

ACADEMY OF VILNIUS (University of Vilnius) — a higher school created by King Stephen Batory in 1579 under the name of the Chief School of the Great Lithuanian Principality; after the partitions it was called the University of Vilnius; from 1919-1939 it was called the University of Stephen Batory; after 1939 it was called the University of Lithuania.

The Academy of Vilnius was the only institution of higher learning in Lithuania. It was made up of the two departments of philosophy and theology. The chief task of the Academy of Vilnius at its inception was to fight the ideology of the reformation and to propagate and fortify Catholicism in Lithuania and neighboring lands dominated by Lutheranism (the western and eastern Prussians, Livonia, the Scandinavian states). Another purpose of the Academy of Vilnius was to lead missionary activity among the members of the Eastern Church in the regions of Orthodox Moscow and even further east. The Academy was located at a point where Latin, Eastern Byzantine, Moslem and German Lutheran cultures met. Such a location was favorable to these plans. This had an important influence on the way the school developed. The primate led the theological sciences, namely polemic theology and positive theology, and after a time speculative theology as well, in view of the plans for re-Catholicization. The missionary intentions contributed to the development of philological interests connected with the Lithuanian language. Besides the Academy of Vilnius, there was also an active Papal residential school that gathered youth from Livonia and Scandinavia, as well as an academic press that published religious books in various languages.

Apart from missionary activity, the Academy of Vilnius also had the purpose of influencing the youthful laity and humanistic and latinistic studies were instituted for them.

In its first period, the faculty of the Academy of Vilnius was chiefly composed of foreigners (Portuguese, Spaniards, British, Germans, Swedes), which accented its cosmopolitan character. The most eminent members of the faculty were Emmanuel Vega, Michael Ortiz, Jacob Ortiz, Benedict de Soxo, Richard Singleton, Lawrence Boyer, Oswald Kruger, John George Schauer, and Simon Dilger. The most outstanding Polish professors in this period were Constantine Szyrwid, Matthew Casimir Sarbiewski, and Marcin Śmiglecki.

The work of the Academy of Vilnius was supported by the Catholic segment of Lithuanian society and also enjoyed the support of Sigmund III. Thanks to its protectors it was able to develop scientifically and to build a library and students' residence. There were important endowments: a collection of books from Eustace Wołłowicz, and a rich collection from the family library of Casimir Leo Sapieha in Rożana — the main part of this collection was made of books and manuscripts gathered by chancellor Leo Sapieha (Casimir's father).

The number of students shows that the influence and reach of the Academy were relatively insignificant. In 1579, the first year of its existence, 600 students were enrolled. By the end of the sixteenth century the number rose to 800 and stayed at this level. In 1628, about 795 students were enrolled.

The greatest blossoming of the Academy of Vilnius was in the years 1640 to 1655, as there was a desire to use the school for the needs of lay society and to build it into a university of four departments. This was supported by Vladislav IV, who on October 11, 1641, extended to the Academy of Vilnius the privilege of creating a medical department and a department of law, and the power to grant the title of doctor in these areas. In 1644, subchancellor

Casimir Leo Sapieha established a foundation which helped in establishing the department of law. Two chairs were to be established for civil law, and two for ecclesiastical law. The plans were not carried out in full at the time. The decision to start the medical department was delayed for an indefinite time and only one chair of civil law and three chairs of canon law were established, which was not in agreement with the wishes of the leader of the foundation. The faculty was composed of Simon Dilger, John Schauer, Aaron Alexander Olizarowski, Benedict Soxa, O. Kruger, Wojciech Wijuk (the rector of the Academy from 1654 to 1655), and Casimir Wijuk.

The armies of Moscow entered Vilnius on August 8, 1655. They destroyed the Academy of Vilnius and the faculty was dispersed, taking refuge for the most part in Królewiec (Kaliningrad, Königsberg) or abroad. The book collection of the Sapiehas' was also moved to Królewiec. In 1661 there was an attempt to reactivate the Academy of Vilnius but it never reached the level of its former glory. There were also other attempts to revive the school in the 1660s and 1670s, but these were unsuccessful. The most important event at the time was the creation, sometime after 1674, of a chair of political science founded by Prince Casimir Wojsznarowicz. For a short time there were lectures on civil law and ecclesiastical law. There were some measures taken to raise the level of teaching in the mathematical sciences, and in 1675 there was an attempt to introduce a permanent program of mathematical studies, but these efforts did not bring the anticipated results. The scholarly level of the Academy of Vilnius gradually fell.

