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**Fr. Karl Urban (1864–1923) –  
Researcher of the History of Upper Silesia  
Research Project Idea and Possibilities of its Implementation**

1. Need for research – 2. Family environment and youth – 3. The specificity of the priestly ministry and writing activity – 4. Proposed research project

In the research connected to local communities and their past, it is important to show the legacy left by people who have been particularly distinguished for these communities. As part of historical research, which has been conducted for many years at the Department of Church History and Patrology at the Faculty of Theology of the Opole University (from 1 Oct, 2019, the Institute of Theological Sciences of UO), also the issues involving the history of Church in Upper Silesia are undertaken, where the lives of important figures – clergymen or laymen, are presented together with their heritage. Fr. Prof Jerzy Myszor, who has been researching the history of the Catholic Church in Silesia, indicated that there is still not enough detailed research done in this field, which would broaden the state of current knowledge. This problem also involves the history of clergy in Upper Silesia<sup>1</sup>. It seems that expanding the research spectrum to include people and environments that have been overlooked or not known so far can provide a much more comprehensive

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<sup>1</sup> It was his proposal after the publication of a very important monograph on the history of the Silesian clergy in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. See: Jerzy Myszor. 2011. *Duchowieństwo katolickie na Śląsku 1742–1914. Z dziejów duszpasterstwa w diecezji wrocławskiej*. Katowice: Księgarnia św. Jacka.

picture of the history of local communities. The use of the microhistorical method in this particular case can help answer questions and address hypotheses which also involve the history of larger communities, including historical processes in the general history.

In order to address the demand postulated in scientific circles to broaden the research spectrum, in contrast to scarce syntheses repeatedly offered for many years, or incomplete records involving people distinguished for German, Polish and, in particular, Silesian historiography, I would like to present the life and legacy of Fr. Karl Urban (1864–1923), a priest of the Diocese of Wrocław, who for most of his life conducted research, publishing sporadically the results of his historical research in the Silesian periodical „Oberschlesische Heimat. Zeitschrift des Oberschlesischen Geschichtsvereins” and in a local magazine „Lublinitzer Kreisblatt”. His scientific works comprised of subjects pertaining to the history of the northern areas of Upper Silesia. Learning about the most important stages of his life as well as bringing together his legacy seems to be crucial, because in 2023 we will be commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death<sup>2</sup>.

## 1. Need for research

The above-mentioned prominent expert on the history of the Church in Upper Silesia, who had for many years conducted research on Catholic clergy in Silesia, pointed out that it was impossible to specify all the clergymen whose scientific interests went beyond mere curiosity: “The most popular for them was the history of Church, especially in its regional, parish dimension”<sup>3</sup>. Those clergymen under-

<sup>2</sup> So far, Fr. Urban did not get any positions about himself. Until now, only Jerzy Myszor wrote about him laconically in their statistical compilations about the Silesian clergy and in biographical dictionaries, and Jerzy Parys and Jan Myrcik in popular science works. See: Jerzy Myszor (Ed). 2009. *Słownik biograficzny duchowieństwa (archi)diecezji katowickiej 1922–2008*. Katowice: Księgarnia św. Jacka, 428–429; Jerzy Parys. 2012. *Herbarz ziemi lublinieckiej*. Pawonków: Jerzy Parys ed, 3, 62, 74; Jan Myrcik. 2007. „Historia Żydów w Cieszowej”. *Ziemia Lubliniecka. Kwartalnik Społeczno-Kulturalny* 6 (1–2): 8–10; Jan Myrcik. 2019. *Artykuły prasowe*. Vol 1: *Tematyka historyczna i religijna*. Koszęcin: Stowarzyszenie Inicjatyw Społecznych w Koszęcinie, 14, 26, 40, 61, 119. In my search, I relied primarily on the available sources, including his personal file. See: Archdiocesan Archives in Katowice (hereinafter: AAK). Personal Files. Ref. 883. *Ks. Karol Urban*, 1–58; Archives of the Parish of St. Joseph in Sądów (hereinafter: AP Sądów). *Geistliche Personalien 1889–1952*; AP Sądów. *Ausgabe 1896–1953*; AP Sądów. *Kirchen-Visitations-Protokolle 1897–1948*; AP Sądów. *Kirchliche Bauten zu Czeschowa 1869–1907*; AP Sądów. *Kirchliche Bauten in Sadow 1885–1902*; AP Sądów. *Kirchliche Statistik 1909–1917*; AP Sądów. *Miscellanea 1899–1939*. Vol 1–3; Archives of the Diocesan Curia in Gliwice (hereinafter: ADC Gliwice). *Acta Localia* (hereinafter: AL), *Parafia św. Marcina Biskupa i Wyznawcy w Cieszowej*. Vol 1: 1925–1989; ADC Gliwice. AL. *Parafia św. Józefa w Sadowie*. Vol 1: *Akta katowickie 1889–1989*.

