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## PILGRIMAGE CENTRES IN POLAND

## LES CENTRES DE PÈLERINAGE EN POLOGNE

## OSRODKI PIELGRZYMKOWE W POLSCE

### INTRODUCTION

Traditions of pilgrimage in Poland date back to the eve of Christianity in the tenth century, if we exclude those of the Slavonic tribes in pagan times. Thus pilgrimages are one of the oldest forms of migration and since they are made for non-economic motives they are similar to tourism.

The contemporary geography of pilgrimage in Poland was and still is shaped not only by religious factors, but also by other influences, mostly social, political and cultural. A considerable impetus to the popularity of pilgrimages has recently been provided by the visits of the Pope, John-Paul II, to Poland in 1979, 1983, 1987, and 1991. In the 1980s a great development of pilgrimaging was observed in Poland. According to opinion of foreign scientists and churches, the pilgrimage became a peculiar religious, social and cultural phenomenon.

### 1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PILGRIMAGE CENTRES

Some of the centres of worship visited then by Slavonic tribes in the pagan era had a supraregional influence, for example Mt. Ślęża near Wrocław.

In a period between the 11th and the 15th centuries, Christian pilgrimages began. Their first centre was the city of Gniezno, connected with the worship of St. Wojciech (St. Adalbert), a martyr who died in 997 and was canonized in 999. In the 15th century Marian worship

was established, mostly due to the activity of the Jasna Góra monastery Częstochowa, founded in 1382 by Hungarian Paulines. By the end of the 18th century the present day network of pilgrimage centres had almost been completed. Even in the 16th century Jasna Góra was the international pilgrimage centre. From the beginning of the 17th century the popular centres became calvaries, of which the oldest in Poland is that of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, founded in 1602. During the partition period of 1772—1918, pilgrimages exhibited not only a religious content, but also a patriotic one, often being effectively a demonstration against conquering powers. In 1825 there were in Poland about 1,100 Marian sanctuaries in nearly 1,000 localities (Fig. 1), of which some 60% were villages. Restrictions on travel in the partitioned country increased the role of the local pilgrimage centres. After 1918, in independent Poland, the importance of pilgrimage grew again. The removal of frontiers imposed by conquerors and the freedom to participate in pilgrimages to the basic sanctuaries reduced the importance of many regional and local ones. The Marian worship changed its spatial pattern from polycentric to monocentric, with Jasna Góra as the basic sanctuary.

## 2. WORSHIP CENTRES

In Poland there are some 500 centres of pilgrimage. Most of them, some 430, are Marian of which over 130 have crowned images of the Holy Virgin. Nearly all the sanctuaries belong to the Roman Catholic Church, only two — those of Grabarka and Jabłeczna — being connected with the Polish Orthodox Church.

Of the actual sanctuaries, nearly all were visited by pilgrimes even in the 19th century, some of them even earlier. Many pilgrimage centres, some 16% of the total appeared during the 14—16th centuries, but most, some 53%, during the 17 and 18th centuries. The images and the figures were made usually during the 14—16th centuries (43% of the total) during the 17 and 18th centuries (41% of the total). Among the youngest centres are firstly, Niepokalanów near Warsaw, connected with the worship of St. Maximilian Kolbe, Franciscan murdered by the Nazis in the Oświęcim (Auschwitz) concentration camp in 1941, and canonized in 1982; and secondly, Warsaw, where are situated the graves of the priest Jerzy Popiełuszko, murdered by the political police in 1984, and Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, who died in 1981 and who was known as the „Millenary Primate”.

