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THE FAMILY IN 18TH CENTURY WARSAW. DEMOGRAPHIC STUDIES

The long-postulated demand for more thorough studies on the family structure in old Poland has not been effectuated so far.¹ For many years social historians in Poland focused their attention on the legal-political status of individuals, classes and social strata and on manifestations of the class struggle, neglecting research into the structure of families in the Polish towns and villages of the past. The size and structure of rural families have been the subject of several studies during the last twelve years or so,² but the demographic history of this smallest social unit in towns, a study which is much more labour-absorbing, has received

¹ A. Wyczański in the preface to *Spoleczeństwo staropolskie* [Old Polish Society], ed. A. Wyczański, vol. I, Warszawa 1976, p. 8; I. Gieysztorowa, *Wstęp do demografii staropolskiej* [Introduction to the Demography of Old Poland], Warszawa 1976, p. 48; eadem, *Rodzina staropolska w świetle badań demograficznych. Zarys problematyki* [The Old Polish Family in the Light of Demographic Studies. An Outline of Problems], in: *Spoleczeństwo staropolskie*, ed. A. Wyczański, vol. II, Warszawa 1979, p. 161; M. Bogucka, *Rodzina w polskim mieście XVI—XVII wieku: wprowadzenie w problematykę* [The Family in Polish Towns in the 16th and 17th Centuries. An Introduction into the Problem], "Przegląd Historyczny", vol. LXXIV, 1983, No. 3, p. 495; A. Wyrobisz, *Rodzina w mieście doby przedprzemysłowej a życie gospodarcze. Przegląd badań i problemów* [The Family in Pre-Industrial Towns and Economic Life. A Survey of Research and Problems], "Przegląd Historyczny", vol. LXXVII, 1986, No. 2., p. 309.

² M. Koczerska, *Rodzina szlachecka w Polsce późnego średnio-wiecza* [The Gentry Family in Poland in the Late Middle Ages], Warszawa

little attention.³ As a result, the contribution of Polish historiography to the world interdisciplinary studies on family questions has been very modest.⁴

1975; S. Borowski, *Próba odtworzenia struktur społecznych i procesów demograficznych na Warmii u schyłku XVII w. na przykładzie Dobrego Miasta i okolicy* [An Attempt to Reconstruct Social Structures and Demographic Processes in Warmia at the End of the 17th Century with the Taking into Account of Nowe Miasto and Its Environs as an Example], "Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski", vol. VIII, 1975, pp. 125—198; idem, *Prawdopodobieństwo powiększania rodziny w mikroregionie Czacz od XVII do XX wieku* [The Probability of the Growth of Families in the Czacz Microregion from the 17th to the 20th Century], "Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski", vol. X, 1978, pp. 135—155; A. Izdorczyk, *Rodzina chłopska w Małopolsce w XV—XVI wieku* [The Peasant Family in Little Poland in the 15th and 16th Centuries], in: *Spółczesność staropolskie*, ed. A. Wyczański, vol. III, Warszawa 1983, pp. 7—27; E. Piasecki, *Charakterystyka demograficzna dawnej rodziny polskiej* [The Demographic Characteristics of the Old Polish Family], "Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski", vol. 14, 1983, pp. 99—121.

³ M. Bogucka, *Badania nad dziejami miast i mieszczaństwa w Polsce przedrozbiorowej: stan i zarys programu* [Research into the History of Towns and Townsmen in Pre-Partition Poland: the State and Outline of the Programme], "Kwartalnik Historyczny", vol. LXXXII, 1975, No. 3, p. 581, wrote: "Research on the demography of our towns, on the number of children in townsmen's families of various social groups, on the life expectancy in towns, etc., is in fact in an embryonic stage." The latest outlines of the history of Cracow (J. Bieniarzówna, J. M. Małecki, *Dzieje Krakowa* [A History of Cracow], vol. II, *Kraków w wiekach XVI—XVIII* [Cracow from the 16th to the 18th Century], Kraków 1984), Warsaw *Dzieje Warszawy* [A History of Warsaw] ed. S. Kieniewicz, vol. II, *Warszawa w latach 1526—1795* [Warsaw in the Years 1526—1795] by M. Bogucka, and others, Warszawa 1984), as well as of the cities in general (M. Bogucka, H. Samsonowicz, *Dzieje Miast i mieszczaństwa w Polsce przedrozbiorowej* [The History of Towns and Townsmen in Pre-Partition Poland], Wrocław 1986), pay little attention to the development of family ties in towns.

