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Conflicts over the Language of Additional Services in the Samogitian (Telšiai) Diocese: Scale and Chronology

Abstract: This article focuses on the conflicts over the language of additional services in the Samogitian (Telšiai) Diocese. The problem is discussed according to its scale and chronology. The causes of the conflicts were not homogeneous, and their occurrences depended on the situation in each individual parish. As their national consciousness grew, Lithuanian parishioners became more and more aware of the abnormal situation of the additional services and church-singing being held in Polish, although the majority of the parishioners were Lithuanian speakers. Polish parishioners, especially the nobility and landowners, demanded the Gospel be read and sermons be preached in Polish. As regards the course of conflicts and conflict situations, it should be noted that no bloody clashes between parishioners in churches have occurred or could be detected in the Samogitian (Telšiai) diocese, although there had been some threats of rebellions or bloodshed. Most often, both Lithuanian and Polish parishioners addressed their complaints and appeals or sent their delegates to the bishop in Kaunas. People also resorted to more violent forms of protest: the singing of hymns in Lithuanian would be interrupted by the Poles singing in Polish. Conflicts and conflict situations occurred in fourteen Lithuanian deaneries. Most of unrest took place in the parishes and filial churches of Kaunas and Krakiai deaneries. There were eight conflicts in the former and six in the latter. In the second half of the nineteenth century, there were fewer conflicts and conflict situations. Due to the divergence of Lithuanian and Polish nationalist interests, in the early twentieth century conflicts spread to an increasing number of parishes. When resolving conflicts and conflict situations over the language of the additional services, the diocesan hierarchy tried to take into account the wishes of the parishioners, whether they were Lithuanians or Poles. Lithuanian church-singing and other additional services were introduced where necessary, and the reading of the Gospel and sermons were also introduced where the Poles asked for that.

Keywords: Samogitian (Telšiai) diocese, additional services, conflicts, Lithuanians, Poles.

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In Lithuanian Catholic churches, the question of the language of additional services arose in the second half of the nineteenth century, with the beginning of the Lithuanian national revival. At that time, the language of the liturgy was Latin. Local languages were used in additional services. These included Gospel readings, sermons, supplications, the Rosary, Lamentations, processional singing, as well as May, June, and October services. In churches, Polish was the main language used in additional services. With the rise of Lithuanian national consciousness, attention was drawn to the less than normal situation of the use of Polish in additional services in parishes where the majority of parishioners were ethnic Lithuanians. Lithuanians started demanding the recognition of equal rights for their language. In purely Lithuanian parishes, the Lithuanian language was introduced into additional services fairly seamlessly, and in the late nineteenth-the early twentieth century, Lithuanian was used in additional services in such parishes. The situation was different in the so-called mixed parishes, where Lithuanian and Polish parishioners lived side by side. The Polish parishioners did not want to give up their positions: they were determined to keep Polish in additional services. When Lithuanian parishioners demanded rights for their mother tongue, conflict situations often erupted. In this article, the term 'conflicts' is used to describe disputes in parishes over the use of the language in additional services. Conflicts in parishes can be likened to the term 'battles' that took place between believers of the same parish based on ethnic preferences. Feuds (conflicts) in churches over the use of the language of additional services took many forms, ranging from petitions to diocesan superiors and the civil authorities to scuffles in churches, disruptions to singing, and even instances of bloodshed. The extent of a conflict situation depended on the social activity of one ethnic group or another. A small ethnic group in a parish could have caused a relatively serious disturbance, or, conversely, a larger ethnic group could have solved the problems more easily. Ethnic conflicts in parishes made it difficult for priests to carry out their pastoral work. Parish priests and diocesan hierarchs looked for the best ways to resolve a conflict situation in one parish or another. The use of a particular language in the additional services depended a lot on the ethno-cultural position of the parish priest. Traditionally, senior priests made an effort to preserve the long-standing use of Polish in the additional services. Influenced by the ideas of national revival, the clergy of the younger generation tried to respond to the desire of Lithuanian parishioners to use their mother tongue in additional services. Taking the conflicts over the language of the additional service in parishes as a whole, it can be seen as a clash between two competing nationalisms in the Catholic Church. The Poles and the Lithuanians tried to consolidate their positions in the context of modern nation-building.

Conflicts over the language of additional services took place in all three Lithuanian dioceses – Vilnius, Samogitian (Telšiai), and Seinai (Augustów). However, the extent of conflict situations varied in each of them. The object of this study is conflicts over the language of worship in the parishes of the

Lithuanian part of the Samogitian (Telšiai) diocese, excluding the city of Kaunas. In terms of the scale of conflicts, this diocese was not much different from the diocese of Seinai (Augustów) and did not match the scale of conflicts in the diocese of Vilnius. In the diocese of Vilnius, conflicts over the language of additional services were the most numerous.

The terms 'conflicts' and 'conflict situations' are used in the sense of disagreements over the language of additional services or the language of the sermons that went beyond the parish boundaries, i.e., the news found its way to the press, complaints and petitions were written to the clerical hierarchy or the civil authorities, parishioners clashed in parishes, and the like.

The historiography on conflicts over the language of additional services in the Samogitian (Telšiai) diocese is not rich. Publications of the contemporaries that appeared before the First World War can be conditionally counted as historiography[1]. This is what Vytautas Merkys wrote about the introduction of Lithuanian sermons by Bishop Motiejus Valančius: 'Lithuanian sermons in the time of Valančius took root in all Lithuanian parishes that belonged to the Samogitian diocese. Exceptions were some churches in the towns and in the eastern outskirts of Zarasai County'[2]. The author of this article wrote three publications on conflicts in the Samogitian (Telšiai) diocese. The first two articles deal with the problems of all three dioceses, without singling out the Samogitian (Telšiai) diocese[3]. The third article deals with the situation in two parishes of the Samogitian (Telšiai) diocese – Zarasai (Novoaleksandrovsk) and Čekiškė[4]. Lithuanian parishioners demanded their rights in Zarasai parish, while in the parish of Čekiškė, it was the Polish believers who put forward their demands. In the former parish, the Polish believers mainly conflicted about the time assigned for the sermons in Lithuanian or Polish. At the bishop's instruction, the time for the Lithuanian sermon was set before Holy Mass, because the Lithuanian-speaking parishioners lived mainly in the villages outside the town, and it took them long to get to church. Meanwhile, the Polish sermon was preached after the Mass, because Polish-speaking parishioners were townspeople, and the church was closer to them. Until 1909, the language of additional services and sermons in the parish of Čekiškė was Lithuanian. However, the Polish-speaking parishioners, mostly

1 K. Š. [Kazimieras Šaulys], *Mūsų santykiai su lenkais*, "Draugija" 1910, no. 41, p. 59-73; Pelicanas, *Lenkystė Kauno gubernijoje*, "Viltis" 1911-10-09, p. 1. These publications reviewed the situation in all three dioceses: Vilnius, Samogitian (Telšiai), and Sejny (Augustów).

2 V. Merkys, *Motiejus Valančius. Tarp katalikiškojo universalizmo ir tautiškumo*, Vilnius 1999, p. 691.

3 A. Katilius, *Konflikty polsko-litewskie o język nabożeństw mieszanych (polsko-litewskich) parafiach na przełomie XIX i XX wieku*, in: *Pozostawione historii: Litwini o Polsce i Plakach*, ed. K. Korzeniewska, V. Sirutavičius, Kraków 1999, p. 109-120; A. Katilius, *Konfliktai dėl kalbos vartojimo pridėtinėse pamaldose: lietuviškos spaudos reflekcija*, "Lietuvių katalikų mokslo akademijos metraštis" 2023, vol. 46, p. 87-107.