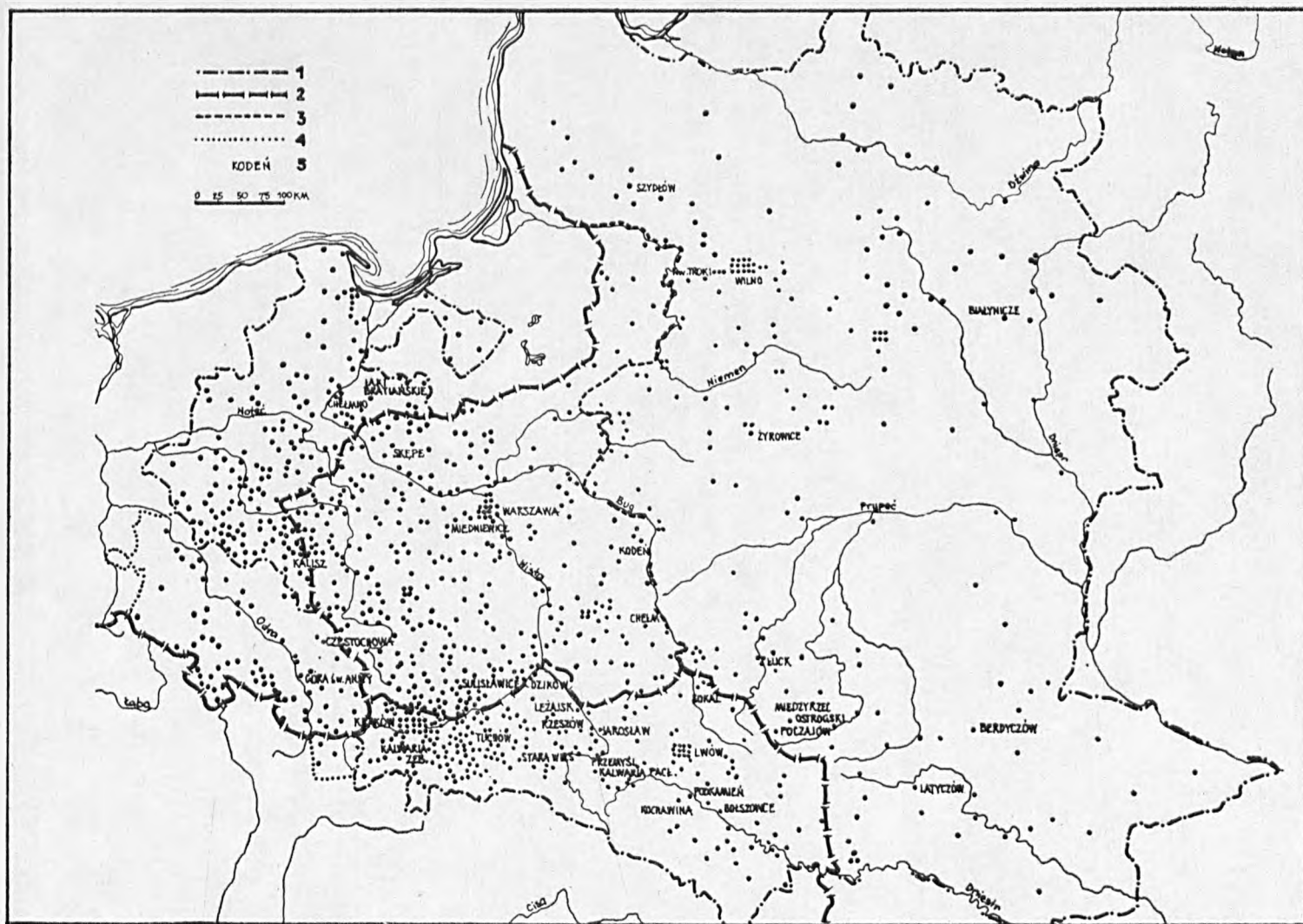


Fig. 1. Centres of Marian worship in the territory of former Poland and Silesia at the beginning of the 19th century (Source: A. Witkowska 1988)

1 — frontiers of Poland before the partition period; 2 — frontiers of the conquering powers; 3 — frontiers of so-called „Polish Kingdom”; 4 — frontiers of Silesia; 5 — images of Holy Virgin crowned before 1914

Dessin 1. Centres du culte de Marie sur le territoire de l'ancienne République Polonaise et de la Silésie au début du XIX<sup>e</sup> s (Source: A. Witkowska 1988)

1 — frontières de la République Polonaise d'avant les partages; 2 — frontières des pays envahisseurs; 3 — frontières du Royaume Polonais; 4 — frontière de la Silésie; 5 — effigies couronnées avant 1914

The principal centres have an international sphere of influence (Fig. 2), these are Częstochowa (Jasna Góra), Niepokalanów and Warsaw.