<sup>3</sup> Myszor. 2011. *Duchowieństwo katolickie na Śląsku 1742–1914*, 416.

stood that research on the history of the local past was in itself intended to guide the readers not only to satisfy their own curiosity. They also avoided giving the reader explicit advice, disseminating slogans promoted at that time, or spreading an ideological message through their texts, which was frequently done in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century German historiography. In this respect, Silesian clergymen would choose an indirect way. Their purpose, apart from providing merely events and facts from the past history, was to provide the readers with informative and didactic knowledge<sup>4</sup>. At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, one of the most dynamic research centers in Silesia was the University of Wrocław. Clergymen who due to the nature of their ministry could not benefit from the sources in the central archives, would choose topics from local history. Having at their disposal rich resources of parish and deanery archives, as well as documentation collected in municipal archives or in gentry estates, they left behind a rich legacy of knowledge. Years later, the said research studies were acknowledged by historians from major university schools: Alf Lüdtke and Mathias Niendorf, promoting the so-called microhistorical method of research<sup>5</sup>.

## 2. Family environment and youth

In the beginning, it is important to show the family environment in which he was brought up, since the Urban family for generations lived in the areas of the Silesian-Moravian-Czech border. Fr. Karl Urban was the second child of the teacher Carl Urban and his wife Maria née Herrmann. Karl's father came from the small town of Scheibau, in the Wünschelburg parish, on the former German-Austrian border (now Radków in the Kłodzko Basin, on the Polish-Czech border). After studying at the Catholic Teacher's Seminary in Głogówek, he worked as a headmaster of elementary schools in areas strongly represented by the Polish tradition (Pszczy-

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<sup>4</sup> Jerzy Myszor. 1994. „Postawy narodowe duchowieństwa śląskiego na przełomie XIX i XX w. przyczynek do dziejów Kościoła na Śląsku w okresie powstań i plebiscytu”. *Saeculum Christianum* 1 (1): 137–153; Henryk Olszar. 2011. Kościół katolicki a konflikt polsko-niemiecki na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1919–1921. In *Górny Śląsk na zakręcie historii. Materiały konferencyjne (Zeszyty Rybnickie 13)*. Ed Dawid Keller, 27–48. Rybnik: Muzeum w Rybniku. Compare: Ernst Rudolf Huber, Wolfgang Huber. 1983. *Staat und Kirche im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. Vol III: *Staat und Kirche von der Beilegung des Kulturkampfes bis zum Ende des Ersten Weltkrieges*, Berlin: WBG Academic.