⁴ The fullest information on the achievements of world historical demographic research, including research into family structure, can be found in *Bibliographie Internationale de la Démographie Historique*, published annually. Extensive lists of latest works concerning these questions can be found in M. Mitterauer, R. Sieder, *The European Family. Patriarchy to Partnership from the Middle Ages to the Present*, Oxford 1982, pp. 178—226 and A. Wyrobisz, *op. cit.*, pp. 305—330.

The main aim of the research started at the end of the 1970s was to examine the circumstances in which families were established, survived or died out in 18th century Warsaw, the largest Polish urban agglomeration at that time. The recognition that demographic analyses play the dominant role in research into the characteristics of urban families stems from the fact that the biological potential of this basic social unit was the result of defined economic processes and, on the other hand, that the size and internal structure of the families stimulated many decisions and economic measures.⁵

The research proper was carried out in two stages. In the first stage nameless lists of the annual and monthly numbers of marriages, baptisms and deaths were compiled to show the developmental trends of the examined population and comprehend the mutual connections between the demographic and socio-economic processes in the pre-industrial town.⁶ In the second stage the method of nominal research was used to define the more important features of the development of Warsaw families in the 18th century (see Table 1), that is : the age of the bride and bridegroom and the duration of their marriage, the frequency of re-marriages among the total number of contracted marriages, the number of children per family, female fertility by age at marriage and the duration of marriage, extra-marital fertility, the intervals between successive births, the structure of deaths by sex and age, in particular the mortality of infants and children.

The research covered the Roman Catholic Holy Cross parish in Warsaw in the 18th century, one of the five parishes of the

⁵ The key role of demographic analyses has been stressed by A. Wyrobisz, *op. cit.*, pp. 308—320.

⁶ C. Kukło, *Rodzina i społeczeństwo południowych dzielnic Warszawy w XVIII wieku. Struktury demograficzne* [The Family and Society in the Southern Districts of Warsaw in the 18th Century. Demographic Structures], Białystok 1987 (typescript of a doctoral thesis at the Institute of History of Warsaw University). The economic situation in the capital has been reconstructed on the basis of changes in rye and wheat prices and the wages of unskilled labourers, which were the most characteristic of the changes in real wages compiled by S. Siegel, *Ceny w Warszawie w latach 1701—1815* [Prices in Warsaw in the Years 1701—1815], Lwów 1936.

Table 1. The Methods and Techniques Applied in the Work

	<i>Aggregative Method</i>	<i>Family Reconstitution Method</i>	<i>Computer Techniques</i>
Marriages	1700—1739	1740—1799	1740—1784
Baptisms	—	1700—1801	—
Deaths	1700—1749	1750—1807	1760—1801
Reconstituted Families	—	1740—1799	1740—1799

capital on the left bank of the Vistula.⁷ The Holy Cross parish was founded in 1626 in what was then a residential suburb of the élite of the gentry, with a large servicing base. In the 18th century, the main streets of the parish, Krakowskie Przedmieście and Nowy Świat, once a residential district of the gentry and the clergy, became the central and representative thoroughfares of the entire town. In the 18th century, the Holy Cross parish was bounded in the west by the Lubomirski entrenchment which marked the end of the town, and in the east by the Vistula; in the north it abutted on St. John's parish (which covered the Old Town) and St. Andrew's parish (from 1774 on); in the south it adjoined the Ujazdów parish.⁸ At the beginning of 1791, the parish was inhabited by over 18,000 Catholics, i.e. one quarter of the total number of Catholics in the capital and about one-sixth of the entire population of the city.⁹ About 63% of the inhabitants of the centre of the parish belonged to the middle class and some

⁷ Among the Warsaw parishes was also the parish at Ujazdów which found itself within the frontiers of the city when Marshal S. Lubomirski's entrenchment was raised in 1770.

⁸ At that time the parish included about 35 streets and a part of Krakowskie Przedmieście Street, from the Saxon Palace to Nowy Świat Street.

⁹ Central Archives of Historical Records (Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych henceforward referred to as AGAD), *Varia Grodu Warszawskiego* [Varia of the Town of Warsaw], 25. The data concerning the population of the whole of Warsaw, including the Praga suburb, and its estate structure are based on the 1792 census, cf. *Warszawa w latach 1526—1795*, pp. 272—282.

22⁰/₀ to the gentry. This was also the part in which the secular and monastic clergy lived (about 1.2⁰/₀ of all the parishioners).¹⁰

In addition to the indispensable introductory remarks (research principles, the sources and methods of work), the article will only present the general results of our research into the family and society of the Holy Cross parish in the last century of the existence of the Commonwealth of the Gentry. Separate detailed treatises with full statistical documentation will analyse the dynamics of the population in the parish (which will make it possible to get a deeper insight into the complex mechanisms of the growth of 18th century Warsaw) and the structures of reconstituted families.

