



Justyna (Euphemia) Szaniawska – Abbess of the Nesvizh Benedictine Monastery in the 18th Century

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Abstract.¹ The work presents the figure of a unique abbess of the Benedictine monastery in Nesvizh – Euphemia Szaniawska. During her tenure from 1758 to 1799, the abbess had to face a number of problems, including disputes over monastic property, serfs and pledges. Regardless, she was an efficient organiser. As a result, this allowed for the expansion of the monastery buildings, renovation works and the foundation of new temples. The work also shows the abbess's relationship with her protectors – the Radziwiłł princes, which was related to the existence of the monastery and even its reaction to the most important political events at the end of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Keywords: *abbess, Benedictine nunnery, Nesvizh, the Radziwiłłs, Szaniawska.*

Anotacija. Straipsnyje pristatoma unikali Nesvyžiaus benediktinių vienuolyno abatė – Eufemija Szaniawska. Per savo vadovavimą 1758–1799 m. abatė turėjo susidurti su daugybe problemų, tarp jų – ginčiais dėl vienuolyno nuosavybės ir baudžiauninkų. Nepaisant to, ji

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buvo efektyvi organizatorė. Jos veikla leido išplėsti vienuolyno pastatus, atnaujinti ir įkurti naujas bažnyčias. Straipsnyje taip pat aptariamas abatės santykis su savo rėmėjais – Radvilų kunigaikščiais, kurie prisidėjo prie vienuolyno išlaikymo ir buvo susiję su vienuolyno reakcija į svarbiausius politinius įvykius Abiejų Tautų Respublikos pabaigoje.

Esminiai žodžiai: *abatė, benediktinių vienuolynas, Nesvyžius, Radvilos, Szaniawska.*

Introduction

The St Euphemia Benedictine nunnery in Nesvizh (*Nieśwież*), founded by Prince Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł, called “the Orphan” (*Sierotka*), in 1591, was the mother house of the Vilnius (1620), Kaunas (1624), Kražiai (1624), Minsk (1631), Smolensk (1640) and Orsha (1640) foundations.² From the beginning of its existence, the Nesvizh monastery remained under the leadership of important and active abbesses: Anna Świętosławska, Dorota Hartmanówna, Euphemia Radziwiłłówna, Placyda Pacówna, Joanna Woiniłłowiczówna, Jadwiga Radoszewska, Petronela Pankiewiczówna, Placyda Kotłówna, Aleksandra Woronowiczówna, Teodora Głuchowska, and Florentyna Chrzanowska, ending with Euphemia Szaniawska.³ The latter had to preside over and organise the life of the monastery in an extremely difficult era, associated with attempts to save the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from the influence of neighbouring powers, a period of reform and, ultimately, the collapse of the union of two states. It was, however, a time of challenges

² On the foundation of the Benedictine monastery in Nesvizh, see: BERNATOWICZ, Tadeusz. Kościół i klasztor Benedyktyn w Nieświeżu. In J. K. Ostrowski (ed.), *Sztuka Kresów Wschodnich*. Kraków: Text, 1996, Vol. 2, p. 127–146; BERNATOWICZ, Tadeusz. *Miles Christianus et peregrinus. Fundacje Mikołaja Radziwiłła „Sierotki” w ordynacji nieświekiej*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 1998, p. 59–67; KEMPA, Tomasz. *Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł Sierotka (1549–1616). Wojewoda wileński*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Semper, 2000, p. 159–164; TAUROGIŃSKI, Bolesław. *Z dziejów Nieświeża*. Warszawa: Drukarnia Bagatela, 1937, p. 241–248; WITKOWSKI Rafał. Rozwój życia zakonnego w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim od XV do XVIII w. (wzmocnienie czy osłabienie litewskiej tożsamości w ramach Rzeczypospolitej szlacheckiej?). In J. Volkonovski, R. Gaidis (eds.), *Lietuvių–lenkų santykiai amžių tėkmėje. Istorinė atmintis. Stosunki polsko-litewskie na przestrzeni wieków Pamięć historyczna*. Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2009, p. 76–102; SAS, Maksymilian, Nieśwież. In M. Jakubowski, M. Sas, F. Walczyna (eds.), *Miasta wielu religii. Topografia sakralna ziem wschodnich dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*. Warszawa: Muzeum Historii Polski, 2016, p. 244. About other monastic foundations, see: BORKOWSKA, Małgorzata. Problemy siedemnastowiecznych fundacji benedyktyn na Litwie w świetle korespondencji. Wybór listów. *Nasza Przyszłość*, 1993, Vol. 130, p. 265–307.

³ Notatki o klasztorze panien benedyktyn w Nieświeżu. *National Historical Archives of Belarus in Minsk*, fond 694, op. 1, Nr. 232, p. 1; Historia klasztoru w Nieświeżu. Archives of Benedictine Nunnery in Staniątka, sign. 164, p. 4–11; BORKOWSKA, Małgorzata. *Leksykon zakonnic polskich epoki przedrozbiorowej*, vol. III. *Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie i Ziemie Ruskie Korony Polskiej*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2008, p. 85–107; BORKOWSKA, Małgorzata. *Słownik mniszek benedyktyńskich w Polsce*. Tyniec: Wydawnictwo Benedyktynów w Tyńcu, 1989, *passim*.

and great changes for the entire community, both in terms of material upkeep and the maintenance of spirituality and the organisation of religious and liturgical life.

The main goal of the work is to present the figure of Euphemia Szaniawska as an abbess who, with her strong character, managed to maintain the high position of the Benedictine monastery in Nesvizh, contributed to its economic growth and tried to raise the cultural and spiritual level of the community through the changes introduced. The work was divided into chapters showing Szaniawska's path to the office of abbess and her participation in maintaining the monastery's assets, then her interest in current political events and finally her activities in the field of artistic and educational patronage.

Career and the fight against financial difficulties

Justyna was the daughter of the starosta of Kuniów Józef Szaniawski and Barbara née Zuchorska. Her cousin's grandfather was Konstanty Felicjan Szaniawski, bishop of Kraków, who held that office in 1720–1732 and was known for his remarkable career and advancement from the position of palestrin to high ecclesiastical dignities, but also for his proselytising and involvement in talks with foreign representatives, and finally for his numerous foundations for the clergy and charitable causes.⁴ The death of this great politician and patron put an end to the temporary importance of the family. Respect and a plea for support emerge from a letter from the head of the family supplicating to Franciszka Urszula Radziwiłłowa, née Wiśniowiecka:

In such a great calamity of our family and mental grief, which to us the never-lamented death of His Excellency the Bishop of Kraków makes a great foil to Your Princely Majesty, wish to make a kind appeal to me. You command here, Your Princely Majesty, that true esteem and friendship towards our sacred memory uncle, to which he by sincere to the interests of the family of Your Princely Majesty became an application. Thank you for entrusting us to the grace of our family and I assure you, that as Your Highness our uncle was during his life an invariable friend of the House of Our Lordship, so also having departed this world, he left to us, his sons, a friendship and observance to the Name of Our Lordship of his inheritance, which we are obliged to demonstrate in every circumstance, as to the papers about which You write I give here a reply.⁵

⁴ On the life, career and activities of Konstanty Felicjan Szaniawski, see: REDAKCJA. Szaniawski Konstanty Felicjan. In A. Romanowski (ed.), *Polski słownik biograficzny*. Warszawa-Kraków: Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Naukowego Societas Vistulana, 2010–2011, Vol. 47, p. 19–26; NITECKI, Piotr. *Biskupi Kościoła w Polsce w latach 965–1999. Słownik biograficzny*. Warszawa: Pax, 2000, p. 426–427; Szaniawski Konstanty Felicjan (24 XI 1668 * 2 VII 1732). In M. Pieniążek-Samek (ed.), *Kielce XVI–XVIII wiek. Słownik biograficzny*. Kielce: Wydawnictwo Akademii Świętokrzyskiej, 2003, p. 152–154.

⁵ 1732 07 18, Suchanki, Józef Szaniawski to Franciszka Urszula née Wiśniowiecka Radziwiłł, Central Archives of Historical Records, Radziwiłł Archives (later in text CAHR, RA), dz. V, sign. 15575, p. 1–2.

It is therefore easy to conclude that the Szaniawskis were keen on the successful completion of the inheritance case and the distribution of the substantial sum of 253,000 Polish zlotys and numerous estates, including Sobków, Korytnica, Lipa, Jawor, Adamów, Kars, Łuków, Opaczów, Ojrzanów, Zaremba Kalenia in the Sandomierz voivodeship, Wesoła Wola, Falenty, Jaworów, Raszyn, Puchał, Wypadów, Janki and Derd in the Warsaw district and Montyglaiski in the Trakai voivodeship and Rudni in the Vitebsk voivodeship.⁶ Efforts for the release of the bishop's casket from Kraków and documents certifying the rights to the estate were also carried out by other members of the family.

