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## PARISH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST IN TRZCIANKA AND ITS RECORD BOOKS TO 1945

### Abstract

The article broadens the current knowledge about the history of the parish of St John the Baptist in Trzcianka before 1945. It has been established that it certainly existed in the early 17th century, and had possibly been erected as early as in the 16th century. Until the second half of the eighteenth century, it operated as the Holy Trinity Parish, then its name was changed to the present one. For more than three centuries, the churches and parish buildings fell victim to fires several times and were rebuilt. The first two churches (before 1628 and 1717) were wooden, the next two (1835 and 1917) were made of brick. The parish has also changed its state and church administrative affiliations many times. The oldest preserved parish books date back to 1730 and are stored in the Archives of Koszalin-Kołobrzeg Diocese in Koszalin. Owing to a search of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century parish visitation records in the Archdiocesan Archives in Poznań, we were able to partially reconstruct information about unpreserved parish books that may have been burned in the fire of the parsonage in Trzcianka in 1730. The search in the state archives also made it possible to locate duplicates of the 19th-century record books of Trzcianka.

Keywords: record books; Catholic Church; Trzcianka; Greater Poland

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### Introduction

Located at the northern edge of Greater Poland, Trzcianka has changed its ecclesiastical administrative affiliation several times over the centuries. Since its creation in the 16th century, it has been part of the diocese and then, since 1821,

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the archdiocese of Poznań. In 1920, it was incorporated into the bishop's delegation based in Tuczno, and in 1930 into the Free Prelature of Piła, where it remained until the end of World War II. On 15 August 1945, Cardinal August Hlond established an apostolic administration in the so-called Western Territories, with headquarters in Gorzów Wielkopolski, to which Trzcianka was also included. This administration was transformed by Paul VI into 3 new dioceses in 1972, and Trzcianka was incorporated into the Diocese of Gorzów, to which it then belonged for 20 years. As a result of the administrative reorganization of the Church in Poland, carried out by Pope John Paul II in 1992, Trzcianka was annexed to the Koszalin-Kołobrzeg Diocese, where it is now located.<sup>1</sup> The archives of this diocese also hold the Trzcianka record books from before 1945.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of this article is to outline the history of St John the Baptist Parish in Trzcianka from its inception to the end of World War II and to gather information on its record books until 1945, i.e. 3 basic types of books: baptisms/births, marriages, and deaths, for which extensive information has survived. Other types of parish registers will be omitted, as it is difficult to determine whether they were ever kept in Trzcianka before 1945. The article will cover both the original Trzcianec record books and their duplicates made up to 1874 as civil registration records. These duplicates, although called civil registry books, were in fact copies of parish registers. The relevant civil registry books from 1874–1945 will be omitted for the purpose of the article. Although they often contain very similar information to that included in parish record books, they nevertheless constitute a completely different type of source. All civil registry books for Trzcianka urban and rural districts are currently (2020) either in the State Archives in Poznań Branch in Piła,<sup>3</sup> or in the Registry Office in Trzcianka.<sup>4</sup>

### **The history of the parish of St John the Baptist in Trzcianka until 1945**

The Roman Catholic parish in Trzcianka was one of the three main religious communities in the town before 1945, along with the Evangelical parish and the Jewish community.<sup>5</sup> It is not known when exactly it was founded, but it was un-

<sup>1</sup> T. Ceynowa, *Trzcianka*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 19, ed. E. Gigilewicz, Lublin 2013, col. 1101–1102.

<sup>2</sup> A list of the record books of Trzcianec stored in the Archives of the Koszalin-Kołobrzeg Diocese, along with their physical description and contents, was recently published by: T. Ceynowa, *Katolickie księgi metrykalne diecezji koszalińsko-kołobrzeszkiej*, „Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne”, 113 (2020) pp. 69–70.

<sup>3</sup> State Archive in Poznań Branch in Piła (hereinafter: APPiła), Trzcianka Registry Office – urban district, ref. 576 (1874–1916 birth records, 1874–1935 marriage records, 1874–1934 death records) and Trzcianka Registry Office – rural district, ref. 577 (1874–1916 birth records, 1874–1934 marriage records, 1874–1934 death records). All records for both districts from 1874–1914 have been digitized, and the digital copies are available at [www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl](http://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl) (accessed on: 1.04.2020).

<sup>4</sup> These are 1917–1945 birth records (for urban and rural districts), 1936–1945 (urban district) and 1935–1945 (rural district) marriage records, and 1935–1945 death records (for urban and rural districts).

<sup>5</sup> M.L. Bamberger, *Die jüdische Gemeinde und ihre Einrichtungen*, in: *Schönlanke an der Ostbahn*, ed. E. Froese, Berlin 1930, pp. 26–27; W. Bartel, *Die evangelische Kirchengemeinde*, in:

doubtedly the oldest officially operating religious community in Trzcianka. The earliest surviving document mentioning the existence of a Catholic church in Trzcianka dates back to 1620 and reports that the temple was at that time under the care of the parish administrator assigned to the village by the parson of Piła and the dean of Czarnków.<sup>6</sup> The earliest record indicating that this church was a parish church dates back to 1624.<sup>7</sup>

It is highly probable that the village of Trzcianka had a small, probably wooden, church as early as in the 16th century.<sup>8</sup> It presumably collapsed in 1601 or slightly earlier. In a study on the town of Trzcianka published in 1930, the local vicar, Rev. Joachim Aust, began his description of the history of the Catholic parish by quoting an unknown document from 1601, which purported to record: ‘our old wooden church has already collapsed.’<sup>9</sup> So far, this is the only trace indicating the existence of a church in Trzcianka in the 16th century.

