



# “Loué soit le très-saint Sacrement” – Monastic Life in the Eighteenth-century Benedictine Monastery in Warsaw in Light of the Correspondence of Maria Augustyna Radziwiłł

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*Abstract.*<sup>1</sup> The study presented here deals with the peculiarities of the functioning of the order The Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the 18th century. The Sacramental Nuns led a simple, modest life based on a constant rhythm of adoration. Their rule was based on essentially the same principle as that of other Benedictine orders. In view of the fact that most of the historical sources concerning the functioning of the congregation in the 18th century have been destroyed, of particular importance is the found private correspondence of one of the prioress of the order – Maria Augustyna Radziwiłł. Her correspondence (found in The Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw) has not previously been analysed by researchers, hence its potential for use in recognising the presented issue is enormous. The aim of the research was to determine what daily life was like in the order during the times of King August III Wettin and Stanisław August Poniatowski. Of particular importance is the analysis of the economic condition of the monastery, relations with benefactors, the standard of living of the nuns and the implementation of the foundation

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act. The presented findings are part of a broader current of research on monastic life in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 18th century.

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**Keywords:** *monastic life, 18th century, Radziwiłł family, Benedictine monasteries, correspondence.*

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*Anotacija.* Straipsnyje nagrinėjami Nuolatinės Švč. Sakramento adoracijos benediktinių ordino veiklos ypatumai XVIII amžiuje. Šios vienuolės gyveno paprastai, kukliai, nuolatinio adoracijos ritmu. Jų valdžia buvo grindžiama iš esmės tuo pačiu principu, kaip ir kitų benediktinų ordinų. Atsižvelgiant į tai, kad dauguma istorinių šaltinių apie kongregacijos veiklą XVIII a. buvo sunaikinti, ypač svarbiu šaltiniu tampa rasta privati vienos iš ordino priorių Marijos Augustinos Radvilos korespondencija. Jos susirašinėjimo, esančio Vyriausiajame senųjų aktų archyve, istorikai anksčiau neanalizavo, todėl jo panaudojimo galimybės sprendžiant pateiktą problemą yra didžiulės. Tyrimo tikslas – nustatyti, kokia buvo kasdienybė ordine karalių Augusto III ir Stanislovo Augusto Poniatovskio valdymo metu. Ypač svarbi vienuolyno ekonominės būklės, santykių su geradariais, vienuolių gyvenimo lygio ir fundacijos akto įgyvendinimo analizė. Pateiktos išvados yra platesnės XVIII a. Abiejų Tautų Respublikos vienuolynų gyvenimo tyrimų srovės dalis.

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**Esminiai žodžiai:** *vienuolynų gyvenimas, XVIII a., Radvilų giminė, benediktinių vienuolynai, korespondencija.*

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## Introduction

The Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament came to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth thanks to the efforts of Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien Sobieska.<sup>2</sup> Few sources illuminate the specifics of how the order functioned in the second half of the 18th century, as the entire archive of the order burnt down during the Warsaw Uprising.<sup>3</sup> All that is left are laconic excerpts from preserved manuscript and printed newspapers or copies of notes made during various visits to the Order. However, they do not say much about the problems of daily ministry. Among the preserved source materials, private correspondence has by far the greatest value for learning about the specifics of life in the nunnery of the Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Letters from Anna Radziwiłł, who stayed in

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<sup>2</sup> SKRZYPIETZ, Aleksandra. Publiczna i prywatna religijność królowej Marii Kazimiery. *Studia Historyczne*, 2019, t. 62 (245), p. 28–29.

<sup>3</sup> This problem has been extensively characterised by BORKOWSKA, Małgorzata. Szkoła warszawskich sakramentek według zachowanych źródeł. *Nasza Przyszłość*, 1998, t. 90, p. 157–158.

the Order for 46 years, are a source that has not been used in research. Born in 1726, Anna was the daughter of Mikołaj Faustyn (died 1746), the Sword Bearer of Lithuania and the voivode of Navahrudak and Barbara née Zawisza (died 1770).<sup>4</sup> She joined the nunnery of the Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in Warsaw, where she took the name of Maria Augustyna. As Maria Augustyna's father died on February 2, 1746, her letters were addressed to other influential representatives of the Radziwiłł family<sup>5</sup> (especially the voivode of Vilnius, Michał Kazimierz, who died in 1762, and later his sons Karol Stanisław "Panie Kochanku", who died in 1790, and Hieronim Wincenty, who died in 1786). She wrote her letters in both Polish and French. The letters contain interesting information about the functioning of the congregation in the second half of the 18th century. They are also a valuable source that allows us to correct various inaccuracies in hitherto presented dating and factual information.<sup>6</sup>

The aim of this article is to analyse the peculiarities of life in a nunnery in the second half of the 18th century. The scope of the research includes both the daily activities of the sisters, the range of their undertakings and the extent of their contacts with the outside world. It is also valuable to establish the extent to which the original rules of monastic life, established in the seventeenth century, retained their viability in the following century. This is particularly important in view of the significant changes that took place during this period (such as the large reduction in the number of French sisters). It is also interesting to consider the financial situation of the order, the source of the funds for its daily activities and the relationship between the congregation and the representatives of the most influential noble families, who were often related to the sisters through family ties. Given the scarcity of sources, the research is primarily based on analysing surviving private correspondence and the eighteenth-century press.

<sup>4</sup> Barbara née Zawisza was the benefactor of many monastic congregations. Cf. PIECZYKOLAN, Ewa. Szaty liturgiczne z fundacji Franciszki z Zawiszów Kieżgajłło Radziwiłłowej (1690–1770) w klasztorze oo. Dominikanów w Lublinie. *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, 2022, t. 20, Nr. 4, p. 137–162.

<sup>5</sup> 43 additional letters of the Radziwiłłs (from 1724–1777) addressed to the Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament are mentioned in the monograph: STOJEK-SAWICKA, Karolina, *Duchowieństwo katolickie w życiu Radziwiłłów nieświeckich w XVIII wieku*. Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 2011, p. 428.

<sup>6</sup> Manuscript newspapers mentioned, for example, that Anna Radziwiłł "dedicated herself to the eternal service of God in the mentioned Monastery in 1745 on September 29" (Pol. *oddada się na wieczną służbę Bogu w Klasztorze pomienionym w roku 1745 dnia 29 września*). In the iconographic material "Icones familiae ducalis Radivilianae ex originalibus ... picturis desumptae : inscriptionibus historico-genealogicis ... illustratae, ab anno ... 1346 ad annum 1758 deductae", under the image of the sacrament, it was indicated that her accession to the order took place earlier – on July 31, 1744. The legitimacy of using the earlier of the dates is confirmed by the correspondence of Maria Augustyna herself, who in one of the letters of June 1747 complained that outstanding debts towards the Order had been growing for three years. Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie [hereafter– AGAD], Radziwiłł Archive [AR] dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 19 VI 1747, p. 2. Several of Anna's letters from this period have been preserved, AGAD, AR Dz. IV, manuscript 605.

## A new monastery

After the victory at the battle of Vienna, King Jan Sobieski founded a Capuchin monastery in Warsaw in thanksgiving.<sup>7</sup> The French-born Queen Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien Sobieska, following in the footsteps of her indebted husband,<sup>8</sup> “undertook an expensive fund in our capital for the nuns of St. Benedict, or Perpetual Adorers, and completed it five years after that year of 1688, erecting a beautiful and expensive church, a monastery, and seminary for young maidens, so that they would, in the holy faith, learn and practice good customs and handicrafts”.<sup>9</sup> According to the preserved accounts, the initiative of Maria Kazimiera was to be inspired by the earlier activities of Queen Louise Maria Gonzaga, who brought another French female order to the Commonwealth during her residence in Warsaw – the Visitandines.<sup>10</sup> Maria Kazimiera used her private affiliations to bring the Benedictine nuns to the Commonwealth. She took advantage of the courtesy of her sister Louise, wife of the Margrave de Bethune, and the former ambassador to Poland, Frobin de Jauson, Bishop of Beauvais. The group of 30 nuns, nuns, bid farewell by Mechtilde of the Blessed Sacrament (d. 1698), left Paris in 1687.<sup>11</sup> They boarded a ship in Rouen and arrived in Gdańsk on October 4. From there, they were transported by carriage to Warsaw. Temporary residence in the castle was initially prepared for them at the request of the queen, who was at the time staying with her husband in Ruthenia. From January 1, 1688, the sisters began constant adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the local chapel.

A new church and monastery began to be erected for the sisters on a previously purchased plot of land in the New Town (pol. *Nowe Miasto*) in Warsaw. Maria Kazimiera acquired the plot from the Warsaw councillor Kacper Walter. Two houses were also allocated for the purpose of the investment – one of brick and the other half wooden, bought from Adam Kotowski, the deputy pantler of Wyszogród.<sup>12</sup> The new temple looked different from all others seen earlier in Warsaw.<sup>13</sup> The exterior was in the Tuscan

<sup>7</sup> BARTOSZEWICZ, Julian. *Kościół warszawskie rzymskokatolickie opisane pod względem historycznym*. Warszawa 1855, p. 215–216.