<sup>5</sup> Mathias Niendorf. 1997. *Minderheiten an der Grenze. Deutsche und Polen in den Kreisen Fladow (Złotów) und Zempelburg (Sępólno Krajeńskie) 1900–1939* (Quellen und Studien 6). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag; Mathias Niendorf. 1997. Die Provinz Oberschlesien und ihre polnische Bevölkerung. In *Deutsche und Polen zwischen den Kriegen. Minderheitenstatus und „Volkstumskampf“ im Grenzgebiet. Amtliche Berichterstattung aus beiden Ländern 1920–1939* (Texte und Materialien zur Zeitgeschichte 9). Vol 2. Ed Rudolf Jaworski, Marian Wojciechowski, 811–816. München: K.G. Saur.

na, Łąka, Kobiór in Upper Silesia). While teaching children and adolescents, he instilled in his students broad horizons of good-neighborly relations. In addition, he was known for several scientific works on subjects related to pedagogy and history. In 1882, he published a very popular book entitled *Hausfleiß in Dänemark* (*Housework in Denmark*)<sup>6</sup>. In Racibórz, where he lived in retirement since 1898, he published two more books: *Reiseskizzen* (*Travel Sketches*, in 1908)<sup>7</sup> and a work on the shrine of Our Lady in Racibórz: *Matka Boża (Mother of God)*, in which he described the history of that place and the specific phenomenon of the pilgrimage movement taking place there<sup>8</sup>.

Owing to his childhood time which Fr. Urban would spend in Pszczyna land, he was strengthening in himself everything which was Polish, acquiring language and culture. As a result of events related to *Kulturkampf*, the teaching of the Polish language was abandoned in elementary schools. Yet, as a young boy, he received the appropriate education in his family home. Good knowledge of the Polish language resulted in the fact that during seminary studies he was exempted as a bilingual person from attending lectures on that language. After finishing the elementary school in Kobiór, he continued his education at the Ducal Evangelical Gymnasium in Pszczyna (*Fürstenschule*), where he studied for 7.5 years, including 2.5 years in the first grade (the so-called *prima*) which was preparing young boys for Matura exams. He obtained his Matura certificate on September 24, 1885, and in the same year he enrolled in theological studies at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Wrocław<sup>9</sup>. He attended the lectures of such professors as e.g: Laemmer, Scholz, Friedlieb, Koenig, Junkmann, Rittner, Krawutzki, Baumkers and Probst. In July 1888 he passed the final examinations and started education in the Episcopal seminary. On 27 June 1889, he was ordained a priest<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Carl Urban. 1881. *Hausfleiß in Dänemark und seine Verpflanzung in die oberschlesischen Rothstands-Distrikte. Eine Reise- und Studienskizze*. Oppeln: Franck.

<sup>7</sup> Carl Urban. 1908. *Reise-Skizzen für Naturfreunde und Wanderlustige*. Ratibor.

<sup>8</sup> In these cases, the printing house where the items were published was not identified. See: AP Sadów. *Miscellanea 1899–1939*. Vol 1, [*Private records of Fr. Urban*].

<sup>9</sup> See: AAK, Personal Files. Ref. 883. *Ks. Karol Urban, Carolus Urbanus de vita sua*, 3.

<sup>10</sup> See: AAK, Personal Files. Ref. 883. *Ks. Karol Urban, [Various documents]*, 12–33a.

### 3. The specificity of the priestly ministry and writing activity

Multiculturalism and openness to various nationalities and diverse traditions provided him with the right background for his heart to develop as a priest with an attitude for straightforwardness, which was to be so indispensable in the pastoral ministry in Silesia. It is worth remembering that Fr. Urban was an ardent supporter of friendly, interconfessional relations between Catholics and Jews. When in 1908 in Cieszowa, one of the oldest Jewish communities in Upper Silesia, buildings of the dissolved kehila were put up for auction, Fr. Urban bought the synagogue with the neighboring building development from his own resources, thus protecting them from inevitable liquidation<sup>11</sup>. He would demonstrate a similar approach as a priest at Bytom-Miechowice (1889–1892), Królewska Huta (1892–1893), Głogówek (1895–1897), Kruszowice in the poviát of Oleśnica (1895–1897) and at Sadów in the Lubliniec deanery (1899–1923). For a short time, Fr. Urban also occupied the position of a prefect of the Episcopal monastery school for boys in Bytom (1893–1895), where he for the first time tried his writing skills. Together with his parishioners, he cared for places related to their history. In an exceptional way he wanted to maintain the memory of the burial places of former parishioners scattered in different places. He commemorated those places by planting commemorative crosses or erratic boulders from the post-glacial era on them<sup>12</sup>.