The basic source for a quantitative characterization of the smallest demographic and social unit of those times was the 18th century register of the marriages, baptisms and funerals of the Holy Cross parish, with a varying degree of completeness. Out of these three series the register of marriages was the most reliable, the number of marriage certificates almost equalling the number of the contracted marriages.¹¹ In the other two series the evidence was not complete, especially in the first half of the 18th century, so that even though the documentation improved as time went on, the registers do not reflect the real number of births and deaths. The many political disasters during the difficult times of the Northern War at the beginning of the century (1700—1721), the plundering by the Swedish, Russian, Saxon and Leszczyński forces, and the contributions levied by them on the inhabitants of the capital, the epidemics of the plague (1704—1705, 1708—1712) and other contagious diseases (1730, 1737) undoubtedly weakened the ties between the impoverished congregation and the Holy Cross church.¹² In the first half of the century,

¹⁰ The research did not include the many Protestant and Jewish families living in the parish.

¹¹ C. Kukło, *Ocena wartości źródłowej rejestrów metrykalnych parafii św. Krzyża w Warszawie w XVIII w.* [An Appraisal of the Value of the 18th Century Registers of the Holy Cross Parish in Warsaw], "Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski", vol. XVIII (forthcoming).

¹² The difficult situation of the Warsaw population at the beginning of the 18th century has been described in : *Warszawa w latach 1526—1795*,

there were on the average from 3.1 to 3.5 births per marriage in the Holy Cross parish, and 1.3 to 3.0 births per death (see Table 2). It was only in the 1770s that a qualitative leap took place, testifying to a marked improvement in the ratio of births to marriages (4.6 B/M) and a turning point in child mortality (1.6 B/D).¹⁸

Table 2. Marriages, Baptisms and Deaths in the Holy Cross Parish in Warsaw in the 18th Century

Period	Marriages	Baptisms	Deaths	Indices	
				B/M	B/D
1700—1709	508	1772	3214	3.5	0.5
1710—1719	390	1262	989	3.2	1.3
1720—1729	479	1656	821	3.5	2.0
1730—1739	530	1796	1200	3.4	1.5
1740—1749	625	1971	667	3.1	3.0
1700—1749	2532	8457	6891	3.3	1.2
1750—1759	898	3522	1366	3.9	2.6
1760—1769	1552	5755	2693	3.7	2.1
1770—1779	1785	6450 ^a	5172	4.6 ^a	1.6 ^a
1780—1789	1860	6367 ^b	6154	5.2 ^a	1.7 ^b
1790—1799	1702	8490	7833	5.0	1.1
1750—1799	7797	30584 ^c	23218	4.5 ^c	1.6 ^c
1700—1799	10329	39041 ^c	30109	4.2 ^c	1.5 ^c

^a for the years 1770—1777

^b for the years 1783—1789

^c without the years 1778—1782

The relatively good level of the examined registers from the middle of the 18th century, which improved still further from the beginning of the 1770s, was due to the increased efforts of the numerous monastic clergy of the parish, missionary priests and also to the fact that after the partial disorganization of religious life during the Northern War and the natural disasters the

pp. 187, 248. A moving description of the famine in Warsaw in 1737 is contained in J. Kitowicz, *Pamiętniki czyli Historia polska [Diaries or a Polish History]*, ed. P. Matuszewska, Warszawa 1971, pp. 38—39.

¹⁸ C. Kuklo, *Ocena...* (forthcoming).

faithful were more interested in availing themselves of pastoral services.¹⁴

In addition to parish registers use has been made of tax registers, the registers of rates for immovable property¹⁵ and censuses.¹⁶ Valuable data were found in the religious census of the inhabitants of the parish, carried out at the beginning of 1791.¹⁷ The third group of sources are the inventories, testaments, divisions of immovable property and other documents kept in the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw¹⁸ in the archive groups of Old Warsaw and Warsaw Economic Documents. These have sometimes made it possible to ascertain the social origin, occupation and position of the investigated people.

The sources contributed to the history of the parish and its inhabitants by the missionary priests are very modest. The war destroyed the parish archives, with the exception of the registers. The documents in the Archdiocesan Archives in Warsaw met with the same fate. Out of the remnants of the reconstructed documents, in addition to the vestigial documents of the missionaries, use has been made mainly of the documents concerning the general inspection of the Holy Cross parish made in 1779 by Andrzej S. Młodziejowski, bishop of Poznań and Chancellor of the Kingdom of Poland.¹⁹

In order to reconstruct the demographic features of Warsaw families use has been made of Louis Henry's family reconstitution

¹⁴ C. Kukło, *Rodzina...*, pp. 103—110.