In 1580, the village of Trzcianka had its own bell, as attested by German researcher of the history of the Netze District, Prof. Carl Schulz.<sup>10</sup> Ownership of the bell may have been linked to the construction of the first church in Trzcianka as early as the 16th century. This is the hypothesis that some researchers are leaning towards.<sup>11</sup> However, the bell alone is not the evidence of the existence of a temple, because villages without churches also had bells, hung on a special scaffolding, which sounded the alarm in case of fire, called for communal prayer or accompanied the dead on their last journey to their eternal resting place.<sup>12</sup>

As already mentioned, the first known record of the existence of a Catholic church in Trzcianka dates only from 1620. According to the records of the Poznań

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idem, pp. 20–23; P. Birecki, *Z dziejów XIX-wiecznych kościołów Trzcianki i jej najbliższej okolicy*, „Kronika Ziemi Trzcianieckiej”, 7 (2017) pp. 21–32.

<sup>6</sup> Archdiocesan Archives in Poznań (hereinafter: AAP), ref. AC 138 – Consistory records of Gaspar Hap, suffragan of Poznań, chancellor and auditor-general, Marcin Moręski, vicar-general and officiate, Jakub Wierzbicka Doruchowski, chancellor and auditor-general of Poznań in 1619–1621 (hereinafter: AC 138), k. 397; J. Nowacki, *Archidiecezja poznańska w jej granicach historycznych i jej ustrój*, vol. 2, Poznań 1964, pp. 578–579.

<sup>7</sup> AAP, ref. AE XXV – Jan Trach Gniński. Records of the activities of the *absente episcopo* and *sade vacante* diocesan administrator 1619–1621, 1624 (hereinafter: AE XXV), k. 43v–44.

<sup>8</sup> According to M. Hlebionka, the foundation of Trzcianka probably took place between 1558 and 1561. The village was then still called Trzcianna Łąka. Cf. M. Hlebionek, *Roźdróżka – Trzcianna Łąka. Jeszcze o początkach Trzcianki*, in: idem, *Studia z dziejów Trzcianki i Ziemi Trzcianieckiej*, Trzcianka 2005, pp. 6–16.

<sup>9</sup> J. Aust, *Die katholische Kirchengemeinde Schönlanke*, in: *Schönlanke*, p. 23.

<sup>10</sup> C. Schulz, *Merktafeln zur Geschichte des Netzekreises und der Stadt Schönlanke*, Schönlanke-Kreuz 1930, p. 37.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. M. Hlebionek, *Pejzaż epigraficzny Trzcianki*, in: idem, *Studia z dziejów Trzcianki*, p. 40 and the works he cites.

<sup>12</sup> The situation was similar in nearby Nowa Wieś, which had a bell as early as ca. 1700. It fell from a scaffolding set up in the garden of one of the landlords and was melted down in 1738 and placed in the cemetery bell tower, although the first church in Nowa Wieś had not been built until 1798. Cf. F. Just, *Dreihundert Jahre Posener Schulzendorf. Geschichte des Dorfes Neudorf bei Schönlanke (Kr. Czarnikau)*, Bromberg 1918, p. 73.

consistory, at that time it was under the care of the parish administrator, Rev. Joshua Zibardus (Zybert), who was appointed to this office in the same year.<sup>13</sup> Administrator of a parish or other benefice was appointed in place of another clergyman, collecting income from that benefice. Thus, it is possible that Trzcianka parish already existed at that time, and J. Zibardus was its administrator on behalf of another parson, drawing income from Trzcianka parish property.

J. Zibardus was not a good manager of the parish and had to leave after about 3 years. His successor in Trzcianka was Rev. Henryk Żywacz (Szywacz, Struort). Poznań bishop's records report that in 1624 H. Żywacz sued his predecessor in the bishop's court, accusing him of numerous negligent acts in the management of the parish property. After hearing witnesses, the court found J. Zibardus partially guilty of the parish's debt and failure to sow the parish fields with wheat (thereby exposing his successor to losses) and ordered him to pay compensation.<sup>14</sup> J. Zibardus was at that time the vicar in Marcinkowice in the Wałcz district.<sup>15</sup>

The earliest surviving protocol written after the bishop's visitation of the Trzcianka parish, dated 15 October 1628, reports the existence in that village of 'a parish church without any sacred invocation, unconsecrated, a foundation of the lords of Czarnków'. The visitor also noted that 'the original foundation act of the church does not exist'. According to the aforementioned document, the rector of the temple for 4 years was Rev. Michał Lyncki, a Prussian by origin. The villages of Łomnica and Nowa Wieś were then subject to this church by parish law. The property of the parish included 1 acre of land, an orchard and a fishing pond. Peasants from Trzcianka, Łomnica and Nowa Wieś paid tributes to the parish priest in the form of grain, eggs, sausages and cash.<sup>16</sup>

The document also states that the church has not been consecrated. It may have belonged for a certain time to the Lutherans during the period of the extensive Reformation (the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries), according to Ludwik Bąk, a researcher of the history of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation in the lands of the Netze District.<sup>17</sup> Such a supposition seems to be confirmed also by the entry in the Visitation Protocol of 1628, stating that the Blessed Sacrament was not kept in the church. Another confirmation of this theory can be found in the decree issued by the visitor (apparently fearing Protestant influence) to not only place the Blessed Sacrament in the church, but also to carry it to the sick, if necessary, and to display it every 2 weeks for public adoration, a thoroughly Counter-Reformation effort.<sup>18</sup> Whether or not the Trzcianka church was in Prot-

<sup>13</sup> AAP, ref. AC 138, k. 397.