4 A. Katilius, *Conflicts over the Language of Additional Service in the Samogitian (Telšiai) Diocese: The Cases of Zarasai and Čekiškė Parishes*, "Studia Ełckie" 26(2024), no. 2, p. 225-248.

the nobles, thought that a Polish sermon should be preached in their parish church. Mindaugas Balkus writes about the Lithuanisation of the churches of Kaunas in the 1920s[5].

In writing this article, the author mainly used the Lithuanian periodical press. The archives contain little information about conflicts over the language of additional services in the Samogitian (Telšiai) diocese.

In this article, we will try to address the reasons for conflicts and conflict situations in parishes, describe the course of conflicts, the scale and geographical distribution of conflicts, their chronology and intensity, and the ways the conflicts in parishes were resolved.

Reasons for conflict situations

The causes of conflicts can be divided into two groups: (1) determined by parishioners' interrelationships, or internal, and (2) external, when the impetus to take one action or another came from the outside.

One of the reasons for the conflict situations was the language of the sermons in the church. This problem was understood to mean that the introduction of Lithuanian sermons and hymn-singing in the churches of ethnographic Lithuania is 'entirely correct, and the Lithuanian nation cannot refuse it. In the churches of ethnographic Lithuania, the first place must belong to the Lithuanian language and not to Polish'. This is reinforced by the comparison that French is the first language spoken in France and German in Germany[6]. It was realised that Polish sermons could not be abolished quickly in places where there were large numbers of Polish parishioners and those listening to sermons in Polish. On the other hand, 'the introduction of Polish services and sermons in purely Lithuanian parishes would be even more unwise'[7].

In Zarasai parish, the conflict was caused by the timing of Lithuanian and Polish sermons set by the diocesan superiors. The Poles were unhappy that the Lithuanian sermon was timed before the Mass and the Polish sermon after the Mass. They saw it as discrimination against the Polish language and a disregard for their aspirations.

The parish of Čekiškė was mixed. About a third of the parishioners spoke Polish at home, but at the same time they had a good command of Lithuanian. The nobles mostly spoke Polish. They had no problem with Lithuanian sermons in church. However, they were instigated from the outside to introduce Polish sermons in the Čekiškė church. The columnist of the magazine *Draugija* (Association) thus commented on the causes of the conflict: 'all appeal *to justice* [emphasis by the author – *A. K.*]. The noble "Poles" demand Polish sermons for the

5 M. Balkus, *Kauno bažnyčių lietuvėjimas XX a. 3-iajame dešimtmetyje*, "Soter" 49(2014), p. 24-35.

6 A. Jakštas, *Faktai ir principai*, "Draugija" 1911, no. 50, p. 168.

7 Ibidem, p. 169.

sake of justice, the Lithuanians want to maintain the old order for the sake of justice, and the bishop wants to appease both sides for the sake of justice'[8].

In Žeimiai parish, the nobility decided – without informing the Lithuanians – that church services should be alternately in Polish and Lithuanian. However, when hymn-singing in Lithuanian began, agitation against the Lithuanian language began at the urging of a local landowner, and it resulted in disputes and even riots among the parishioners[9].

In the filial church of Pelikonys, the bishop allowed additional services in Lithuanian every third Sunday and holy day. After the arrival of a Polish priest in 1909, hymn-singing in Lithuanian was allowed every fourth Sunday, and the Lithuanian sermon was abolished[10].

In Karmėlava parish, Lithuanian parishioners asked to be allowed to sing hymns in church in Lithuanian, but the Polish parishioners resisted.

Speaking about the events in Ukmergė parish, Rev. Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas described the causes of the conflicts:

> In the summer of 1899, rumours of disagreements between the pure Lithuanian villagers of the diocese and the townspeople, Polonised Lithuanians, were widely spread in the Samogitian diocese, due to the disproportionate use of Lithuanian and Polish in the church. It happened the way it always does: a small misunderstanding at the beginning, which did not arise from any mutual hatred among the parishioners, but through the inability if not to coordinate in time, then at least not to be incited by unfortunate orders, overwhelmed the whole parish, stirred the minds of the hitherto drowsy districts, and echoed to more distant lands as a real rebellion, with the desecration of the holy place and the indignation of the faithful[11].

A correspondent of the *Tėvynės sargas* (The Homeland Guardian) thus described the reasons for the conflicts between Lithuanian and Polish in churches.

> The question of the place of Lithuanian and Polish languages in the church worries many people. The unjust division of languages between the Lithuanian and the Poles is coming to the fore as the national revival continues to spread. The Lithuanians claim there are more of us, so there should be more time for the Lithuanian language in church, while the Poles say we have always had more, and we will not give up our place. This leads to quarrels and sometimes indecent confusions in churches. Younger priests advocate a revision of the old order, while older priests advocate upholding the tradition[12].

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8 A. Jakštas, *Teisybė ir kalbų klausimas Lietuvos bažnyčiose*, "Draugija" 1909, no. 33, p. 29.

9 K. Š. [Kazimieras Šaulys], *Mūsų santykiai su lenkais*, "Draugija" 1910, no. 41, p. 66.

10 Pelicanas, *Lenkystė Kauno gubernijoje*, "Viltis" 1911-10-09, p. 1.

11 [Vaižgantas], *Dėlko kyla Ukmergės ir k. panaszios istorijos?*, "Tėvynės sargas" 1900, nos 4-5, p. 25.

12 Jonas Šiušelis, *Nuo Batakių padangės*, "Tėvynės sargas" 1901, no. 2-3A, p. 27-28.

Quite a number of conflicts were caused by the desire of Polish parishioners to introduce sermons and other additional services in Polish. This is what Rev. Antanas Alekna wrote about it:

> Until 1905, our Polish landowners were content with one Polish Gospel, and in many places did not require it as they knew Lithuanian well; now they suddenly became so pious that they even want Polish sermons. The landed gentry of the *akalica* [the nobility neighbourhood] take their cue from the nobles. Before freedom, they understood Lithuanian well and sometimes they did not speak Polish at all, but they willingly listened to Lithuanian sermons and sang Lithuanian sacred hymns together with the Lithuanian villagers. Now all of them have suddenly forgotten Lithuanian, say they do not understand the language of the 'boors' anymore, and demand Polish sermons, supplications, rosaries, May and other services... In these demands, our lords and nobles invoke the principle of 'justice' by referring to statistics, by pointing to their numerical strength[13].

Referring to the efforts of the Poles to Polonise the mixed parishes, the author of the article writes that they are making a fuss in the Polonised parishes, demanding Polish services, writing petitions to the diocesan hierarchy, sending delegations to bishops, inciting riots in churches, preventing the Lithuanians from singing hymns and listening to Lithuanian sermons, etc.'[14].

The Course of the Conflicts

The conflicts in the parishes of Zarasai (Novoaleksandrovsk) and Čekiškė have already been described[15]. For this reason, these parishes will not be mentioned in this article.