<sup>8</sup> WALICKA, Irena Michaela. *Kościół i klasztor Sakramentek w Warszawie. Pomnik zwycięstwa pod Wiedniem*. Warszawa: Drukarnia S. Orgelbranda, 1988, p. 77.

<sup>9</sup> Archiwum Państwowe w Warszawie [eng. The State Archive in Warsaw], Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 8. Warsaw newspaper of January 25, 1783 (pol. *kosztowny fundusz w tejże naszej stolicy dla zakonnic św. Benedykta czyli sakramentek przedsięwzięła i w lat pięć po tym roku 1688 dokończyła, wystawiwszy piękny i kosztowny kościół, klasztor i seminarium dla młodych panien, aby tam w wierze świętej, w obyczajach i w ręcznych robotach wychowanie brały i ćwiczyły się*).

<sup>10</sup> CHROŚCICKI, Juliusz. *Kościół Wizytek*. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1973, p. 5–30.

<sup>11</sup> de BAR, Catherine. *En Pologne avec les bènédictines de France*. Paris: Tequi, 1984, p. 41–43.

<sup>12</sup> SZOŁDRSKI, Władysław. Benedyktyнки od Nieustającej Adoracji (sakramentki) w Warszawie (1687–1960). *Nasza Przeszłość*, 1957, t. 6, p. 126–127.

<sup>13</sup> ŻMUDZIŃSKI, Jerzy. Gest wotywny Marii Kazimiery. *Maria Kazimiera Sobieska (1641–1716). W kręgu rodziny, polityki i kultury*. Ed. A. Kalinowska, P. Tyska. Warszawa 2017, p. 237–242.

style and had a characteristic octagonal rotunda (originally roofed with lead), topped with a roof lantern. The front bore the coats of arms of the Sobieski family and the margrave d'Arquien (three goats). Inside, the walls were decorated with pilasters in the Corinthian style, while the domed vault was decorated with depictions of scenes from the Holy Scriptures. The foundation act was officially signed in 1688. In the erection act of June 4, the queen clarified the new monastery's rules. It was agreed that the congregation was to consist of 14 nuns – 8 French and 6 Polish. It was assumed that, should new candidates appear, exceeding the number of nuns designated in the foundation act, they were obliged to bring in dowries, which would fund the purchase of additional goods for the needs of the order. Thus, the way was open to increasing the originally assumed number of 14 nuns (the so-called funded number) over time. All this, however, depended on the growth rate of the monastic estate. The queen allotted an amount of 8,000 złoty from the Jarosław estate – the hereditary property of the Sobieski family – to support the basic number of nuns.

The Holy Sacrament was ceremonially moved from the royal castle to the newly built monastery on June 27, 1688. The solemn procession was attended by guilds with banners, bishops, the papal nuncio, and King Jan Sobieski, along with his wife, surrounded by a large retinue of senators.<sup>14</sup> After the service was over, the papal nuncio blessed the gathering. The ceremony ended with a sumptuous dinner that the royal couple had set up for the gathered guests. According to contemporary accounts,

*Maria Kazimiera took care of and entertained the Perpetual Adorers like Mary Louise had done before with the Visitandines*<sup>15</sup> [and]

*she ordered solemn services to be held there, provided garments for the maidens joining the order and covered all the costs.*<sup>16</sup>

The first mother superior of the new monastery was Maria Rodegunda de Beavois. Although the foundation act assumed the permanent presence of sisters from France,

<sup>14</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 32. Newspaper from Warsaw of April 25, 1789.

<sup>15</sup> Pol. *Maryja Kazimira tak się opiekowała i bawiła sakramentkami jak przedtem Maryja Ludwika wizytkami*; After leaving the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Maria Kazimiera made efforts to also bring the Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament to Remis, which she did succeed in doing. With her help, the nuns were granted the opportunity to reside at Trinita dei Monti. Cf. *Listy Marii Kazimiery z archiwum Sobieskich w Oławie*, t. 2: *Listy do synów z lat 1697–1704*. Ed. A. Czarniecka. Warszawa: Muzeum Pałacu Króla Jana III w Wilanowie 2021, p. 122–123. Interestingly, in one of her letters to her son Jakub, she mentioned that she initiated this venture to “establish with the Pope a monastery of the daughters Of the Holy Sacrament, in order to repair all the damage that mine from Warsaw had done” (Pol. *ustanowić z papieżem klasztor córek Świętego Sakramentu, by naprawić wszelkie niesłaby, które te moje z Warszawy uczyniły*). Maria Kazimiera Sobieska to Jakub Sobieski, Rome 23 July 1701, a letter from the collection *Listy Marii Kazimiery z archiwum Sobieskich w Oławie...*, p. 129.

<sup>16</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 32. Newspaper from Warsaw of April 25, 1789 (pol. *zamawiała tu uroczyste nabożeństwa, sama obłóczyla wstępujące panny do zakonu i podejmowała wszystkie koszta*).

after some time the foreigners returned to their homeland, and their place was taken by local nuns. In 1690, Maria Bidzińska became the first Benedictine Nun of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

## Everyday life in Monastery

The nuns led a simple, modest life, based on the constant rhythm of adoration. Their rule was basically identical to the other Benedictine orders, with the difference being that the sisters were obliged to make a vow confirming that they would worship the Blessed Sacrament day and night, without any break, on their knees.<sup>17</sup> Mary Mother of God herself was to be invariably accepted as the first abbess of the order. As a reminder of this fact, a special rite was to be held every year on the day of the Blessed Virgin Mary, during which, the sisters would invoke the protection of the Mother of God and adored her as their supreme mistress. Organisationally, each superior of a monastery was called a prioress. She had to be elected or confirmed every three years. As mentioned above, the dignity of the prioress was initially granted to one of the French nuns. The first Polish superior, Katarzyna Potocka, was chosen only in 1730.<sup>18</sup>

The sisters wore a black monastic garment, which consisted of a wide dress with a scapular on top, black headgear, and a small metallic monstrance worn on the chest. Religious life was based on simplicity and modesty. During an inspection carried out in the 1780s, it was noted that “each cell has a large black cross and paper paintings on the walls, a table with drawers”, as well as “a cabinet, a box, stools, a bed, and other necessary equipment; paintings of the founder in the chapterhouse”.<sup>19</sup> The monastic rules assumed lifelong service, conducted solely inside the walls of the monastery. “The closure is complete, once they enter, the nuns never go outside the cloister again and they are bound by the clear vows they make upon joining”<sup>20</sup> as the lives of the Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament were described. And indeed – after taking the vows, nuns were not allowed to leave the monastery gate, except in three cases: during a fire, due to the plague, and upon receiving instruction to move to a new settlement. However, girls were not immediately sentenced to a cloistered life.

<sup>17</sup> For more about the rhythm of life in monasteries based on the Benedictine rule, including the Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, see BORKOWSKA, Małgorzata. *Triduum Sacrum u benedyktynek nieświeskich w XVIII wieku. Nasza Przyszłość*, 1991, t. 76, p. 315–328.

<sup>18</sup> See her correspondence in: *Korespondencja Józefa Andrzeja Załuskiego 1724–1736*. Ed. B. Kupść, K. Muszyńska. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1967.

<sup>19</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 7 (pol. *każda cela ma krzyż wielki czarny i obrazy papierowe na ścianach, stolik z szufladkami [...] szafka, skrzynka, stołki, łóżko i inne potrzebne sprzęta; w kapitularku obrazy fundatorki*).

<sup>20</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 6. Notes concerning the visit of Bishop Antoni Okęcki on July 2, 1780; pol. *Klauzura jest zupełna, raz wszedłszy nigdy już nie wychodzą za klauzurę klasztoru tego zakonnic i wyraźną przysięgą przy profesji do tego się obowiązują*).



When joining the congregation, they first stayed for half a year on probation, then a year in the novitiate, and only after this period they professed their perpetual vows. Then, for four more years, they remained under the authority of a superior. Only after completing these four years would they become full members of the congregation. A lot of attention was paid to the education of prospective nuns.

*Education in their duty [...] always first training in the Catholic faith, in good manners, after that improvement in French, German and handicrafts, they can also learn music according to their inclination.*<sup>21</sup>

The principles of the sisters' ministry and the liturgical calendar applicable to them were also clearly specified. It was recorded that from the moment of founding "the church and monastery should hold special celebration to the Holy Sacrament on Thursdays, and so weekly moral sermons in the Sunday Gospel".<sup>22</sup> Representatives of male orders were responsible for receiving confessions from the sisters – in the eighteenth century this ministry was performed by the Jesuits.<sup>23</sup> Preaching in the church was done by the Dominican Fathers, who also performed other spiritual services for the order, as well as annually administering a seventy-hour service. It was assumed that the masses celebrated on the day of St. Casimir, St. Benedict, St. Scholastica and on the day of commemoration of Mother Anna Eleonora Kazanowska (d. 1711, abbess of the Benedictine Nunnery in Lviv, who had a close relationship with Maria Kazimiera Sobieska) would be given particular importance. In addition, to remind the sisters of the rules of their ministry,

*a lamp burns incessantly day and night in front of the holy altar, similarly a wax candle on a choir on a high candlestick, at which the nuns, according to their duty... perform adoration of the Holy Sacrament day and night.*<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 7 (pol. *Edukacja w ich obowiązku [...] zawsze najpierw na ćwiczeniu się w wierze katolickiej, w dobrych obyczajach, po tym na doskonaleniu w języku francuskim, niemieckim i ręcznych robotach, mogą się także uczyć i muzyki jakiej według swojej skłonności*).