Regardless of the money they had or the estates from the testamentary legacy, the Szaniawski family were no longer major political players, so they had to put themselves under the protection of the Radziwiłłs. Thus, Józef's son began soliciting support from the Voivode of Vilnius and Great Hetman of Lithuania Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł "Little Fish" (*Rybeńko*), envisaging a military career for himself. Justyna's brother Stanisław continued to supplicate for a decade after the bishop's death, asking that he be given the cavalry ensign called *petyhorska* of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which he actually received in 1742. It seems that the choice of patron was so good that soon afterwards he received from the prince a unit of *volok* of land in the Grodno district with the right to his wife.⁷ The Stanisław sisters took the clerical path and entered the Benedictine nunnery in Nesvizh, which was under the Radziwiłłs' protection. The first to cross the threshold of the monastery's cloister in 1719 was Apolonia, who made her profession in 1721. She was the prioress for almost thirty years, and from 1778 until her death in 1780, she served as the novice mistress.⁸ Also Justyna's younger sister followed to the same monastery and entered the novitiate in 1720, than made her profession a year later. During her religious vows in 1747, she took the religious name Euphemia.⁹ In 1758, following the death of the revered mother Florentyna Chrzanowska, Szaniawska

In a similar vein was the letter from his brother Fabian, see: 1732 08 03, Kielce, Fabian Szaniawski to Franciszka Urszula née Wiśniowiecka Radziwiłł. CAHR, RA, dz. V, sign. 15578, p. 1–2.

⁶ 1732 05 31 [Testament Konstantego Felicjana Szaniawskiego], National Ossolinski Institute in Wrocław, sign. 2670, p. 1–18.

⁷ 1741 10 26, Słowiańsko, Stanisław Szaniawski to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł „Rybeńko”. CAHR, RA, dz. V, sign. 15557, p. 1–2; 1742 02 10, Słowiańsko, Stanisław Szaniawski to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł „Rybeńko”. CAHR, RA, dz. V, sign. 15557, p. 3–4; 1742 07 25 Montygaliszki, 25 VII 1742, Stanisław Szaniawski to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł „Rybeńko”. CAHR, RA, dz. V, sign. 15557, p. 5–6; without place and date, Stanisław Szaniawski to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł „Rybeńko”. CAHR, RA, dz. V, sign. 15557, p. 15.

⁸ [Księga metryczna klasztoru Benedyktyniek nieświeskich]. CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 353, p. 18; Apolonia Szaniawska (Rozalia). In: BORKOWSKA, Małgorzata. Leksykon zakonnic polskich epoki przedrozbiorowej. Vol. III. *Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie i Ziemia Ruskie Korony Polskiej*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2008, p. 100. Apolonia (Rozalia) in 1776 addressed separate letters to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł „My Beloved Sir” (*Panie Kochanku*), asking for his patronage, see: without place and date, Apolonia (Rozalia) Szaniawska to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł „Panie Kochanku”. CAHR, RA, dz. V, sign. 15581, p. 1 and 4.

⁹ [Księga metryczna klasztoru Benedyktyniek nieświeskich]. CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 353, p. 20; ZRZELSKI, Jan. Kazanie II. Na dzień świętych Trzech Królów, przy obłóczynach trzech panien, wstępujących do Zakonu Świętego Benedykta. In *Trakt do nieba niegdyś śladami świętych Pańskich utworowany, teraz przez kazania na wszystkie święta całego roku na większą chwałę Boga, w świętych swoich dziwnego,*

was elected prioress of the monastery, which was certainly not without the support of the princely house, since her brother gave thanks:

to make me should always be towards myself adoring the feet of the authoritas of the solemnity and dignity of Your Princely Majesty all the more now I have the honour together with my wife at the feet of Your Princely Majesty to make this address I recommend and to the patronage and grace of Your Princely Majesty as Father and Founder of the Nesvizh nunnery of Saint Benedict Euphemia Szaniawska, my sister born and unworthy of the God and a true servant of Your Holiness, upon whom the nunnery assembly of the Benedictine nuns has put the onus of seniority of the abbess, and for such grace and patronage she herself will forever bless the Divine Majesty, and I myself, with the whole particular House of my name will be obliged to the Lord's service.¹⁰

It is therefore possible to see the choice of Szaniawska was an act of grace on the part of the Radziwiłłs, but also a need to bind the family even more closely to the prince, and even to make them dependent on patronage from the lords of Nesvizh.

The main income of the Nesvizh Benedictine nunnery came from the landed property it leased. It included the Teladowicze estate with the town of Teladowicze and the villages of Dumnicze, Łokocin, Osovo and Horodnik, which the Benedictines received in 1626 from Jan and Krystyna Kamiński, née Telaszewska, yielding 25,000 Polish złotys annually; then the Zinkowicze estate in the Minsk province with an annual income of 28,000 Polish złotys received in 1629 from Krzysztof Kawęczyński; the estate of Wieleśzyn and Ołdowicze, which Albrycht Stanisław Radziwiłł in 1639 granted to the monastery as a pledge; the Howiezna estate with Żuchowska, Wielszyńska, Łucznowska and Słobodnica bridledways bequeathed in 1729;¹¹ Kroszyn estate granted by Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł

do naśladowania wszystkim wiernym pokazany [...]. Warszawa: Drukarnia J. K. Mci y Rzeczyp. Collegium Soc. Jesu, 1747.

¹⁰ 1758 07 02, Warszawa, Stanisław Szaniawski to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł „Rybeńko”. CAHR, RA, dz. V, sign. 15557, p. 13–14. On the occasion of the benediction of the abbess a new pastoral stole and gloves were made for her as insignia of her authority over the religious community, see: Regestr przychodu i rozchodu klasztoru Benedyktyniek nieświeskich. CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 324, p. 460; ODSTRCILOVÁ, Sylvie. Pious vanity: Two pairs of 18th century knitted abbesses' gloves. *Archeological Textiles Review*, 2020, 62, p. 144–152. Prince Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł „Rybeńko” was not present during the benediction ceremony, although we know that he appeared as a patron during the consecration ceremony of the Abbess Florentyna Chrzanowska on 22 August 1738. (see: 22 08 1738, Kopia diariusza Michała Kazimierza Radziwiłła „Rybeńko”. CAHR, RA, dz. VI, sign. II-80a, s. 931). The prince's absence was determined by his participation in the consecration of the castle chapel and attendance at mass and then by his illness and interest in rebuilding the Dominican monastery in Nesvizh after a fire in December 1758. Neither the prince's chancellery correspondence from 1758–1762 nor the pages of his diary even mention staying at the monastery, praying in the church, or eating lunch at the monastery. However, such facts are recorded for his stay at the church and the Bernardine monastery in Nesvizh, see: Kopia diariusza Michała Kazimierza Radziwiłła „Rybeńko”. CAHR, RA, dz. VI, sign. II-80a, p. 2151–2153.

¹¹ In fact, this was an extension of the bequest, for in 1589–1591, in the act of the monastery's foundation, Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł “The Orphan” had already bequeathed Howiezna to the Benedictines of



1 illus. Anonymous, *Portrait of Abbess Euphemia Szaniawska, circa 1768. National Museum in Warsaw, MP 2459 MNW*

“Little Fish” in 1759 as a pledge¹² together with 143,000 Polish złotys from Iszkołdź and the manor of Łysica from 1774; the Mienicze estate in Novogrudok District granted to the Benedictine monks in 1777 from Karolina Katarzyna Radziwiłł née Rzewuska, in the form of a demesne; and finally the Hresk estate granted on a perpetual lease from Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł “My Beloved Sir” together with an income of 84,010 Polish złotys in 1790.¹³ To this should be added the *jurydyka* leased in the city of Nesvizh, which in 1789 was inhabited by 15 people, including 4 saddlers, 4 tailors, 2 boilermakers and 2 blacksmiths.¹⁴ These assets were depleted following the occupation of the lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania by the Russians and the change in administrative borders after the Second Partition of Poland, as well as by court decrees as a consequence of disputes with the monastery, whose main axis was the ownership status of the estates.

Nesvizh as the source of their endowment, see: Akt fundacji klasztoru Benedyktyniek w Nieświeżu. CAHR, RA dz. VIII, sign. 283, p. 2–3; SIEKIERSKI, Maciej. The Niasviz Estates of Prince Nicholas Christopher Radziwiłł. The Formation of a Belorussian Latifundium (1565–1616). *The Journal of Belorussian Studies*, 1978, Vol. 4(2), p. 48–67.

¹² CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 324, p. 478.

¹³ The state of the assets has been compiled based on news from the various files located in the: Regestr dokumentów przeze mnie niżey piszącego się do attynencyi w Roku 1778 Mca Augusta 22 wziętych. CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 288, p. 1, 125–127; CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 291, p. 134–136; CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 306, p. 1, 2–4; CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 358, p. 324.

¹⁴ CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 338, pp. 4–5.

In 1793–1796, the Benedictine nuns of Nesvizh sold the Mienicze estate to the Radziwiłłs¹⁵ and then gave the manor of Rudzinowicze together with the village of Klukinowicze to Dominik Radziwiłł, the villages of Syców and Rudka to Józef Radziwiłł, the manor of Kowalewyszczyna together with the village of Kruchlicze to Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski and the manor of Cichowy together with the village of Zapole to Jan Kasyna.¹⁶ It is likely that they did so either under pressure from the nobles, wanting to get rid of estates for which they had dubious bequests, or simply out of a need to boost the monastery's coffers.