¹⁵ *Zróżdła do dziejów Warszawy. Rejestry podatkowe i taryfy nieruchomości 1510—1770* [*Sources to the History of Warsaw. Tax Registers and Immovable Property Rates 1510—1770*], ed. by A. Berdecka, J. Rutkowska, A. Sucheni-Grabowska, H. Szwanowska, Warszawa 1963.

¹⁶ AGAD, Warszawa Ekonomiczna [Warsaw-Economy] (henceforward referred to as WE), 15—17.

¹⁷ AGAD, *Varia Grodu Warszawskiego*, 25.

¹⁸ AGAD, *Stara Warszawa* (Old Warsaw, henceforward referred to as OW), 283, 320—333, 357—359, 519—520, 699, 734—736; 766 WE, 1—3, 747—749, 752, 1223.

¹⁹ Archdiocesan Archives in Warsaw, documents from the inspection by Bishop Antoni O. Okęcki in 1787, vol. II, pp. 777—845.

method,²⁰ widely accepted in historical demographic research. Its principal value, which has been confirmed also in our research, is that it makes it possible to ascertain the fertility of women and the number of their children by age at marriage and the duration of the marriage. In view of the vastness of the basic source material, the summary aggregative method has been used in elaborating some of the documents from the registers (cf. Table 1).

In view of the efforts required to read and copy thousands of certificates—to say nothing of the laborious work of describing the collected material scientifically—and also the prospect of more or less complicated statistical calculations (e.g. the computation of fertility per married woman by age), in 1979 the team accepted Andrzej Wyczański's proposal to use electronic computation techniques in the already commenced study of registers.²¹ "Cooperation with a computer" was adopted in order to speed up and modernize the work and check the possibilities offered by computer techniques, the use of which is still meagre in Polish science.²²

²⁰ M. Fleury, L. Henry, *Nouveau manuel de dépouillement et d'exploitation de l'état civil ancien*, Paris 1965, pp. 117—161; L. Henry, *Techniques d'analyse en démographie historique*, Paris 1980, pp. 65—147; J. Dupâquier, *Pour la démographie historique*, Paris 1984, p. 37.

²¹ A. Wyczański, *Informacje o pracach zespołu nad systemem informatycznym dla badań społeczno-demograficznych* [*Information on the Work of the Team on a Computing System for Socio-Demographic Studies*], "Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski", vol. XV, 1984, pp. 151—153.

²² M. Wolański, *Zastosowanie komputerów w badaniach historycznych* [*The Use of Computers in Historical Research*], in: *Badania z dziejów gospodarczych* [*Research into Economic History*], "Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis," 279, *Historia* 27, Wrocław 1976, pp. 315—354; A. Wyczański, *Współpraca historyka z komputerem* [*A Historian's Cooperation with a Computer*], "Kwartalnik Historyczny", vol. LXXXIII, 1976, No. 1, pp. 65—73. In Polish historical demographic research computer techniques are widely used by E. Piasecki in the Institute of Anthropology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Wrocław, cf. E. Piasecki, R. Wrona, *Przeniesienie do pamięci maszyny cyfrowej danych za lata 1746—1968 z ksiąg metrykalnych parafii bejskiej w województwie kieleckim* [*The Storing of Data from the Years 1746—1968 Deriving from the Registers of the Bejsko Parish in the Kielce Voivodship in a Computer's Memory*], "Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski", vol. X, 1978, pp. 17—37.

The use of electronic computer techniques made it necessary to work out alphabetical indices which greatly speed up the manual reconstitution of families. On the basis of 5,806 marriage certificates of the Holy Cross parish, alphabetical indices were worked out in two arrangements: by the name of the husband and the wife, with the date of marriage and the family status of the newly married couple. Two other alphabetical indices feature the names of 23,000 deceased persons by sex, citing their age and the date of death. Indices prepared in this way make it easy to spot the successive marriages contracted by the widows,²³ which would not otherwise be easy to detect in a mass material. Yet another index gives information on the frequency of appearance in the role of witnesses to marriages, giving the date of the ceremony and the personal connections. The impressive alphabetical personal files compiled in this way (11,000) show the contacts between the various milieus of Warsaw in the late Saxon times and during the Enlightenment; their reconstitution may turn out to be useful for broader research. Moreover, data concerning the primary sources of information, that is, marriages and deaths²⁴ and the reconstituted families (cf. Table 1) have been processed.

The reconstitution of families covers the couples married in the Holy Cross parish and domiciled there from 1740 until 1799.²⁵ In order to link demographic questions with the political and economic changes in the capital and make it possible to compare the results with foreign studies, the material from the years

²³ The 18th century death certificates in the parish frequently give the widows' maiden names, but not always the name of the last husband.