<sup>22</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 6. Notes concerning the visit of Bishop Antoni Okęcki on July 2, 1780 (pol. *kościół i klasztor na uczynienie ś. Sakramentu z osobniejszą uroczystością powinien obchodzić dni czwartkowe, tak też w ten dzień przez cały rok kazania tygodniowe moralne w Ewangelii niedzielnej bywają*).

<sup>23</sup> Maria Augustyna tried – using her contacts – to help the confessor in his clerical career. She asked Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł to use his contacts with Bishop Ludwik Ignacy Riaucour (d. 1777) to negotiate for the Jesuit a "Beneficium in Bielsko" (Pol. *beneficjum bielskie*). AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 10 April 1774, p. 113.

<sup>24</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 6. Notes concerning the visit of Bishop Antoni Okęcki on July 2, 1780 (pol. *lampa bezprzestannie we dnie i w nocy pali się przed św. ołtarzem, podobnie świeca woskowa na chórze na lichtarzu wysokim, przy którym dzienną i nocną porą zakonnice według obowiązku [...] swego czynią adorację św. Sakramentu*).

## New impact

The nuns, in addition to constant prayer, were also supposed to teach maidens from noble families in scholarly subjects, women's work, and the French language.<sup>25</sup> Although there were already other monastic schools for girls in Warsaw at that time (with the Bernardine nuns as well as the Visitandines),<sup>26</sup> they operated based on completely different principles. Women's orders, especially the Visitandines, used staff from outside the congregation itself, and the number of girls admitted for education was very limited. It was therefore argued that the activity of Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament could open new opportunities for the education of girls.<sup>27</sup> Maria Kazimiera in particular insisted that the sisters she had brought teach young noble maidens appropriate knowledge and crafts, and spread the French language in Poland.<sup>28</sup> However, all this was subject to particular rules. That is because lay people were not allowed into the nunnery without special permission from the bishop. The admission of girls for education was also subject to separate rules:

*lay maidens in education are always, but not in equal number, all at the cloister, never able to leave, although they live separately from the congregation of nuns.*<sup>29</sup>

The task of educating the girls was performed so well that, over time, representatives of the richest and most influential magnate houses in the Commonwealth began to send their daughters for education with the sisters of Perpetual Adoration.<sup>30</sup> The Order ensured that the level and conditions of education matched the expectations of the wealthy. This is evidenced by preserved correspondence. For instance, Anna Zamoyska née Gniński, wife of ordinate Marcin Zamoyski, was assured by the sisters that they treat her daughter, entrusted to their care, as "our only consolation, which we preserve as the most expensive jewel, so that we give it into the hands of Your Grace as perfect

<sup>25</sup> GWOŹDZIK, Jolanta. *Kultura pisma i książki w żeńskich klasztorach dawnej Rzeczypospolitej XVI–XVIII wieku*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2015, p. 31.

<sup>26</sup> FABIANI, Bożena. *Warszawska pensja panien wizytek w latach 1655–1680. Warszawa XVI–XVII wieku*. Ed. J. Gutkowski, A. Kašinowski. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN 1977, p. 171–198.

<sup>27</sup> BORKOWSKA, Małgorzata. *Szkoła warszawskich sakramentek według zachowanych źródeł. Nasza Przeszłość*, 1998, t. 90, p. 159.

<sup>28</sup> Compliance with this assumption was confirmed by the rules inscribed in the "Little Catechism or Christian teaching for young children, and especially for those who are at the school with the maidens of the Blessed Sacrament in Warsaw" (Pol. *Katechizm mały albo nauka chrześcijańska dla dzieci małych złożona, a osobliwie dla tych, które są na ćwiczeniach u panien Najświętszego Sakramentu w Warszawie of 1740*). BORKOWSKA, Małgorzata. *Szkoła warszawskich sakramentek według zachowanych źródeł. Nasza Przeszłość*, 1998, t. 90, p. 159.

<sup>29</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 6 (pol. *panny świeckie na edukacji są zawsze, ale nie w jednakowej liczbie, wszystkie za klauzurą, nigdy wyjść nie mogą, mieszkają jednak od zgromadzenia zakonnice oddzielone*).

<sup>30</sup> TOPIŃSKA, Maria. *Kościół sakramentek*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1974, p. 47–48.



as we received it”<sup>31</sup> The supervision of lay maidens receiving education in the order was exercised by the so-called mistresses, appointed by mother superior. However, the presence of noblewomen was not allowed to affect the rhythm of religious life in any way. Therefore, the girls were separated from the nuns whenever possible, so that even a separate refectory was made for them to eat meals in.

According to the preserved accounts, even after the death of King Jan Sobieski, and after his sons had lost the chance to win the election and left the Commonwealth, Maria Kazimiera took care of the order.<sup>32</sup> Her efforts led to Pope Clement XI approving all the order’s privileges in 1705<sup>33</sup>. With the exception of the blow struck to the order during the plague in 1708, its situation was very stable throughout the 18th century. The benefactors of the order included primates, bishops, and the wealthiest magnate houses, to which contributed the high quality of education provided by the nuns and the high quality of their French teaching, valued by the nobility. Maidens from influential magnate families of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth joined the order more and more willingly. King Augustus II used to attend services at the monastery, each time accompanied by a large court. His wife, Maria Józefa proved to be a generous benefactor to the order. As was recalled:

*And the Church, although modest, was often chosen to celebrate the most outstanding religious ceremonies. At that time, the number of nuns reached a significant figure, and their property grew more and more.*<sup>34</sup>

## Anna (Mary Augustine) Radziwiłł

It has already been mentioned that according to the rule of the Order of the Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, a maiden joining the congregation was obliged to undergo a six-month probation, after which she could be admitted as a novice. Anna Radziwiłł was inducted into the order in the years

<sup>31</sup> AGAD, Archiwum Zamoyskich, rkps 1410, p. Maria of the Passion of the Christ (Pol. *Maria od Męki Pańskiej*) to Anna née Gniński Zamoyska, Warsaw 25 February 1701, p. 1 (pol. *jedyną naszą pociechę, którą konserwujemy jako najdroższy klejnot, abyśmy go oddały do rąk WMPani tak doskonałym, jakżeśmy go przyjęły*).

<sup>32</sup> CZARNIECKA, Anna. Zabiegi Marii Kazimierzy o tron dla królewicza Jakuba w czasie wielkiej wojny północnej w świetle korespondencji z Narodowego Archiwum Historycznego Białorusi w Mińsku (1701–1704). *Studia Wilanowskie*, 2020, t. XXVII, p. 76.

<sup>33</sup> Order’s privileges were granted on August 1705 and published in Rome, then supplemented (“editum diligenter collatas atque correctas”) and printed in Warsaw in 1758 as “Constitutions sur la regle de Saint Benoit: pour les religieuses Bénédictines de l’adoration perpetuelle du Très-Saint Sacrement, confirmées et approuvées par notre Saint Père le Pape Clement XI”, Varsovie- de l’imprimerie de RR. PP. Jésuites, 1758.

<sup>34</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 36.

1742–1744.<sup>35</sup> After the preparatory stage, she was ordained as a nun of the order in 1744.<sup>36</sup> On this occasion, she begged one of her relatives to convince her mother – Barbara née Zawisza – to participate in the ceremony, and argued that “my mother, by her very presence, would adorn this act, giving me a motherly blessing from her hands”.<sup>37</sup> Apparently, Barbara was sceptical about her daughter’s choices. Anna herself was delighted with the possibility of becoming involved in the life of the Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. After formally joining the congregation, she profusely expressed joy at having “already collected vestments” and being accepted into the community “in the presence of our brightest queen from whose hands I received these vestments”.<sup>38</sup> The beginning of a new life was associated with adopting a new, this time religious, name. Anna Radziwiłł informed her loved ones about this fact by writing:

*I also report that now I have the name of Mary Augustine of Saint Michael.*<sup>39</sup>

The completion of the first two stages of formation opened the way to taking perpetual vows. The preserved source materials indicate that obtaining consent to the vows was inextricably linked to the settlement of all financial obligations towards the congregation. If – in accordance with the agreement drawn up with the Order – the maiden was obliged to bring in an appropriate dowry, only after its transfer would she be allowed to take the vows.<sup>40</sup> In addition, the family’s obligations included covering the ongoing costs of supporting the young woman (so-called monastic pension), as well as other additional costs. The young magnate’s correspondence indicates that the Radziwiłł family did not meet these obligations for a long time. The prospective nun complained that, even though three years had passed since the beginning of her formation in the order, she still could not get “my vows, which I have been so long

<sup>35</sup> A letter written in French, signed by Anna and her sister Brygida, asking for permission to take part in the formation in the Order of the Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 605, Anna and Brygida Radziwiłł to NN, 24 VI 1742, p. 4–5. W. Szoldrski reported that A. Radziwiłł joined the congregation 29 IX 1743, but she made her profession in the congregation 15 X 1747. SZOLDRSKI, Władysław. *Benedyktynki od Nieustającej Adoracji (sakramentki) w Warszawie (1687–1960)*. *Nasza Przyszłość*, 1957, t. 6, p. 136.