For even with the onset of the tsarist authorities' rule, the monastery's income was doing quite well, given the sums analysed. The great merit of the Euphemia Szaniawska was to put the precept books in order and sum up the income for each month and the passing year.¹⁷ Thus, from 1767 until the end of her prioresship, we are able to trace the changes in the monasteries' profits. In addition to the income from the estates, the nuns supported themselves from the arenda Świętomichalska, payments from the kehillah of Kletsk, or income from the Howiezna and Skopyrnyki inns. In addition, their income was supplied by payments from the Radziwiłłs princes. Annually, this was a profit of 1,350 Polish złotys on a borrowed sum of 20,000 Polish złotys. Small sums from 8 to 63 złotys for the monastery table were provided to the community by individuals from the Obuchowicz, Zaranek and Gałęcki families. Separate receipts from Radziwiłł, Sapieha, Mycielski, Pogorzelski, Klarowski, Czachowski, Woyna, Ciszewski, Giżycki, Paszkowski, Mogilnicki, Iwanowicki, Wessel and Koyter were intended in the form of mass offerings for the celebrated anniversaries and prayers for the souls of the dead in the amount of 8 to 100 Polish złotys. The donors were not only a group of founders and families related to the Radziwiłłs or forming part of the Grand Duchy's elite, but also members of families belonging to the group of court officials or the duke's clientele. Another source of income was the profits from dowries paid by maidens entering the order.¹⁸ Each maiden brought a dowry of about 2,000 Polish złotys and their families decided to pay the table, depending on their wealth, from 20 to 200 Polish złotys per month.¹⁹ Finally, mention also must be made of the monastery's economic activities,

¹⁵ CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 289, p. 3 and 4.

¹⁶ CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 316, p. 6.

¹⁷ Regestr przychodu... CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 324, p. 109–170. This is also very well evidenced by inspections of the Zinkowicze estate, including inventories of grain, cattle, livestock, fowl, beehives, the manor house and its furnishings, copperware, ironware and stored products – barrels of tar, salt and tar for the years 1757, 1759, 1762, 1764, 1775, 1782, 1789, 1791, 1798, 1801, see: CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 344, p. 86–248. In addition, the nuns ensured that the revisers assessing the estate and assigning taxes fairly counted the number of smokes, as evidenced by Abbess Alojza Buczyńska's appeal in 1789 to the commissioner Ignacy Tuchanowski, regent of the Novgorod land, to do the right thing, see: CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 318, p. 1–2.

¹⁸ [Księga metryczna ...]. CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 353, p. 24–28.

¹⁹ The rationale for this is the dowry bequest made by the Novogrudok nobility of Józef and Joanna (née Brzuchowiecka) Wołodkowicz in 1756 in favour of their ward Franciszka (Kolumba) Brzuchowiecka,

which consisted of selling raw materials and products from its goods, such as salt and wood, giving a yield of between 100 and 200 Polish złotys.²⁰ In all probability, it can be concluded that the abbess Euphemia Szaniawska sought to stimulate the economy of the estates by creating craft settlements. A sign of this was the conclusion of a contract in 1768 with the draper Ignacy Januszkiewicz, with a view to creating a guild of this profession in Teladowicze. The contract stipulated that the craftsman was to be given a house and 8 morgens of land for a rent of 16 złotys. The craftsman was given the right to cut, dye and produce woven pieces of cloth of a specified length and width.²¹ Due to the size of its property, the Nesvizh Benedictine monastery was embroiled in numerous court cases. As early as the beginning of 1766, the Abbess Euphemia Szaniawska reported to Prince Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł “My Beloved Sir” that Bogusławski, on the basis of a decree of the land court of the Novogrudok, demanded that the nuns pay him half of the money from the sum of 42,000 Polish złotys and give up half of the Kroszyn estate together with Połoszka and Hurkow. This caused fear and trepidation to the prioress, who begged Radziwiłł, as protector and guardian of the monastery, for mercy and a decision on the action she was to take: “so that with grave harm and great loss to our monastery, we will have to perform this. However, I cannot dare to do so, without the express permission of Yours Princely Majesties and Successors of His will and law”.²² The end of this case is unknown, due to the lack of sources, but this case allows us to conclude that only the presence of a patron and his decisions ensured the survival of the monastery.

The absence of Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł “My Beloved Sir”, prompted primarily by his emigration resulting, on the one hand, from his protest against the presence of Russian troops in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the years 1764–1767 and, on the other, from his support for the activities of the Confederates of Bar in the period from 1768 to 1777, exposed the monastery to various dangers from the prince’s political opponents. In addition, its property was devastated by Russian troops and in 1765 was sequestered by a decision of the Diet (*Sejm*).²³ The news of the prince’s return from

in accordance with the will of her deceased parents, for the payment of the sum of 2,000 Polish złotys in instalments of 100 złotys each year by St George’s Day [i.e. by 21 April], see: CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 302, p. 65 and 71.

²⁰ The sources and income of the Nesvizh Benedictine monastery have been compiled on the basis of a reading of the percept book, taking into account only the period from 1757 to 1799, see: Regestr przychodu... CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 324, p. 89–109.

²¹ CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 342, p. 1–2.

²² 1766 01 16, Nesvizh, Euphemia Szaniawska to Karola Stanisław Radziwiłł „Panie Kochanku”. CAHR, RA, dz. V, sign. 15584, pp. 1–2.

²³ More on the subject, see: ANUSIK, Zbigniew; STROYNOWSKI, Andrzej. Radziwiłłowie w epoce saskiej. Zarys dziejów politycznych i majątkowych. *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Historica*, 1989, Nr. 33, p. 29–58; ANUSIK, Zbigniew; STROYNOWSKI, Andrzej. Problemy majątkowe Radziwiłłów w XVIII w. *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych*, 1987, Vol. 48, p. 79–115; STROYNOWSKI, Andrzej. Emigracyjne opowieści Radziwiłła „Panie Kochanku”. *Prace Naukowe Akademii im. J. Długosza w Częstochowie*, 2010, 11, p. 257–278; STROYNOWSKI, Andrzej. Zmiana pozycji ordynatów nieświeskich w

exile was greeted with joy by Szaniawska, and was not just the customary expression of courtesy towards a descendant of the founding family, but above all a plea for the protection of the foundation in the face of judicial and financial difficulties: "At the first hint of the return to the Fatherland, so long desired and prayed for from God, I would be glad to strive as far as possible for your Benefactor's sake, if the cloister would not be shamed by the religious, from under which, so that I may have these few letters as proofs of our due graciousness. Your Princely Majesty will kindly accept this preceding declaration of our hearts, before we reach this happy hour".²⁴ The Abbess was aware that the restrictions of the cloister, limiting her contact with the outside world, as well as her influence and scope of power, placed her in a losing position when confronted by her accusers. Only Radziwiłł's seriousness, his magnate position and senatorial office, and consequently his possession of a large clientele in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, were able to ensure the monastery's protection and survival: "In this critical time, when the government itself threatens either to abolish our monastery or to impose marked taxes on it, to whom first in this distress of importance should we go as to Your Lordship the Founder and our Defender, who by his senatorial dignity in the Grand Duchy of

XVIII wieku. *Przegląd Nauk Historycznych*, 2020, Vol. 19, Nr. 1, p. 103–131; MICHALSKI, Jerzy. Wokół powrotu Karola Radziwiłła z emigracji pobarskiej. *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 1999, Vol. 106, Nr. 4, p. 21–72.

²⁴ 1767 07 01, Nieśwież, Euphemia Szaniawska to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł „Panie Kochanku”. CAHR, RA, dz. V, sygn. 15584, p. 3–4; 1777 04 27, Nieśwież, Euphemia Szaniawska to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł „Panie Kochanku”. CAHR, RA, dz. V, sygn. 15584, p. 5; 1777 07 24. CAHR, RA, dz. V, sign. 15584, p. 11–12. During Radziwiłł's absence in the country, the nuns were cared for by Princess Teresa Karolina Rzewuska née Radziwiłł, and in more difficult matters requiring consultation with Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, they were assisted by Father Józef Katenbring, a Jesuit from the Nesvizh College, who was the prince's chaplain in 1768–1790 and a canon of Smolensk, more, see: REDAKCJA. Józef Katenbring. In *Společné i kulturowe uwarunkowania edukacji w Rzeczypospolitej XVI–XVIII wieku*, [access 2024 05 21]. Prieiga per internetą: <<https://irp.pth.net.pl/downloadPDF/509>>; STOJEK-SAWICKA, Karolina. *Duchowieństwo katolickie w życiu Radziwiłłów nieświeżskich w XVIII wieku*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2011, *passim*; MARIANI, Andrea. *I Gesuiti e la nobilità polacca-lituana nel tardo periodo Sassone (1724–1763). Cultura e istituzione fra tradizione e innovazione*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Historii UAM, 2014, p. 195, 226, 265, 351; MARIANI, Andrea. Aktywność jezuickich kapelanów nadwornych prowincji litewskiej. Między ustawodawstwem zakonnym a praktyką. *Rocznik Lituanistyczny*, 2015, Vol. 1, p. 37–82. Probably in the matter of judicial assistance Szaniawska asked for intercession of the Jeleński family, see: ROLNIK, Dariusz. *Archiwum Jeleńskich w NGAB w Mińsku (XVI–XX wiek) – jego dzieje i inwentarze*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach, 2018, p. 389. Because of the cloister, the Benedictines' representatives in court cases were plenipotentiaries recruited from among the duke's officialdom or Radziwiłł's „My Beloved Sir” clients, such as Jan Wojciechowski (receipts dated 1786–1787 for court case fees, see: CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 315, pp. 2–5), Leon Malawski, Tribune (*wojski*) of Novogrudok (see: CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 322, p. 7), Tadeusz Dawidowicz, Rittmaster (*rotmistrz*) of the Novogrudok Voivodship (see: CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 329, p. 21) and Grzegorz Olendzki in 1796 (see: CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 329, s. 22). It seems, however, that the Abbess Euphemia Szaniawska left the monastery several times for the purpose of filing suits or revising the estates, as evidenced by her travel expenses totalling 8 Polish zlotys each between 1779 and 1784, see: Registr przychodu... CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 324, p. 595–660.