There are 9 localities of national significance whose pilgrimage traditions are different. These are 7 Catholic centres — Piekary Śląskie,

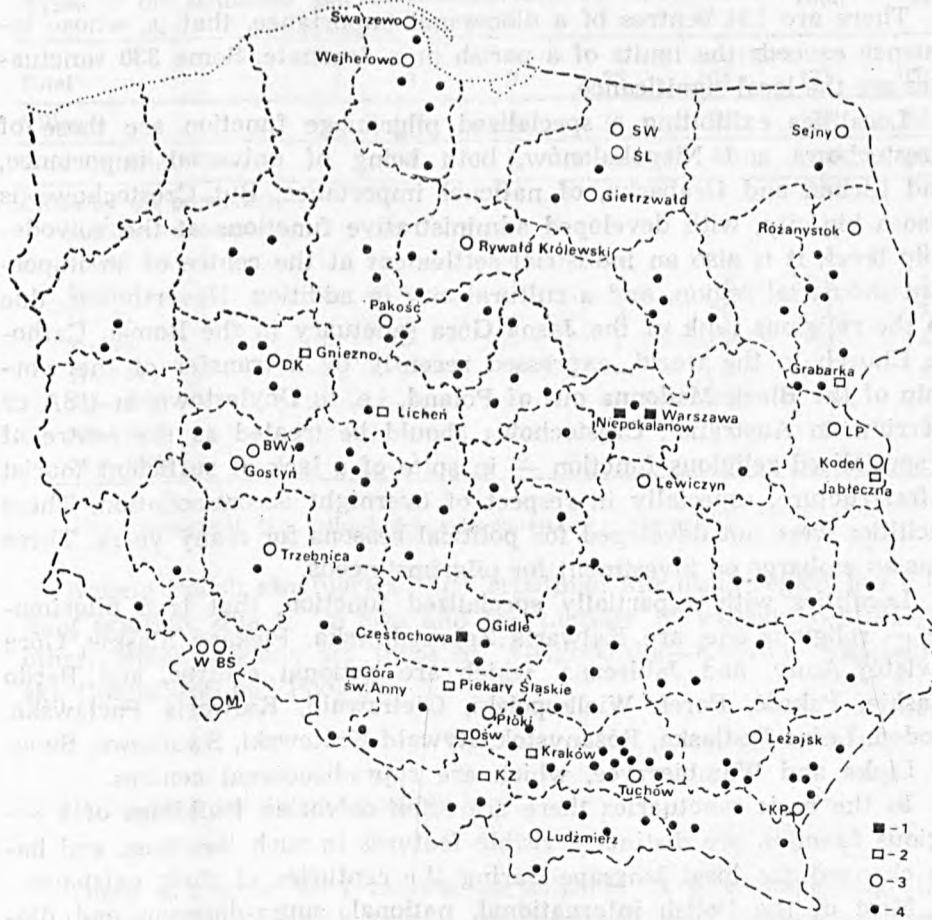


Fig. 2. Main centres of pilgrimage in Poland (Source: A. Jackowski 1989)

The scope of the centres: 1 — international, 2 — national, 3 — supradiocesan, 4 — diocesan; BS — Bardo Śląskie, BW — Borek Wielkopolski, DK — Dąbrówka Kościelna, KP — Kalwaria Pałacowa, KZ — Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, LP — Leśna Podlaska, M — Międzygórze, Ośw — Oświęcim, SW — Stoczek Warmiński, ŚL — Święta Lipka, W — Wambierzyce

Dessin 2. Principaux centres de pèlerinage en Pologne (Source: A. Jackowski 1989)

Centres ayant l'étendue: 1 — internationale, 2 — nationale, 3 — dépassant les limites d'un diocèse, 4 — diocésaine; BS — Bardo Śląskie, BW — Borek Wielkopolski, DK — Dąbrówka Kościelna, KP — Kalwaria Pałacowa, KZ — Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, LP — Leśna Podlaska, M — Międzygórze, Ośw — Oświęcim, SW — Stoczek Warmiński, ŚL — Święta Lipka, W — Wambierzyce



Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Góra Świętej Anny, Licheń, Gniezno, Cracow, Oświęcim — and two Orthodox centres — Grabarka and Jabłeczna.

Some 25 sanctuaries have a supradiocesan sphere of influence, the best known being those of Bardo Śląskie, Wambierzyce, Trzebnica, Kodeń, Leśna Podlaska, Gietrzwałd, Święta Lipka, Wejherowo, Swarzewo, Kalwaria Paławska and Pakość.

There are 134 centres of a diocesan importance, that is, whose influence exceeds the limits of a parish or a decanate. Some 330 sanctuaries are the local significance.