<sup>36</sup> This fact is also confirmed by a letter sent in June 1744 with an invitation to the ceremonial investiture, AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 605 Anna Radziwiłłowa to NN, 22 VI 1744, p. 1–3.

<sup>37</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 605 Anna Radziwiłłowa to NN, 22 VI 1744, p. 2 (pol. *matka moja sama przytomnością swoją przyozdobiła akt ten, dając mi z rąk swoich błogosławieństwo macierzyńskie*).

<sup>38</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to NN, Warsaw, b. d., p. 202 (pol. *przy bytności najjaśniejszej królowej, z której rąk odebrałam tę sukienkę*).

<sup>39</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to NN, Warsaw, b. d., p. 202 (pol. *donoszę też oraz, że mam imię Maryja Augustina od Świętego Michała*).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. PENKAŁA-JASTRZEBSKA, Anna. Osiemnastowieczne rejestry wypraw panińskich dla szlachcianek wstępujących do klasztoru. Zarys problematyki. *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, 2018, r. 66, Nr. 3, p. 321–324.

waiting for”.<sup>41</sup> She pointed out that the family had not settled with the order neither for her annual pension, nor for “any debts, like the tailor, pharmacist, for when I was still in the seminary”.<sup>42</sup> However, her reminders and requests brought the expected effect. On October 15, 1747, she made her long-awaited perpetual vows in the Order of the Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in Warsaw.<sup>43</sup>

As mentioned above, the nuns led a simple life, regulated by the rhythm of daily prayers. The letters written by Maria Augustyna were extremely specific – usually short and goal-oriented. Mostly they were assurances about remembrance and prayer, but there was also health advice and confirmation of having sent the correspondents the necessary medicines from the monastery’s pharmacy “from our reverend mother”, with the instruction to “take them according to prescription”.<sup>44</sup> The way of transmitting the content was as clear and direct as possible. The nun herself pointed out in one of the messages “as far as understanding my letter is concerned, it was not allegorical, because I never use this method in my correspondence, always wanting to make sense in letters, as is appropriate for my stature, to conduct myself with honest truth”.<sup>45</sup> The preserved correspondence shows that the sisters prayed in particular for the benefactors of the order, offering prayers, litanies, and novenas in their intention.<sup>46</sup> Maria Augustyna herself mentioned offering a special prayer for the benefactors every first Friday of the month, as well as including their intentions in the weekly Monday prayer. Benefactors were also remembered on the occasion of the novenas to the Holy Trinity, Transfiguration, Divine Providence, the *septena* to the Holy Father Benedict, prayers to St. Anthony and other patron saints (as in the case of Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, on the occasion of the feast of St. Michael,<sup>47</sup> or St. Charles, in recognition of Karol Stanisław “Panie Kochanku”).<sup>48</sup> In the intention of one of her relatives, and at the same time a supporter of the order, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłł promised to pray “that you would have your

<sup>41</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 19 VI 1747, p. 2 (pol. *profesji mojej, której tak długo czekam*).

<sup>42</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 19 VI 1747, p. 2 (pol. *żadnych długów, jako to krawcowi, aptekarzowi, to jeszcze jakem była w seminarium*).

<sup>43</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 18 VI 1747, p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to NN, Warsaw, b.d, p. 206 (pol. *od naszej matki wielbnej (...) zażywać według recepty*).

<sup>45</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to her aunt, Warsaw, 4 VI 1757, p. 27 (pol. *co zaś się tyczy do wyrozumienia listu mego, ten nie był alegoryczny, bo sposobu tego w moich korespondencjach nigdy nie używam, chcąc zawsze sensowi w listach stanowi memu przyzwoitych, regulować się przy rzetelnej prawdzie*).

<sup>46</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 29 II 1748, p. 9.

<sup>47</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 23 IX 1751, p. 29.

<sup>48</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 3 XI 1762, p. 93.

novena with us every week”.<sup>49</sup> She would also pray for dead relatives – benefactors of the nunnery. The Nun received news of the death of Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł’s wife – Urszula Franciszka née Wiśniowiecki Radziwiłł (d. 1753) with some emotion, but also with assurance of constant prayer. She assured the widower in a letter that she had attached “my votive offerings to God for the departed benefactress”, joining in prayer with the whole of “our congregation, as in particular in my unworthy prayers”.<sup>50</sup>

## Economy

The magnates themselves also suggested intentions for which the nuns were to pray. Benefactors were supposed make regular remittances to the congregation in return for the masses and services they ordered. The preserved correspondence proves that there were constant problems with enforcing these payments. Maria Augustyna repeatedly had to beg the founders and benefactors to pay the outstanding settlements for masses and services. The funds collected in this way were crucial in covering day-to-day expenses. Preserved letters and requests expose the difficult financial situation of the congregation. Over a decade after joining the nunnery, in June 1762, Maria Augustyna would implore with Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł:

*worried that my request did not have an effect [...] I request that you order the outstanding commission for masses for the year ended in March of 840 złoty to be paid out to us, because, having replaced them so far, the monastery is now in dire need for board expenses.*<sup>51</sup>

The preserved correspondence only proves how ineffective these appeals were, because two months later she asked again for “commission due to us for a year and a half” admitting – “I would not have bothered you with this request if the circumstances of the gravity and cost of life in Warsaw had not urged us to do so”.<sup>52</sup> In her annotations to the letters, Maria Augustyna admitted that financial difficulties were aggravated both by external circumstances and by the growing expectations of the Dominican

<sup>49</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 29 II 1748, p. 9 (pol. *ażebys co tydzień miał u nas swoją nowennę*).

<sup>50</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 21 VI 1753, p. 35 (pol. *vota moje za w Bogu zeszlą Dobrodziejkę (...) zgromadzeniem naszym jako i partykularnie w niegodnych onych modlitwach*).

<sup>51</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 24 XI 1762, p. 90 (pol. *będąc zmartwiona, że prośba moja nie otrzymała skutku [...] suplikuję, abyś nam kazał wypłacić prowizję zaległą za rok skończony w marcu 840 zł za msze, gdyż zastępując za nie dotąd, klasztor teraz jest w ostatniej potrzebie na wydatek na wikt*).

<sup>52</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 8 VIII 1762, p. 91 (pol. *nie przykrzyłabym się tą prośbą moją, gdyby nie okoliczność ciężkości i drogości warszawskiej przynaglała nas do tego*).

fathers, who – as mentioned earlier – were responsible for performing spiritual services for the order. The need to pay regular fees for the masses they celebrated forced the sisters to constantly seek financial support from the most faithful benefactors of the congregation.<sup>53</sup> It should be noted that Maria Augustyna also used her family connections to ask her relatives to financially support other women's orders, including in particular the Warsaw Visitandines and the Vilnius Benedictine Nuns.<sup>54</sup>

Although the rules of the order strongly limited the number of people allowed to come within the monastery walls, the preserved correspondence indicates that exceptions were made in this regard for the relatives of the nuns, especially those involved in financially supporting the congregation. Maria Augustyna admitted in one of her letters of May 1750 that, when one of the representatives of the Radziwiłł family came to visit the congregation, the Mother Superior even decided to change her day plan and prayer schedule in order to adapt to it. "My superior [...] expects only the presence of your grace, because it is already well known to you that she was to go to the gathering, and at your command in particular she changed her intention"<sup>55</sup> – she wrote, at the same time asking the relative to respect the rhythm of religious life and to visit the congregation on a predetermined date. The matter of additional restrictions on the nature and number of visits was not mentioned in any of her letters. On the contrary, in her private letters, she regularly encouraged relatives to visit the congregation whenever they wished. The character of these invitations is perfectly reflected in one of Maria Augustyna's letters to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł "Panie Kochanku", in which she wrote to him "I also suggest that you gift me your presence for a moment at least".<sup>56</sup>

At the same time, the sisters did not neglect constant spiritual development and the education of girls entrusted to them. Maria Augustyna herself thanked her relatives for sending her the necessary books, saluting them with "deep submission" (pol. *głęboką submisją*).<sup>57</sup> Reading, as well as improving oneself through prayer, was an inherent part of the nuns' life. In one of the letters, Maria Augustyna even mentioned that she was temporarily obliged to take care of correspondence, because the "reverend mother"

<sup>53</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 8 VIII 1762, p. 92.