For the first two years of the Russian partitions, the operations of the Academy of Vilnius were suspended. It was reactivated in 1796 and 1797 under the name of the Chief School of Vilnius. The Academy of Vilnius lost its autonomy and its authority over middle schools and was subordinated to the Lithuanian Commission of Education. The nomination of professors was in the hands of the administrative authorities. During that time the rectors were Fr. M. Poczobutt and Fr. H. Stroynowski. After the reform of the Academy of Vilnius, the faculty was composed of S. Malewski, Fr. M. Poczobutt, I. Reszka, J. Śniadecki, F. Smuglewicz, W. Gucewicz, M. Szule, Fr. S. B. Jundziłł, S. Stublewicz, Z. Niemczewski, J. Nizkowski, and A. Becu, among others.

In the last period of the reign of Catharine II and Paul I's accession to the throne, the Academy of Vilnius had a serious problem with increased restrictions from censors who made it difficult for the Academy to publish books and bring them in from foreign countries.

Alexander I's accession to the throne opened new opportunities for the development of learning. Alexander I led a reform of education. On May 30, 1803, he confirmed the *Laws, namely the general resolutions of the Imperial University of Vilnius*. This was the first university charter in the territories of the empire. The charter returned a great degree of autonomy to the Academy of Vilnius and granted it authority over all education in the district. The Chief School was transformed into a university by a legal act on June 16, 1803.

The laws defined the aim, rights and structure of the Academy of Vilnius. Four faculties operated in the Academy: the physical and mathematical sciences, the medical sciences, the moral and political sciences (this department included philosophy, theology, law and economics), and the department of literature and the liberal arts. The Academy of Vilnius was granted the right to name honorary members, including foreign scholars. Honorary membership was granted to several people including A. K. Czartoryski, T. Czacki, A. Chodkiewicz, J. M. Ossoliński, L. Plater, J. Potocki, W. Stroynowski, J. Chreptowicz, J.

Mostowski, A. Feliński, L. Kropiński, J. Niemcewicz, J. Chodźko, W. Szewkowski, S. Sierakowski, Cuvier, Berzelius, Gay-Lussac, Haüy, Werner, Savigny, and Jenner.

In order to assure the Academy of Vilnius of material and legal stability and to make it independent of the Czarist administration, legal and educational commissions were convened in 1808 in Vilnius and Krzemieniec in the tradition of the National Commission of Education, but these were dissolved in 1829.

The material foundation of the Academy of Vilnius consists of spiritual benefices, goods and education capital, as they were called, as well as donations from the Czar intended for the construction of buildings. Thereby the university found itself in a good financial situation which made it possible to give the professors a high salary, homes and to cover travel costs for those invited abroad. The good material conditions contributed to an influx of foreign faculty eager to take up chairs at the university. A. K. Czartoryski was the curator of the university and supported the tendency to hire foreigners. In 1804 the following persons were called to chairs in Vilnius: P. Frank, J. Frank (son of Peter), L. Bojanus (he would arrive in 1806), K. Langsdorf, J. H. Abicht, G. E. Groddek, Fr. P. Tarenghi, L. Capelli, and J. Saunders. The faculty included many Poles, often graduates of the Academy of Vilnius who had continued their studies abroad during foreign scholarly trips: A. Becu, A. Matuszewicz, B. Jundziłł, S. Stublewicz, Z. Niemczewski, J. Śniadecki, T. Życki, J. F. Niczkowski, R. Symonowicz, Fr. T. Hussarzewski, and J. Lelewel.

At the time the University had a serious problem with tension and conflict between the professors of the natural and mathematical sciences and the humanists. There were also controversies between those who were for and those who were against foreigners taking chairs at the university. The foreigners were seen as indifferent to the national character of the University and they did not lecture in the Polish language. J. Śniadecki, rector from 1807 to 1915, supported the idea that vacant chairs should be entrusted only to Poles. A. K. Czartoryski, the curator of the Academy of Vilnius, did not share this view. Despite such problems, a project supported by Czartoryski was brought to realization, to give a greater role to the humanistic sciences. In 1810 a philological seminar was organized for the purpose of forming teachers of the Latin and Greek languages. This was the first form of the modern scientific education in the humanities and was known only in a few institutions of higher education at that time. One of the participants in the seminar was the historian J. Lelewel.

The growth and reconstruction of the university took place from 1807 to 1818, especially during the time when J. Śniadecki was rector. From 1805 to 1808 the first associations of self-education arose among the students. The war years of 1812 and 1813 were difficult for the University, but the rector Śniadecki succeeded in saving the school of material ruin. Śniadecki was dismissed in 1815 by the minister of education, Razumowski, who was not well disposed to Śniadecki. Razumowski also took over control of the schools in the southern and western governments of the Vilnius Scholarly District.

The situation improved under the policies of Czar Alexander I. There was a change in the position of minister of education (Razumowski was replaced by A. Golycyn), and the Academy of Vilnius regained control of the entire Vilnius Scholarly District. S. Malewski became rector, and later became dean of the Department of Moral and Political Sciences. The Academy of Vilnius influenced the revival of intellectual life in all of Lithuania.