Localities exhibiting a specialized pilgrimage function are those of Częstochowa and Niepokalanów, both being of universal importance, and Licheń and Grabarka, of national importance. But Częstochowa is also a big city, with developed administrative functions at the voivodeship level; it is also an industrial settlement at the centre of an important industrial region, and a cultural city in addition. Nevertheless, due to the religious rank of the Jasna Góra sanctuary in the Roman Catholic Church in the world, expressed recently by a transfer of the worship of the Black Madonna out of Poland, i.e. to Doylestown in USA or Berrima in Australia<sup>1</sup>, Częstochowa should be treated as the centre of a specialized religious function — in spite of a lack of sufficient tourist infrastructure, especially in respect of overnight accommodation. These facilities were not developed for political reasons for many years. There was an embargo on investment for pilgrims' needs.

Localities with a partially specialized function, that is a pilgrimage — religious one, are Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Piekary Śląskie, Góra Świętej Anny, and Jabłeczna, which are national centres, and Bardo Śląskie, Pakość, Borek Wielkopolski, Gietrzwałd, Kalwaria Paławska, Kodeń, Leśna Podlaska, Różanystok, Rywałd Królewski, Swarzewo, Święta Lipka and Wambierzyce, which are supradiocesan centres.

In the basic sanctuaries there are often calvaries. Buildings of a religious function are distinctly visible features in such localities, and have changed the local landscape during the centuries of their existence.

Most of the Polish international, national, supra-diocesan and diocesan centres are villages or small cities (Tab. I). In the past a religious function was distinctly apparent in the socio-economic structure of these settlements, in the form of a special infrastructure. But in the last few decades, this function has experienced a considerable crisis, also due to political reasons. In the last few years pilgrimages have once again become the economic driving force behind localities such as the villages of Gietrzwałd, Święta Lipka, Licheń, Ludźmierz, Grabarka.

<sup>1</sup> At the worldwide scale such processes were observed at the Marian worship centres of Lourdes and Fatima.

Table I

Pilgrimage centres by the type of settlement unit  
Centres de pèlerinage par type d'établissement humain

Types of the settlement unit	Rank of the centres <sup>a</sup>				Total	%
	I	N	S	D		
Total	3	9	25	134	171	100.0
Villages	1	4	16	88	109	63.7
Cities in total	2	5	9	46	62	36.3
Cities by the population						
number (in thousands):						
below 5	—	—	2	3	5	2.9
5—10	—	1	3	5	9	5.3
11—20	—	—	3	10	13	7.6
21—50	—	—	1	7	8	4.7
51—100	—	3	—	5	8	4.7
101—500	1	—	—	12	13	7.6
501—1000	—	1	—	4	5	2.9
over 1000	1	—	—	—	1	0.6

a) I — international; N — national; S — supra-diocesan; D — diocesan.

Among Polish sanctuaries, the Carpathian Mountain region has a leading position, due to its size and the number of worship centres. The other, minor, regions are those of Wielkopolska—Kujawy, Świętokrzyski, Dolnośląski and Podlaski.

### 3. PILGRIMAGE MIGRATIONS IN POLAND

There are some 6—7 million participants in pilgrimage migrations in Lourdes, France, and Fatima, Portugal. Of the pilgrims to Częstochowa of Christian pilgrims in the world.

The principal centre of this traffic is Częstochowa (Tab. II), where since the first visit of John-Paul II to Poland in 1979 there has been 4—5 million pilgrims annually. This frequency is comparable to that in Lourdes, France, and Fatime, Portugal. Of the pilgrims to Częstochowa, 100,000 are foreigners from over 100 countries. Pilgrims from 60—70% of Polish Catholic parishes come to Częstochowa every year.