<sup>54</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 15 III 1762, p. 103.

<sup>55</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 12 V 1750, p. 21 (pol. *Przełożona moja [...] samej tylko bytności JO WMCi oczekuje, gdyż mu jest już dobrze wiadomo, że miała iść na rekolekcję, a za rozkazem szczególnie jego odmieniła intencję swoją*).

<sup>56</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 14 XII 1780, p. 149 (pol. *suplikuję też, abyś mi darował swoją prezencję choć na momencik*).

<sup>57</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 29 II 1748, p. 9.

could not fulfil these obligations for a time, because she was “exercising the spirit, where she now remains”.<sup>58</sup>

However, many of Maria Augustyna’s letters were purely a courtesy – they were wishes sent on the occasion of holidays and celebrations, assurances of constant prayer, as well as requests for remembrance and assistance for the congregation.<sup>59</sup> Others, however, refer very precisely to the various activities undertaken by the nuns, as well as matters affecting members of the congregation.

## Connections

Various events took place in the middle of the eighteenth century that were widely commented on in Warsaw and were not without influence on the life of the nunnery. The fate of the Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in Warsaw remained inextricably linked to the fate of the next generation of the Sobieski family. Maria Karolina née Sobieski, Duchess de Bouillon, daughter of Prince Jakub and granddaughter of John III, who died of tuberculosis on 8 May 1740,<sup>60</sup> wanted to be buried in the monastery. By virtue of her will, Maria Karolina bequeathed 12 thousand złoty to the nunnery, to be paid out in the form of a fund for the continuous celebration of mass for her soul.<sup>61</sup> The body of the deceased was transported to Warsaw in June 1740 and buried in the monastery in November of the same year. The executors of her will – the Crown Chancellor, Bishop Andrzej Stanisław Kostka Załuski (d. 1758) and Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł (d. 1762), the voivode of Vilnius, fulfilled the last will of the duchess and transported her body to Warsaw.<sup>62</sup> In 1746 a magnificent monument of red marble was erected in her memory at the monastery. Above the sarcophagus, decorated with the Sobieski coat of arms and the royal crown, a medallion was placed presenting a bust of Maria Karolina. On the right side of the tombstone there is a woman leaning on the tomb, with the coat of arms of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth next to her. It was supposed to be an allegory of the state, which, looking at the royal

<sup>58</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 29 V 1748, p. 12 (pol. *dla exercycji duchownych na których teraz zostaje*).

<sup>59</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 18 XII 1747, p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> ROSZKOWSKA, Wanda. Maria Karolina ks. de Bouillon ostatnia wnuczka Jana III Sobieskiego. *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis*, 1987, t. 903 p. 21.

<sup>61</sup> SKRZYPIETZ, Aleksandra. Publiczna i prywatna religijność królowej Marii Kazimiery. *Studia Historyczne*, 2019, t. 62 (245), p. 28–29.

<sup>62</sup> Bishop Andrzej Stanisław Kostka Załuski had a close relation with Maria Karolina. Earlier, in 1740 he received library collections from Żółkiew, inherited after the death of Jakub Ludwik Sobieski. Cf. BAŃKOWSKI, Piotr. *Biblioteka Publiczna Załuskich i jej twórcy*. Warszawa: Stowarzyszenie Bibliotekarzy Polskich, 1959, p. 18; KOSSARZECKI, Krzysztof; SZYLLER, Sławomir. Rękopisy Biblioteki Załuskich w Sankt Petersburgu. *Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej*, 2013, t. 44, p. 245.



crown, seems to regret its fate and the consequences of the extinction of the Sobieski line. The genius figure on the left was to stare at the coat of arms of the Dukes of Bouillon.<sup>63</sup> Remembrance of and prayer for Maria Karolina née Sobieski de Bouillon was close to the intentions of the Radziwiłłs themselves. After all, the sister of King Jan Sobieski – Catherine (d.1694) was married to the Vice-Chancellor of Lithuania, Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł (d.1680). He himself was to ensure that this “eternal fund” for the soul of the Duchess de Bouillon was regularly paid to the Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.<sup>64</sup> Problems began, however, after several regular payments for this purpose, as the Radziwiłł family effectively evaded their obligations. In her letters, Maria Augustyna asked her relatives not to forget Maria Karolina buried in the nunnery and to pay the established “commission for the memorial services for the Duchess de Bouillon”<sup>65</sup> with greater regularity. Payments for this purpose were to be covered by the Voivode of Vilnius, Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł and later by his son Karol Stanisław – both, however, were years in arrears with payments for the commissioned intention.<sup>66</sup> In 1780 the debt incurred from this neglect reached twelve years and the amounted of 556 red złoty.<sup>67</sup>

The second important figure associated with the Warsaw nunnery of Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was Maria Józefa née Wessel,

<sup>63</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 32. Newspaper from Warsaw of April 25, 1789.

<sup>64</sup> The principles of this agreement were invoked in one of her letters by Maria Augustyna herself, as Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł – like his father – was years in arrears with the monastery. She reminded him at the time that “the Warsaw Monastery of the Congregation of the Maidens of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament [...] has the sum of twelve thousand Polish złoty assigned by his grace the late Duke de Bouillon to an eternal fund for celebrating a daily Mass to our church and our disposal, and by his grace the late prince Michał Radziwiłł, Grand Hetman of the Lithuanian army, bequeathed in 1740 in the city of Warsaw [...] this sum is to be drawn from the hereditary property of Your Grace by the name Strachowka, in the land of Liw” (Pol. *Klasztor Warszawski Zgromadzenia Panien Sakramentek [...] mający sumę dwanaście tysięcy złotych polskich przez niegdy ś.p. JOJMc de Bouillon na fundusz wieczny odprawiania mszy codziennej do kościoła naszego dysponowaną, a przez niegdy ś.p. JOX Michała Radziwiłła, hetmana wielkiego wojsk litewskich w r.1740 w grodzie warszawskim z obowiązkiem prezentu [...] zapisaną [...] ta zaś suma lokowana jest na dobrach JOWM Dobrodzieja dziedzicznych Strachowka zwanych w ziemi liwskiej będących*). AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 9 XI 1784, p. 173.

<sup>65</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 19 VI 1747, p. 3 (pol. *prowiję na msze o pamięć za księżną de Bouillon*).

<sup>66</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 8 XI 1767, p. 97. In 1769 Maria Augustyna calculated that the Radziwiłł family was in arrears with payments of over five thousand Polish złoty, AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 20 III 1769, p. 112. Part of the amount was repaid, but subsequent payments did not materialise on time again. As a result, the debt increased over the years. In letters from the end of the seventies of the 1770s century, Maria Augustyna regularly, but unsuccessfully, asked for settlement of the debt, AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 1 III 1778, p. 120.

<sup>67</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 29 IX 1780, p. 136.

the widow of Konstanty Sobieski, who decided to settle permanently in the monastery during the final years of her life. It was written that Maria Józef was “the last link connecting the society of that time with the memory of John III” (pol. *ostatnim ogniwnem łączącym ówczesne społeczeństwo ze wspomnieniem Jana III*).<sup>68</sup> The daughter of Stanisław, starost of Róžańsk and Maria de Starhemberg did not find happiness in her marriage to Prince Konstanty Sobieski. The couple even started a process to have the marriage annulled. Separated from her husband, Maria Józefa spent 11 years in the nunnery of the Visitandines in Warsaw. The estranged spouses managed to communicate enough to return to living together, this time in the Sobieski estate in Żółkiew.<sup>69</sup> After the death of her husband, the widow moved to a permanent residence in a monastery, this time with the Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (with whom she was connected, since in her teenage years she received her education in this order).<sup>70</sup> It was Maria Augustyna who became her informal liaison with the Radziwiłł family – for instance, when she sent wishes from “her grace, the princess” to Michał Kazimierz on the occasion of his marriage to Anna Luiza née Mycielski (d. 1771).<sup>71</sup> After Wesslowa’s death in 1761, her tombstone was placed in front of the altar of St. Casimir. It was a sarcophagus made of dark marble, on which two genius figures held a medallion with a portrait in relief, with bright stars embedded among the clouds above.<sup>72</sup>

Wesslowa was not the only lay woman who decided to obtain residence in the nunnery.<sup>73</sup> It would happen that monasteries became a way for noblewomen to escape from worldly problems, especially from abusive husbands. This was the case of Magdalena née Czapski, the second wife of Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł, the Grand Ensign of Lithuania. The couple’s short marriage ended in a scandal and the magnate’s escape from her degenerate spouse.<sup>74</sup> She found shelter with the Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. This use of the nunnery as a place of residence for ladies struggling with marital problems was not an isolated

<sup>68</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 32. Newspaper from Warsaw of April 25, 1789.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> GRZEGORZEWSKA, Sabina. *Pamiętnik o Marii Wesslównie królewiczowej Konstantowej Sobieskiej spisany ze wspomnień rodzinnych*. Warszawa: Czytelnik 1965, p. 82–86.