<sup>14</sup> AAP, ref. AE XXV, k. 43v–44.

<sup>15</sup> His career in Marcinkowice was also short-lived, as in 1628 he received an admonition from the visitor for neglecting the service, along with the announcement that he would be replaced 'with an exemplary priest'. Cf. L. Bąk, *Ziemia Wałecka w dobie reformacji i kontrreformacji w XVI–XVIII w.*, Piła 1999, p. 403.

<sup>16</sup> AAP, ref. AV 07, Visitation of the Poznań Archdeaconry by Świątosław Strzałkowski 1628–1629 (hereinafter: AV 07), k. 12v–13.

<sup>17</sup> Bąk, *Ziemia Wałecka*, pp. 404–405.

<sup>18</sup> AAP, ref. AV 07, k. 13.

estant hands, much evidence suggests that Protestants, referred to as heretics in diocesan documents, made up the bulk of the village population. Such indications can be found in the court ruling of 1624 (heretics were said to have looted and destroyed the parish's movable property and beehives), in the visitation protocol of 1628 (the church servant at the parish church is a heretic), as well as in the visitation protocol of 1641 (the visitor says explicitly that almost all the residents of Trzcianka are heretics – ‘ab haereticis qui ibidem fere sunt omnes’).<sup>19</sup>

In February 1638, Rev. Jerzy Rzepinski, a German-speaking Pole presented by Katarzyna Czarnkowska, was introduced into the office of the parish priest of Trzcianka.<sup>20</sup> During his ministry, on 16 October 1640, the consecration of churches in Trzcianka and Biała took place.<sup>21</sup> A visitation document from 1641 states that the parish church bears the invocation of the Holy Trinity, and that there is a school attached to the parish. The parish estate included farmland divided into 3 parts, which brought in 12 zlotys of annual income. Profits from crops or land lease were mainly used to buy wine and candles. The parish priest owned 1 acre of land, 2 meadows in Biała and orchards. In addition to the usual tributes in rye and Polish zlotys, the residents of Trzcianka donated chicken eggs for Easter, sausages for Christmas, and sheaves of hay, rye and oats at harvest.<sup>22</sup>

The 17th-century parish church in Trzcianka collapsed or burned down in the early 18th century. This may have happened during the 1717 village conflagration, when 65 houses along with outbuildings, the manor house and brewery burned.<sup>23</sup> If the church had indeed burned down, reconstruction began the same year, for the parish's visitation protocol after the visitation conducted by Józef Kierski on 1 April 1738 mentions a new temple of 1717, as yet unconsecrated, whose founders were supposed to be the ‘heirs of the village’.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> AAP, ref. AE XXV, k. 58v–59; AAP, sygn. AV 07, k. 13, AV 10, Visitation of the Pszczew archdeaconry by Jan Branecki administrator of the diocese and his delegate Andrzej Swinarski, and of the Oborniki and Czarnków deaneries by Feliks Mietlicki, cathedral canon in 1640–1641 (hereinafter: AV 10), k. 351v.

<sup>20</sup> AAP, ref. AC 146, Records of the Vicar General and Judicial Vicar of Poznań, concerning the *sede vacante* diocese administrator Jan of Zalesie Baykowski, suffragan of Poznań 1635–1639 (hereinafter: AC 146), k. 306.

<sup>21</sup> AAP, ref. AV 14, Visitation of the Czarnków deanery by Wojciech Dobrzelewski, Archdeacon of Poznań 1663 (hereinafter: AV 14), k. 32v.

<sup>22</sup> AAP, ref. AV 10, k. 349v–350v.

<sup>23</sup> Ł. Nowak, *Trzcieńskie konflagracje, czyli o pożarach folwarku, wsi i miasta Trzcianka (Trzcionka/Schönlanck) w XVIII w.*, „Kronika Ziemi Trzcieńskiej”, 9 (2019) p. 47. A description of the damage caused to the village by the fire of 18 July 1717 was published on the Trzcianka Virtual Museum website by M. Hlebionek: <https://wirtualnemuzeumtrzcianki.trz.pl/content/opis-szkód-wyrządzonych-miejscowości-przez-pożar-w-1717r> (accessed on: 1.03.2020).

<sup>24</sup> AAP, ref. AV 26, Visitation of the Czarnków and Wałcz deanery by Bishop Suffragan Józef Tadeusz Kierski, Vicar General Custodian and Judicial Vicar of Poznań 1738 (hereinafter: AV 26), k. 143; J. Łukaszewicz, *Krótki opis historyczny kościołów parochialnych, kościółków, kaplic, klasztorów, szkółek parochialnych, szpitali i innych zakładów dobroczynnych w dawnej diecezji poznańskiej*, vol. 1, Poznań 1858, p. 196.