In 1884, at the Stations of the Cross, the parish priest of Kražiai forced the parishioners to sing hymns in Polish instead of Samogitian. The governor-general asked the bishop to take measures to prevent priests from forcing parishioners to sing in Polish instead of Samogitian[16] In his explanation to the bishop, the parish priest of Kražiai noted that he did not force his parishioners to sing in Polish[17]. He pointed out that the landowners repeatedly hinted that his predecessors not only preached Samogitian sermons, but also Polish sermons, and now even the Gospel is not read in Polish.

In 1886, the parish priest of Raseiniai explained in his report to the bishop why he had preached a sermon in Polish on Lenten Sunday, on 2 March 1886.

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13 Kuronietis [Antanas Alekna], *Kalbų klausimas Lietuvos Bažnyčiose ir Vilniaus "Sąjunga"*, "Draugija" 1911, no. 60, p. 386-387.

14 Ibidem, p. 386.

15 A. Katilius, *Conflicts over the Language of Additional Service…*, op. cit., p. 225-248.

16 A letter of the governor-general of Vilnius to the bishop of the Samogitian (Telšiai) diocese, 1884-06-21, Lietuvos valstybės istorijos archyvas (hereinafter LVIA, Lithuanian State Historical Archives), f. 1671, ap. 4, b. 144, l. 799-800.

17 Explanation of the parish priest of Kražiai, 1884-12-18, ibidem, l. 801.

He explained his action by his wish to clarify the importance, significance, and sanctity of that time; also, to explain the mystery of repentance, so that people could make their Easter confession for their own spiritual benefit. It should be noted that he did not preach during the liturgy, but after the Gospel reading. After the Polish sermon, he read the Gospel in Lithuanian and preached in Lithuanian. Since time immemorial, the Raseiniai church had had the custom of reading the Gospel from the pulpit first in Polish and then in Lithuanian. Around half of the parishioners speak Polish at home, and there are some who do not understand Lithuanian at all[18]. A letter from the governor-general of Vilnius to the bishop instructs that the Gospel and sermons should not be in the language of a minority of parishioners, but in the mother tongue of the majority[19]. The dean of Veliuona visited to the church of Raseiniai and interviewed twenty old-timer parishioners: what language sermons had been delivered since old days, what the current custom was, and how many parishioners might be demanding sermons in Polish. The survey revealed that from time immemorial, on Sundays and holy days, the sermon had been delivered first in Polish and then in Lithuanian. From their childhood, when they came to the church in Raseiniai, these parishioners listened to sermons in Polish and Lithuanian. For the last two or three years, the sermons had been in Polish. The last sermon in Polish was preached by the parish priest on 2 March 1886. As for the need for Polish sermons, they are necessary, because there are around 800 Catholics in Raseiniai, of whom about one-sixth understand a little Lithuanian and the rest speak only Polish and do not understand Lithuanian. In addition, the parishioners who resided in nobility neighbourhoods, *akalica*, spoke Polish at home. That was why other additional services in the Raseiniai church were held in Polish. Finally, they confirmed that the Raseiniai church could not do without sermons and additional services in Polish[20]. An archive file contains a list of locations in Raseiniai parish where parishioners spoke Polish at home. The list includes 39 locations[21]. The Lithuanians of Raseiniai parish asked the parish priest to introduce more additional services in Lithuanian, but he refused. In the summer of 1899, parish representatives went to the bishop twice and sent two appeals with many signatures to him. The bishop took their requests into consideration and ordered that May and October services be held in two languages (Lithuanian in the morning and Polish in the evening). 'O Holy God' should be sung in Lithuanian and in Polish on alternate Sundays. Hymns in processions to be sung in Polish without exposition and in Latin with exposition. The Polish parishioners did not like this and even asked the parish priest not to follow the bishop's orders. However, the nobility did not often go to

[18] Report of the Raseiniai parish priest to the bishop, 1886-04-03, LVIA, F. 1671, ap. 4, b. 146, l. 826-826v.

[19] Letter of the governor-general of Vilnius to the bishop, 1887-03-22, ibidem, l. 822-824.

[20] Act of the dean of Veliuona, 1886-08-18, ibidem, l. 827-828.

[21] List of locations, 1886-08-18, ibidem, l. 829.

church, and they forgot everything a month later[22]. In 1900, the supplications, 'May Jesus Be Honoured' etc. came to be sung in Lithuanian in the church of Raseiniai on Mondays. This led to significant resentment among the Polish parishioners[23]. In 1902, *Tėvynės sargas* wrote that after two months of Lithuanian hymn-singing in the Raseiniai church, an order to sing in Polish came from the pulpit again. Again, two or three men sing, and the whole church is silent. With nobody to sing in Polish, the parish priest sings all by himself[24].

In the Viduklė church, only one Gospel is read in Polish and all the rest in Lithuanian. However, the author of the article is surprised: 'Incidentally, at each holy day, the organist plays the Holy Hours in Polish. Now this I cannot understand – why the organist gives Polish concerts to the Samogitians. If the parish priest wants the Samogitians not to understand the Hours, I would suggest he sang in Latin, because this would be at least in the language of the Church'[25].

A report from Pociūnėliai reads that sermons were delivered in Lithuanian, but after the parish priest was replaced, Polish sermons were introduced[26].

The correspondent of *Tėvynės sargas* regrets that no Lithuanian is ever heard in the Lapės church. The parishioners of Lapės became Polonised and regard Lithuanians with disdain. The article reads: 'Meanwhile, the grandparents of those "Poles", who are still alive, speak good Lithuanian, and the surnames of people and the names of places clearly indicate that it was not Poles but Lithuanians who had lived here since olden times'[27].

When discord surfaced in Žeimiai parish, complaints against the Lithuanians were sent to the bishop, and demands were made on the parish priest for a ban of singing in Lithuanian in the church. Failure to do so was threatened with scandals in the church, riots, fights, and even bloodshed[28]. The Poles started carrying out their threats in practice: in January 1900, while the Lithuanians were singing the Rosary in the church, a few girls from the town, who had been instigated, broke into the church and started singing in Polish. The Lithuanians stopped singing. The parishioners wrote a complaint to the bishop, in which they accused the Lithuanians of separatism. Also, they sent a deputation to the bishop. In consequence, one priest accused by the Poles was transferred, and the parish priest was forbidden to make any changes in additional services without informing the church superiors, in order to avoid misunderstandings among the parishioners. In turn, the Lithuanians also sent appeals to the bishop. In 1906, the bishop ordered the parish priest to provide a broader explanation of the situation in the parish and collect statistics of the inhabitants of the parish. The statistics

22 Raseinių Magdė, *Isz Raseinių*, "Tėvynės sargas" 1900, no. 9, p. 56.
23 Krislas, *Isz Raseinių*, "Tėvynės sargas" 1900, no. 2-3, p. 92.
24 Anonymous, *Iš Raseinių*, "Tėvynės sargas", 1902, no. 4-5A, p. 38-39.
25 Anonymous, *Isz Viduklės*, "Tėvynės sargas" 1900, p. 59.
26 S. [Kazimieras Pakalniškis], *Pocunelei*, "Žemaičių ir Lietuvos apžvalga" 1893, no. 12, p. 93.
27 Lapinas, *Isz Lapių*, "Tėvynės sargas" 1899, no. 11, p. 37.
28 K. Š. [Kazimieras Šaulys], *Mūsų santykiai su lenkais*, "Draugija" 1910, no. 41, p. 66.

showed that there were 2511 Lithuanians and 2390 Poles[29]. By the bishop's instruction of 1907, one Sunday in Žeimiai parish was dedicated to a service in Lithuanian and the other in Polish. The local Poles did not like that at all and even set up a company to overturn the bishop's order and introduce services exclusively in Polish[30]. On the third day of Easter in 1908, hymn were to be sung in Lithuanian in the Žeimiai church, but the Polish parishioners started singing in Polish in order to outshout the Lithuanians. To avoid confusion in the church, the Lithuanians stopped singing[31]. A broad overview of the history of Žeimiai parish and ethnic relations was published in *Viltis* by Rev. Matas Miežinis under the cryptonym (X. M.)[32].