The best period in the growth of the Academy of Vilnius and the schools under its governance was the period from the Congress of Vienna to 1824. The Academy was then the only completely Polish organ of educational government in the region of the western governments of the empire. After 1815, the number of persons directed to studies abroad in order to complete their education grew significantly. Students on scholarships learned of the latest scientific achievements and bought scientific instruments and books. The circle of lecturers broadened as they were recruited from the graduates of the Academy. The faculty included M. Malinowski, W. Haberski, F. Drzewiński, M. Poliński, J. Jundziłł, K. Podczasyński, M. Bobrowski, J. Gołuchowski, J. Lelewel, I. Łobojko, A. Adamowicz, K. Muyschel, F. Jurewicz, I. Horodecki, I. Fonberg, M. Oczapowski.

Students were recruited chiefly from among the sons of wealthy landowners. This was very important for national culture, because they were the bearers of patriotism. The sons of the indigent nobility, of Uniate clergy, of the bourgeoisie, and even the sons of peasants also attended the Academy of Vilnius.

Also in this period of the activity of the Academy of Vilnius, the professors played an important role in the cultural life of Vilnius. Among other things, they started many journals. Student organizations were intensely active: in 1817 the conspiratorial Society of Philomaths was established, and in 1819 the Society of Philaretos was established.

From 1820 on, the Czar's policies toward Poland became more restrictive. The atmosphere among the youth and in their organization made the political authorities uneasy. The rector at the time, Twardowski, tried to take more control of the students, to prevent the establishment of new student organizations, and to reorganize the school. The hostile attitude of Czarist officials, especially Nowosilcow who was curator of the school starting in 1824, led to Twardowski's dismissal. In many cases the members of the student organizations (the Philomaths and Philaretos) were harshly sentenced to deportation to the Russian interior (A. Mickiewicz was one of those deported), because "they thought to spread the imprudent Polish nationality by teaching". At the same time professors Lelewel, Danilowicz, Fr. Bobrowski and professor Gołuchowski were removed from their chairs and banished from Vilnius. Under the influence of Nowosilcow, the censorship of books from abroad was made more rigorous, students were kept under surveillance, and the governments of Mogilyov, Vitebsk and Minsk were separated from the Vilnius Teaching District. The Russian language was introduced as the language of the chancellery of the Academy of Vilnius and there were changes in the faculty (the new rector, W. Pelikan, was Nowosilcow's supporter). The changes in faculty had a negative effect on the level of scholarship. Those who lectured at the Academy of Vilnius at the time included A. Korowicki, J. Jaroszewicz, W. Pietkiewicz, J. Waszkiewicz, E. Eichwald, J. Śniadecki, F. Rymkiewicz, S. Gałęźowski, K. Porcyjanko, A. Abicht, B. Bielkiewicz, I. Jakowicki, A. Szahin, and Z. Rewkowski.

The year 1828 was the 250-year jubilee of the Academy of Vilnius. The course of events showed that the authorities were inclined to maintain the university and even supported its growth despite the imposition of greater restrictions. The Academy of Vilnius remained a Polish school and the number of students was constantly growing.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Polish school was best developed with respect to scholarship. Some of its professors (Śniadecki, Lelewel) were the most eminent Polish scholars of the period. Some graduates became members of the faculty of the University of Warsaw (K. Skrodzki, M. Pawłowicz, K. Lach-Szyrma, E. Nowicki, K. Kaczkowski). In the

repression that followed the November uprising, the Academy of Vilnius was liquidated (the civil governor of Mogilyov, M. Murawiew, came forward with the liquidation plan). The Scholarly Circle of Vilnius and the Lyceum of Krzemieniec which was associated with the Scholar Circle of Vilnius were liquidated. In the place of the Academy of Vilnius, which was liquidated by order of Czar Nicholas I on May 1, 1832, the Academy of Medicine was created in Vilnius. (The Academy of Medicine extended the scientific and didactic work of the department of medicine for another decade. The Department of Medicine was the strongest department of the Academy of Vilnius in the final years of its existence.) The Clerical Academy was also liquidated. The Vilnius book collections were taken over by the newly founded University of Kiev and the University of Kharkov. The Academy of Medicine was finally liquidated in August, 1842, and the Clerical Academy was transferred to Saint Petersburg. The book collections of the Academy of Medicine were removed, and the collections on natural science (zoology, chemistry, pharmacology and the books belonging to clinics) were moved to Russian schools, chiefly the University of Kiev.

In 1860, there was a plan formed to resuscitate the Academy of Vilnius, and this was to be proposed to Czar Alexander II, but this did not happen. The matter was raised again at a congress of delegates from the nobility in Vilnius in 1862, but this time the project of reactivating the Academy was not realized on account of the eruption of the January uprising.

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