A more detailed description of the parish church was included in the visitation records of Bishop Krzysztof Antoni Szembek in 1718:

The new church, dedicated to the Holy Trinity [...]. Inside: flooring, plank ceiling, pews, choir – all new. No pipe organ. One new altar, freshly gilded. Both the ceiling and the walls next to it are painted in colours. No foundation. The altar has a consecrated portable altar with relics permitted by the [church] office, according to an inscription on the opposite side, where relics of saints are placed. In addition, two new altars have altar stones; one of them has an old altar on it with a sculpture of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. No chapels. Brand new ciborium, gilded, well stocked with latches and locked.<sup>25</sup>

In 1713, Rev. Andrew Stanislaw Cybort became the parish priest in Trzcianka. His contribution to the parish was not only the construction of a new temple in 1717. He also meticulously maintained the church's books. The oldest surviving record book of the Catholic parish in Trzcianka (1730–1753) was prepared and filled in large part by him. Rev. A. S. Cybort died in 1738 in Trzcianka and was the first parish priest to be buried in the church he built. His successor was Rev. Jakub Ladwig, who also died in Trzcianka and was buried near the church in 1751. These are the oldest information about the burial of parish priests in Trzcianka.<sup>26</sup>

In 1731, the village was granted township status,<sup>27</sup> which, however, initially had little impact on the life of the parish. The formation of urban structures must have continued for the next several years, because in the 1830s the oldest record book still referred to Trzcianka as a village. It was not until the mid-18th century that vicars began to appear in the then urban parish.<sup>28</sup>

In 1754, a prominent figure became the parish priest in Trzcianka, namely a Warsaw canon and secretary to the Bishop of Poznań Teodor Kazimierz Czartoryski – Rev. Jan Ginter. After several years of his ministry, on St. John's Day, 24 June 1754, Trzcianka was hit by a major fire in the city, in which, in addition to the houses of the townspeople, all the parish buildings burned down. However,

<sup>25</sup> AAP, ref. AV 19, Visitation of the Greater Poland Part of the Diocese by Bishop Krzysztof Antoni Szembek 1718–1719 (hereinafter: AV 19), k. 26.

<sup>26</sup> Archive of the Koszalin-Kołobrzeg Diocese in Koszalin (hereafter: ADKK), ref. 43, Records of the Roman Catholic parish in Trzcianka. Book of baptisms, marriages and deaths 1730–1753 (hereinafter: 43), pp. 420, 424.

<sup>27</sup> The act granting Trzcianka township status was signed by King Augustus II the Strong on 3 March 1731. However, the village of Trzcianka and the farmstead continued to exist near the town, functioning as separate entities. M. Hlebionek, *Przywilej lokacyjny miasta Trzcianki*, Trzcianka 2006, p. 4; Schulz, *Merktafeln zur Geschichte*, pp. 38–39.

<sup>28</sup> The earliest mention of the presence of a vicar in Trzcianka dates back to 16 February 1749. This is an entry in the marriage records, in which Rev. Mathias Schröder is identified as *vicarius trzcionensis*. In addition, Rev. M. Schröder does not appear in the records until 1751, when, as one of several priests arriving as a substitute in Trzcianka after the death of Rev. Jan Jaht, he performed several baptisms in the local church, but was not identified as a vicar. He may have done so as one of the canons of Czarnków, after an unsuccessful attempt to install him in Trzcianka in 1749. The first vicar, who certainly remained in the local parish for several years, was Rev. Adam Jaht, working in Trzcianka since March 1753. The parish priest at the time was Rev. J. Jaht (1751–1754). ADKK, ref. 43, p. 281n.



the church survived, which the townspeople considered an obvious miracle. Every year since then, 24 June has been celebrated as a municipal holiday. Shortly after the fire, the name of the parish must also have been changed from Holy Trinity to St John the Baptist.<sup>29</sup> Father J. Ginter not only led to the reconstruction of the parish buildings in a short time, but taking advantage of the favour of the Catholic owner of the Trzcianka estates, count Antoni Lasocki, he applied in 1765 for a special document in which the count confirmed the former obligations to the church and granted new privileges to the parish in Trzcianka.<sup>30</sup>

When, as a result of the First Partition of Poland, the lands north of the Noteć River were annexed to Prussia, the Bishop of Poznań Andrzej Młodziejowski established a district officiality for them in 1773, with its headquarters initially in Trzcianka and, after the Second Partition of Poland, in Wałcz. Rev. J. Ginter, a parish priest from Trzcianka, became the judicial vicar.<sup>31</sup> At this time, the establishment of an Evangelical parish in Trzcianka took place (1 February 1773).<sup>32</sup> The Evangelicals accounted for about two-thirds of the city's total population. According to statistics from 1771, there were 1133 Catholics and 2015 dissidents living in the parish of Trzcianka, not including Jews.<sup>33</sup>

By the end of the 18th century, the wooden Catholic church was in need of major renovation. The inspection protocol of the Trzcianka estate in 1793 stated that it was already in danger of collapse at that time, nevertheless there were still plans to change the roofing.<sup>34</sup> The building survived another 30 years in this condition. In 1823, the cemeteries at the Catholic and Protestant churches were closed and moved to a site then outside the city.<sup>35</sup> Afterwards, works were undertaken to clear the church grounds and demolish the old parish buildings. This prepared the site for the construction of a new brick parish church, which was solemnly consecrated on 20 August 1835. The newly built temple had Baroque altars, which were transferred from the decommissioned monastery in Gołańcz.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Trzcianka w przeszłości i obecnie. Rękopisy z 1912 r.*, ed. and trans. Ł. Nowak, Trzcianka 2019, p. 171; Nowak, *Trzcianieckie konflagracje*, pp. 43–44.

<sup>30</sup> M. Hlebionek, *Źródła do dziejów parafii w Trzciance*, Trzcianka 1996, pp. 18–22.

<sup>31</sup> B. Kumor, *Ustrój i organizacja Kościoła polskiego w okresie niewoli narodowej (1772–1918)*, Kraków 1980, p. 178. Rev. J. Ginter's successors in the office of parish priest were: Rev. Ignatius Stielke (1778–1790), Rev. Jakub Szwanki (1790–1791), Rev. Piotr Westfal (1791–1807), Rev. Jan Dalski (1807–1828), Rev. Martin Moerke (1828–1832), Rev. Marcin Tuszyński (1832–1838), Rev. Jakob Kranz (1838–1861), Rev. Robert Samberger (1861–1865), Rev. Gustav Lüdke (1865–1890), Rev. Adalbert Lenz (1890–1907), Rev. Stanisław Paradowski (1907–1910), Rev. Aloysius Bucks (1910–1922), Rev. Bernhard Timm (1922–1945). Cf. M. Hlebionek, *Z dziejów parafii w Trzciance*, Trzcianka 1995, p. 40.