In 1899, it was noted that the congregation in the Karmėlava church was Polonised: although they spoke Lithuanian at home, they used Polish in town and in the churchyard. Sermons in the church were delivered entirely in Polish. Upon the Lithuanians' request, the bishop came to preach the people in Lithuanian, but the bishop's instruction was not followed[33]. In 1906, the representatives of Karmėlava parish sent an appeal to the bishop. They wrote that the Word of God was preached in Lithuanian every second Sunday and on all feast days. Hymn-singing in Lithuanian was allowed when a priest was brought to a sick person, but there was no singing in Lithuanian in the church, and there could be no singing without the bishop's permission. The parishioners of Karmėlava requested that on the days when Lithuanian sermons were preached, hymns and the Rosary were sung in Lithuanian. In addition, all singing should be in Lithuanian on some feast days and in Polish on others. Then the custom of teaching Lithuanian-speaking children to pray in Polish would fade away[34]. The conflict between the Poles and the Lithuanians in the parish of Karmėlava reached such a level that the bishop had no other option but to close the church[35].

In the church of Skaruliai, everything was Polish: the sermons, hymn-singing, and catechisation. One sermon in Lithuanian was preached on a feast day in 1899. It was, however, a pity that the honest parish priest of Skaruliai did not try to speak more Lithuanian from the pulpit, because a larger number of parishioners understood Lithuanian better than Polish[36].

In 1899, hymn-singing in the church of Ukmergė was in Polish, although all the sermons were delivered in Lithuanian. Lithuanians took steps to claim their rights in the church. A large choir of skilled singers was assembled, with which the Polish singers found themselves unable not compete against. The Polish parishioners were unhappy with this and reproached young priests for organising

29 K. Š. [Kazimieras Šaulys], *Mūsų santykiai su lenkais*, "Draugija" 1910, no. 41, p. 66-67.
30 Smilga, *Žeimė*, "Nedėldienio skaitymas" 1907-08-28, p. 280.
31 Be autoriaus, *Žeimė*, "Vienybė" 1908, no. 17, p. 260.
32 See: "Viltis" 1909, nos 46, 49, 51, 54, 57, 67.
33 Gabris Kurmėlys, *Isz Kurmėlavos*, "Tėvynės sargas" 1899, no. 11, p. 36.
34 K.S.S. [Stanislovas Stakelė], *Karmelava*, "Vilniaus žinios" 1906-09-14, p. 2-3.
35 D. Dumbrė [Bikinas Juozapas], *Dėlei pamaldų kalbos*, "Vienybė" 1909, no. 46, p. 713.
36 Narunas, *Isz Skarulių*, "Tėvynės sargas" 1899, no. 11, p. 37.

everything[37] Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas stressed that the conflict in the church of Ukmergė was triggered by external forces but encouraged by the 'spirit of the times'. The parish priest supported one warring side or the other. The Lithuanians did not cave in and wrote a complaint to the bishop. The parish priest lodged a complaint against the undersigned to the police, to the effect that they were distributing forbidden literature not only among the people but also among pupils and asked for searches to be carried out. The police did that. As mentioned above, a Lithuanian parish choir was formed in Ukmergė, and the parish priest announced on Easter morning, when the whole parish was gathered, that from then on, on each holy day, the Rosary would be sung in Lithuanian in the morning and in Polish in the afternoon before the vespers. However, sometime later, the parish priest listened to the Poles who did not go to church and declared that the Rosary should be sung in the old-fashioned way, that is, in Polish. With his instructions, he continued to restrict the opportunities of the Lithuanians to sing hymns. Vaižgantas wrote:

> Stopping the second singing of the Rosary in Lithuanian; chasing the Lithuanian singers out of their place; demanding that they swear not to sing in Lithuanian anymore; refusing absolution to those who sing – all that again provoked a reaction, because the Lithuanians understood from this harsh behaviour that they were not only to be pushed into a corner but pushed out of the door altogether[38].

The parish priest regretted that not all the hymn-singing was taken away at once, because there were still a few days left when Lithuanians could sing. The church superiors decided that the Lithuanians would sing on the following holy days throughout the year: the Hours, the Rosary, 'Holy God', 'Fall on Your Knees', 'God Our Saviour', in processions without exposition, and the Octave of Corpus Christi. The parish priest was transferred from Ukmergė to a smaller parish.

In 1898, the pharmacist of Ramygala came up with the idea of having the organist sing the Hours in Lithuanian, but the parish priest did not agree to this. The Lithuanian parishioners also wanted the Hours to be sung in Lithuanian[39]. In 1903, the Hours came to be sung in Lithuanian, and the parish priest wanted more singing, but the marshals (Church brothers) wanted Polish hymn-singing. To avoid racket in the church, younger people were waiting for the existing singers to get old[40].

In 1900, the organist in the Darbėnai church had already been singing in Lithuanian for several months. The parishioners were very pleased with this[41].

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37 Anonymous, *Isz Ukmergės*, "Tėvynės sargas" 1899, nos 7-8, p. 38.

38 [Vaižgantas], *Dėlko kyla Ukmergės ir k. panaszios istorijos?*, "Tėvynės sargas" 1900, nos 4-5, p. 31.

39 Striukis, *Blogas geidimas*, "Tėvynės sargas" 1900, no. 1, p. 57-58.

40 S-tis, *Iš Ramygalos*, "Tėvynės sargas" 1903, no. 2A, p. 9.

41 Keleivis, *Keliaudamas į Kretingą...*, "Tėvynės sargas" 1900, nos 2-3, p. 73.

In 1899, a correspondent reported from the filial church of Kulva that two sermons had been preached in Lithuanian. It would be desirable for it not to end there. If the Polish parishioners did not like sermons in Lithuanian, their wish should be disregarded[42]. Hymn-singing in the filial church of Kulva was in Polish. The parish priest could not introduce singing in Lithuanian, because there was Bishop Gasparas Cirtautas's instruction not to do anything without informing the bishop. Then several parishioners went to see the bishop and demanded that he order the parish priest to introduce hymn-singing in Lithuanian in the Kulva church. The bishop told them to put everything in writing. Also, the bishop demanded that the parish priest provide the number of Lithuanian speakers. The parish priest was unable to do it, because he was transferred to Kulva not long ago and did not possess this information. The bishop formed a commission of parish priests of Skaruliai and Žeimiai to investigate the situation. It was found that almost all parishioners at the filial church were Lithuanians, with the exception of a few nobles[43].

Sometimes hymn-singing in Polish would fade away on its own because there was no-one to sing in Polish, and that was what happened in the Eržvilkas church. There was just one singer who sang in broken Polish. Once, however, he did not turn up, and the priest, not knowing anything about it, initiated the procession in Polish, but all the people remained silent, and that was how they went around the church. This opened the eyes of the priests, and they agreed not to use Polish anymore[44].