Lithuania first, may and by his good will send us our most serious protection”.²⁵ However, it is difficult to agree that the situation of this monastery, the richest in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, was actually so bad that it was in danger of collapse or cassation. In 1788, when Szaniawska wrote these words, the monastery’s income was 32,000 Polish złotys, a sum which, in contrast to earlier and later years, was quite good.²⁶ Such phrases can therefore be seen as a constant need to maintain contact with the patron and to seek their favour, regardless of actual needs. This does not mean, however, that there were no situations in which the protector’s intervention proved necessary. This statement is excellently illustrated by the case of the Paków estate taken during Radziwiłł’s absence in the country, together with the town of Piaseczno. Shortly after they were appropriated by the Przedzieckis family in March 1774, the Benedictine nuns of Nesvizh lodged a protest in Novogrudok, but it was only after the prince’s return in 1778 that a court case began during which the Benedictines presented their lease rights. Involved in the case were later successors to the Vilnius voivode, Maciej and Michał Hieronim Radziwiłł, who in 1792 demanded the return of 100,000 Polish złotys to the monastery.²⁷

The first serious court dispute concerned the Iszkołdź estate and Łysica manor, which in 1774 Katarzyna Karolina Rzewuska, née Radziwiłł, donated to the Benedictine nuns of Nesvizh for one year.²⁸ In 1775 the lease was extended for three years, remaining at a sum of 143,000 Polish złoty.²⁹ In 1777, she returned the sum to the nuns, but the abbess Szaniawska initiated a court dispute over the unreturned money and any legal expenses involved in the handling of the case.³⁰ Rzewuska, after a trial concluded in 1778, undertook to give the Benedictines the sum of 50,340 Polish złotys and probably deposited her table silver, jewels, wardrobe and cash in the monastery to cover the

²⁵ 1788 11 07, Nieśwież, Euphemia Szaniawska to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł. *CAHR, RA*, dz. V, sign. 15584, p. 26–27.

²⁶ *Regestr przychodu... CAHR, RA*, dz. VIII, sign. p. 152.

²⁷ *CAHR, RA*, dz. VIII, sign. 301, pp. 302–303.

²⁸ In 1755, Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł „Little Fish” pledged the estate to Jan Niezabitowski, starosta of Celsk (Celosia), and then pledged it again in April 1759 to his son-in-law, ensigner of Grand Duchy of Lithuania Stanisław Ferdinand Rzewuski, for the sum of 143,000 Polish złotys. Two months later, Rzewuski, claiming the Iszkołdź estate, borrowed 10,000 Polish złotys from Korsak, the huntsman (*łowczy*) of Novogrudok, which was related to the transfer of the estate to Rzewuski as a life estate. Katarzyna Karolina Rzewuska née Radziwiłł again pledged Iszkołdź to the aforementioned starost of Celsk for the sum of 167,417 Polish złotys in 1763. Niezabitowski started a lawsuit with the Rzewuskis, as the estate did not bring in as much income as he could have wished or the estate was burdened with large debts. The Rzewuskis paid Niezabitowski in two instalments the sum of 59,207 złotys and he resigned from the estate in 1777, see: *CAHR, RA*, dz. VIII, sign. 306, p. 1–2, 39–41; PERCZYŃSKA, Gabriela. *Kobiety Iszkołci, czyli dzieje zarządzania majątnością*. In Urszula Augustyniak (ed.), *Administracja i życie codzienne w dobrach Radziwiłłów XVI–XVIII wieku. Fasciculi Historici Novi*, Vol. IX, Warszawa 2009, p. 16–17.

²⁹ *CAHR, RA*, dz. VIII, sign. 306, p. 2–4, 7–8, 9, 10–11, 15–16.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17–20.

debt.³¹ The rights were claimed by her children, led by Adam Wawrzyniec and Seweryn Rzewuski, after the death of their father Lithuanian ensigner (*chorąży*), accusing the abbess of appropriating belongings worth a total of 20,000 red Polish złotys, as well as unlawfully keeping Iszkołdź.³² In 1784 the registry court of Novogrudok ordered that the estate be freed from any claims by the Benedictine nuns, but it was only the next pledgees of the estate – Ignacy and Teofila Morawski née Radziwiłł – who gave the Benedictine nuns the sum of 143,000 Polish złotys.³³ However, this did not mean the end of the dispute, as the Benedictine nuns protested to the Novogrudok court in 1795–1798 for the case to be restored.³⁴ At a similar time, the Benedictine nuns of Nesvizh were engaged in another dispute with the Lithuanian objector (*obożny*) Józef Judycki over the Czernichów estate in the Novogrudok voivodeship. This case is known only from a lawsuit filed by the Abbess Szaniawska in 1776, as further court records have not been preserved.³⁵

In 1777, Euphemia Szaniawska became suspicious, on the basis of rumours circulating that someone intended to seize the monastery's property by right. Thanks to the help of Katarzyna Karolina Rzewuska, it was possible to find the property granting documents and potentially avert the danger hanging over the state of the monastery property.³⁶ It was, however, a dream, as in August 1779 the Szaniawska received a lawsuit for illegally leasing the Mienicze estate, which the Benedictine nuns had received from Rzewuska in 1777 as *wyderkaf*, i.e. property in exchange for credit.³⁷ In January 1780, King Stanislaus Augustus, at the suit chamberlain (*szambelan*) of Novogrudok Marek Tuchanowski, summoned the prioress to prove the monastery's rights to the property before the court of assessors.³⁸ However, the land court of Novogrudok in 1789 found – on the basis of insufficient evidence – that the delator had no rights to the estate, dismissed his claim and ordered the payment of 20,000 złotys as the equivalent of a sum selected from the Mienicze estate.³⁹

³¹ Regestr złota, srebra, klejnotów oraz rzeczy dalszych wszelkich po S.P. JW. JM Pani Katarzyny Karoliny z Xiążąt Radziwiłłów Rzewuskiej Chorążyny WXL pozostałych w klasztorze w Bogu Wielebnych J.O.P. Benedyktyniek Nieświeskiego Konwentu [...] w Roku 1779 Mca Septembra 13. Dnia [...]. CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 306, p. 21–36.

³² Regestr złota, srebra, klejnotów... CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 306, p. 37–38.

³³ Ibid., p. 2–4. During the litigation, the Benedictine nuns benefited from the support and assistance of Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł “My Beloved Sir”, for which the abbess Euphemia Szaniawska thanked in a separate letter, see: 1787 03 10, Nieśwież, Euphemia Szaniawska to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł „Panie Kochanku”. CAHR, RA, dz. V, sign. 15584, p. 19.

³⁴ CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 306, p. 41–42.

³⁵ CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 307, p. 2–3.

³⁶ 1777 11 10, Nieśwież, Euphemia Szaniawska to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł „Panie Kochanku”. CAHR, RA, dz. V, sign. 15584, p. 16–17.

³⁷ CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 288, p. 1.

³⁸ CAHR, RA, p. 3, 5.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 11, 13–28.

The matter was complicated, however, when in 1789 the Benedictine nuns of Nesvizh were granted the right of intromission to the Hresk estate by Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł “My Beloved Sir”, while two years earlier, abbess Szaniawska had asked her protector to lease the estate to her, on the same rights as the Dominican Sisters of Novogrudok administered it. With boldness and a touch of arrogance, she wrote that her monastery, as a princely foundation, could count on special treatment, especially as she and the nuns loyally supported the affairs of the Radziwiłł family. The object of possession was the right to choose percentages from the Hresk estate. Szaniawska even tried to blackmail the Prince Karol Stanisława Radziwiłł “My Beloved Sir” that the proceeds would cover his as yet unpaid debt of 100,000 Polish złotys, contracted for 20 years earlier.⁴⁰ On 12 September 1790, the Benedictine nuns received confirmation of the possession of the estates of Hresk, Juniewiczze, Teladowicze, Dumnicze, Wielszyn and Stancin.⁴¹ For a year, however, the monastery was in a court dispute with the rittmaster (*rotmistrz*) of Novogrudok, Franciszek Mikulski, who disputed the monastery’s rights to the abovementioned estates and the Zinkowicze estate, and demanded that the monastery hand over – in accordance with the law – half of the property illegally held by the monastery, as well as the Kuncewicze estate.⁴² In a decree from the beginning of 1790, the chief tribunal (*sędzia*) of Grand Duchy of Lithuania granted the Benedictines the right to only half of the sum from the Hresk estate, i.e. 100,000 Polish złotys, and their property in the Novogrudok and Minsk provinces was maintained. The court also ordered that the bequest to the Benedictine nuns be cancelled, placed a hold on a percentage of the income from the Hresk estate, i.e. 143,000 Polish złotys, and ordered that it be returned to the Dominican Sisters of Novogrudok.⁴³ The case was also sent back to the land court of Novogrudok for reconsideration.⁴⁴ At that time, the voivode of Vilnius Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł “My Beloved Sir”, fearing confiscation of the estate, handed it over to the chamberlain (*szambelan*) of Slutsk Michał Bernowicz, instructing

⁴⁰ 1787 03 10, Nieśwież, Euphemia Szaniawska to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł „Panie Kochanku”. *CAHR, RA*, dz. V, sign. 15584, p. 19–21; STOJEK-SAWICKA, Karolina. Znaczenie ekonomiczne i organizacyjne klasztorów katolickich w życiu i działalności rodu Radziwiłłów nieświeskich w XVIII w. *Rocznik Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych*, 2016, Vol. 66, p. 96–97; STOJEK-SAWICKA, Karolina. Żeńskie konwenty zakonne w życiu Radziwiłłów nieświeskich w XVIII wieku. In Bożena Płonka-Syroka (ed.), *Oczekiwania kobiet i wobec kobiet. Stereotypy i wzorce kobiecości w kulturze europejskiej i amerykańskiej*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, p. 316.

