

Marek DERWICH

Introduction

Volume II comprises articles devoted to the origins, course and significance of the 1810 dissolution in Prussian Silesia and the dissolutions in the Polish territories annexed by Prussia. Articles dealing with sources illustrating these dissolutions and with the fate of the cultural heritage of the dissolved monasteries are to be found in Volume III.

The variety of topics and research methods used by the authors make the articles an important contribution to the study of dissolutions in Silesia and the territories annexed by Prussia. An interesting comparison of the 1810 dissolutions (in Prussia) and the 1864 dissolutions (in the territories annexed by Russia) carried out by Fr. Roland Prejs is included in Volume I.

Strangely enough, the authors of articles devoted to the 1810 dissolution in Prussian Silesia make very limited use of two archive collections absolutely fundamental to any analysis of the subject, i.e. the Archdiocesan Archives in Wrocław (mainly Fr. Kazimierz Dola and Fr. Henryk Gerlic) and the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin Dahlem, as well as J. G. G. Büsching's hand-written *Acta Manualia* kept in the Wrocław University Library. Particularly surprising is the fact that practically no one uses Büsching's work (only Arkadiusz Wojtyła) and the Dahlem collection (only Agnieszka Zabłocka-Kos).

Of course, there are significant reasons for such a state of affairs. The Archdiocesan Archives in Wrocław is not a researcher-friendly institution, and the files dealing with dissolutions have not been catalogued and are not well-known (a great challenge awaiting Wrocław historians). The Dahlem collection, especially the part devoted to Silesia, is not well-organised and has not been catalogued (another great challenge facing scholars studying the 19th century), while Büsching's notes are not very legible.

That is why it is my great pleasure to announce that in the course of the project *Cultural heritage of dissolved monasteries on the territory of former Poland and in Silesia in 18th and 19th centuries: fate, significance, cataloguing* (Ministry of Science and Higher Education programme "National Programme for the Development

of Humanities” for 2012–2016) we have begun to work on a partial edition of these so-called *Büsching Papers*. As a result, we have been able to publish in the present volume a list of monasteries and other church institutions originally earmarked for dissolution as well as special commissioners who were to carry it out (Urszula Bończuk-Dawidziuk, Anna Jezierska). In addition, we have begun a survey of the Berlin archive collections – its first results will be published in successive volumes of “*Hereditas Monasteriorum*”.

In the present volume particularly worthy of note is an excellent paper by Agnieszka Zabłocka-Kos, who, unlike many authors of the literature on the subject complaining about the dissolutions and pointing to their negative consequences, tries to – successfully – show their other side, definitely inadequately presented so far, namely the opportunities opened up by the dissolutions to towns and cities. Not only to towns and cities, it must be said, but this, however, is a topic requiring a separate analysis.

Colour illustrations accompanying the articles as well as a complete bibliography from all four volumes can be found in Volume IV.