<sup>32</sup> Schulz, *Merktafeln zur Geschichte*, p. 42.

<sup>33</sup> M. Kędelski, *Ludność północno-zachodniej Wielkopolski w XVIII w.*, „Studia i Materiały do Dziejów Wielkopolski i Pomorza”, 36 (1991) p. 34.

<sup>34</sup> *Protokoły rewizyjne dóbr trzcianieckich z 1793 r.*, ed. and trans. Ł. Nowak, Trzcianka 2018, p. 157.

<sup>35</sup> APPiła, ref. 15/715, Anlegung von Begräbnisplätzen und Kommunalfriedhof 1931–1944 [nonpaginated].

<sup>36</sup> Hlebionek, *Z dziejów parafii*, p. 10.

At the beginning of the 18th century, Trzcianka experienced a decline in population, and consequently the number of Catholics diminished significantly. In 1818, they accounted for just over 1/5 of the total population. Of the 2,789 total Trzcianka residents, 1,579 were Lutherans, 609 were Catholics, and 600 were Jews.<sup>37</sup> The city's population began to increase with the development of industry from the mid-19th century. In 1871, there were already 3954 people living in Trzcianka, including 2542 Evangelicals, 841 Catholics and 571 Jews.<sup>38</sup>

In 1890, the number of Trzcianka Catholics reached about 1,000. At that time, large factories began to open in the city, attracting an increasing number of workers. This brought the number of Catholics to nearly 3,000 by the beginning of the 20th century, almost five times the number of Catholics when the parish church was built. In view of this, it was necessary to erect a new temple. Construction work began in the spring of 1914 and was successfully completed despite the ongoing war. The consecration of the new church, built in neo-Baroque style, took place on 2 December 1917.<sup>39</sup>

In 1922, Rev. Aloysius Bucks, the constructor of the Trzcianka church, left the parish, and was replaced by the last German parish priest, Rev. Bernhard Timm. Between 1925 and 1940, the parish had a population of about 3,200 believers, making pastoral work in the parish beyond the capacity of a single priest. Therefore, from 1925 until the end of the war, one additional vicar was employed.<sup>40</sup>

The territorial coverage of the Catholic parish in Trzcianka has changed only slightly over the centuries. The visitation protocol of 1641 states that even then it included (apart from Trzcianka itself): Łąka Pańska (later Sarcz), Łomnica, Nowa Wieś and Straduń.<sup>41</sup> Over the years, new settlements were established within the parish, which automatically became part of it, namely: Rudka (as Hutka farmstead, 17th century), Rychlik (as Carolina settlement incorporated into the parish in 1855) and Smolarnia (early 18th century). By 1920, the following towns and villages, in addition to the town of Trzcianka itself, already belonged to the Catholic parish: Łomnica, Nowa Wieś, Przyłęki, Rudka, Rychlik, Sarcz, Smolarnia and Straduń. In 1920, more villages were added to the parish: Biernatowo (railroad station),

<sup>37</sup> J. Demian, *Handbuch der neuen Geographie des Preussischen Staats*, Berlin 1818, p. 368.

<sup>38</sup> D. Chojecki, *Obraz statystyczno-administracyjny Trzcianki w 1873 roku, część I*, „Kronika Ziemi Trzcianieckiej”, 4 (2014) p. 46.

<sup>39</sup> *Kronika parafii pw. św. Jana Chrzciciela w Trzciance 1914–1918 spisana przez ówczesnego proboszcza – ks. Aloysiusa Bucksa*, ed. and trans. Ł. Nowak, Trzcianka 2015, pp. 22–36.

<sup>40</sup> *Apostolische Administratur Schneidemühl 1927* [Schematismus], Schneidemühl 1927, p. 14; *Freie Prälatur Schneidemühl 1932* [Schematismus], Schneidemühl 1932, p. 34; *Freie Prälatur Schneidemühl 1936* [Schematismus], Schneidemühl 1936, p. 37; *Freie Prälatur Schneidemühl 1940* [Schematismus], Schneidemühl 1940, pp. 40–41; P. Hammling, *Zur Geschichte der katholischen Kirche im Netzekreise*, in: *Die Apostolische Administratur Schneidemühl*, ed. F. Westpfahl, Schneidemühl 1928, p. 92.

<sup>41</sup> AAP, ref. AV 10, k. 351.



Górnica, Hedwigshof (a settlement now defunct) and Siedlisko. This state of affairs was preserved until the end of World War II.<sup>42</sup>

In 1945, Trzcianka became part of Poland again after 173 years, and the care of the parish was entrusted to the Congregation of the Missionaries of La Salette, who have worked there to this day.