⁴¹ Excerpt z Protokołu Potocznego Ksiąg Województwa Nowogródzkiego czynszowej Intormisji w Roku Teraźniejszym 1790 Dnia Septembra Dwunastego Dnia. *CAHR, RA*, dz. VIII, sign. 288, p. 45. The abbess Szaniawska in 1787 intended to purchase the Hresk estate and collected the necessary sum of money i.e. 40,000 Polish złotys, perhaps knowing that the pledge was legally defective. Compare with: 1787 03 13, Nieśwież, Euphemia Szaniawska to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł „Panie Kochanku”. *CAHR, RA*, dz. V, sign. 15584, p. 23–24.

⁴² *CAHR, RA*, dz. VIII, sign. 288, p. 60; *CAHR, RA*, dz. VIII, sign. 301, p. 289–290.

⁴³ *CAHR, RA*, dz. VIII, sign. 301, p. 294–296.

⁴⁴ *CAHR, RA*, dz. VIII, sign. 288, p. 62–79.

that the pledged sums should be paid to the Benedictine monastery of Nesvizh.⁴⁵ It was not until February 1795 that the land court of the Slutsk district recalled that the Hresk estate was held by the monastery in violation of the law on the lease of property by the state of the clergy, on which the constitutions of 1635, 1639 and 1668 had pronounced.⁴⁶ At the same time, the case was declared time-barred and the court dismissed Mikulski's claims. Three years later the case was reopened, which meant that Mikulski did not give up easily. A decree in the case was issued by the Minsk district court in 1802, thus already after Szaniawska's death. It recognised then that:

the Benedictine nuns of Nesvizh, already after this law was passed, because in the year 1787 Hresk, having a pledge, dared to use the secular state property over the prohibition of the law, as it is mentioned above, they arranged and squandered with various citizens. The land court of the Minsk having found the delimitation of Mikulski right, took possession of the property by the nuns for eternity and released their pledged property [...].⁴⁷

The last major dispute was with the Zawisza brothers, Jan, a colonel in the army of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Kazimierz, a captain in the same army, and Ignacy and Felicjan, starostas of Starodub, over the repayment of 6,000 golden thalers lent by their parents, Jan Jerzy and Teodora née Wollowicz, ensign (*chorąży*) of Minsk, in 1720 and bequeathed on the estates of Kuchciewiczze, Daniłowicze and Burniszew.⁴⁸ None of them returned the sum or the property on which the pledge had been made, so in 1796 the abbess Szaniawska again brought suit against Aleksander Kazimierz Zawisza, General of the Russian army.⁴⁹ The case was resolved in 1804, when Tsar Paul I ordered Zawisza to return his property and violently seized the Benedictines' estate.⁵⁰

The patron's help was always important and necessary, especially at times when the boundaries of the monastery's property were breached by neighbours wishing to seize land or to devastate farm buildings. In August 1790, the abbess Euphemia Szaniawska asked Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, "My Beloved Sir", to sue the owners of Piaseczno and Stokówka, who had organised a raid on the monastery property, and to resolve the border dispute by appointing the appointment of commissioners, to which

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 115–122.

⁴⁶ Compare with: [O dobrach władcyckich i cerkiewnych, [konstytucje sejmu warszawskiego 1631]. In Jozafat Ohryzko (ed.), *Volumina Legum* (later in text VL). Vol. III, Petersburg: Drukarnia Jozafata Ohryzko, 1859, p. 32; Ordynacja Rzeczypospolitej, dóbr ziemskich dziedzicznych, [konstytucja sejmu warszawskiego 1635]. In Jozafat Ohryzko, VL, Vol. III, p. 404–405; O wyderkafach, [konstytucja sejmu warszawskiego 1635]. VL, Vol. III, p. 405; Reasumptio securitatis bonorum [konstytucje sejmu warszawskiego 1667]. VL, Vol. IV, Petersburg: Drukarnia Jozafata Ohryzko, 1861, p. 448.

⁴⁷ [Wypis z ksiąg ziemskich powiatu mińskiego, 25 V 1802]. CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 288, p. 168–169.

⁴⁸ Zawisza's inscription of donation for Nesvizh monastery, see: CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 304, p. 1–3.

⁴⁹ CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 304, p. 106–118, 120–121.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 122–128. Zawisza refused to return the property and, in 1806, launched a lawsuit for alleged destruction and abuse by Benedictine nuns of the monastery's property.

they recommended Józef Sipayłło, believing him to be committed to the interests of the prince.⁵¹ Securing the boundaries against annexation of the estate or destruction forced the Benedictine nuns more than once to assert their rights in court. In December 1780, Szaniawska filed a lawsuit for violation of the borders of the Howiezna estate and damming up of the dykes on the monastery grounds by the commissioners of the Bishop of Vilnius Ignacy Massalski.⁵² Szaniawska stated that the serfs from the villages of Kozłów, Niewiszcz and Załęcze were sent to do earthworks in order to drain water on the monastery farms.⁵³ After a local inspection of the Mienicze estate, the commissioners noticed the damage caused by the bishop's officials and ruled that the dyke had been illegally formed and the mill built on the border of the Mienicze and Lachowicze estates. After verification of the records, in which the bishop's side tried to prove the existence of the mill in the past and its reconstruction, it was ordered to fill in the dyke and reconstruct the area, and to leave the mill.⁵⁴ In order to prevent similar actions, in 1782, at the request of Szaniawska, Jesuit and Smolensk canon Józef Katenbring, has been delegated by Prince Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł "My Beloved Sir" to help the monastery in demarcation between the Benedictine monastery's properties in Howiezna and Kołtatajowszyczna and that of Ludwik Ilinicz Zubek, treasurer (*skarbnik*) of Mozyrsk, in accordance with the 1737 delimitation of the estate, when the estate was granted to the abbess Antonina Głuchowska.⁵⁵ In the future, it turned out that this was not enough to ward off invasions and annexations. In 1796, the vicar sued the Metropolitan of Kyiv of the Greek Catholic rite, Theodosius Rostocki, for appropriating the village of Piaseczny, the villages of Łochowno and Osowo, and the Ucinki estate.⁵⁶ Boundary disputes also managed to put the abbess Szaniawska at odds with her greatest protector and ally, Prince Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł "My Beloved Sir", which shattered the image of good relations. In 1784, on behalf of her nunnery, the princess sued the duke, ending in the necessity of returning the property to the nunnery.⁵⁷

While boundary violations were often the least of her worries, the damage done to the estate by third parties definitely shocked the vicar and mobilised her to act quickly. In 1781, there was an unlawful cutting down of trees in Howiezna by the subjects of Maciej and Mikołaj Zabielski, the hunters of Łuków. The Benedictine nuns demanded the return of the plundered material and a fine of 500 złotys.⁵⁸ The same year, perhaps as an act of revenge, a month after the events took place, Maciej Zabielski perpetrated

⁵¹ 1790 08 19, Nieśwież, Euphemia Szaniawska to Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł „Panie Kochanku”. CAHR, RA, dz. dz. V, sign. 15584, p. 29–30.

⁵² CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 296, p. 3, 4.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 6.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 11–13.

⁵⁵ CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 291, p. 123–125.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 203–204, 205–206.

⁵⁷ Lithuanian State Historical Archives, fond 1280, op. 1, Nr. 591.

⁵⁸ CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 291, p. 197.

an attack on the Benedictine subjects in the Ochimów estate and the Horodziej forest. He robbed the manor, destroyed crops and beat peasants.⁵⁹ Let us bear in mind, however, that the abbess Szaniawska did not always appear in cases as the injured party, and there were times when she herself, along with the nunnery, was held responsible for rapes and robberies committed by her subjects. Three cases are worth noting on this occasion. The first took place in 1780, when the Benedictine nuns were accused of oppressing and beating their subjects in the Żuchowiec estate, which belonged to the Voivode of Novogradok Leopold Niesiołowski. However, a settlement was reached through the granting of monetary compensation to the beaten and the arrest of Hrynek and Baryła Machnowicz, peasants from the town of Żuchowiec, who were considered to be the instigators of the incident.⁶⁰ It was a different story in 1790, when Howiezna tavern-keepers, together with Icek Berkovich and Saul Baliklar, robbed the Major of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Adam Piasecki and his wife Elisabeth née Sienkiewicz, who were travelling from Polatsk, of their valuables, including a signet ring, wedding rings, a diamond belt and cash, left in the inn's chamber.⁶¹ In 1796, on the other hand, serfs from the monastery estate seized hay and attacked carts of hay and horses in Teladowicze. In both cases, the convicts were banished from the estate.⁶²

Euphemia Szaniawska was undoubtedly one of the abbesses who not only knew how to fight in court to maintain the substance of the land, but also knew how to claim the money owed to her and the debts owed to her creditors. It is in such terms that the attempts to enforce the debt against Ludwik Ilinicz Zubek, whose father had incurred a debt of 1,500 Polish złotys, should be seen. Jan Wojciechowski, the *podstoli* of Minsk, reported that the money was intended to secure the boy's future and his education:

*The gift of the due debt to the monastery as the magnificence and universal goodness of the Your Reverend Benefactress for the minor Zubek because of his father's debt, made according to his collection, will have the final effect by an acted letter issued by Rymsza. The document, with which I will try to bring with me the equally rendered favours of Your Reverend Benefactress arouses me in the rendering of the temporary debt of fifty złotys not only to the certainty in the common thanksgiving of Your Benefactress to me, but also to the human you have rendered with the whole of her monastery the due service.*⁶³

In practice, however, repayment of the debt was delayed until 1812, when Euphemia Szaniawska's successor, abbess Teofila Kościuszkówna, seized part of the Biełże estate in the Petryków key in order to collect the amount due. In 1788 Szaniawska filed a

⁵⁹ CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 295, p. 46–47, 48–55.