The intensity of the pilgrims' inflow varies during the year. During the greater part of the year (210—230 days) 2,000—10,000 people

Table II

Pilgrimages to selected centres  
Mouvement de pèlerinage dans les localités choisies

No	Name of the centre	Voivodeship	Scope of the centre <sup>a</sup>	Year	Number of pilgrims (in thousands)
1.	Częstochowa— —Jasna Góra	Częstochowa	I	1989	4,000
2.	Warszawa <sup>b</sup>	Warszawa	I	1987	2,000
3.	Licheń	Konin	N	1988	800
4.	Piekary Śląskie	Katowice	N	1987	600
5.	Niepokalanów	Skierniewice	I	1987	500
6.	Kalwaria Zebrzydowska	Bielsko-Biała	N	1988	500
7.	Góra Świętej Anny	Opole	N	1988	400
8.	Gniezno	Poznań	N	1987	200
9.	Święta Lipka	Olsztyn	S	1988	200
10.	Gietrzwałd	Olsztyn	S	1989	100
11.	Kodeń	Biała Podlaska	S	1987	100
12.	Kalwaria Paclawska	Przemyśl	S	1988	100
13.	Tuchów	Tarnów	S	1986	100
14.	Wambierzyce	Wałbrzych	S	1986	100
15.	Leśna Podlaska	Biała Podlaska	S	1987	80
16.	Bardo Śląskie	Wałbrzych	S	1986	55
17.	Gostyń	Leszno	S	1987	50
18.	Grabarka <sup>c</sup>	Białystok	N	1986	50
19.	Swarzewo	Gdańsk	S	1987	50
20.	Borek Wielkopolski	Leszno	S	1987	30
21.	Gidle	Częstochowa	S	1988	30
22.	Ludźmierz	Nowy Sącz	S	1989	30
23.	Rywałd Królewski	Toruń	S	1989	30
24.	Stoczek Warmiński	Olsztyn	S	1987	30
25.	Jabłeczna <sup>c</sup>	Biała Podlaska	N	1987	25
26.	Lewiczyn	Radom	S	1987	25
27.	Sejny	Suwałki	S	1987	25
28.	Dąbrówka Kościelna	Poznań	S	1987	20
29.	Płoki	Katowice	S	1987	20
30.	Różanystok	Białystok	S	1987	20

a Scope of centre: I — international, N — national, S — supradiecezjalny.

b Grave of the priest Jerzy Popiełuszko.

c Orthodox sanctuaries.

Source: After the data of the particular sanctuaries, reports and results of the investigations undertaken by the Section of the Geography of Tourism of the Institute of Geography, Jagiellonian University.

Table III

Distance travelled by pilgrims to pilgrimage centres 1987—1989 (by % of visits each centre)<sup>a</sup>

Entendue spatiale des centres de pèlerinage chosis (années: 1987—1989; % du pèlerinage global)

Distance from the starting point to the given sanctuary (km)	Jasna Góra — Częstochowa (I) — pilgrimage on foot		Mt. St. Anna (N)		Licheń (N)	Kodeń (S)	Gietrzwałd (S)	Święta Lipka (S)	Bardo Śląskie (S)
	8—15th August	22—30th August	group-organized pilgrims	individual pilgrimages					
Below 100	13.9	57.4	95.6	53.1	21.8	25.8	41.4	30.0	85.0
100—199	13.9	20.4	1.1	25.8	31.3	20.1	37.6	38.0	10.0
200—299	30.6	20.4	2.2	10.9	35.0	12.2	13.0	18.5	5.0
300—399	19.4	1.8	1.1	—	11.8	27.4	4.5	9.2	—
400—499	11.1	—	—	4.8	0.1	8.5	3.5	2.5	—
Over 500	11.1	—	—	5.4	—	6.0	—	1.8	—

<sup>a</sup> Scope of the sanctuaries: I — international, N — national, S — supra-diocesan.

Source: See Table II.



a day visit Częstochowa; for 70 days of the year the daily total of visitors is 11,000—20,000. But on 10 days each year over 100,000 pilgrims arrive. These are the days of the basic festivities, those of 3rd May, 15th and 26th August. More than three-quarters of the pilgrims come in the period May—September, the share of those coming in August amounting to nearly 35%.

Since 1977 foot pilgrimages to Częstochowa have developed considerably. In 1989 there were over 150 such groups, containing about 300,000 pilgrims. One of the greatest pilgrimages of this sort is Pilgrimage from Warsaw. The longest route is covered by groups from Pomerania and Varmia who walk 400—600 km. Some groups (60 in 1988) arrive and return on foot.

Most of the pilgrims on foot come to Jasna Góra in August — 64,1% in the period 8—15th August, and 30% between 22—30th August (Tab. III). The June—July period accounts for only 5,6% of the pilgrims and September for only 0,3%. Some 50 foot pilgrimage routes lead to Jasna Góra (Fig. 3). They pass through the whole country, and their length varies from a few kilometres to several hundred kilometres.