²⁴ The analysis of the marriage and death certificates included: chronological distribution by months, years and decades; the frequency with which the individual elements of the certificates occurred by decades; division of marriages according to the family status and estate title of the newlyweds; distribution of deaths by age, sex and family status in decades.

²⁵ The analysis was restricted to the families established after 1740 since the registers contained no information on the age of the newlyweds (the age started to be recorded in 1801); the age had to be determined individually on the basis of baptism certificates from 1700 on.

1740—1799 has been divided into two periods: from 1740 until 1769 and from 1770 until 1799, according to the date of marriage.

On the basis of over 80,000 entries of marriages, baptisms and funerals nearly 2,000 families have been reconstituted; they have been divided into two groups.

The first group consists of closed families, i.e. those for which the date of death of one of the spouses could be found in the register. The other group are the so-called open families, for which the date of the funeral of the father or the mother could not be found in the register. Since various ways were used to determine the age at marriage, three sub-groups have been distinguished among the closed families:

1. families in which the age of the woman has been ascertained on the basis of her baptism certificate (CF 1),

2. families in which the age of the woman has been established on the basis of an entry in the parish register or her death certificate (CF 2B),

3. families in which the age of the woman has not been established (CF 3),²⁶ (see Table 3).

Table 3. Number of Reconstituted Families by Type

<i>Period</i>	<i>Closed families</i>			<i>Total</i>	<i>Open families</i>
	<i>CF 1</i>	<i>CF 2B</i>	<i>CF 3</i>		
1740—1769	147	257	255	659	183
1770—1799	234	319	289	842	221
1740—1799	381	576	544	1501	404

The analyses of the number of children per family and of the fertility of women, and to a lesser extent also of the death rate, have been based on computer programmes of the French CASOAR

²⁶ The classification of closed families has been adopted from L. Henry, *Techniques...*, pp. 69—70.

system²⁷ which have been adapted by Polish experts to the processing of data contained in the Polish input data file of reconstituted families or have been fully worked out by Polish computing experts.²⁸

Until the middle of the 1780s the Holy Cross marriage certificates do not, on the whole, give information on the birth place or the domicile of the bride and bridegroom prior to the marriage, which makes it impossible to take the gauge of immigration, which must have been quite large. In the years 1785—1799, the overwhelming majority of the marriages in the Holy Cross parish were between the inhabitants of the parish (80.7⁰/o).²⁹ Out of the others, marriages in which one of the spouses came from St. John's parish, a district of the prosperous patriciate, were twice as frequent (5.2⁰/o) as those in which one of the partners came from another Warsaw parish: St. Andrew's (2.4⁰/o), Ujazdów (1.9⁰/o) and that of the Holy Virgin in the New Town (1.5⁰/o). Exogamous marriages, i.e. those where the husband was from outside Warsaw, were few (4.6⁰/o), and of the 86 such bridegrooms the majority were from suburban parishes: Skaryszew, Wilanów, Służew and several others.

In the same period (1785—1799) the data concerning the social structure of the newlyweds show that on the whole the partners came from the same estate or even the same social stratum. The marriages were contracted throughout the year, with the exception of Advent and Lent; they were the most frequent in January,

²⁷ M. Hainsworth, J. P. Bardet, *Logical CASOAR. Calculs et analyses sur ordinateur appliqués aux Reconstitutions*, Paris 1981, "Annales de Démographie Historique", 1-er Cahier.

²⁸ C. Kukło, A. Wyczański, *Badania nad rodziną w Polsce XVI—XVIII wieku za pomocą elektronicznego przetwarzania danych, prowadzone w Instytucie Historii Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Warszawie oraz w Instytucie Historii Filia Univ. Warszawskiego w Białymstoku* [*Studies on the Family in Poland from the 16th until the 18th Century, Conducted by Means of Electronic Data Processing at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw and the Institute of History of the Warsaw University Branch at Białystok*], "Studia Podlaskie", vol. I (in the press).

²⁹ The marriage certificates from the years 1785—1799 do not give the men's domicile in only 4.6% of the cases.

February and late autumn (October–November) and, unlike those in the countryside, also in July. The most frequent day for taking the sacrament of marriage in the parish church and for the beginning of the wedding was a holiday: Sunday (41.7% of all the marriages in the years 1740–1784) and, to a much smaller extent, Monday (16.1%) and Tuesday (15.0%). The nuptial ceremonies in Warsaw rarely took place on a Friday (1.4%). In the church calendar this was the day of the Crucifixion, of Christ's death, a fast day and therefore unbecoming for such an important ceremony and, above all, for a boisterous wedding.

The male inhabitants of Warsaw were not very young, usually 29, when they married for the first time. The women were much younger at the time of their first marriage, 23 during the late Saxon times and even one year younger during the Enlightenment. For first marriages the average difference of age between the spouses was 6–7 years.