## Record Books

### *Nonpreserved originals*

The earliest mention of the keeping of record books in Trzcianka is contained in the visitation protocol of the Archdiocese of Poznań of 13 March 1641, where they were listed in the parish inventory among other books. These included baptism and marriage records ('libri metrices baptisatorum et copulatorum').<sup>43</sup> Presumably these metrical records did not survive until the next visitation or were discontinued, since the next visitation protocol of 18 July 1663 recommended that the parish priest keep baptism and marriage books.<sup>44</sup> Conducting the next visitation of the Trzcianka parish, Archdeacon Mikołaj Zalasowski noted in his protocol of 2 October 1695, that metrical records had been kept since 1680. Again, this was a case of baptism and marriage books, but there was no death book ('libri metrices, baptisatorum simul et matrimonia liber copulatorum ab anno 1680 ad annum praesentem sunt conscripti et mortuorum desunt').<sup>45</sup> Between 1695 and 1718, a death record book must have been drawn up as well, since in the documents of the parish visitation conducted in 1718 Bishop K. A. Szembek noted that the parish of Trzcianka kept parish registers of the baptisms, marriages and deaths transcribed according to the prescribed model ('libri metrices baptisatorum, copulatorum et mortuorum secundum formam descriptorum dantur').<sup>46</sup> Visitation of 1727 mentions only one book in *quarto* format, kept for 3 types of records.<sup>47</sup> One book is also mentioned in the 1738 visitation.<sup>48</sup> However, this is certainly not the same manuscript. Entries in the oldest surviving ledger begin in March 1730. It can therefore be assumed that the ledger listed in 1727 was kept until February 1730. It is difficult to say whether at the time of the 1738 visitation the older records no longer existed, or whether the visitor may have focused only on the ledger in which he made an entry. A clue to this may be found in the 1738 visitation protocol, which states that 'the [parish priest's] residence burned down eight years ago'.<sup>49</sup> Perhaps along with the rectory in 1730, the older parish books were also burned.

<sup>42</sup> W. Volkman, *Die Kirchenbücher der katholischen Pfarreien in der früheren Provinz Grenzmark Posen-Westpreußen*, Schneidemühl 1939, p. 105.

<sup>43</sup> AAP, ref. AV 10, k. 351.

<sup>44</sup> AAP, ref. AV 14, k. 34.

<sup>45</sup> AAP, ref. AV 18, Visitation of the Archdeaconry by Mikołaj Zalasowski 1696–1696 (hereinafter: AV 18), k. 364v.

<sup>46</sup> AAP, ref. AV 19, k. 29v.

<sup>47</sup> AAP, ref. AV 20, Visitation of the Poznań Archdeaconry by Franciszek Libowicz 1726–1728 (hereinafter: AV 20), k. 319v.

<sup>48</sup> AAP, ref. AV 26, k. 143v.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*, k. 145.

None of the books kept before 1730 have survived to the present day. As early as 1851, Józef Łukaszewicz, a researcher of the history of the Poznań Archdiocese, wrote about the Trzcianka church: ‘Its present books begin with the year 1730, the earlier ones probably burned down in the frequent fires of the place.’<sup>50</sup>

**Table 1. List of nonpreserved record books of the Catholic parish in Trzcianka**

Type	Years	Place of last storage	Year of last known mention
Baptisms Marriages	1641	Parish Archives	1641
Baptisms Marriages	1680–1695	Parish Archives	1695, perhaps a reference from 1718 also applies to it
Baptisms Marriages Deaths	1718 (deaths after 1695)	Parish Archives	1718, lost before 1851 (probably burned in 1730)
Baptisms Marriages Deaths	1727–1730	Parish Archives	1727, lost before 1851 (probably burned in 1730)

Source: AAP, AV 10, k. 351; AV 18, k. 364v; AV 19, k. 29v, AV 20, k. 319v

#### *Preserved originals*

The oldest surviving record book of the Catholic parish in Trzcianka covers the years 1730–1753. It is a single *in quarto* format ledger for 3 types of metrical records: baptisms, marriages and deaths. It is already mentioned in the 1738 visitation, which was also noted in it.<sup>51</sup> The second oldest surviving Trzcianka record book began in 1754 and by 1797 all 3 types of metrical records were entered in it.<sup>52</sup> Then, due to lack of space for further entries for marriages and deaths, a separate ledger was established for them in 1797, and the ledger that begun in 1754 was continued with entries for baptisms alone. This situation lasted until 1829, when this ledger was closed, and baptisms from 1829–1830 began to be recorded in the book established earlier for marriage and death records. In 1830, this ledger was closed as well, and from 1831, 3 separate ledgers were kept: baptism, marriage and death records. Thus, until 1830, there was a system in Trzcianka based on dividing one book into 3 parts and entering 3 types of metrical records into it at

<sup>50</sup> Łukaszewicz, *Krótki opis historyczny*, p. 196.

<sup>51</sup> AAP, ref. AV 26, k. 143v; ADKK, ref. 43, pp. 70, 351, 419.

<sup>52</sup> Not only metrical entries were made in this book. It also contains a number of copies of documents from the 18th and 19th centuries that are relevant to researching the history of the parish. Cf. M. Hlebionek, „*Documenta ecclesiae parochialis Trzciankensis*” w inwentarzu parafii z 1798 roku, in: *Pamiętnik I Ogólnopolskiego Zjazdu Studentów Archiwistyki*, eds. W. Chorążyczewski, R. Degen, Toruń 1998, pp. 75–81. Some of these copies were published in 1996. Cf. Hlebionek, *Źródła do dziejów parafii w Trzciance*.

the same time. The ledgers from this period are characterized by a fair amount of arbitrariness in the formulation of entries, and are also partially incomplete. It was not until 1830 that a system was introduced that involved completing a printed form of metrical records.<sup>53</sup> A total of 11 Catholic record books were drawn up between 1730 and 1945, including three simultaneously for baptisms, marriages and deaths (1730–1830), four for baptisms alone, and two each for marriages and deaths alone (1831–1945). Until 2004, all these records were kept in the archives of St John the Baptist parish in Trzcianka.<sup>54</sup> According to the decree of Ordinary Bishop of the Diocese of Koszalin-Kołobrzeg Marian Gołębiewski of 4 November 2003, all archives in the parishes belonging to this diocese produced before 1945 had to be handed over for mandatory deposit to the diocesan archives.<sup>55</sup> On 7 October 2004, the parish of St John the Baptist in Trzcianka transferred its metrical records from 1730–1945 to the Archives of the Koszalin-Kołobrzeg Diocese in Koszalin, where they can be found until today (2020).<sup>56</sup>