In the Radviliškis church, the Poles started singing in Polish at the time the Lithuanians were singing[45].

The parish of Siesikai was almost entirely Lithuanian, but services were conducted in Polish. In 1907, changes took place: May services came to be conducted not only in Polish but also in Lithuanian, and the banns were announced in Lithuanian whereas previously that was done only in Polish[46]. In 1909, most of church-singing at the Siesikai church was in Polish. A correspondent wrote about such a situation: 'Eventually, one is shouting 'Swięty Bože' [Holy God in Polish], another 'Šventas Dieve' [Holy God in Lithuanian], and the third one something else altogether. Sometimes, the vicar also preaches sermons in Polish'[47].

In 1903, strong disagreements arose in the Pabaiskas church: the Lithuanians were demanding more services in Lithuanian, while the Poles, although much smaller in number, were opposing them. For the sake of preserving calm, the parish priest did not introduce services in Lithuanian[48]. In Pabaiskas parish,

42 Kulvos mužikėliai, *Isz Kulvos*, "Tėvynės sargas" 1899, no. 11, p. 38.
43 B-tis (Stanislovas Stakelė], *Kulva*, "Vilniaus žinios" 1906-07-05, p. 3.
44 Jonas Šiušelis, *Nuo Batakių padangės*, "Tėvynės sargas" 1901, no. 2-3A, p. 28.
45 Silpnutis, *Radviliškis*, "Lietuvos ūkininkas" 1906, no. 25, p. 332.
46 Viensėdis, *Sesikiai*, "Šaltinis" 1907, no. 25, p. 394.
47 A. Skaistutis, *Siesikai*, "Viltis" 1909-09-25, p. 3.
48 Dr., *Pabaiske*, "Tėvynės sargas" 1903, nos 5-6A, p. 20.

sermons in Lithuanian are preached every other Sunday, but church-singing is entirely in Polish. This is what the correspondent wrote about church-singing: 'a Lithuanian, unable to pronounce Polish words properly, turns them into Lithuanian ones'[49]. There were attempts to sing the Rosary in Lithuanian, but the Polish parishioners objected. In 1909, the Lithuanians outnumbered the Poles in the Pabaiskas church, but additional services were conducted only in Polish, and only the sermon on every other holy day was preached in Lithuanian. The parish priest is a Lithuanian, but he does not attend to the needs of his compatriots[50].

The Poles of the parish of Krekenava saw that there was nothing in Polish left in the church. They asked the bishop that sermons in Polish be preached at least on feast days. The bishop instructed the parish priest that sermons in Polish should be preached at least on feast days[51].

In the parish of Bukonys, there were eighteen homesteads of Polish petty nobility, but church-singing in the church was in Polish and Lithuanian on alternate Sundays. A correspondent wrote: 'Since Polish nobility sing on their Sundays, the parish priest forces the Lithuanian hymn singers to sing in Polish, threatening that he will forbid them to sing in Lithuanian if they don't come to sing in Polish'[52].

Sometimes the believers in the parishes in the depth of Samogitia demanded their rights to the Polish language. This happened in Mažeikiai parish. As many as 150 Poles were counted in the parish, and there was nothing in Polish in the church. They appealed to the bishop, and the reading of the Gospel in Polish was introduced in the Mažeikiai church[53].

In Renavas parish, the priest was a Lithuanian. However, the church organist, who considered himself a Pole, sang in Polish when he should be singing in Latin, as required[54].

In 1909, at the instruction of the bishop, church-singing in the Panoteriai church used to be in Polish and in Lithuanian on alternate holy days, although previously all church-singing was only in Polish. However, Lithuanian singing is still not very good, there is no one to teach it, because the organist is not very good either[55].

An article in *Šaltinis* reads that Kuršėnai parish is Lithuanian (Samogitian), but the old parish priest belongs to Polish culture. That is why services and hymn-singing in the church are conducted in Polish. He also forbids reading Lithuanian books and newspapers when he goes around the villages, because he does not like the fact that the Lithuanian letters are not the same as the Polish

49 K.J., *Pabaiskas*, "Šaltinis" 1907, no. 48, 763.
50 Pabaiskietis, *Pabaiskas*, "Viltis" 1909-06-24, p. 2.
51 Lietuvėlis, *Iš Krakinavos*, "Tėvynės sargas" 1903, nos 11-12A, p. 40-41.
52 Nuskriaustas lietuvis [Tadas Greibus], *Bukonįs*, "Vilniaus žinios" 1908-11-11, p. 3.
53 Šaulytis, *Mažeikiai*, "Viltis" 1908-05-18, p. 3-4.
54 Ten buvęs, *Renavas*, "Viltis" 1908-03-09, p. 3.
55 J. Putinėlis [Bernotas Adomas], *Paneteriai, arba Koplyčios*, "Viltis" 1909-05-13, p. 2.

ones[56]. The eleventh issue of *Šaltinis* contains an editorial clarification to the effect that the information about the Kuršėnai church published earlier is not entirely accurate. In the Kuršėnai church, the Holy Hours and hymns are always sung in Polish during the Corpus Christi procession. The remaining additional services – the Rosary, supplications, and sermons – are in Lithuanian. The Gospel is read first in Polish and then in Lithuanian, and it is followed by a sermon in Lithuanian. There is no sermon in Polish[57].

In the church of Šiaulėnai, everything was in Lithuanian since old days, but times changed, and the Gospel came to be read in Polish. The correspondent wrote: 'Some shook their heads, others rejoiced... they would become enlightened by learning Polish. Soon after, the singing of "Fall on Your Knees" was banned. Of course, hymn singers followed this order only when the parish priest was in the church'[58]. At the feast of Corpus Christi, the parish priest sang 'Twoja cześć, chwała' (Your Honour, Praise) during the procession. The parishioners frowned in surprise. Two singers, who spoke some Polish, turned up and sang this hymn. In the procession a year later, singing in either Polish or in Lithuanian was not allowed, only in Latin. However, the singing was in distorted Latin[59].

The correspondent writes that there is hardly one person in a thousand who does not understand Lithuanian in Telšiai, but most of the additional services in the church are conducted in Polish[60]. This is what *Viltis* wrote about the unrest in the Telšiai church in during May service on 4 May 1912[61]. The priest who conducted the service ordered to sing in Polish, but the pupils of the gymnasium and the town school and most of the parishioners, especially the women, began to sing in Lithuanian. The priest then expelled several people from the church, after which the congregation obeyed the priest's demands. After this publication in *Viltis*, the parish priest of Telšiai had to explain himself to the bishop[62]. In another report, the parish priest pointed out that in the Telšiai church, May services were held in Polish and October services in Lithuanian[63]. The bishop had to explain the developments in Telšiai to the Department of Spiritual Affairs for Foreign Confessions in St Petersburg[64].