⁶⁰ CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 320, p. 6.

⁶¹ CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 322, p. 8–10.

⁶² CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 291, p. 197.

⁶³ 1790 03 02, Novogradok, Jan Wojciechowski to Euphemia Szaniawska. CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 308, p. 1–4.

lawsuit against Andrzej Borzobohaty demanding payment of the sum of 3,750 Polish złotys on a loan of 6,425 Polish złotys taken seventeen years earlier.⁶⁴ The collected data from various types of sources show Euphemia Szaniawska as an active person, not to say brave, and above all able to fight for the vital matters of the cloister.⁶⁵

Euphemia Szaniawska in the world of domestic politics

In addition to her undoubted ferocity in the economic field, the abbess Euphemia Szaniawska was also possibly politically active. The best occasion to express her views was King Stanislaus Augustus' visit to Nesvizh in September 1784, on the occasion of Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł's "My Beloved Sir" celebrating the centenary of the Vienna Victory.⁶⁶ The King's arrival in the capital of Radziwiłł estate was first honoured by the manoeuvres of the hussar flags of the National Cavalry. Moments later, the King was able to get a glimpse of the nobility, who stood along the road dressed in canary-coloured *żupan* and dark blue *kontusz*:

*there were up to eight hundred of these nobles under their rittmasters. [...] In the midst of these noblemen, arranged along the wings, were seated eighty men on horseback, armed with ancient armour, that is, iron cuirasses, with iron helmets on their heads. [...] Further on there were riflemen arrayed in two rows, wearing green żupans and grey jackets, numbering up to eight hundred, with fusillades in their hands.*⁶⁷

⁶⁴ CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 314, p. 10.

⁶⁵ Przemysław Wiszewski combines the virtue of bravery and knowledge of the law and the functioning of the institutions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with the noble background of the abbesses, see: WISZEWSKI, Przemysław. Klasztor benedyktynek w Rzeczypospolitej XVII wieku w świecie kapłanów i zakonnic. In ROK, Bogdan; WOLAŃSKI, Filip (eds.). Staropolski ogląd świata. Materiały z konferencji Wrocław 23–24 października 2004. *Prace Historyczne*, Vol. 36, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2004, p. 74.

⁶⁶ On the King's residence in Nesvizh, see: ANUSIK, Zbigniew; ANUSIK, Małgorzata. Jan III Sobieski w tradycji historycznej czasów stanisławowskich, *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Historica*, 1985, Vol. 22, p. 85–89; PYZEL, Konrad. Obchody setnej rocznicy odsieczy wiedeńskiej jako przykład polityki historycznej czasów Stanisława Augusta. In Bogusław Dybaś, Woldan Alois, Anna Ziembewska (eds.), *Sarmacka pamięć. Wokół bitwy pod Wiedniem*. Warszawa: Muzeum Pałacu Króla Jana III w Wilanowie, 2014, p. 223–247; ROLNIK, Dariusz. Miejsce i rola Radziwiłłów w życiu publicznym Rzeczypospolitej lat 1764–1795 w świetle literatury pamiątkarskiej czasów stanisławowskich. In Krzysztof Stępnia (ed.), *Radziwiłłowie. Biografie. Świadectwa historyczne*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu im. Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej w Lublinie, 2003, p. 393; NORKOWSKA, Anna. Miasto wita króla. Ceremoniał i jego rola komunikacyjna w dziennikach Adama Naruszewicza (1784, 1787). *Napis*, 2010, Vol. 16, p. 237–254; BOBER-JANKOWSKA, Magdalena. „Adventus” Stanisława Augusta. Blaski i cienie wojaży monarchy, *Kronika Zamkowa*, 2011, Nr. 1–2 (61–62), p. 119–137.

⁶⁷ Bytność Stanisława Augusta w Nieświeżu. In: Raczyński, Edward, ed., *Obraz Polaków i Polski w XVIII wieku czyli zbiór pamiętników, dyaryuszów, korespondencji publicznych i listów prywatnych, podróży i opisów zdarzeń szczegółowych, służących do wyjaśnienia stanu Polski w wieku wspomnianym, wydany*

Noblemen from the Vilnius and Minsk provinces and the entire Radziwiłł militia lined the road. Even before entering Nesvizh, the retinue was accompanied by some six thousand people. Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł “My Beloved Sir” himself greeted the king dressed in the provincial uniform, consisting of a dark blue *kontusz* with crimson appliqués, gold trimming and a *gouvernement* of the same colour as the appliqués. The prince was seated on a Turkish horse “under a silver-headed carpet and a row of gold, lavishly bedecked with rubies”.⁶⁸ This unparalleled splendour of the first moments of the meeting between the prince and Stanislaus Augustus was only a prelude to what was to happen in Nesvizh over the next four days of the royal visit. Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł “My Beloved Sir”, who, in honour of the monarch, ordered the cannons inherited by the Radziwiłł family from King Jan III to be fired, organised a magnificent fireworks display to celebrate the monarch’s arrival. All the castle ramparts were on fire, the causeway too, and all the streets with houses, and at the ends of the streets there were gates planted with dense lamps. These fires numbered up to three hundred thousand.⁶⁹ When the king was travelling the next day to Alba, the Radziwiłłs’ summer residence, the prince had more than a quarter of a mile (i.e. about 2 km) of road lit up with lamps and torches, and then prepared a fireworks display lasting a whole hour. It did not stop there, of course. The Alba Palace itself, built on the model of the famous Hagia Sophia in Istanbul and located, as if on an island, at the intersection of water channels, was illuminated throughout with hundreds of lanterns. To make the effect even more beautiful, all the canals were also decorated in the same way.⁷⁰ In addition, Radziwiłł “My Beloved Sir” decided to recreate the battle of 16 January 1780, when the British fleet under the orders of Admiral George Rodney defeated the Spanish fleet under the command of Admiral Don Juan de Lángara during the Battle of Gibraltar. The clash began at four o’clock in the morning and was therefore dubbed the “Battle of Moonlight”. Radziwiłł ordered a re-enactment to be prepared on the lake near the castle. Thirty ships with cannons and soldiers armed with muskets were placed on it. The fortress they were to conquer was built of wood and painted canvas. The shore of the lake and the causeway were illuminated by a huge number of torches.

z rękopismów, vol 16, Poznań: Drukarnia W. Stefańskiego, 1842, p. 62–63; NARUSZEWICZ, Adam. *Dyaryjusz podróży Jego Królewskiej Mości na sejm grodzieński*. Magdalena Bober-Jankowska (ed.). Biblioteka Pisarzy Polskiego Oświecenia, Vol. 8, Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich w Warszawie, 2008, p. 64–182. Certain elements concerning the king’s welcome and stay in Nesvizh were discussed by the prince in a letter to the official Kluszewski, see: 1784 07 21, Warszawa, Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł „Panie Kochanku” to Kluszewski. CAHR, RA, dz. IV, sign. 282, p. 54–57.

⁶⁸ Bytność Stanisława Augusta... P. 50–72.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 69.

⁷⁰ BERNATOWICZ, Tadeusz. *Alba. Od renesansowej willi do kompozycji krajobrazowej. Z badań źródłowych nad architekturą ogrodów na Kresach*. Warszawa: Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego, 2009; *ibid.*, *Alba w czasach Karola Radziwiłła „Panie Kochanku”*. In Bożena Wierzbicka (ed.), *In artium hortis. Studia i szkice z dziejów sztuki, konserwacji zabytków i muzealnictwa. Wojciechowi Fijałkowskiemu w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*. Warszawa: Stowarzyszenie Konserwatorów Zabytków, 1997, p. 121–129.

*With such a powerful light, flares like bombs were let off from both sides, a terrific fire from both sides, and incessant, blasting ashes, imitated by the throwing of thousand-fold flares with stars and firecrackers, made a beautiful and altogether terrible sight, namely, when the enemy approached the castle and made a retreat.*⁷¹

It is difficult to say whether the performance really appealed to Poniatowski. Neither Naruszewicz nor other authors of accounts of the Grodno journey left any comment.