<sup>71</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 30 I 1754, p. 41.

<sup>72</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 32. Newspaper from Warsaw of April 25, 1789.

<sup>73</sup> See also: POPIOŁEK, Bożena. Zamiana ról. Królowa Maria Kazimiera d’Arquien Sobieska i Elżbieta z Lubomirskich Sieniawska, kasztelanowa krakowska. *Maria Kazimiera Sobieska (1641–1716). W kręgu rodziny, polityki i kultury*. Ed. A. Kalinowska, P. Tyska. Warszawa: Zamek Królewski 2017, p. 181.

<sup>74</sup> GAD, Paweł. Najukochańszy tyran – Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł w listach drugiej żony Magdaleny z Czapskich. *Wiek Stary i Nowy*, 2015, t. 8(13), p. 84–85.

incident.<sup>75</sup> So far, research has revealed few facts about the character of these cases, as well as about the attitude of family and outsiders to them. However, the preserved correspondence of Maria Augustyna née Radziwiłł does shed some light on the issue. It turns out that Magdalena, disappointed with her marital life, was not keen to leave the congregation, despite the insistence of her relatives. Maria Augustyna initially tried to take on the difficult role of an intermediary in conversations with Magdalena's mother – Konstancja née Gniński Czapska, who tried her best to get her daughter to leave the monastery. The nun argued that the Ensign's wife residing in the monastery chose the place guided by pure intentions and, taught by difficult experiences, she wanted to direct her life differently from before, so "she assumes the greatest effort of divine glory and salvation of her soul as the foundation of her life, and she has no intention to return, considering her present life as a more reliable way to obtain salvation, which she prefers above all".<sup>76</sup>

This assumption turned out to be wrong. Over time, the magnate's presence became increasingly burdensome for the nuns themselves. Unable to cope with the recalcitrant resident, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłł tried to mediate for Magdalena to leave the monastery, but to no avail. Therefore, she admitted,

*I cannot do more with persuasion [...] which I heartily regret, seeing in this point the mortification of the family, and I cannot do more, as to implore the majesty of God with my unworthy prayer to do according to his holy will.*<sup>77</sup>

Despite the months passing, Magdalena was not going to succumb to any pressure to leave the monastery. She must have been increasingly bothersome to the nuns if two years after she was allowed in, a clearly impatient Maria Augustyna wrote that the ensign's wife would not move a step away from the monastery "not changing her intention from any persuasions of various family and strangers even" and added only that "she herself announced that the divorce had passed and the final decree was already with the nuncio".<sup>78</sup> The pressure exerted on Magdalena had no effect until July 1753.

<sup>75</sup> PENKAŁA, Anna. *Przeciw prawu tradycji i obyczajowi. Sprawy procesowe szlacheckich małżeństw w księgach sądów grodzkich z terenu województwa krakowskiego*. Kraków: Libron, 2017, p. 150–154.

<sup>76</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 4 VI 1757, p. 27 (pol. *za fundament życia swego zakłada największe staranie chwały boskiej i zbawienia duszy swojej i że powrócić intencji nie ma, mieniąc życie teraźniejsze za pewniejszy sposób do dostąpienia zbawienia, co nade wszystko przedkłada*).

<sup>77</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Konstancja née Gniński Czapska, Warsaw, 24 VI 1751, p. 27–28 (pol. *ja perswazją moją więcej uczynić nie mogę [...] co zaś z mej strony na serdecznie ubolewam, widząc w tym punkcie umartwienie familii, czynić zaś więcej nie mogę, jako modlitwą moją niegodną błagać majestat Boski, aby uczynił według swej świętej woli*).

<sup>78</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 23 VI 1753, p. 35–36 (pol. *nie odmieniając się w swojej intencji żadnymi perswazjami od różnych familii pochodzącymi i obcych nawet*) and (*sama to ogłosiła, że rozwód stanął i jest już dekret ostatni w nuncjaturze*).

Maria Augustyna informed Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł with undisguised satisfaction that “our resident Duchess her grace is leaving our monastery soon”.<sup>79</sup>

As predicted, Czapska’s lengthy stay at the monastery ended with mutual grievances. Magdalena, known for her difficult character, must have been an extremely burdensome guest for Maria Augustyna Radziwiłł, who would normally try to restrain her emotions, to commented extensively in a letter that the magnate she had accepted in good faith, rather than show gratitude, “complained everywhere that she found no comfort with us” and that the sisters were trying to “fleece [her] for a great sum”.<sup>80</sup> Meanwhile, it turned out that the magnate had “paid only 20 red złoty per month so far”, which not only did not compensate the monastery for the costs of her stay, but also forced it to pay for her maintenance, because – as Maria Augustyna Radziwiłł wrote “we spent 25 red złoty from our own purse for her board and firewood”.<sup>81</sup> Discouraged and disappointed, the nuns themselves asked the magnate to “change her [place of] residence”, further arguing that “it does not behove to keep a lady who is getting divorced”.<sup>82</sup> As long as the magnate was seen as an abandoned victim, they provided her with shelter. The analysis of the situation and of Magdalena’s conduct radically influenced the attitude of the Order itself to her procedure of formal separation from her husband.

## Life of the congregation

Maria Augustyna’s correspondence also perfectly reflects the daily rhythm of religious life. A particularly important part of this life was the election of the prioress of the order – carried out in the event of the death of the mother superior, and then repeated regularly every three years. Her correspondence reveals the course of events under both of these circumstances. In July 1754 she rejoiced in a letter, reporting on the “successful election” carried out “for our old mother [Barbara Kczewska], so that she is confirmed for the fourth time for the leadership, with the full consolation of the entire congregation”.<sup>83</sup> No more than two years later – in the last days of May 1756, she informed about difficult moments in the life of the congregation, related to the death of the long-term prioress of the nunnery. In a letter, she expressed “our unfettered regret for

<sup>79</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 1 VII 1753, p. 40 (pol. *nasza rezydentka Księżna JMc wyjeżdża z naszego klasztoru wkrótce*).

<sup>80</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 1 VII 1753, p. 40 (pol. *wielką pensję wyciągają*).

<sup>81</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 1 VII 1753, p. 40 (pol. *za jej wikt i drwa 25 czerwonych złotych ze swego worka wydaliśmy*).

<sup>82</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 1 VII 1753, p. 40 (pol. *nie godzi dłużej trzymać damy co się rozwodzi*).

<sup>83</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 2 VII 1754, p. 43 (pol. *sukcesie elekcji [...] na naszą matkę dawną, iż jest konfirmowana po czwarty raz na przełożństwo, z konsolacją zupełną całego zgromadzenia*).

the loss of our beloved Reverend Mother [Barbara Kczewska], who on the 26th of this month said goodbye to the world, with our great mortification”.<sup>84</sup> The period between the death of the prioress and the selection of a new one lasted a month. Already at the beginning of July 1756 Maria Augustyna Radziwiłł reported “about the fortunate progress of our election that by Divine decree we have the superior of great qualities and nobility, Mother Głębocka [Teresa]”.<sup>85</sup>

With time, Maria Augustyna began to be included in special religious duties. She was initially elected to the office of depositor of the congregation. Due to her function, she had to increase her efforts to raise funds for the Order. She tried to fulfil the tasks entrusted to her reliably, although she was not enthusiastic about them, because money was always short – not only for new investments, but also to provide for the basic living expenses of the nuns. In one of her letters to her brother, she stated directly “consider my dearest brother and benefactor, what a terrible time it is for me to serve as depositor and how this unfortunate situation of our congregation may worry me”.<sup>86</sup> Thanks to her function, what is left of her correspondence allows us to, at least to a small extent, recreate the circulation of finances in the nunnery and see what investments were made by the congregation in the second half of the 18th century. One of the major undertakings, completed on January 26, 1752, was the “act of benediction of bells for the Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, celebrated by Father bishop Rioacour (Riokur)”.<sup>87</sup> The whole event was reported in the newspapers:

*The Godfather was his grace Załuski, the Crown Referendary, in the name of the entire Warsaw Chapter. The first bell was dedicated in honour of the above-mentioned, the second in honour of St. Mary and St. Benedict, the third in honour of St. Michael Archangel and St. Joseph, 4th in honour of all the saints.*<sup>88</sup>

<sup>84</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 29 V 1756, p. 52 (pol. nieskrępowany żal nasz z utraty kochanej matki Wielebnej, która w dniu 26 tegoż miesiąca z tym się pożegnała światem, z wielkim naszym umartwieniem).

<sup>85</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 3 VII 1756, p. 52 (pol. o szczęśliwym progresie elekcyji naszej iż za zrządzeniem Boskim mamy przełożoną wielkich przymiotów i zacności, matkę Głębocką). See also: SZOŁDRSKI, Władysław. Benedyktynki od Nieustającej Adoracji (sakramentki) w Warszawie (1687–1960). *Nasza Przyszłość*, 1957, t. 6, p. 139.

