfectly prepared lawyers (25 promoted doctors). The education obtained in Basel was perceived by the Polish burghers as solid and facilitating a career as a civil servant. Many law graduates from Basel later became mayors and high officials of the Baltic cities (Gdańsk, Riga, Königsberg) or lecturers at the University of Königsberg (Krzysztof Tetsch, Hieronim vom Stein). Theological studies were also very popular (24 students) due to the high prestige of Calvinist theology studies in Basel. Although only 4 students became doctors of theology, they later worked as lecturers of the Gdańsk Academic Gymnasium (Jakub Fabricius, Jerzy Pauli), the University of Marburg (Samuel Andreae), or worked as Calvinist ministers (Baltazar Krośniewicki). However, only 114 students are known, to whom specific fields of study can be assigned. The others enrolled only in the main university record and probably studied at the faculty of philosophy or attended several faculties without the desire of regular studies or to achieve academic degrees.

³⁵ S. SOKÓŁ, *Polnische Mediziner in Basel*, pp. 175–190

³⁶ Edward A. ECKERT, *Boundary formation and diffusion of plague: swiss epidemics from 1562 to 1669*, *Annales de Démographie Historique* 1978, p. 52.

³⁷ Franciszek MINCER, *Dzieje Bydgoszczy do 1806*, Zielona Góra 1992, p. 149.

Polish patrons of the University of Basel

Writing about students from Poland and Lithuania studying in Basel, one cannot omit the two most colourful figures associated with *Athenae Rauricae*: that is Jan Osmólski (ca. 1510–1593) and Marcin Chmielecki (1559–1632), who became promoters of students in Basel and supported – with their position, wealth, and activities – students who arrived from Poland and Lithuania. At the same time, their influence on the functioning of the university in Basel was the highest, leaving the greatest mark on the history of the city and its university. Additionally, they were related, of noble origins, Calvinists, came from the Lublin voivodeship, and both were characterized by a love for sciences. As in essence, they typically represented most of the features of any other Polish and Lithuanian students in Basel.

Jan Osmólski was a nobleman, an enthusiast of science, a patron of scholars and a humanist, who previously studied in Vienna, Leipzig, Italy and France, but his studies in Basel captivated him the most. Dissatisfied with the political and social situation in Poland, Osmólski bought a house in Basel, where he decided to spend the rest of his days. He began to fraternize with urban intellectuals and supported the university. He enrolled in the university when he was over 50 years old, attended lectures and began to be friends with professors Teodor Zwinger, Jan Grynaeus, Christian Wurtsisen and Jan Stupanus. He arranged an intellectual salon in his house, near the cathedral, where he hosted Basel professors and gave hospitality to Polish students. He was the only person outside the university who was invited to official ceremonies as a friend of the university. In 1585, he went to Poland, where his affairs regarding property matters, as well as his long stop in Nuremberg, prevented him from his return to Basel. Osmólski died in Poland in 1593, and his disputes over the Basel estate and the rich library were later inherited by Johann Jacob Grynaeus.³⁸

Marcin Chmielecki, his distant relative, came to study in Basel in 1578 as a protégé of Osmólski. As a talented student and mentee of Osmólski, he quickly began to climb the university ladder. He became Doctor of Medicine (1587), Professor of Logic (1589), Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy (1593, 1597, 1604, 1608), Professor of Physics (1610), Dean of the Faculty of Medicine (1616, 1620, 1624, 1629, 1632), and finally Rector (1613/14, 1627/28, 1629) of the University of Basel. He was also the personal physician of the bishops of Basel: Wilhelm Rinck of Baldenstein and Johann Heinrich of Ostein. Chmielecki even married three daughters of various Basel professors: Christina Zwinger, Christina Werenfels and Urszula Wursteisen.³⁹ Interestingly, their fathers were frequent guests at Osmólski's residence. Chmielecki thus became a member of the most important Basel families and an important element of the "family university" (*Familienuniversität*). He also created a new burgher family. His son and grandson became mayors of nearby Mulhouse.⁴⁰ During his work at the university, Chmielecki supported Polish and Lithuanian students, as well as protecting them from the possibility of getting into trouble. He was also the only

³⁸ Henryk BARYCZ, *Osmolski (Osmolicki, Osmólski) Jan*, in: Emanuel Rostworowski (ed.), *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, XXIV, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków – Gdańsk 1979, pp. 370–373.