In addition to all the signs of reverence and pleasure, including hunting and visiting the Radziwiłł collection, King Stanislaus Augustus visited Nesvizh and went to see the Benedictine church and monastery. After touring the church and seeing the rich church apparatus, the abbess Euphemia Szaniawska received the king in her cell and treated him to the monastery's jam.⁷² For the occasion, the abbess hung a portrait of the king, which could either have been a protocol necessity on the wall or was an attempt to express sympathy for the reform camp.⁷³ It is also worth mentioning that the monastery and its superior were involved in helping the Bar Confederates. It can hardly be said that the assistance provided to those returning from emigration or from Muscovite captivity was motivated by any form of political manifestation; rather, it should be seen in terms of the exercise of the virtue of charity.⁷⁴

Foundation activities

The high profitability and financial stability of the estate contributed to the reconstruction of the church in Nesvizh, the construction of Greek Catholic church in Howiezna and the renovation of two Greek Catholic churches in Kroszyn and Wieleśzyn, the foundation of liturgical parament and the elevation of spiritual and intellectual culture among the Nesvizh Benedictine nuns.

Work on the rebuilding of the Church of St Euphemia and the Benedictine monastery began during the lifetime of abbess Florentyna Chrzanowska, with support from Prince Michał Kazimiera Radziwiłł "Little Fish", under the direction of court builder Kazimierz Antoni Źdanowicz (Zdanowicz). According to his design, the monastery tower was built, completed in 1765–1766. Two years earlier, the gate tower was erected, which was the second monumental accent of the architectural ensemble. At the same time, brick and lime were purchased for the construction of the bell tower, built on the basis of projects made by an unknown Vilnius architect (probably his name was Chilka), who

⁷¹ Bytność Stanisława Augusta... P. 74–75. *Conf.* OLSZEWSKA, Magdalena M. Widowska „bitew morskich” wystawione dla Stanisława Augusta Poniatowskiego. *Artifex Novus*, 2017, Nr. 1, p. 36–45.

⁷² Bytność Najjaśniejszego Stanisława Augusta... P. 65.

⁷³ Archives of Benedictine Nunnery in Sierpc, sign. A2, without number of page.

⁷⁴ The Benedictine nuns of Nesvizh provided monetary assistance in the form of alms to former prisoners and emigrants from July 1772, in the amount of 2–8 Polish zlotys, see: *Regestr przychodu... CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 324, p. 562, 574, 575, 577.*

carried out the work in 1758–1762.⁷⁵ In addition to such extensive works, the abbess took care of the new glazing of the windows in the nunnery in 1758 and the sealing of the windows in the church in 1763.⁷⁶ Two years later, on Szaniawska's initiative, the archive building was erected.⁷⁷ Once the masonry work was completed, Szaniawska set about restoring the altars and painting work in the church. In 1759, the painter Estko made paintings for the two side altars and a larger painting or polychrome depicting the Calvary.⁷⁸ Two more side altars were painted in 1770 and 1779.⁷⁹ Over time, new candlesticks, liturgical paraments, antependia and liturgical vestments were funded.⁸⁰ The culmination of her efforts was to apply papal indulgence for the seven altars in the church of St Euphemia, before which prayer was to compensate the faithful for their pilgrimage to the seven basilicas of Rome. Pius VI in 1783, through Bishop of Vilnius Ignacy Massalski, granted the church such prerogatives.⁸¹

However, masonry work was not only carried out in the Nesvizh church and monastery. Since 1742, the Benedictine nuns had been trying to erect a Greek Catholic church in Howiezna. When Euphemia Szaniawska assumed the office of abbess, masonry work around the erection of the temple was already underway. Tadeusz Bernatowicz believes that the author of the design for the Baroque structure was the same Vilnius architect who had worked on the reconstruction of the monastery church in Nesvizh.⁸² The work, which had been under way with vigour since 1755, was completed seven years later. Accounts from this period include payments to the architect, attic workers, mulars, the purchase of materials in Königsberg and bricks and lime brine. Occasionally single payments of sums of 1,400 to 1,600 Polish złotys “for the Howiezna church” relate directly to the payment of wages to the workers.⁸³ Then came the furnishing of the church with liturgical vessels – the Benedictine nuns funded a gilded silver chalice and paten, a crucifix and candlesticks.⁸⁴ Similar work was underway in Kroszyn⁸⁵ and in Wieleśzyn, related to the renovation of the church, where a new altar was erected,

⁷⁵ Expenses included: architectural design, purchase of sheet metal in Królewiec (Königsberg) for roofing, purchase of bricks, lime, labour for mullers, see: *Regestr przychodu... CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 324, p. 446, 449, 454, 468, 469, 474, 509–510, 526, 541, 623.*

⁷⁶ *Regestr przychodu... CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 324, p. 469, 509.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 526.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 476, 478. On this occasion, silver appliqués were made for the robes and crowns of the figures featured in the paintings.

⁷⁹ *Regestr przychodu... CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 324, p. 553, 609, 623.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 493, 500–501, 531, 533, 535, 654.

⁸¹ *CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 352, p. 1.*

⁸² BERNATOIWCZ, Tadeusz. Kościół i klasztor Benedyktynek w Nieświeżu. In J. K. Ostrowski (ed.), *Sztuka Kresów Wschodnich*. Kraków: Text, 1996, Vol. 2, p. 132.

⁸³ *Regestr przychodu... CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 324, p. 438, 439, 446, 449, 452, 454, 460, 468, 493, 495, 502.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 495, 496.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 537.

church apparatus and liturgical vestments were purchased.⁸⁶ Abbess Euphemia Szaniawska recommended the installation of parish priests in 1758 in Kroszyn and in 1765 in Wieleśzyn. While the name of the first one is not known,⁸⁷ as much as to Wieleśzyn she asked the Metropolitan of Kyiv of the Greek rite to appoint to this post the priest Antoni Busek, distinguished by his virtuous life and handsome conduct.⁸⁸ This case, although not isolated in the environment of the princes of monasteries in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, was evidence of the efficiency and protective capabilities of the superior of the Benedictine nuns of Nesvizh.

Education and cultural activities

The founding activity did not exhaust the areas of activity of the abbess Euphemia Szaniawska. All the changes taking place in the Benedictine nunnery in Nesvizh were complemented by the creation of appropriate conditions for the education of future nuns, in writing, reading, housework, and above all singing and playing the organ, to ensure the proper artistic setting for liturgical rites.⁸⁹ Singing lessons were initially outsourced to Cieciołowicz, Płoszowski and Włoszynski.⁹⁰ From 1759 onwards, reference is additionally made to Theodore, who was paid until September 1766.⁹¹ Thanks to the right economic policy and the income generated, the vicar also succeeded in employing a Jew called Berek, who taught the nuns how to play the organ, and formed a musical band which performed at important church ceremonies.⁹²

The abbess undoubtedly contributed to the animation of intellectual and cultural life by equipping the nunnery library. The accounts leave no doubt that she saw to the

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 516, 517.

⁸⁷ Only an emolument of 500 zlotys has been set since October 1758, see: *Regestr przychodu... CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 324, p. 468.*

⁸⁸ *CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 358, p. 3.*

⁸⁹ The Benedictine monastery in Nesvizh did not stand apart from other important monastic centres in the Polish Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in this respect, see the most important publications: FABIANI, Bożena. *Warszawska pensja panien wizytek w latach 1655–1680*. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1977. GAŚSIOR, Renata; MATUŁA, Teresa. *Szkoła Sióstr Prezentek w Krakowie w latach 1627–1918*. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 1998; SANDER, Elżbieta. *Działalność edukacyjna i wychowawcza krakowskich klarysek*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo UNUM, 2010; SZYLAR, Anna. *Działalność wychowawczo-edukacyjna żeńskich zgromadzeń zakonnych w Małopolsce w okresie potrydenckim do 1815 roku*. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawniczo-Drukarska „Secesja”, 2012; SZYLAR, Anna. *Działalność oświatowa benedyktynek sandomierskich w latach 1616–1865*. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 2002; BORKOWSKA, Małgorzata. *Szkoła benedyktynek wileńskich. Nasza Przyszłość*, 1994, Vol. 81, p. 85–112; BORKOWSKA, Małgorzata. *Szkoła warszawskich sakramentek według zachowanych źródeł. Nasza Przyszłość*, 1998, Vol. 90, p. 157–179; PELCZAR, Roman. *Klasztorne szkoły żeńskie w Polsce w XVI–XVIII w. Nasza Przyszłość*, 1998, Vol. 89, p. 96–109.

⁹⁰ *Regestr przychodu... CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 324, p. 442, 448, 470, 494, 495, 521, 531.*

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 474, 479, 482, 494, 496, 521, 531.

⁹² Ibid., p. 474, 490, 494, 510.

preservation of the book collection, submitting the volumes to a bookbinder for binding and protection them from damage.⁹³ The size of the book collection was 60 pieces, and although it was clearly inferior in quantity to the Jesuit, Benedictine and Dominican libraries in Nesvizh, it still contained important titles.⁹⁴ Undoubtedly the most important place on the shelves was occupied by liturgical works, sermons, speeches, poetry, theological and historical works. One important work has survived to this day.⁹⁵ It is the ceremonial book of the ecclesiastical rites, collecting all the liturgical practices of the monastery with adaptation to the local spatial conditions, the possibilities of the community, the needs of the environment and even the climate.⁹⁶ We may venture to say that Szaniawska herself tried to animate spiritual life by composing texts of prayers and passion meditations.⁹⁷ It is likely that the person of the Prelate and her educational and moral activities were also so important that Anzelm Zaborowski dedicated meditations about life of Virgin Mary for each day of the year to abbess in 1771.⁹⁸ The intellectual dimension of the foundation, showing the mind of the Szaniawska and her openness to the culture of the time, resulted in the creation of a theatre stage, which also drew its tradition from the Radziwiłł court and the passion of Princess Franciszka Urszula née Wiśniowiecka. Staging scenes from devotional stories – biblical and hagiographical – on the one hand allowed for the activation and integration of the nuns

⁹³ Ibid., p. 438, 448, 460, 461, 462, 502, 536.