Because of the higher death rate caused by the unhygienic conditions of the large urban agglomeration, repeated and successive marriages were frequent. The premature death of one of the spouses—this was frequently the woman's death at childbirth—was the reason for the short duration of marriages (about 15 years). The widowers remarried at the age of about 40, while the widows would remarry at an average age of 36 during the late Saxon period and even earlier in later times. In the relatively normal years, free of great elementary disasters, remarriages accounted for one-third of all the contracted marriages. Their number used to grow rapidly after disasters, accounting for as much as 40–50 per cent of the total.

A repeated marriage was an economic necessity, though the chances of the widowed partners were not even. In the reconstituted families almost a half of the widowers remarried and only a third of the widows. Widowers remarried much more quickly. In the years 1740–1769, almost 30 per cent of the widowers and only 12% of the widows contracted a successive marriage during the first three months of their widowhood and 73.6% of the widowers and 50% of the widows during the first year after the death of the former spouse. The duration of male widowhood lengthened gradually while that of female widow-

hood became shorter ; in the years 1770—1799 as many widowers as widows remarried during the first year of their widowhood (61%). On the whole, a large number of orphaned children (5—6) did not increase the chance of another marriage, but during the late Saxon period this did not apply to women. On the contrary, the percentage of the widows who remarried was the higher the more children they had. It would be most useful to know the material situation of these widows, but this is hard to ascertain in the sources. We think that a good material situation (ownership of a production or a servicing workshop) gave a better chance of another marriage, if neither a large number of children nor the age of the widow (half of them were 35—44 years old) prevented men from marrying them.

Spring was the time of an upsurge of sexual relations just as summer witnessed their abatement. In winter, from November to the end of February, no special increase in sexual contacts was noticeable and the number of conceptions was not higher than the average. Throughout the 18th century there was a marked drop in sexual activity among married people in March, during Lent. The most noticeable increase in the number of baptisms was between February and April, but their distribution throughout the year was more even than in the countryside.

The research into the number of children of Warsaw married couples, conducted for all the reconstituted closed families (CF 1, in which the age of the woman was determined on the basis of her baptism certificate, and CF 2B, families in which the age of the woman was ascertained on the basis of an entry in the parish register or her death certificate), shows that the average number of births in fertile marriages was lower during the reign of King Stanisław Augustus Poniatowski than in the preceding Saxon period. The families established between 1740 and 1769 had on the average 5.0 children, while the families set up in the next thirty years had only 3.8.³⁰ A similar phenomenon has also been noticed in the group of complete families, in which the woman reached the age of 45 in marriage. In late Saxon times an

³⁰ C. Kukło, *Rodzina...*, p. 276.

average of 7.1 children were born into these families, and during the Enlightenment period 6.8.³¹

The above figures concern legitimate births. The proportion of illegitimate births was quite large in the Holy Cross parish, amounting to at least 10 per cent of all the births, and to 13 per cent in the 1740s and 1750s, and if we include foundlings, most of whom were probably illegitimate, to nearly 20 per cent.³² An analysis of the number of illegitimate births and foundlings has shown an intensification of this phenomenon during wars, elementary disasters and periods of economic difficulties.³³ The collected material shows that spring and even more so summer (the greatest number of conceptions took place in July) offered better conditions for love making and non-marital cohabitation (less need of a shelter), especially to the lower strata of the urban population.

Since the contraction of marriage depended on the economic situation, as can be seen from the relatively advanced age of the bridegrooms, there was quite a large number of people of both sexes in such a large town like Warsaw who were unable to establish a family for lack of the necessary material conditions. In the Holy Cross parish at least 12⁰/₁₀₀ of the women and as much as 25⁰/₁₀₀ of the men were unmarried.³⁴ Some of them probably satisfied their sexual needs through extra-marital relations, even though these were not approved of by the Church and society. The extent of these practices can also be gauged from the number of pre-marital conceptions, which accounted for 12.1⁰/₁₀₀ of the first births in the years 1740—1769 and for as much as 15.4⁰/₁₀₀ in the following period. Among women extra-marital relations were

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 279.

³² *Dzieci nieślubne i podrzutki w parafii św. Krzyża w Warszawie w XVIII wieku* [Illegitimate Children and Foundlings in the Holy Cross Parish in Warsaw in the 18th Century], "Roczniki Humanistyczne" (forthcoming).

³³ C. Kukło, *Rodzina...*, pp. 202—204. Similarly in the parish of Łomża, cf. I. Gieysztorowa, *Les enfants illégitimes dans une paroisse de Pologne aux dix-septième et dix huitième siècles*, in: *Marriage and Remarriage in Populations of the Past*, ed. by J. Dupaquier and others, London 1981, pp. 429—436.

