

The educational system in Wielkopolska in the Middle Ages as compared with its neighbouring states

Summary

The aim of this book is to discuss the relationships and mutual impacts within church legislation of both a council and synod nature, as well as in schools' everyday practice and, more broadly, in the cultural life of medieval Wielkoposka region. I also want to capture the way society received legal and functional solutions introduced in the developed countries of Western Christianity in Europe and their impact on the education system of medieval and early modern Wielkopolska.

The key time frame covers the period starting from Poland's acceptance of Christianity to the first decades of the 16th century. However, due to the historical context determining the Church legislation on education, which in turn shaped the organisational structure of the educational activity in Wielkopolska, as well as practical solutions in this respect, it was necessary to extend the time span of the analysis to include the turn of the 4th century up to the time of the Lateran Council (1512–1517).

This paper is based on diverse sources, starting from normative ones such as general Church legislation, statutes of provincial and diocesan synods (councils) of legates, canon law, papal bulls, supplications, canonical files, capitular acts and statutes, consistory acts and acts of ecclesiastical courts. The reconstruction of the network of parishes and therefore also parish schools was possible thanks to the analysis of various documents: e.g. those issued by both secular and church authorities, documents related to tax and property, testaments of the clergy, consistory files of local churches and bishopries (*acta episcopalia*) and, finally, also various available narrative sources.

This publication is composed of five chapters. Chapter One provides an extensive description of the Church's educational activity with a particular focus on legislation related to schools, which provides a necessary background for further analysis. It contains the contents of the acts issued by the Councils, general synods. It also

provides a description of the legislation issued by particular popes, regarding diocesan structures and monastic orders alike, as well as relating to schools and education contained in numerous compilations of canonical law. Chapter Two is devoted to the reception of church law regarding education in the Wielkopolska region. Chapter Three deals with cathedral and collegiate church schools. I provide a concise description of the history and development of the cathedral schools in Gniezno and Poznań, and also present the most recent body of research on collegiate church schools in Wielkoposka. I draw on information from source material on teachers, pupils, curricula and the financial position of schools. I also try to point to the impact that the schools had on the level of education of diocesan clergy.

A similar research questionnaire is used in Chapter Four, which is devoted to parish schools. It is the key part of this book and is based to the greatest extent on inquiry based into the source material. It covers the development of the parish network in Wielkopolska and provides an analysis of the function that a school performed in the structure of a parish. I try to show different aims and organisational structures that parish schools had in the cities and villages. I analyse the curricula, compile data on teachers and their intellectual level, education and wages. I follow a similar idea with regard to parish school pupils. I present the body of research on the school building construction. Finally, I discuss the issue of preaching and other forms of religious and social education. Chapter Five is devoted to the monastic schools in Wielkopolska. It is intended as a synthetic overview of the present state of historiography with regard to the development of the monastery network, as well as the issue of school as an element in the life of convents. This chapter continues to provide more detailed information on teachers in monastic schools and the role of the novitiate in the formation of future monks. Here I bring together data on internal and external schools and university studies taken up by monks from various convents of particular monastic orders in Wielkopolska.

Translated by Rob Pagett