**Table 2. List of preserved record books of the Catholic parish in Trzcianka**

Type	Years	Place of storage
1	2	3
Baptisms Marriages Deaths	1730–1753 1730–1753 1730–1753	ADKK, Records of the Roman Catholic parish in Trzcianka, ref. 43
Baptisms Marriages Deaths	1754–1829 1754–1797 1754–1797	ADKK, Records of the Roman Catholic parish in Trzcianka, ref. 44
Baptisms Marriages Deaths	1829–1830 1797–1830 1797–1830	ADKK, Records of the Roman Catholic parish in Trzcianka, ref. 45
Baptisms	1831–1863	ADKK, Records of the Roman Catholic parish in Trzcianka, ref. 46

<sup>53</sup> M. Hlebionek, *Archiwum Parafii św. Jana Chrzciciela w Trzciance*, Przegląd Zachodniopomorski, XIII/ XLII (1998) issue 1, p. 165.

<sup>54</sup> A 1962 study published by the *Katholisches Kirchenbuchamt und Archiv für Heimatvertriebene* of Munich on the metrical records of Catholic church provinces east of the Oder and Neisse rivers as of 8 May 1945 incorrectly states that the oldest surviving record books of the Catholic parish in Trzcianka are the baptism book from 1831, the marriage book from 1886–1944 and the death book from 1872. Cf. *Handbuch über die Kirchenbücher in der Ostdeutschen Kirchenprovinz östlich der Oder und Neisse und dem Bistum Danzig*, ed. J. Kaps, München 1962, p. 134.

<sup>55</sup> *Zarządzenie w sprawie gromadzenia zbiorów Archiwum Diecezji Koszalińsko-Kołobrzesckiej*, Koszalińsko-Kołobrzesckie Wiadomości Diecezjalne, 10–12 (2003) pp. 37–38.

<sup>56</sup> Archive of the parish of St John the Baptist in Trzcianka (hereinafter: APTJCh), Acceptance protocol of archival materials from the parish of Trzcianka transferred to the Diocesan Archives in Koszalin dated 4 October 200.

1	2	3
Marriages	1831–1885	ADKK, Records of the Roman Catholic parish in Trzcianka, ref. 47
Deaths	1831–1872	ADKK, Records of the Roman Catholic parish in Trzcianka, ref. 48
Baptisms	1863–1893	ADKK, Records of the Roman Catholic parish in Trzcianka, ref. 49
Deaths	1872–1945	ADKK, Records of the Roman Catholic parish in Trzcianka, ref. 50
Marriages	1886–1944	ADKK, Records of the Roman Catholic parish in Trzcianka, ref. 51
Baptisms	1893–1920	ADKK, Records of the Roman Catholic parish in Trzcianka, ref. 52
Baptisms	1921–1945	ADKK, Records of the Roman Catholic parish in Trzcianka, ref. 53

Source: ADKK, Inventory of the fond: Records of the Roman Catholic parish in Trzcianka

### *Duplicates*

As a result of the First Partition of Poland, the Netze District became part of Prussia, and on 22 September 1772 Prussian troops seized Trzcianka.<sup>57</sup> Beginning in 1794, parish record books gained the status of public documents in Prussia, and extracts made from them could be used for secular purposes. The 1794 General Domestic Law for the Prussian States (§500–§509) required the priests of Catholic and Protestant parishes to prepare duplicate record books at the end of each calendar year.<sup>58</sup>

During the time of the Duchy of Warsaw, it was made compulsory to keep state registry books: births, marriages and deaths, but the function of civil registrars was usually performed by clergymen and these records were actually duplicates of church books. Such an order continued in Prussia even after 1815 and lasted until 1874, when civil registry offices independent of the clergy were established and urban and rural mayors were appointed their managers.<sup>59</sup>

For Trzcianka, duplicates of Catholic record books have been preserved only fragmentarily in the State Archives in Poznań and its branch in Piła.<sup>60</sup> Those stored at the National Archives in Piła were transferred there in August 2006 from the District Court in Trzcianka. Digital copies of some of the duplicates stored in both Poznań and Piła are available on the *Szukaj w archiwach* website.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>57</sup> J. Dolata, *Trzcianka w latach 1772–1815*, in: J. Dolata, E. Gajda, H. Rogacki, *Trzcianka. Zarys dziejów*, vol. 1, Poznań 1994, p. 60.

<sup>58</sup> *Allgemeines Landesrecht für die Preussischen Staaten*, vol. IV, Berlin 1794, pp. 789–790.

<sup>59</sup> A. Hamryszczak, *Materiały do badań genealogicznych w zasobach Instytutu Archiwów, Bibliotek i Muzeów Kościelnych KUL w Lublinie*, „Rocznik Lubelskiego Towarzystwa Genealogicznego”, 1 (2009) pp. 112–113.

<sup>60</sup> *Księgi metrykalne i stanu cywilnego w archiwach państwowych w Polsce*, ed. A. Laszuk, Warsaw 2003, p. 406.