³⁴ C. Kukło, *Rodzina...*, pp. 247—252.

undertaken more frequently by single persons of about the age of 30 (spinsters or widows, the latter frequently immediately after the death and burial of their husband) out of sexual need or in the hope of acquiring a husband.

Demographers distinguish between illegitimate births and births resulting from pre-marital conceptions; if these two groups were taken jointly, the number of births resulting from extra-marital conceptions would have been much higher. If to this we add that in the 18th century it became increasingly frequent to put off the baptism, one can say that conformity to customs was gradually weakening in pre-industrial large towns, a large part of whose inhabitants consisted of migrants from villages and small towns, where religion was of an extremely traditional character.

In the reconstituted families in the Holy Cross parish the average interval between the date of marriage and the first child (excluding pre-marital conceptions) was 15—16 months. It was longer in women who married at a later age (30—34). The next children came into the world every two years, but the interval between births would decrease to 20 months if the previous child had died in the first year of life. The interval before the last birth was longer, amounting to 2.5 or 3 years.

Since the register of burials is less complete than that of baptisms, to say nothing of marriages, great caution must be preserved in establishing the death rate. Death registers have been used first and foremost in the reconstitution of families, in establishing the seasonal factor of deaths by age, and in reconstructing the course of the plague (1708—1712) and other elemental disasters. Infants (up to 1 year of age) had a high death rate in summer, from June until the end of September, with the climax in August. This was due, above all, to the frequent poisonings and infections of the alimentary tract, which were lethal to young and weak organisms. The same season witnessed the most frequent deaths among small children (aged one to four) and older children (5—14) in the second half of the 18th century. Among adults (aged 15—59) the death rate was the highest in winter and early spring. The causes of death were different in the group of adults, most of whom died of typhus, smallpox and

tuberculosis.³⁵ Owing to the reduced biological resistance of the frequently emaciated old people (over the age of 60) these diseases took the heaviest toll of lives in the preharvest period, in April, when food was scarce.

It has been established on the basis of a fuller evidence of funerals from the beginning of the 19th century (only for the short 1800—1801 period and concerning 1205 deaths) that 12 per cent of the new-born babies died before they were a month old and nearly 30% before reaching the age of one; not much more than 40% reached the reproductive age.

Detailed studies on the biological factors which exerted an influence on the number of children per family have shown that throughout the 18th century the number of children in Warsaw families was the smaller the older the woman was at marriage, and that marital fertility was lower in all age groups in the families established in the 1770s. The number of children was, of course, higher in families with a longer married life which had more opportunities to make use of the woman's progenerative ability; fertility decreased gradually with the duration of the marriage (the debilitation of the woman's organism through the successive childbirths). In the marriages contracted during the Enlightenment period (1770—1790) a decrease in fertility was noted after the first five years of marriage, irrespective of the mother's age at marriage. The reconstituted complete closed families, i.e. families in which the woman reached the age of 45 in marriage, did not make the maximum use of the reproductive capacity. The Warsaw women who got married before the age of 20 sometimes ceased to bear children when they were 33 or 34, and those who got married between 20 and 24 had their last child four years later (37—38), that is, long before the period of their biological sterility (45—49 years).

These results allow us to call into question the old conviction about the unrestricted procreation in Poland in the old days.³⁶

³⁵ Z. Woźniewski, A. Rose, *Przyczyny zgonów w księgach metrykalnych parafii św. Krzyża w Warszawie w r. 1799* [The Causes of Death in the Registers of the Holy Cross Parish in Warsaw in 1799], "Polski Tygodnik Lekarski", vol. XVII, 1962, No. 39, pp. 1521—1525.

³⁶ S. Borowski, *Funkcje prokreacyjne rodziny polskiej* [The Pro-

Some families in the capital may have already been using some methods of birth control.³⁷ Let us recall that the Holy Cross parish was inhabited by many families of merchants, officials, and the prosperous gentry and in the light of West European research family planning appeared first among the more prosperous social groups, especially the nascent bourgeoisie.³⁸

Contemporary Polish historiography likes to emphasize the specific character of old Polish political, economic and social structures. Let us therefore try to compare the synthetic picture of the development of the Warsaw families with that found in the pre-industrial towns in the West, known to us thanks to the productive French, English and German studies.

The old Polish urban family of the late Saxon and Enlightenment periods had one of the most characteristic features of the West European families, namely, the late average age at which marriage was contracted, but only with regard to men. In old Europe men married when they were between 28 and 30,³⁹ which

creative Functions of the Polish Family], in: *Demografia społeczna [Social Demography]*, collective work ed. by A. Józefowicz, Warszawa 1974, p. 87; more cautiously I. Gieysztorowa, *Wstęp...*, p. 260.