For some years, among the pilgrims on foot, Catholics from the abroad, especially young people, have been increasingly numerous. They come to Poland specifically for this purpose. In 1988 over 10,000 foreigners from 25 countries, mostly from Spain, Italy, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, France, Belgium and Germany come on foot to Częstochowa. Most of them took part in the Warsaw Pilgrimage, Cracow Pilgrimage and the Highlanders' Pilgrimage.

The growing pilgrims' traffic and its long traditions, dating from several centuries ago, make the pilgrimage on foot to Częstochowa an outstanding religious and social phenomenon at the world scale, especially in that of Christian world. Supporting this statement are arrivals of the foreigners to participate in those pilgrimages. It is worth stressing that Jasna Góra experience in organizing pilgrimages on foot are widely used in numerous European countries including Austria, France, Germany, and even in Australia.

Of the national sanctuaries, the principal ones are those of Piekary Śląskie, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska and Licheń. In Piekary Śląskie, situated within the Upper Silesian conurbation since the end of the 1970s there has been a growth in the number of pilgrim-workers from all the country. In Kalwaria Zebrzydowska the greatest intensity of pilgrims' arrivals falls in Holy Week (Passion Mystery). At this centre traditions date back to the 17th century and to the August Marian festivities. A growing number of foreigners participate in these ceremonies, which are rich in folklore. They come as pilgrims, or are simply attracted by fol-

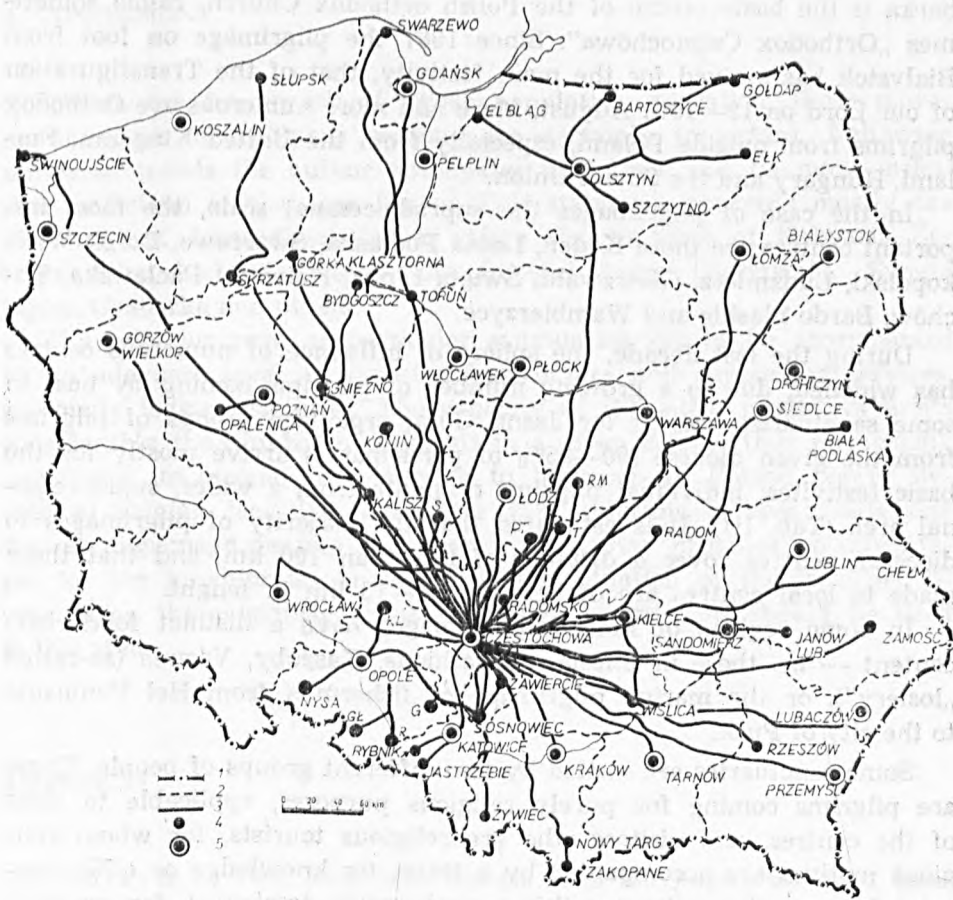


Fig. 3. Main routes of the pilgrimages on foot to Jasna Góra in July—August

1 — frontiers of Poland, 2 — limits of dioceses, 4 — routes, of pilgrimages on foot, 4 — places of departure of pilgrimages (the dioceses centres excluded), 5 — dioceses centres; G — Gliwice, Gł — Głubczyce, Kl — Kluczbork, PT — Piotrków Trybunalski, R — Racibórz, RM — Rawa Mazowiecka, S — Sieradz, T — Tomaszów Mazowiecki