<sup>86</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to her brother, Warsaw, 2 X 1768, p. 108 (pol. zważ mój najukochańszy braciszku dobrodzieju, na jaki czas fatalny obranam jest depozytorką i jak ta nieszczęśliwa sytuacja naszego zgromadzenia może mię martwić).

<sup>87</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 17. Newspaper from Warsaw of April 25, 1789 (pol. akt benedykcji dzwonów u Wielebnych PP. Sakramentek tutejszych, odprawiony został przez księdza Rioacoura (Riokur) biskupa).

<sup>88</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 17. Newspaper from Warsaw of April 25, 1789 (pol. Ojcem Chrzestnym był JX Załuski referendarz koronny imieniem całej kapituły warszawskiej. Pierwszy dzwon poświęcony został na cześć jak wyżej przytoczono, 2-gi na cześć Najświętszej Marii i świętego Benedykta, 3ci na cześć śś. Archaniola Michała i Józefa, 4ty na cześć wszystkich świętych).

This and other larger investments necessitated the raising of funds, so the sisters sent requests to representatives of influential and wealthy magnate houses to get them involved financially with the congregation. As the depositor, Maria Augustyna played a central role in this process. In February 1757 – using her family ties and good relations with the Radziwiłł house – she begged Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł to be kind enough to finance the renovation of a part of the church choir.<sup>89</sup> Commending herself to her relative's memory, she wrote "for the great benevolence that your Grace our benefactor has so far shown us in everything, so we expect your protection and care in this foundation, always remembering the graces received before God and people".<sup>90</sup> She added immediately "this choir set up for the glory of God will be an object of constant memory of our dearest protector and benefactor".<sup>91</sup> The scope of necessary works turned out to be so extensive that the task of renewing the church had to be extended to many years. In 1762 Maria Augustyna recalled that during the attempt to restore the church organs, it turned out that they had to be completely dismantled, because "they greatly threatened us with danger [...] for almost the entire choir had rotten through".<sup>92</sup> The financial support from Radziwiłł once again allowed for the modernisation process to begin with wooden construction being replaced with masonry. It was hoped that he would also not spare the funds for the completion of the project – "I expect that you will not refuse us those 60 red złoty",<sup>93</sup> Maria Augustyna wrote on behalf of the assembly. She supported her requests with specific calculations. According to her letters, it was necessary to complete the renovation with "10 thousand bricks and 2 chaldrons of lime".<sup>94</sup> She also informed that the congregation decided to hire a new architect because the services of the previous one were too expensive, and his calculations as to the amount of materials needed were never correct.<sup>95</sup> She also sought financial support from one of her brothers. In 1768 she asked him to "make an offering to God, so that you have a

<sup>89</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 7 II 1757, p. 64.

<sup>90</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 27 II 1757, p. 65 (pol. *za tym jak wielką łaskę we wszystkim nam dotąd oświadczał WXM Dobrodziej, tak i w tej fundatorskiej protekcji i opieki oczekujemy, zawsze pamiętne będąc na odebrane łaski przed Bogiem i ludźmi*).

<sup>91</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 27 II 1757, p. 65 (pol. *ten na chwałę Boską postawiony chór będzie nam obiektem ustawicznej pamięci na najukochańszego naszego protektora i dobrodzieja*).

<sup>92</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 24 II 1762, p. 86 (pol. *mocno nas zestrząsżyły niebezpieczeństwem [...] dla spróchniałego prawie całego chóru*).

<sup>93</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 24 II 1762, p. 86 (pol. *nam te 60 czerwonych złotych spodziewam się, że nie odmówisz*).

<sup>94</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 24 II 1762, p. 86 (pol. *cegiły 10 tysięcy i łasztów 2 ma wyjść wapna*).

<sup>95</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 24 II 1762, p. 88.



hand in the stone tabernacle that we are now trying to build, seeing this divine house ruined by worms”.<sup>96</sup> She admitted – as she did in other letters of this kind – that the congregation could not afford this type of investment, because it had “an empty chest and no money for food”.<sup>97</sup>

## Final years

Maria Augustyna would take up her most important role in the last decade of her life. On July 2, 1780, she was elected as the prioress of the nunnery. Just two weeks after being nominated for the distinguished position, she complained in a letter to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, writing “it is in critical times that I have become the superior”.<sup>98</sup> At the same time, she thanked the magnate for his congratulatory letter sent to her on the occasion and used the opportunity to ask for further financial support for the order. The greatest undertaking, which she had to take on as prioress, was the renovation of the buildings belonging to the congregation. The “critical times” she mentioned were real difficulties faced by the nunnery in 1780. A fire consumed some of the monastery buildings – their reconstruction required considerable expenditure of funds. Meanwhile, the meagre funds, obtained with such difficulty, were barely enough to cover the ongoing costs of feeding the nuns.<sup>99</sup> The newly elected prioress admitted that

*now our house has burned down, much needed for housing our workers, so we are even in constant danger from thieves.*<sup>100</sup>

Taking personal responsibility for the continued existence of the congregation, from the moment of assuming the leadership position in the monastery, Maria Augustyna noticeably changed the form of her correspondence with the Radziwiłłs. The prior petitionary tone gave way to task-oriented and extremely precise messages sent by the prioress. Wanting to finally collect all the outstanding debts that have been lingering for years, she stated directly that performing the ministry and celebrating mass for unpaid intentions exposes the monastery to debt (especially with other religious

<sup>96</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to her brother, Warsaw, 2 X 1768, p. 107 (pol. *dla Boga uczyni ofiarę, abyś się przyłożył do tabernakulum kamiennego, o które się teraz staramy wystawić, widząc ten boski domek wcale zrujnowany przez robaki*).

<sup>97</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to her brother, Warsaw, 2 X 1768, p. 107 (pol. *depozyt pusty i bez pieniędzy na wyżywienie*).

<sup>98</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 17 VIII 1780, p. 132 (pol. *w krytycznych czasach zostałam przełożoną*).

<sup>99</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Hieronim Wincenty Radziwiłł, 30 IX 1780, p. 147.

<sup>100</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 26 VIII 1780, p. 134 (pol. *teraz nam zgorzał dom, bardzo potrzebny dla mieszkania naszej czeladzi, że jesteśmy nawet w niebezpieczeństwie ustawicznym od złodziejów*).

orders performing spiritual services for the nuns). In connection with the above, she kindly but firmly informed that “many of these [stakeholders] are threatening lawsuits, and I really do not know any other way to satisfy them than to refer them to people who also owe us”.<sup>101</sup> This would allow the issue of debts to be resolved without direct intervention from the order. For the nuns, who relied solely on the help and grace of the powerful, this method seemed to be the most effective. Debtors’ money was to be collected by other creditors.

In addition to the new coercive measures, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłł constantly referred to the long-standing tradition of supporting the order by representatives of the Radziwiłł house. She reminded that even in difficult times “from my family I always experienced unceasing grace”,<sup>102</sup> thus referring to the financial support provided to her regularly by the voivode of Vilnius, Michał Kazimierz.<sup>103</sup> Her intention was apparently for Karol Stanisław, who persistently avoided paying anything to the Order, to want to surpass his father’s generosity. Even his younger half-brother – Hieronim Wincenty, whom Maria Augustyna asked for urgent intervention in private letters, supposedly urged him to settle his debts with the order.<sup>104</sup> However, no admonitions, suggestions, or entreaties brought the intended effect. After more than fourteen years of Radziwiłł not paying his debts to the Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in Warsaw, Maria Augustyna sent what seems to have been her final letter to her relative, in which she informed him that “we cannot continue to maintain the Funded Holy Mass without some measure, but we also have nothing to live off”.<sup>105</sup> Meanwhile, despite having inherited a huge estate, Karol Stanisław himself faced constant financial problems and creditors’ grievances. Therefore, he was not willing to pay anything to the order, which, as he well knew, was ineffective in trying to enforce debts. Neither was Hieronim Wincenty, who himself relied on his influential half-brother’s support, of any real help. The problem was growing because there were many more similar cases. Maria Augustyna even tried to seek justice in the courts, in order to finally bring to a conclusion the matter of many years of arrears for payments to the order, resulting from agreements concluded with the congregation going unfulfilled for years. Her correspondence confirms that she sued debtors before land courts and appealed, in matters of property disputes between

<sup>101</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 20 X 1780, p. 139 (pol. *wielu z onych [interesariuszy] odgraża pozwami, a prawdziwie nie wiem innego sposobu do ich zaspokojenia, jak odsyłać do osób, które nam są też winne*).

<sup>102</sup> Pol. *z rodziny swojej doznawałam ja zawsze łask nieustających dla mojej osoby*.

<sup>103</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 7 XI 1780, p. 144.

<sup>104</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Hieronim Wincenty Radziwiłł, 30 IX 1780, p. 147.

<sup>105</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 11 VIII 1783, p. 171 (pol. *utrzymywać Mszy św. Funduszowej bez sposobu nie możemy, ale też i z czego żyć nie mamy*).

the Order and its debtors, to the Crown Tribunal. Despite favourable verdicts, debt collection dragged out for years.