A preliminary archival query made it possible to find the first texts of Fr. Urban, describing the history of Lubliniec and Koszęcin lands: *Die Trojca Kirche bei Koschentin*<sup>13</sup>; *Kirchhöfe und Grabstätten in der Parochie Sodow, Kreis Lublinitz*<sup>14</sup>; history of the Jewish community in Cieszowa – *Die katholische Kirche und die jüdische Synagoge zu Czieschowa, Kreis Lublinitz O/S*<sup>15</sup>. These texts were published by Fr. Urban in the journal of the Upper Silesian Historical Society (Oberschlesis-

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<sup>11</sup> Marcus Mordechai Brann. 1917. „Die jüdischen Altertümer in Czieschowa O/S”, *Oberschlesien. Monatsschrift zur Pflege der Kenntnis und zur Vertretung der Interessen Oberschlesiens* 16 (3): 139.

<sup>12</sup> See: AP Sadów. *Kirchliche Bauten zu Czieschowa 1869–1907*; AP Sadów. *Kirchliche Bauten in Sodow 1885–1902*.

<sup>13</sup> Karl Urban. 1911. „Die Trojca Kirche bei Koschentin”. *Oberschlesische Heimat. Zeitschrift des Oberschlesischen Geschichtsvereins* 7: 38–47.

<sup>14</sup> Karl Urban. 1916. „Kirchhöfe und Grabstätten in der Parochie Sodow, Kreis Lublinitz”. *Oberschlesische Heimat. Zeitschrift des Oberschlesischen Geschichtsvereins* 12: 105–113.

<sup>15</sup> Karl Urban. 1909. „Die katholische Kirche und die jüdische Synagoge zu Czieschowa, Kreis Lublinitz O/S”, *Oberschlesische Heimat. Zeitschrift des Oberschlesischen Geschichtsvereins* 5: 105–115.

cher Geschichtsverein). The society, whose activity was inaugurated in Opole in 1904, propagated knowledge about the history of Silesia, and the articles published there are still a great repository of knowledge on the past history of many local communities in Upper Silesia.

The preliminary research results will be supplemented by an extensive query of the texts of Fr. Urban deposited in the national and church archives. In particular, it involves the so-called *Legacy of Fr. Urban*, located in the Archives of the Parish of St. Joseph in Sadów, which is a collection of cards written by him in German Gothic<sup>16</sup>. The said complex is also in possession of his *Family registry (Familienregister)*. The parish priest of Sadów recorded in it the most important information about the owners of the nearby dominion (often having Polish roots)<sup>17</sup>, made notes about nearby towns or people buried in cemeteries and in other places forgotten by contemporary society<sup>18</sup>. Those notes were a kind of rough notebook and indispensable help in the development of research works. Apart from the notes, various newspaper clippings were preserved, which the priest had been collecting in the parish archives until his death in 1923. Doing a good translation of the works written by Fr. Urban and their publication is another objective of the presented project. The fragments of a story about the famous family of count von Oppersdorf would prove to be very interesting, who in 1655, i.e. during the Swedish invasion, gave shelter to the Polish king Jan Kazimierz and his courtiers: *Memorabilia ex Genealogia Oppersdorfiana (Materialien zur Pfarr-Chronik)*. The historian certainly wanted to publish this text and provide it with a good commentary, but the notes have not survived.