³⁹ Stanisław KOT, *Chmielecki Marcin (1559-1632)*, in: Władysław Konopczyński (ed.), *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, III, Kraków 1937, p. 318; H. G. WACKERNAGEL (Hg.), *Die Matrikel der Universität Basel*, p. 254.

⁴⁰ Max KOEHNLEIN, *La famille des Chmielecius à Bâle et à Mulhouse*, *Bulletin du Musée historique de Mulhouse* 58, 1939, pp. 53–76.

Pole who worked as a professor at this university and, furthermore, became a rector of this institution.

Summary

From the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, Polish and Lithuanian students at the University of Basel did not constitute a large group of people but were distinguished by close relations with the environment of Basel professors. People associated with well-known noble Calvinist families most often studied in Basel, educating there their children, guardians or pastors. Basel was also an important centre for the training of future doctors and lawyers, especially those from large Prussian cities. Most of the well-known medics in Poland at that time had studied in Basel. The University of Basel was also an academic centre where professors of the Gdańsk Academic Gymnasium and the University of Königsberg were educated or further educated. Among the protestant universities of the time, the University of Basel did not rank very high in terms of popularity among students from Poland and Lithuania.⁴¹ However, it was, next to Leiden, the most important centre of education for students of the Calvinist denomination. Interestingly, Geneva was not so important here due to the fact that many students were discouraged with the idea of traveling to this city and instead travelled from Basel to Paris.

However, the relations between the University of Basel and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth are much more complex and require a more systematic description. The source base is larger and also includes numerous Basel albums of friendship, to which Poles and Lithuanians willingly subscribed. Social networks connecting Poland, Lithuania, and Basel have already been an object of studies.⁴² It is worth noting here that the Poles and Lithuanians' studies in Basel were elitist and were characterized by high complexity. In this article, however, there are only a few of the most important elements of these relationships outlined. The primary focus was on showing statistical data that allows to reflect on the importance of the *Athenae Rauricae* for the education of young Polish and Lithuanian Calvinists. Issues related to interdependence or prosopography, in this respect, require more advanced research and analysis. Therefore, more detailed information and a thorough analysis of the role of the University of Basel in the intellectual life of Poland and Lithuania from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century will be presented in the upcoming scientific monograph.

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⁴¹ M. PAWLAK, *Studia uniwersyteckie*, tab. 8–28.

⁴² Robert T. TOMCZAK, *Athenae Rauricae und Königliche Republik der polnischen Krone und des Großfürstentums Litauen Soziales Netzwerk eines Basler Bürgers im 17. Jahrhundert*, *Opera Historica* 23/1, 2022, pp. 58–80.

Polští a litevští studenti na univerzitě v Basileji od 15. do 17. století

RESUMÉ

Od 15. do 17. století (přesněji v letech 1551–1700) studovalo na univerzitě v Basileji 432 studentů z Polsko-litevské unie. Celkem tvořili pouze 3,5 % všech studentů této univerzity. Jejich původ byl obvykle šlechtický (51 %) nebo měšťanský (40 %) a většinou pocházeli z bohatých magnátských nebo patricijských rodin. Převažovali mezi nimi kalvinisté (86 %), kteří pocházeli z oblastí Královského Pruska (Gdaňsk, Toruň), Vévodského Pruska (Königsberg – Královec), Velkopolska a Malopolska. U 114 z nich lze určit přesnější akademické zájmy. Většina z nich se totiž zabývala studiem medicíny (50) a práv (25). V těchto oborech získali akademické tituly a později působili jako významní lékaři a právníci v Polsku, Litvě a Prusku. Basilejská univerzita byla vedle Leidenu nejdůležitějším centrem pro vzdělávání studentů kalvínské víry z Polsko-litevské unie. Mezi nejvýznamnější polské studenty, kteří studovali v Basileji, patří Jan Osmólski (cca 1510–1593), přítel univerzity a podporovatel polských studentů, a Marcin Chmielecki (1559–1632), rektor basilejské univerzity (1613/14, 1627/28, 1629).

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