However, support for the nunnery came from elsewhere. The thorough reconstruction and repair of monastic premises undertaken by the prioress thanks to the support of King Stanisław August Poniatowski became quite famous. A Warsaw newspaper reported extensively on the reconstruction of a part of the monastery intended for laywomen undertaking education at the nunnery.

*The seminary having over time become completely ruined and no longer fit for residence, our reigning monarch Stanisław August decided to have a new, far more magnificent and more comfortable apartments built, at great expense, which he also happily brought to completion.*<sup>106</sup>

The former monastery buildings were in poor condition and the existing premises had become too small to accommodate the constantly growing number of sisters and lay maidens. The royal funds earmarked for this purpose were supplemented with the property previously bequeathed to Maria Augustyna Radziwiłł herself, which she had brought many years earlier as dowry when joining the order. The whole was completed with funds from the benefactors of the monastery. Even the Radziwiłł family chipped in for the “erection of a house for lay maidens at the monastery.”<sup>107</sup> The collected funds allowed for the gradual renovation of the monastery buildings and restoring their former splendour.

The completion of the reconstruction was celebrated very solemnly, and all of Warsaw was preoccupied with the unique event. According to the report from a newspaper from 1783

*On the 20th of this month, that is, last Monday, our shepherd His Excellency Father Okecki, Bishop of Poznań and Warsaw, Grand Chancellor of the Crown, having arrived with appropriate circumstance at the monastery of the aforementioned nuns, in the presence of the entire religious congregation, gave in the name of His Highness onto the hands of the Prioress, Lady Augusta Radziwiłłówna (daughter of the late Mikołaj Prince Radziwiłł, voivode of Navahrudak and Barbara Zawisza) the keys to this new seminary, recommending eternal gratitude before God to High Royal Highness, the founder of the expensive and magnificent structure.*<sup>108</sup>

<sup>106</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 8. Warsaw newspaper of January 25, 1783 (pol. *Seminarium gdy z czasem cale się zrujnowało i mieszkalnym już być nie mogło, panujący dziś nasz monarcha Stanisław August nowe, wspanialsze nierówne i wygodniejsze mieszkanie, wielkim swym nakładem z gruntu wymurować postanowił, co też szczęśliwie i skutecznie*).

<sup>107</sup> AGAD, AR dz. IV, manuscript 716, Maria Augustyna Radziwiłłowa to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 29 IX 1780, p. 137 (pol. *fabrykę domu panien świeckich klasztorze*).

<sup>108</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 8. Warsaw newspaper of January 25, 1783 (pol. *20 tego miesiąca, to jest w przeszły poniedziałek, pasterz nasz Jmć Ksiądz Okecki*).

The nuns received new, much larger buildings for use. The monastery itself was extended and renovated from the street side. As a result “the Perpetual Adorers rightly consider King Poniatowski to be their second founder” (Pol. *króla Poniatowskiego sakramentki słusznie uważają za drugiego swego fundatora*).<sup>109</sup> This event coincided with the 100th anniversary of the victory at Vienna. The renewal of the work initiated by Maria Kazimiera was treated as an excellent reminder of the glorious victory over the Turks. The whole undertaking was treated as a kind of “souvenir of the end of the whole century, [which] it was a worthy thing to celebrate with such a work worthy of monarchs, which all the centuries after that will fondly recall”.<sup>110</sup> The centenary of the arrival of the Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was celebrated five years later, in June 1788. According to a preserved account, Maria Augustyna, along with the entire congregation, celebrated “in her church with great solemnity for three days and with illumination of the same church the end of one hundred years from the foundation of her church and monastery by Maria Kazimiera, wife of the great king Sobieski, completed in 1688”.<sup>111</sup>

Maria Augustyna Radziwiłł died in April 1789. She had lived for 46 years in the monastery of the Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in Warsaw. The news of her death was announced on the pages of a Warsaw newspaper:

*last Tuesday, that is on 21 of this month, in the evening, at the local monastery of Perpetual Adorers, prioress Augustine of the Family of the Radziwiłł princes, noble in the world by birth, but even more so from her contempt of this world, and from her pious and monastic virtues, ended her sacrament, her pious life, with an equally pious and exemplary death at 63 in the same monastery.*<sup>112</sup>

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*Biskup poznański i warszawski, kanclerz wielki koronny, przybywszy z przyzwoitą takiemu aktowi parady do pomienionych zakonnic klasztoru, w przytomności całego zakonnego zgromadzenia oddał imieniem najjaśniejszego pana, do rąk tamecznej przeoryszy Jejmość Panny Augusty Radziwiłłówny (córkę niegdyś Mikołaja Książęcia Radziwiłła wojewody nowogrodzkiego i Barbary Zawiszanki wojewodzianki mińskiej) od tegoż nowego seminarium klucze, zalecając wieczną przed Bogiem wdzięczność ku najjaśniejszemu, kosztownej i wspianialej tej fabryki fundatorowi).*

<sup>109</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 36.

<sup>110</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 8. Warsaw newspaper of January 25, 1783 (pol. *pamiętkę kończącego się tegoż całego wieku, [którą] godna rzecz była obchodzić takim godnym monarchów dziełem, o którym wszystkie po tym wieki mile wspominać będą*).

<sup>111</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 8. Warsaw newspaper of January 25, 1783 (pol. *w swym kościele z wielką przez trzy dni uroczystością i tegoż kościoła iluminacją zakończenie stu lat od fundacyi swego kościoła i klasztoru przez Maryję Kazimierę małżonkę wielkiego Sobieskiego króla roku 1688r dopełnionej*).

<sup>112</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 10. Newspaper from Warsaw of April 25, 1789 (pol. *w przeszły wtorek, to jest d. 21 tego miesiąca wieczorem w klasztorze tutejszym pp. Sakramentek, życie swe pobożne równie pobożną i przykładną śmiercią w roku 63 zakończyła, tegoż klasztoru przeorysza, Augustyna z Familii książąt Radziwiłłów, zacna na świecie z urodzenia, lecz znaczniejsza jeszcze z wzgardy tegoż świata i z wysokich zakonnych cnót swoich zrodzona*).

About the period of her leadership at the monastery it was written:

*she ruled her home uninterrupted, and always with great exemplarity and prudence, and in the greatest difficulties that occurred under her leadership, she presented herself so courageously that these difficulties had to subside before her more quickly than she would ever have given way to them.*<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> The State Archive in Warsaw, Korotyński collection, manuscript 56, p. 10. Newspaper from Warsaw of April 25, 1789 (pol. *rządziła nieprzerwanie swym domem, a zawsze z wielką przykładnością i roztropnością, w zachodzących zaś w swym rządzie największych trudnościach tak się mężnie stawiała, że rychlej te trudności przed nią ustępować daleko musiały, aniżeli by ona ustąpić im kiedykolwiek miała*).

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## „Loué soit le très-saint Sacrement“ – vienuolių gyvenimas XVIII amžiaus benediktinių vienuolyne Varšuvoje

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### Santrauka

Atsižvelgiant į jau minėtą kitų šaltinių trūkumą, išlikusi korespondencija nusipelno ypatingo dėmesio tiriant Nuolatinės Švč. Sakramento adoracijos benediktinių vienuolių istoriją XVIII amžiuje. Marijos Augustinos korespondencija puikiai atspindi kasdienį vienuolių gyvenimo ritmą ir gerokai papildo ankstesnių tyrimų rezultatus. XVIII a. vidurio įvykiai, plačiai nuskambėję Varšuvoje, padarė įtaką kongregacijos raidai. Vienuolynas vis dar turėjo finansinių sunkumų, o turtingų donorų paieška iš esmės buvo privačių šeimos ryšių reikalas. Nors sumažėjus prancūzių vienuolių skaičiui, moterų švietimas prarado pirminį pobūdį, tačiau išliko pagrindine Nuolatinės Švč. Sakramento adoracijos benediktinių vienuolių veikla. Taip pat nepakito vienuolių gyvenimo taisyklės, paremtos Švč. Sakramento adoracija, izoliacija nuo pasaulio ir gyvenimo paprastumu. Benediktinių likimas taip pat liko neatsiejamai susijęs su naujos kartos Sobieskių ir Radvilų giminių likimu. Bendradarbiavimas su kongregacijos „geradariais“ pasirodė esąs nenutrūkstamų pastangų virtinė, siekiant gauti bet kokią finansinę paramą ordinui. Be finansinių sunkumų, vienuolynas turėjo susidoroti su tokiais katastrofiniais įvykiais kaip gaisrai ir plėšimai. Tačiau dėl karališkos finansinės paramos pavyko ne tik jį išsaugoti, bet ir atnaujinti vienuolyno pastatą bei išplėsti namą pasaulietėms. Atsižvelgiant į kitų šaltinių trūkumą, išlikęs privatus susirašinėjimas pasirodo esąs nepakeičiamas suvokiant veiksmus, lėmusius aptariamo laikotarpio vienuolių gyvenimo ypatumus.

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