Reading of the works of Fr. Urban reveals many forgotten facts from local history, and also reveals a kind of mission that guided him in creating scientific texts. For example, while describing burial places from the contemporary times in the vast parish at Sadów (he identified as many as 38 places), he included in the text facts informative for the reader taken from the lives of former residents, which he intertwined with the events from economic and political history. The typescript of Fr. Urban ends with an occasional maxim that the parish priest Fr. Gmyrek had entered into the parish funeral book in 1673: *Migrarunt hinc et nos post illos – utinam ad Deum*. The author quoted words from St. Augustine, which in the Middle Ages were quoted as a learned maxim. In modern times, it was published and popularized by Fr. Johann Lorenz Helbig (1662–1721), the dean of the Gerolzhofen Chapter in the

<sup>16</sup> AP Sadów. *Miscellanea 1899–1939*. Vol 1–3.

<sup>17</sup> AP Sadów, *Miscellanea*. Vol 1, *Besitzer von Wierzbie, zugleich eine Chronik der Familie Ziemietzki von Zemetitz-Matyska*; vol 3, *Besitzer von Nieder Sadow*; vol 3, *Die Besitzer von Ober Sadow*.

<sup>18</sup> AP Sadów, *Miscellanea*. Vol 2, *Chronik von Sadow*; vol 3, *Namen und Wappen der Städte und Landgemeinden des Lublinitzer Kreises und ihre Bedeutung*.

diocese of Würzburg, in a widely read homiletic textbook *Anatomia Canis Mystica et Moralis*<sup>19</sup>. We can hypothesize that in this particular case the text of Fr. Urban is not a dry and systematic catalog of old burial places, but it is a message of remembrance of past generations in the spirit of paschal theology.

#### 4. Proposed research project

Although the literature on the history of Upper Silesia and the clergy in Upper Silesia is available on the publishing market, the individual life of Fr. Urban was not discussed there. Maybe it was because the parish priest of Sadów died suddenly in 1923, and the subsequent situation involving the division of Upper Silesia and the economic crisis can explain the fact that he was soon forgotten. Another barrier was that his legacy was written in German, i.e. in the language in which Fr. Urban received a university education. In post-war research on the clergy in Upper Silesia, both Fr. Henryk Olszar and Fr. Jerzy Myszor referenced him in the research, but because of the scattered source material, they did not strive to characterize him in more detail<sup>20</sup>. Fortunately, the church records concerning him survived to our times. It is e.g. a personal file kept in the Archdiocese Archives in Katowice<sup>21</sup>. It contains documents related to the period of his theological studies and priesthood ordination, passed exams and issued episcopal decrees (in total – 60 cards handwritten in German Gothic and Latin). What still remains to be investigated is the so-called *Legacy of Fr. Urban*, as well as the Archives of the Parish of St. Joseph in Sadów. Only for the period covering the years 1899–1923, i.e. during the ministry of Fr. Urban as the parish priest of Sadów, over 40 inventory units were created. So far, a small part of them has been reviewed. Laconic information about Fr. Urban was included in occasional obituaries that were published after his death in the local press<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> Johann Lorenz Helbig. 1720. *Anatomia Canis Mystica et Moralis. Das ist: Die Eigenschafft eines Hunds gut und böse. Durch sonntägliche Predig-Concept auff Tugend und Laster, welche ein Christen-Mensch, sein Seelen-Heyl zu erwerben, üben und meyden solle; also gerichtet, daß auf jeden Sonntag das erste Concept von einer Eingenschafft des Hunds den Eingang machet.* Nürnberg – Franckfurth: Johann Michel Kleyer.

<sup>20</sup> Myszor (Ed). 2009. *Słownik biograficzny duchowieństwa*, 428–429. Compare: Henryk Olszar. 2000. *Duchowieństwo katolickie diecezji śląskiej (katowickiej) w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej.* Katowice: Księgarnia św. Jacka.

<sup>21</sup> AAK, Personal Files. Ref. 883. *Ks. Karol Urban.*

<sup>22</sup> 1923. „Śp. ks. Karol Urban”. *Katolik Codzienny* 26 (216), 3; 1923. „Śp. ks. Karol Urban”, *Górnoślązak* 22 (216), 3; 1923. „Umarł ks. Karol Urban”, *Rozporządzenia Administracji Apostolskiej Śląska Polskiego* 1 (8): 38.