An article from Dotnuva parish reads:

> Here in the church, the Lithuanians are forced to become 'Poles'. In our church, all services are conducted in Polish, although half of the parish are genuine

[56] Teisingas, *Kuršėnai*, "Šaltinis" 1908, no. 4, p. 59.
[57] Red., *Kuršėnai*, "Šaltinis" 1908, no. 11, p. 169.
[58] Senis sumaišytgalvis, *Šiaulėnai*, "Viltis" 1908-12-25, p. 3.
[59] Ibidem.
[60] Lietuvis, *Telšiai*, "Vilniaus žinios" 1908-07-22, p. 3.
[61] Krislelis, *Telšiai*, "Viltis" 1912-05-11, p. 1.
[62] A report of the parish priest of Telšiai, undated, LVIA, f. 1671, ap. 4, b. 220, l. 180-185.
[63] A report of the parish priest of Telšiai, 1913-03-13, ibidem, l. 175.
[64] A draft of the bishop's letter to the Department of Spiritual Affairs for Foreign Confessions in St Petersburg, 1912-06-28, ibidem, l. 177.

> Lithuanians. Although more loyal parishioners, the Lithuanians hear a Lithuanian sermon in their church only once a month, and that is the only one, because all other services are always in Polish. Thus, in order to take part in church services, the Lithuanians of Dotnuva have to learn and teach their children to pray in Polish, sing Polish hymns, listen to Polish sermons, whether they want it or not; one must abandon one's own native language, given by God to Lithuanians, or go to another parish, and only there to worship God from the heart in one's own language[65].

The author continues that it is time to introduce all services with a sermon in Lithuanian and in Polish on alternate Sundays in the Dotnuva church.

In Babtai, the organist assembled a choir of Lithuanians. However, the Poles opposed this, believing that the Lithuanians would surpass them in church-singing. They started to threaten the singers, but it did not help – the Lithuanians kept singing; then they threatened to physically beat the singers, and the choir withered away[66].

In 1909, instigated from the outside, the Polish nobles of Josvainiai parish appealed to the bishop to introduce as many additional services in Polish as there were in Lithuanian. This sparked an unrest in the parish[67].

There is not a single person in the parish of Grinkiškis who does not understand Lithuanian. Polish sermons had never been preached here, but one Sunday the parish priest preached a Polish sermon during Holy Mass. People were forced to listen to the priest without understanding him. The intention was to continue the Polish sermons[68].

This is what Rev. Juozas Stakauskas wrote in his memoirs about the services in the Panevėžys church:

> While I was still in Liepaja, I received a request from the Lithuanians of Panevėžys to introduce the Lithuanian language for May services, because they were only in Polish in the evenings, and service in Lithuanian was held immediately after Holy Mass only on holy days. Since I took over the parish in June 1909, I introduced the service only in 1910, with the bishop's permission: May service was held in Lithuania one evening, and in Polish the next evening. The villagers still had the Lithuanian May service on holy days immediately after Holy Mass. It was not possible to abolish the Polish services altogether, because Panevėžys, like other towns, was strongly Polonised. At that time, the only church in the city had to meet the demands of the Poles[69].

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65 Jonas Švilpikas, *Dotnava*, "Vienybė" 1908, no. 46, p. 731; cf. L., *Parapijos reikalai*, "Viltis" 1913-02-20, p. 2. It reads that on church holidays, the sermon is preached in Lithuanian on the second day. On major holidays, when more priests participate, the lessons are given in Lithuanian and Polish.

66 Anonymous, *Babtai*, "Vargonininkas" 1909, no. 7, p. 7.

67 J. Ačas [Dabužis Juozas], *Juosvainiai*, "Viltis" 1909-05-10, p. 2-3.

68 A. P., *Grinkiškis*, "Viltis" 1909-02-25, p. 2.

69 J. Stakauskas, *Trys lietuvių tautos pagrindai. Iš atsiminimų*, parengė G. Rudis, Vilnius 2014, p. 102.

In 1911, the Polish parishioners submitted an appeal with 69 signatures to the parish priest Juozas Stakauskas, in which they set out their demands: (1) At 10.30 a.m. on all Sundays and feast days, a Polish sermon would be preached after the votive, and necessarily from the pulpit; (2) May, June, and October services and the Litany of Jesus after the Evening Prayer on all holy days and every other day on ordinary days would be held in Polish; (3) At a funeral of a deceased Pole, 'Angel of God' would be sung only in Polish, and the sermon, if delivered, would be preached in Polish[70]. On 13 December 1911, the Polish parishioners of Panevėžys submitted an appeal with identical demands to the bishop[71]. In his report to the bishop, Rev. Juozas Stakauskas, the parish priest of Panevėžys, explained the situation regarding the language of additional services in Panevėžys parish[72].

The Polish parishioners of Utena lodged an appeal to the bishop for the Gospel to be read in Polish. However, when it turned out that, among the undersigned, only one family attending the church did not speak Lithuanian, the request was not granted[73].

In 1911, the Gospel was read in Polish in the Pandėlys church. The correspondent writes that this is unnecessary, because everyone in the parish understands Lithuanian, while the nobility are few and rarely go to church[74].

The parish of Panemunėlis was a Lithuanian one. However, one landowner turned up who demanded that the parish priest read the Gospel in Polish. The pastor did not agree. Then a complaint against him was lodged with the bishop. The bishop agreed that reading the Gospel in Polish was not needed in Panemunėlis. The landowner exerted economic pressure on the parish priest: he refused fuel to the parish house or pasture for the parish priest's cattle. Three years later, the parish priest gave in and introduced the reading of the Gospel in Polish[75].

The Scale and Geographical Distribution

The parishes of the Samogitian (Telšiai) diocese were part of two governorates: Kaunas and Courland. The parishes of Kaunas governorate can be attributed to the Lithuanian (Samogitian) part of the diocese, and those of Courland governorate to the Latvian part of the diocese.

It is difficult to identify all the parishes in the diocese where conflicts or disagreements over the language of the additional service occurred. We mainly

70 Mes, *Panevėžys*, "Viltis" 1911-07-17 [trūksta metų], p. 2.

71 Appeal of Polish parishioners of Panevėžys to the bishop of the Samogitian (Telšiai) diocese, 1911-12-13, LVIA, f. 1671, ap. 4, b. 200, l. 3.

72 Report of Rev. Juozas Stakauskas, the parish priest of Panevėžys, 1911-12-28, ibidem, l. 1-2.

73 Draugijos narys, *Utena*, "Šaltinis" 1909, no. 15, p. 234.

74 Dobilėlis, *Panedėlis*, "Viltis" 1911-08-03, p. 2-3.

75 Panemunietis, *Panemunėlis*, "Viltis" 1912-06-01, p. 1-2; cf. Report of Rev. Juozapas Budrikis, parish priest of Panemunėlis, 1913-07-10, LVIA, f. 1671, ap. 4, b. 235, l. 5. It reads that the Gospel in Polish is read in the church of Panemunėlis on Sundays and on the twelve feasts of the year.

confined ourselves to the parishes that were reported in the press. On the other hand, it should be noted that in Lithuanian (Samogitian) parishes, the absolute majority of the population of which consisted of the Lithuanians, the Lithuanian language was naturally used in additional services without any larger or smaller conflicts. Conflict situations arose in the so-called mixed parishes, where Lithuanians and Poles lived side by side, or where nationalistically inclined Poles would turn up mainly from among the nobility and landowners.