<sup>61</sup> APP, Civil Status Records of the Roman Catholic Parish of Czarnków and parishes of various denominations of the Czarnków district, ref. 3266/0: [https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/zespol?p\\_p\\_id=Zespol&p\\_p\\_lifecycle=1&p\\_p\\_state=normal&p\\_p\\_mode=view&\\_Zespol\\_javax.portlet.action=zmienWidok&\\_Zespol\\_nameofjsp=jednostki&\\_Zespol\\_id\\_zespolu=18759](https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/zespol?p_p_id=Zespol&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&_Zespol_javax.portlet.action=zmienWidok&_Zespol_nameofjsp=jednostki&_Zespol_id_zespolu=18759) (accessed on: 1.05.2020); APPiła, Civil Status Records of the Roman Catholic Parish of Trzcianka, ref. 894: <https://www.szuka->

**Table 3. List of duplicate record books of the Catholic parish in Trzcianka**

Type	Years	Place of storage
Deaths	1815–1816	APP, Civil Status Records of the Roman Catholic Parish of Czarnków and parishes of various denominations of the Czarnków district, ref. 3266/0/2
Baptisms Marriages	1818	APPiła, Civil Status Records of the Roman Catholic Parish of Trzcianka, ref. 894/1
Baptisms Deaths	1819	APPiła, Civil Status Records of the Roman Catholic Parish of Trzcianka, ref. 894/2
Baptisms Marriages Deaths	1820–1821	APPiła, Civil Status Records of the Roman Catholic Parish of Trzcianka, ref. 894/3
Deaths	1851–1861	APP, Civil Status Records of the Roman Catholic Parish of Czarnków and parishes of various denominations of the Czarnków district, ref. 3266/0/49
Baptisms Marriages Deaths	1858	APP, Civil Status Records of the Roman Catholic Parish of Czarnków and parishes of various denominations of the Czarnków district, ref. 3266/0/45
Deaths	1864	APP, Civil Status Records of the Roman Catholic Parish of Czarnków and parishes of various denominations of the Czarnków district, ref. 3266/0/53
Deaths	1868	APP, Civil Status Records of the Roman Catholic Parish of Czarnków and parishes of various denominations of the Czarnków district, ref. 3266/0/57
Deaths	1872–1874	APP, Civil Status Records of the Roman Catholic Parish of Czarnków and parishes of various denominations of the Czarnków district, ref. 3266/0/63

Source: APP, Inventory of the fond: Civil Status Records of the Roman Catholic Parish of Czarnków and parishes of various denominations of the Czarnków district; APPiła, Inventory of the fond: Records of the Roman Catholic parish in Trzcianka

### Conclusion

The author's search of state and church archives has shed new light on the history of the parish of St John the Baptist in Trzcianka and its metrical records. It also provided an opportunity to correct some untrue statements and inaccurate accounts. A search of the Catholic parish's visitation records led to a determination of the time and form of its record books during the Old Polish period. This information has never been published before.

[jwarchiwach.gov.pl/zespol?p\\_p\\_id=Zespol&p\\_p\\_lifecycle=1&p\\_p\\_state=normal&p\\_p\\_mode=view&\\_Zespol\\_javax.portlet.action=zmienWidok&\\_Zespol\\_nameofjsp=jednostki&\\_Zespol\\_id\\_zespolu=23718](http://jwarchiwach.gov.pl/zespol?p_p_id=Zespol&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&_Zespol_javax.portlet.action=zmienWidok&_Zespol_nameofjsp=jednostki&_Zespol_id_zespolu=23718) (accessed on: 1.05.2020).

Parish record books are an invaluable source not only for genealogical research, but also for regional studies. The information contained in them allows us to supplement our existing knowledge of the history of Trzcianka and the surrounding area. Further research would need to use the metrical data to conduct an analysis of social change and demographics in the parish. The development of a comprehensive monograph of the parish based on the latest findings, including hitherto unknown historical sources, also remains a research postulate.

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## PARAFIA PW. ŚW. JANA CHRZCICIELA W TRZCIANCIE I JEJ KSIĘGI METRYKALNE DO 1945 ROKU

### Abstrakt

Artykuł znacznie poszerza dotychczasowy stan wiedzy na temat dziejów parafii pw. św. Jana Chrzciciela w Trzciancie przed 1945 rokiem. Ustalono, że z pewnością istniała ona już na początku XVII wieku, a możliwe, że powstała jeszcze w wieku XVI. Do drugiej połowy XVIII wieku funkcjonowała jako parafia pw. Trójcy Świętej, następnie zmieniono jej wezwanie na obecne. Przez ponad trzy wieki kościoły i zabudowania parafialne kilkakrotnie padały ofiarą pożarów i były odbudowywane. Pierwsze dwie świątynie (sprzed 1628 r. i 1717 r.) były drewniane, dwie kolejne (1835 r. i 1917 r.) murowane. Parafia wielokrotnie zmieniała również państwową i kościelną przynależność administracyjną. Najstarsze zachowane księgi parafialne pochodzą z 1730 r. i przechowywane są w Archiwum Diecezji Koszalińsko-Kołońskiej w Koszalinie. Dzięki kwerendzie w siedemnasto- i osiemnastowiecznych aktach wizytacji parafialnych z Archiwum Archidiecezjalnego w Poznaniu częściowo udało się odtworzyć informacje na temat niezachowanych ksiąg parafialnych, które mogły spłonąć w pożarze plebanii w Trzciancie w 1730 r. Kwerenda w archiwach państwowych pozwoliła także na ustalenie miejsc przechowywania duplikatów trzcianeckich ksiąg metrykalnych pochodzących z XIX w.

Słowa kluczowe: księgi metrykalne; Kościół katolicki; Trzcianka; Wielkopolska