Dessin 3. Principaux itinéraires du pèlerinage à pied à Jasna Góra aux mois de juillet et d'août

1 — frontières de l'Etat, 2 — limites du diocèse, 3 — itinéraires du pèlerinage à pied, 4 — localités des sorties des pèlerinages n'étant pas, les capitales des diocèses, 5 — capitales des diocèses; G — Gliwice, Gł — Głubczyce, Kl — Kluczbork, PT — Piotrków Trybunalski, R — Racibórz, RM — Rawa Mazowiecka, S — Sieradz, T — Tomaszów Mazowiecki

klore. In the last few years, a new national centre has developed at Li- cheń, known as „New Częstochowa” or „Northern Częstochowa”.

Of equal importance are the two Orthodox sanctuaries, those of Grabarka (Święta Góra Grabarka) and Jableczna. The status of Grabarka

is changing gradually from a national to a global centre. Nowadays Grabarka is the basic centre of the Polish orthodox Church, called sometimes „Orthodox Częstochowa”. Since 1987 the pilgrimage on foot from Białystok has arrived for the main festivity, that of the Transfiguration of our Lord on 18—19th August. More and more numerous are Orthodox pilgrims from outside Poland, especially from the United Kingdom, Finland, Hungary and the Soviet Union.

In the case of pilgrimages the supradiocesan scale, the most important centres are those Kodeń, Leśna Podlaska, Swarzewo, Borek Wielkopolski, Ludźmierz, Gietrzwałd, Święta Lipka, Kalwaria Pałacowska, Tuchów, Bardo Śląskie and Wambierzyce.

During the last decade, the sphere of influence of numerous centres has widened, due to a growing number of pilgrims coming by bus. In some sanctuaries, except for Jasna Góra, organized groups of pilgrims from the given diocese (90—95% of participants) arrive mostly for the basic festivities; individual pilgrims originate from a wider, supra-regional area (Tab. III). It is estimated that the majority of pilgrimages to diocesan centres cover a distance of less than 100 km, and that those made to local centres are of between 10—15 km in length.

In some regions of Poland, pilgrimages have a distinct folkloristic content — i.e. those in Silesia, Carpathians, Kaszuby, Varmia (so-called „łosiery”), or the marine pilgrimage of fishermen from Hel Peninsula to the city of Puck.

Some sanctuaries are visited by two different groups of people. These are pilgrims coming for purely religious purposes, applicable to most of the centres, and visitors who are religious tourists, for whom religious motives are accompanied by a thirst for knowledge or other reasons. In several sanctuaries this second group dominates, for example at Święta Lipka they constitute 85% of visitors.

The further growth of pilgrimages to the basic centres, mostly to those of universal, national and supra-diocesan significance, is considerably limited by inadequate infrastructure. For example, the paucity of accommodation results in most pilgrims (between 75—95%) coming to such centres for one day only. The greatest deficit in this field is observed in Częstochowa — in this centre, one of the best known in the world, the hotel capacity amounts only to 500 beds. This is an effect of the socialist authorities' policy, limiting the tourist investment in this city. At present there are only 8 beds in hotels and quest houses per 1,000 population in Częstochowa, while the national average amounts to some 13 beds per 1,000 population. In Częstochowa there are only 0.27 beds per 1,000 pilgrims against a national average of 15 beds per 1,000 pilgrims.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

Within the framework of Polish population migration, those movements made for religious reasons are certainly important. Following universal trends the author anticipates that they will be more intensive in Poland in the near future. This statement concerns mostly the sanctuary of Jasną Górą, but it refers also to those of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Licheń, Kodeń, Górą Świętej Anny, Gietrzwałd, Święta Lipka, Grabarka and others.

