

DEMOLITION OF THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCHES
IN THE LUBLIN REGION IN 1938:
CULTURAL CONSEQUENCES

S u m m a r y

In 1938 (from mid-May to mid-July) in Lublin region the authorities have demolished about 130 Eastern Orthodox churches. They were of Greek Catholic or Eastern Orthodox origin. The greater part of them has been closed since 1915; they have not been claimed by the Catholic Church nor become permanent Eastern Orthodox parishes. Some of them were the seats of not full-time parishes and were not recognized officially by the state, but they were tolerated until 1938.

The elimination of so many sacred buildings had a huge impact on the cultural face of the described area and greatly diminished its Eastern Christian character. From the landscape of the Eastern Lublin region disappeared several old Uniate churches, mostly wooden, from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. They were often objects of great historical value. The next few churches were of Eastern Orthodox origin. They were built in the late nineteenth and early 20th century. Being recently built, they were not been seen as historical monuments, however a much greater was their material value (new buildings, often of bricks). The list of closed buildings should be completed by small chapels, built in the interwar period. Their material value were negligible and they had no historical significance.

The churches were supplied with utensils among which were the objects of great artistic and cultural value. Their fate varied. Many of them have been transferred to the permanent Eastern Orthodox parishes or to Eastern Orthodox believers. Significant part was destroyed by the authors of the demolition action. The Catholic Church was interested in some objects of Uniate origin and took over some of them.

Summarised by Rev. Krzysztof Grzesiak

Słowa kluczowe: prawosławie, Lubelszczyzna, akcja rewindykacyjno-polonizacyjna, cerkwie, okres międzywojenny.

Key words: Orthodoxy, Lublin region, Polishisation and restitution, Eastern Orthodox churches, interwar period.