³⁷ Z. Kuchowicz, *Z badań nad stanem biologicznym społeczeństwa polskiego od schyłku XVI do końca XVIII wieku [Research into the Biological Condition of Polish Society from the End of the 16th until the End of the 18th Century]*, Łódź 1972, p. 93; *idem*, *Obyczaje staropolskie XVII—XVIII wieku [Old Polish Customs in the 17th and 18th Centuries]*, Łódź 1975, p. 193. See also A. Wyrobisz, *op. cit.*, pp. 311—314, and also M. Kamler, *Infanticide in the Towns of the Polish Kingdom in the Second Half of the 16th and the First Half of the 17th Century*, "Acta Poloniae Historica", vol. LVIII, 1988, pp. 33—49.

³⁸ A. Perrenoud, *Variables sociales en démographie urbaine. L'exemple de Genève au XVIIIe siècle*, in: *Démographie urbaine XVe—XXe siècle*, Centre d'histoire économique et sociale de la région lyonnaise, vol. VIII, Lyon 1979, pp. 152—165; J. P. Bardet, *Rouen au XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles. Les mutations d'un espace social*, vol. I, Paris 1983, pp. 272—280.

³⁹ M. Garden, *Lyon et les Lyonnais au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris 1970, p. 91; J. P. Bardet, *op. cit.*, p. 255; A. Perrenoud, *op. cit.*, pp. 147—148; E. François, *La population de Coblenz au XVIIIe siècle. Deficit démographique et immigration dans une ville de résidence*, "Annales de Démographie Historique", 1975, p. 299 (it contains data for Koblenz, Luzern and Durlach). The connection between the late age at which

was due to the fact that the future head of the family needed a long time to attain material stability. However, Warsaw girls married definitely earlier than did the French, German and British women. Maternity occurred earlier in the Polish urban families in the pre-industrial era than it did in the West.⁴⁰ Another feature distinguishing Polish families was the greater difference in age between the spouses on their first marriage. Whereas in the Western urban agglomerations this difference was insignificant, amounting to 2—3 years, in the Warsaw families it was as high as 6—7 years.

No significant differences have been observed in the number of children per family, pre-marital conceptions and the number of illegitimate children. The average number of children born into complete families in Warsaw (7—8) did not differ from that noted in the pre-industrial West European urban families.⁴¹

Comparisons of the demographic features of old Polish urban families with those in Western Europe can only be preliminary because demographic research into families in large and small Polish towns before the partitions is only in the initial stage. At the end of the 18th century, Warsaw families did not differ much from those in the pre-industrial towns in Western Europe.

Having the registers at our disposal, we want to continue research into the Holy Cross congregation and pass from vertical

marriages were contracted in Flanders and Brabant and social differentiation is dealt with by C. Vandenbroke, *Caractéristique de la nuptialité de la fécondité en Flandre et en Brabant aux XVIII^e—XIX^e siècles*, "Annales de Démographie Historique", 1977, pp. 9—12. Information on the age of the newlyweds in the British Isles is given by E. A. Wrigley, R. S. Schofield, *English Population History from Reconstitution: Summary Results 1600—1799*, "Population Studies", vol. XXXVII, 1983, No. 1, pp. 157—184.

⁴⁰ In Polish urban families the women had their first child in that century at the age of 23—24, in the West between the age of 27 and 29.

⁴¹ J. P. Bardet, *op. cit.*, pp. 270—275; M. Lachiver, *La population de Meulan du XVII^e au XIX^e siècle (vers 1600—1870), Etude de démographie historique*, Paris 1969, pp. 167—173; in Geneva only six children, cf. A. Perrenoud, *op. cit.*, p. 517; in Caen even fewer, namely five children, cf. J. C. Perrot, *Genèse d'une ville moderne. Caen au XVIII^e siècle*, vol. II, Paris 1975, p. 868.

developmental studies to horizontal structural ones which may, in the future, show marital fertility and mortality according to social strata and occupation. If more historians took up research into the registers of large and small Polish towns as well as the villages in the pre-industrial and industrial eras, this would allow us to better understand to what extent the size of the family and its structure was influenced by different socio-economic structures. Church archives contain many registers from the 17th up to the 19th century. In their exploitation (provided the documents are continuous and the three series are complete) wider use should be made of computer techniques, which shorten the time of elaboration, thus making it possible to extend the field of study. On the basis of my own experience and the experience of other members of the Warsaw computer team I can say that the Family Reconstitution Computer System which is being established under the auspices of the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Białystok branch of Warsaw University, can be adopted by other research centres.

(Translated by Janina Dorosz)