The religious rank of particular sanctuaries should be accompanied by an adequate level of tourist infrastructure and supporting services, especially lodging facilities. The capacity of the latter nowadays limits considerably the number of pilgrims in a given centre, thus influencing negatively its income from service to pilgrims. In Poland poorly developed lodging facilities cause over 75% pilgrims to spend only one day at pilgrimage centres and such a short stay provides no advantages for the inhabitants. Analogous is the situation of the localities living along the pilgrimage routes. Foreign experiences should be used in this area.

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## RÉSUMÉ

Les traditions de pèlerinage en Pologne remontent aux débuts de la chrétienté, mais elles étaient aussi vives à l'antiquité païenne. Au XV<sup>ème</sup> siècle s'affermir le culte de Marie et c'est Jasna Góra (depuis 1382) qui joua le rôle primordial dans ce domaine. En principe, le processus de la formation du réseau de presque tous les centres de pèlerinage durait jusqu'à la fin du XV<sup>ème</sup> siècle.

À présent, en Pologne, on enregistre environ 500 sanctuaires de pèlerinage, dont 430 sont des sanctuaires de Marie. Deux centres de pèlerinage (Grabarka et Jabłeczna) sont liés avec l'église orthodoxe.

Trois centres (Jasna Góra à Częstochowa, Niepokalanów et Varsovie) ont l'étendue internationale, neuf centres ont celle du pays, neuf centres ont l'étendue dépassant les limites d'un diocèse, cent-trente-quatre ne rayonnent que dans un diocèse, trois-cent-trente — ont un caractère local. Częstochowa, Niepokalanów, Licheń et Grabarka ont la fonction de pèlerinage spécialisée, seize centres ont la fonction religieuse partiellement spécialisée.

6—7 millions de personnes participent chaque année dans les pèlerinages. Le centre principal, Częstochowa en accueille 4—5 millions par an. Dès 1977, on observe le développement rapide du pèlerinage à pied à Częstochowa (300 000 personnes par an). 50 itinéraires traversant toute la Pologne mènent à Częstochowa.

Dans certains centres, on peut observer deux groupes de pèlerins: le premier comprend ceux qui vont en pèlerinage pour des motifs purement religieux, le deuxième se compose de ceux qui en participant au pèlerinage veulent enrichir leurs connaissances, par exemple, et, chez eux, d'autres motifs accompagnent celui religieux.

Traduit par Lucjan Kowalski

## STRESZCZENIE

Tradycje pielgrzymowania w Polsce sięgają zarania chrześcijaństwa, żeby nie wspomnieć o pielgrzymkach w czasach pogańskich. W XV w. ugruntował się ostаточно kultura maryjna, przy czym ważną rolę odegrała w tym zakresie Jasna Góra (od 1382 r.). Do końca XVIII w. nastąpiło w zasadzie zakończenie procesu wykształcania się niemal całej obecnej sieci ośrodków pielgrzymkowych.

W Polsce rejestruje się obecnie około 500 sanktuariów pielgrzymkowych, z których około 430 to sanktuaria maryjne. Dwa ośrodki pielgrzymkowe (Grabarka, Jabłeczna) związane są z kościołem prawosławnym.

Zasięg międzynarodowy mają trzy ośrodki (Jasna Góra — Częstochowa, Niepokalanów, Warszawa), zasięg krajowy — 9 ośrodków, ponaddiecezjalny — 9, diecezjalny — 134, zaś lokalny — 330 sanktuariów. Miejscowościami o wyspecjalizowanej funkcji pielgrzymkowej są Częstochowa, Niepokalanów, Licheń i Grabarka, częściowo zaś wyspecjalizowaną funkcję religijną posiada 16 ośrodków.

W migracjach pielgrzymkowych uczestniczy 6—7 mln osób rocznie. Głównym ośrodkiem jest Częstochowa (4—5 mln pielgrzymów w ciągu roku). Od 1977 r. obserwuje się zdecydowany rozwój pielgrzymowania pieszego do Częstochowy (około 300 tys. osób rocznie). Na Jasną Górę prowadzi około 50 szlaków pielgrzymkowych przecinających całą Polskę.

W niektórych ośrodkach obserwuje się dwie grupy odwiedzających: pielgrzymów przybywających z motywów czysto religijnych oraz grupy uczestników turystyki religijnej, którym obok motywu religijnego towarzyszy również motyw poznawczy lub inny.