In 1910, the Samogitian (Telšiai) Diocese comprised nineteen deaneries, seventeen in the Kaunas governorate and two in the Courland governorate[76]. Let us now take a look at the distribution of conflicting parishes by deaneries:

> Alsėdžiai Deanery: Telšiai parish; Kaunas Deanery: Babtai parish, Karmėlava parish, Kėdainiai parish, Kulva filial church, Lapės filial church, Rumšiškės parish, Skaruliai parish, Žeimiai parish; Krakiai Deanery: Dotnuva parish, Grinkiškis parish, Josvainiai parish, Krekenava parish, Paberžė filial church, Pociūnėliai filial church; Obeliai Deanery: Panemunėlis parish; Panevėžys Deanery: Panevėžys parish, Ramygala parish; Rietavas Deanery: Rietavas parish; Skuodas Deanery: Darbėnai parish; Šeduva Deanery: Radviliškis parish; Šiaulėnai parish; Šiluva Deanery: Kražiai parish, Viduklė parish; Ukmergė Deanery: Bukonys parish, Pabaiskas parish, Panoteriai filial church, Paželvė filial church, Siesikai parish, Ukmergė parish; Utena Deanery: Utena parish; Veliuona Deanery: Čekiškė parish, Raseiniai parish; Viekšniai Deanery: Kuršėnai parish, Mažeikiai parish; Zarasai (Novoaleksandrovsk) Deanery: Zarasai parish, Pelikonys filial church.

The data provided shows that conflicts and conflict situations occurred in fourteen out of seventeen deaneries in Kaunas governorate. Parishioner clashes could not be determined in three deaneries: Batakiai, Joniškis, and Varniai. Most of the conflicts took place in the parishes and filial churches of Kaunas and Krakiai deaneries. There were eight conflicts in the former and six in the latter.

Conflicts over the language of additional services occurred not only in the Lithuanian part of the Samogitian (Telšiai) Diocese but also in the parishes of the Courland governorate. This was even recorded in the chronicle of the 'Rūta' [Rue] association of the Lithuanian students at the University of Fribourg. Below is an example of the Liepaja parish. The chronicle reads:

> Not once such individuals, from among Lithuanians from Vilnius, who had lived in Liepaja for years and did not even know that sermons in Lithuanian are preached in our church, that was because they would only come to Holy Mass. We, the Lithuanian priests, demanded that if there was a Polish sermon before Holy Mass, then there should be a Lithuanian sermon after it; but the priest disagreed and assigned that time to the Germans. The priest starts the German sermon after Holy Mass, all people go outside, and there are so few Germans listening to it, actually, as I once counted myself, there were only seven people, and they were

[76] Directorium horarum canonicarum et missarum pro dioecesi Telsensi seu Samogitiensi in Annnum Domini Communem MCMX, Vilnae 1909.

> educated people who could do without the sermon and could easily arrive earlier; meanwhile, the whole street is packed with hundreds of Lithuanians, who stand at the churchyard for another half of the day smoking their pipes. When the priest was away for a couple of times and there was nobody to preach in German, I and another vicar preached Lithuanian sermons after Holy Mass, and the church was full, right to the main door. At least we achieved the Lithuanian sermon to be preached after the votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary during the Advent, when the church is full, but later the priest regretted it, he quoted the words of one Polish woman that the Lithuanians were given the best time for their sermon[77].

In the parish of Laukesa, Bishop M. L. Paliulionis arranged additional services in Lithuanian to be held every third Sunday. Later, daily May service was introduced for the Lithuanians, which was held after morning Mass. Initially, the Lithuanians attended services diligently, but as time went on, fewer and fewer people turned up. On the first day of church service in 1914, some three to five women appeared. For this reason, May services in Lithuanian were suspended. It was quite clear that the time of the morning service was not suitable for Lithuanian villagers[78].

Chronology and intensity

It has already been mentioned that during the time of Bishop Motiejus Valančius, sermons in Lithuanian were introduced in the churches of the Lithuanian part of the Samogitian (Telšiai) diocese, with the exception of some parishes. Vytautas Merkys gave a couple of examples when the nobility wanted to keep sermons in Polish. In 1867, Rev. Pranciškus Levickis, the priest of the filial church of Kėdainiai, preached his sermons in Polish, even though all Catholics in Kėdainiai and the surrounding area spoke Lithuanian, except the nobility.

The vice-governor of Kaunas drew the bishop's attention to the situation in Kėdainiai. Motiejus Valančius agreed with the representative of the civil authorities that sermons should be delivered in Lithuanian and instructed Rev. Levickis to preach in Lithuanian[79]. Even where the nobility may have constituted the majority of parishioners, Bishop Valančius did not take their desire to preserve the Polish language in the church into account. This is what happened in the filial church of Panoteriai. Rev. Juozapas Sakalauskas, the priest of this church, asked the bishop for permission to preach sermons in Polish every second week, because only a quarter of the inhabitants were peasants and the rest were nobility. Being aware of the ethnic composition of Panoteriai, the bishop did not allow sermons in Polish in this church[80]. These examples suggest that concern about the introduction of Polish sermons in Samogitian (Telšiai) diocese started only

[77] A. Katilius, *Fribūro universiteto lietuvių studentų "Rūtos" draugijos kronika*, "Lietuvių katalikų mokslo akademijos metraštis" 39(2016), p. 273-274.
[78] Žr.: LVIA, f. 1671, ap. 4, b. 200, l. 41.
[79] V. Merkys, *Motiejus Valančius. Tarp katalikiškojo universalizmo ir tautiškumo*, p. 691.
[80] Ibidem.

after the introduction of Lithuanian sermons in the churches of the Lithuanian part of the diocese, i.e., in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The timeframe discussed in this article spans from the mid-1860s to the beginning of the First World War. The collected data on the conflicts and conflict situations regarding the use of the language of additional services in the parishes of the Samogitian (Telšiai) diocese suggests that more or less intense periods can be distinguished. In the second half of the nineteenth century, there were fewer conflicts and conflict situations. Due to the divergence of Lithuanian and Polish interests on national grounds in the early twentieth century, conflicts spread to an increasing number of parishes. The Lithuanians began to fight for church-singing in Lithuanian, while the Poles began to demand the preaching of Polish sermons or the reading of the Gospel in Polish. Conflicts and conflict situations continued in the parishes right until the First World War.

How were conflicts in parishes resolved?

Writing about the resolution of the conflict in the Čekiškė church, Antanas Alekna pointed to the principles followed by Bishop Gasparas Cirtautas:

1) As a separate ethnographic area, Lithuania has no special rights in the church. Only individual ethnic groups of parishioners can have the rights. Therefore, there is no dominant language in Lithuania that could have more rights than other languages. The languages of different ethnic groups have absolutely equal rights in the church.

2) Each of these ethnic groups must have sermons and services in its own language in the parish church.

3) The order of services by language can only be determined by statistical information.

4) This information is obtained by individually asking each parishioner about their preferred language of additional service and correctly recording their individual response.

5) There can be no other normative principles in this matter.

6) It is not the role of the Church to become involved in ethnic conflicts. It does not have to serve either Polish or Lithuanian national aspirations[81].