A future biography and translation of the works of Fr. Urban is consistent with the policy in the field of knowledge practiced by church historians, which is an objective reflection of history. The description of the pastoral and scientific activity of Fr. Urban will not only help rediscover him in the local environment, but above all it will expand the current knowledge involving the past history of Upper Silesia and its small homelands, whereof many sources are still unavailable. In this respect, Fr. Urban was a man of his era, collecting stories about the past of Upper Silesia based on the accounts of the then residents, as well as documenting monuments of material culture, or describing old memorial sites. The proposed project is to demonstrate that the scientific activity of Fr. Urban, which he could not cultivate in the realm of academic halls, as did the Silesian historians of the Church: Joseph Jungnitz and Franz Xaver Seppelt, reflected his reliability and skills to conduct research studies. He himself followed the principle that revealing the truth leads to healing the wounds of the Church community and prevents the repetition of land division errors in the future. It must be admitted that priest-historians of that time (Fr. Karol Urban, Fr. Johannes Chrzyszcz, blessed Fr. Emil Szramek and others) were reliable historians. They did not think of idealizing the past or practicing some form of apologetics that would encourage silence about uncomfortable and shameful pages of history. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the climate for that type of work was very favorable. The Prussian Ministry of the Interior on 17 February 1859 recommended that the authorities of all provinces should pay special attention to archives in cities and support historical publications. On that occasion, the ministry recommended that city authorities set up and run city records, in line with the approved scheme. After the turbulent time of both wars, it turned out that the research made at that time and the scientific treatises developed on its basis are today an unquestionable reference source involving the course of local history, which in many cases lacked source documentation.

All texts which are accounted to Fr. Urban will be verified. The most valuable articles, both the published ones and those in manuscripts, will be translated into Polish. With respect to methodology, any discrepancies in the names and terminology used in the texts should also be taken into account. The correct translation and accurate reading of all data will be facilitated by: geographical and cartographic methods (principally the analysis of old maps), taking into account the old topography of hamlets, colonies and smaller localities described by Fr. Urban. We should also face the fact that the texts of Fr. Urban may be characterized by a kind of archaic notation, manifested, e.g. by the use of old church terminology and words or terms in Old German which are no longer used. All these difficulties can be overcome by using various historical methods, as well as other auxiliary



methods: editorial, dictionary or ethnographic methods (including the use of dialect vocabulary).

The collected source material will be analyzed and confronted with the available literature on the history of Central Europe, including also Upper Silesia at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The comparative method of the historical sources and studies should be helpful to facilitate the development of a good synthesis, which is a scientific study aiming to present Fr. Karol Urban and his scientific achievements. We can theoretically conclude that the achievements of Fr. Urban, which have not been lengthily described in Polish historiography so far, will broaden knowledge about the local past history of Upper Silesia, and his achievements will reflect the method of objective verification of sources commonly acknowledged by the historians of that time, especially by the clergy at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, in line with the postulate of Prof. Leopold von Ranke: *Wie es eigentlich gewesen war*. The comparative method will also specify the research novelties of Fr. Urban, but it will also address the question about how much he benefited from the principles of scientific methods of research craft used in the past and adopted by the Upper Silesian Historical Society.

After drawing up the texts, the whole will be forwarded for scientific and linguistic correction. At the final stage, the collected materials will be used to publish a scientific work: *Fr. Karl Urban (1864–1923) – researcher of the history of Upper Silesia*, containing the biography and research output of this priest and historian. The work will be published as part of the publication series: „Heritage of Christian culture in Silesia”, under the auspices of the Editorial Office of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Opole.

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Fr. Urban, whose 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of death will fall in 2023, is still an undiscovered figure. During the realization of the project, the following research hypotheses will be verified: what model of the nineteenth and twentieth-century historical research the Silesian clergy followed in their works, what mission they disseminated in their texts, how strong was the impact represented by the then scientific societies and what role the clergy themselves played in them. It is interesting whether Fr. Urban – himself a man of the borderland – was involved in political events during the turbulent period of the Silesian Uprisings and plebiscite, or he kept the expectant attitude, and did not engage in national activities. Such behavior might even have been in compliance with the recommendations of the superior church administration. All these hypotheses and research assump-

tions would be narrowed down to the confirmation or denial of the thesis put forward by Fr. Myszor that priests from the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries: “Intuitively fitted into the then model of historical research, which favored basic research, consisting in the exploration of sources and the issuing of scientific items, without going into interpretation”<sup>23</sup>.

It is necessary to appreciate the initiative of the local government so that 100 years after his death we could rediscover Fr. Urban and the texts he wrote. Both their desire and the atmosphere of kindness created by the representatives of various professional groups of the local environment give hope that the results of the research will be presented not only in university halls, but also in the rooms of cultural centers of towns and municipalities. I hope that the book, which will be published soon, will surely find buyers.

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<sup>23</sup> Myszor. 2011. *Duchowieństwo katolickie na Śląsku 1742–1914*, 416.

## Studies

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**Abstract:** The aim of the article is to present the person and scientific achievements of Fr. Karl Urban (1864–1923), in the years 1899–1923 a priest at Sadow in the Lubliniec deanery. He himself – being the son of Carl Urban (1836–1922), a teacher in Upper Silesian schools, the author of a few books combining the subjects of pedagogy and history – he was engaged in scientific activity almost all his life. He published some of his research works in the Silesian scientific journal: „Oberschlesische Heimat. Zeitschrift des Oberschlesischen Geschichtsvereins”, and he was actively participating in the activities of the Upper Silesian Historical Society founded in 1904. The members of that society focused their work mainly on the history of local communities, creating accounts contributing to the synthetic history of Upper Silesia. The preliminary archival query found the first articles of Fr. Urban, concerning the history of the lands of Lubliniec and Koszęcin. The author shares the preliminary results of his research, the aim of which is to publish a book about this forgotten researcher of local history on the hundredth anniversary of his death.

**Keywords:** Fr. Karl Urban, archival research, history of the Catholic Church in Upper Silesia, history of Upper Silesia.

**Streszczenie:** Ks. Karol Urban (1864–1923) – badacz dziejów Górnego Śląska. **Pomysł projektu badawczego i możliwości jego realizacji.** Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie osoby i dorobku naukowego ks. Karla Urbana (1864–1923), w latach 1899–1923 proboszcza w Sadowie w dekanacie lublinieckim. On sam – będący synem nauczyciela szkół górnośląskich Carla Urbana (1836–1922), autora niewielkich pozycji książkowych

z pogranicza pedagogiki i historii – przez niemal całe swoje życie prowadził działalność naukową. Część swoich badań opublikował w śląskim periodyku naukowym: „Oberschlesische Heimat. Zeitschrift des Oberschlesischen Geschichtsvereins”, czynnie angażując się w działalność założonego w 1904 r. Górnośląskiego Towarzystwa Historycznego. Członkowie tegoż towarzystwa zajmowali się głównie dziejami lokalnych społeczności, tworząc przyczynki do syntetycznych dziejów Górnego Śląska. Wstępna kwerenda archiwalna pozwoliła odszukać pierwsze artykuły ks. Urbana, dotyczące dziejów ziemi lublinieckiej i koszęcińskiej. Autor dzieli się wstępnymi wynikami swoich badań naukowych, których celem jest wydanie książki o tym zapomnianym badaczu lokalnych dziejów w setną rocznicę jego śmierci.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Ks. Karl Urban, poszukiwania archiwalne, historia Kościoła katolickiego na Górnym Śląsku, historia Górnego Śląska.