The above principles resulted in the following consequences. The spiritual superiors must equitably address the demands of the minority. If there appear individuals in a parish who desire one language or another and who send letters and delegations, the spiritual superiors must meet their demands, taking into account the statistics of the parishioners, without considering other motives for the introduction of one language or another. If those who appeal claim they want service for religious reasons, then this is to be believed, even if there exists important evidence that these motives are not religious, but only political and

[81] Kuronietis [Antanas Alekna], *Kalbų klausimas Lietuvos Bažnyčiose ir Vilniaus "Sąjunga"*, "Draugija" 1911, no. 60, p. 390-391.

nationalist. The minority must take care of its own language rights in the church, without waiting for the spiritual superiors to *motu proprio* correct the anomalies that have existed in this matter since old times. The Church teaches only faith and virtue. The truths of faith and virtue are the same whether they are proclaimed in Polish or Lithuanian. Since the issue of languages often leads to discord and even riots in parishes, the spiritual superiors must maintain the *status quo* on the issue of languages for the sake of peace, even though sometimes it may not be entirely fair from the ethnic point of view. Thus, if services in Lithuanian have disappeared in a parish due to the negligence of the priests, or if the Poles have succeeded in convincing the Lithuanians that they are Poles and do not need services in Lithuanian, the spiritual superiors are not obliged to interfere in the matter and let them pray in Polish. There is nothing wrong with that theologically or from the point of view of the Church. And if the fooled Lithuanians themselves demand services in Polish, then that demand must be met just as much as that of the real Poles, because the Church is not obliged to interfere in ethnic matters[82].

In 1906, the parishioners of Žeimiai sent an appeal to the bishop for the introduction of services in Lithuanian. The appeal reads that the inhabitants of the villages of Žeimiai parish and the town itself have always loved the Lithuanian language and spoke it at home. However, they had to worship God in Polish. Under parish priest Šapalas, the church-singing was in Lithuanian. However, when another priest arrived and with landowners insisting, church-singing in Lithuanian was banished from the church. The bishop advised the delegates of the Žeimiai parish to calm down and not to fight for singing in Lithuanian while the new church was being built, because the landowners might refuse to contribute to the construction of the church. When the church is completed, the parish priest should be instructed to restore singing in Lithuanian in Žeimiai church on Sundays and holy days, when the Lithuanian sermon is preached[83]. In order to resolve the conflict over additional services in Žeimiai parish, Bishop Mečislovas Leonardas Paliulionis sent a letter to the parish priest, which was announced in the church on 25 December 1906. The letter instructed that May services were to be held in Lithuania one Sunday and in Polish the next Sunday. Before the introduction of additional services, statistics on the parishioner was collected. In Žeimiai parish, 2511 parishioners speak Lithuanian at home and 2390 parishioners speak Polish[84]. Although the Poles did not oppose it at first, they eventually began to resist the established order: ‘They again made complaints, scandals, provocations,

82 Ibidem, p. 391-392.

83 K.S.S. [Stanislovas Stakelė], *Žeimė*, “Vilniaus žinios” 1906-09-12, p. 3.

84 X. M. [Matas Miežinis], *Žeimė*, “Viltis” 1909-05-13, p. 3. On Bishop Paliulionis’s instructions, in the church of Žeimiai the Gospel is read in Polish and Lithuanian every Sunday and holy day, the sermons are preached in Polish and in Lithuanian on alternate Sundays and holy days; on feast days after Mass, the sermon must be preached first in Polish and then in Lithuanian, and on Sundays and holy days when the sermon is preached in Polish, hymn-singing is in Polish, and when it is in Lithuanian, hymn-singing is in Lithuanian etc.

trying to drive Lithuanian singing out of the church'[85]. Lithuanian parishioners thanked the Bishop in the press for introducing Lithuanian services[86].

In Karmėlava parish, Bishop M. L. Paliulionis introduced the practice of allowing Lithuanians to have an additional service every fourth week. However, this did not go down well with the local Poles, who were incited by the members of the Polish National Democracy (ND) movement from Kaunas. Complaints were written and delegations were sent to Bishop Gasparas Cirtautas to ban Lithuanians from singing in Lithuanian in the church of Karmėlava, because, according to them, there were no Lithuanians in the parish. The bishop issued an instruction to collect statistics of the parishioners and on its basis he assigned every fifth holy day for the Lithuanians to sing. Nonetheless, the Poles resisted this instruction as well, simply saying that they did not want Lithuanian hymn-singing. Since an amicable agreement with the Polish parishioners could not be reached, the bishop removed the parish priest for several weeks and closed the church[87].

Conclusions

The causes of the conflicts were not homogeneous, and their occurrences depended on the situation in each individual parish. As their national consciousness grew, Lithuanian parishioners became more and more aware of the abnormal situation of the additional services and church-singing being held in Polish, although the majority of the parishioners were Lithuanian speakers. The Polish parishioners tried to preserve the long-established order. From the time of Bishop Motiejus Valančius, it was established that sermons were preached in Lithuanian. Polish parishioners, especially the nobility and landowners, demanded the Gospel be read and sermons be preached in Polish. After 1905, these processes intensified dramatically. When sermons in Polish were introduced, the Lithuanians usually did not object.

As regards the course of conflicts and conflict situations, it should be noted that no bloody clashes between parishioners in churches occurred or could be detected in the Samogitian (Telšiai) Diocese, although there had been some threats of rebellions or bloodshed. Most often, both Lithuanian and Polish parishioners addressed their complaints and appeals or sent their delegates to the bishop in Kaunas. People also resorted to more violent forms of protest: the singing of hymns in Lithuanian would be interrupted by the Poles singing in Polish.

[85] K. Š. [Kazimieras Šaulys], *Mūsų santykiai su lenkais*, "Draugija" 1910, no. 41, p. 67; cf. N., *Žeimiai*, "Nedėldienio skaitymas" 1906-11-29, p. 7. The announcement of the bishop's instruction took place on a day important for the Žeimiai Church. On the first day of Christmas in 1906, the newly built brick church was consecrated, and services were introduced in the church. On Sunday, 31 December, Lithuanians sang church hymns in Lithuanian. See: J.S., A.S., M.G., *Žeimė*, "Nedėldienio skaitymas" 1907-02-07, p. 45.

[86] J.S., A.S., S.K., *Žeimė*, "Šaltinis" 1907, no. 9, p. 138-139.

[87] K. Š. [Kazimieras Šaulys], *Mūsų santykiai su lenkais*, "Draugija" 1910, no. 41, p. 69.

When the priest in the Telšiai church instructed the congregation to sing in Polish during May services, the parishioners sang in Lithuanian.

The parishes of the Samogitian (Telšiai) Diocese were divided between two governorates – Kaunas (the Lithuanian part of the diocese) and Courland (the Latvian part of the diocese). Seventeen out of nineteen deaneries were in the Lithuanian part. Conflicts and conflict situations occurred in fourteen Lithuanian deaneries. Most of unrest took place in the parishes and filial churches of Kaunas and Krakiai deaneries. There were eight conflicts in the former and six in the latter. In the second half of the nineteenth century, there were fewer conflicts and conflict situations. Due to the divergence of Lithuanian and Polish nationalist interests, in the early twentieth century conflicts spread to an increasing number of parishes.

When resolving conflicts and conflict situations over the language of the additional services, the diocesan hierarchy tried to take into account the wishes of the parishioners, whether they were Lithuanians or Poles. Lithuanian church-singing and other additional services were introduced where necessary, and the reading of the Gospel and sermons were also introduced where the Poles asked for that. However, sometimes the diocesan superiors had to resort to extreme measures – to close a church because of a riot. To resolve conflicts in parishes, the diocesan superiors used statistical methods to determine the ethnic composition of the parish population. This was done in Čekiškė, Žeimiai, and other parishes.

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