⁹⁴ GWIOŹDZIK, Jolanta. Staropolski księgozbiór panien benedyktynek z Nieświeża. Z dziejów fundacji Mikołaja Krzysztofa Radziwiłła Sierotki. In Zoja Jaroszewicz-Pierśławcew (ed.), *Badania księgozbiorów Radziwiłłów. Materiały międzynarodowej sesji Olsztyn 6–7 października 1994 r.* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Wojciech Wójcicki, 1995, p. 101–110.

⁹⁵ PIETRZKIEWICZ, Iwona. Mundus librorum w Nieświeżu. Magnacka tożsamość a duchowość zakonna. *Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia ad Bibliothecarum Scientiam Pertinentia*, 2022, Vol. 20, p. 36–50.

⁹⁶ Ceremoniarz obrządków kościelnych według reguły i zwyczaju Zakonu Oyca s. Benedykta... klasztoru nieświeskiego przepisany w 1807 r., za czasów ksieni Scholastyki Szaniawskiej, Archives of Benedictine Nunnery of Vilnius in Żarnowiec, sign. F12 [For pointing to the text and making it available, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Prof. Jolanta Gwioździk of the University of Silesia in Katowice]. More on this, see. BORKOWSKA, Małgorzata. Triduum sacrum u benedyktynek nieświeskich w XVIII wieku. *Nasza Przyszłość*, 1991, Vol. 76, p. 315–328; GWIOŹDZIK, Jolanta. *Kultura pisma i książki w żeńskich klasztorach dawnej Rzeczypospolitej XVI–XVIII wieku*, Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach, 2001, p. 181.

⁹⁷ SZANIAWSKA, Euphemia. *Nabożeństwo ku cierpiącemu Zbawicielowi i Duchowi Przenajświętszemu na nowo przedrukowane*. Nieśwież: Drukarnia Jezuitów w Nieświeżu 1795 wg Bibliografii Estreichera, see: [access 2024 05 22. Prieiga per internetą: <https://www.estreicher.uj.edu.pl/staropolska/baza/wpis/?-sort=nazwisko_imie&order=1&id=227866&offset=0&index=6>]

⁹⁸ ZABOROWSKI, Anzelm. *Tota Pulchra Virgo Fecundissima Mater Carissima Maria Beatissima*. Nesvisii: Drukarnia Jezuitów w Nieświeżu 1771 [Instytut Badań Literackich PAN w Warszawie, sygn. XVIII.1.329]. Zaborowski was a Jesuit and the last superior of the Jesuit mission in Myszyniec. After the dissolution of the order in 1774, he moved to Nesvizh, where he died in 1774. His dedication of the work to Szaniawska may thus have been an attempt to win her gratitude and hope for patronage at the Radziwiłł court, see. LOŁO, Radosław. Misja jezuicka w Myszyńcu. *Zeszyty Naukowe Ostrołęckiego Towarzystwa Naukowego*, 2019, Vol. 33, p. 14.

and fulfilled didactic and parenetic functions, while on the other hand it was a form of recreation from everyday duties. We know about the activities of the nunnery theatre in Nesvizh on the basis of later 19th-century accusations addressed to the abbess Teofila Kościuszkowna, who was accused of allowing the nuns to dress “in a masculine manner”. The abbess did not see anything improper in this, as the nuns’ intramural game had been practised since the reign of Euphemia Szaniawska and her successor Scholastica Szaniawska.⁹⁹

Conclusion

The death of abbess Euphemia Szaniawska on 1 May 1799¹⁰⁰ was the culmination of an important period when the Nesvizh Benedictine monastery was still developing during the time of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was steadily losing its influence and territory to the partitioners. Although Nesvizh came under Russian rule after the second partition of the Commonwealth and belonged to the Mogilev archdiocese, the monastery continued to function. The end of its existence did not come until 1877. While she was still alive, Szaniawska probably arranged for her distant relative, Ludwika (Scholastica) Szaniawska, who had come to Nesvizh from Radom in 1779, to be entrusted with the function of superior.¹⁰¹

Undoubtedly, the period of Abbess Euphemia Szaniawska’s reign can be considered a fruitful one, thanks to her energetic and prolific nature in terms of the initiatives she developed. At the same time, Szaniawska did not neglect temporal matters related to the administration of the monastic property or litigation, which was to maintain the integrity of the estate and raise it to a higher level of profitability. However, the abbess did not always resort to solutions in line with the law and ethics, committing embezzlement of bequests, exploitation of debts or even blackmail. Many of her actions can be considered reprehensible and unbecoming of a Christian attitude. It should be noted,

⁹⁹ BORKOWSKA, Małgorzata. Teatr w polskich klasztorach żeńskich XVII–XIX wieku. *Nasza Przyszłość*, 1997, Vol. 79, p. 335.

¹⁰⁰ SZYLAR, Anna. Nekrologi mniszek polskich z II połowy XVIII i XIX w. zawarte w korespondencji do benedyktynek sandomierskich. *Nasza Przyszłość*, 2007, Vol. 107, p. 149.

¹⁰¹ Szaniawska Ludwika (Scholastyka). In: Borkowska, Małgorzata. *Słownik polskich księń benedyktyńskich*, vol. II, *Siostry zakonne w Polsce. Słownik biograficzny*. Niepokalanów: Wydawnictwo Ojców Franciszkanów, 1996, p. 158; BORKOWSKA, Małgorzata. Liczebność i skład osobowy klasztorów benedyktynek kongregacji chełmińskiej. *Nasza Przyszłość*, 1978, Vol. 49, p. 257. In this way, „dynasties” of abbesses were created, ruling over Benedictine monasteries in Poznań, Staniątka, Drohiczyń, Przemyśl and Jarosław, see: BORKOWSKA, Małgorzata. Powiązania rodzinne wewnątrz wspólnoty zakonnej na przykładzie krakowskich bernardynek. *Nasza Przyszłość*, 2005, Vol. 104, p. 71–85; BORKOWSKA, Małgorzata. Dynastia księń jarosławskich. *Nasza Przyszłość*, 1992, Vol. 77, p. 281–293; BAUM, Marzena. *Klasztor w mieście w świetle kronik benedyktynek poznańskich*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo Diecezji Tarnowskiej „Biblos”, 2009, p. 86–88; KRASNOWOLSKI, Bogusław. *Historia klasztoru Benedyktynki w Staniątkach*. Kraków: Drukarnia Patra, 1999, p. 148–149.

however, that her decision-making was not an easy task. The abbess had to respond to current economic problems, or respond to delays in payments and come to terms with debtors.¹⁰² Sometimes she also had to decide to recruit from among her subjects from the monastery estates, which did not make her popular, but she was legally obliged to do so.¹⁰³ However, it must be borne in mind – in so far as this can justify her actions – that she did them for the good of the monastery and the community, and never for herself. Szaniawska also had to be adept at negotiating with Karol Stanisław “My Beloved Sir”, knowing how to win him over with compliments, assuring him of the thanks she had rendered to the monastery, so as not to lose contact with him, especially during the years when he was in exile and the monastery’s possessions were exposed to prey from noble neighbours. However, it was not only material matters that occupied the abbess’s mind. Adequate liturgical celebrations and missionary activity also figured prominently in her activities. Her activities, such as teaching organ singing and playing, and the construction and furnishing of two new Uniate churches, should be linked to these needs. This makes Euphemia Szaniawska a model of the ideal priestess, but without idolatrous adoration, because, after all, this “beady-eyed grandmother”, as Małgorzata Borkowska called her,¹⁰⁴ used to be a she-wolf holding a crozier firmly in her womanly hand.

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¹⁰² 1786 05 31, without place, Jan Jezierski to Euphemia Szaniawska. CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 333, p. 54; without date and place, Antoni Lewkowicz to Euphemia Szaniawska. CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 333, p. 57–58; 1793 05 22 without place, Antoni Lewkowicz to Euphemia Szaniawskiej. CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 333, p. 60; without year 05 27, without place, Anna Płaszowa to Euphemia Szaniawskiej. CAHR, RA, dz. VIII, sign. 333, p. 67–68.

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Justina (Eufemija) Šaniavska – XVIII amžiaus Nesvyžiaus benediktinių vienuolyno abatė

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje pristatoma unikali Nesvyžiaus benediktinių vienuolyno abatė Eufemija Szaniawska. Per savo vadovavimą 1758–1799 m. abatė turėjo susidurti su daugybe problemų, tarp jų – ginčais dėl vienuolyno nuosavybės ir baudžiauninkų. Tai privertė abatę vesti daugybę teisminių ginčų. Tyrimo metu buvo nustatyta, kad abatė ne visada buvo teisi ir buvo pateikusi melagingų parodymų dėl nuosavybės. Nepaisant to, ji buvo efektyvi organizatorė. Išaugus pelnui, gaunamam iš valdomo turto, padidėjo ir pačio vienuolyno pajamos. Dėl to buvo galima išplėsti vienuolyno pastatus, atnaujinti ir įkurti naujas bažnyčias. Abatės globa atsispindėjo ir kultūros srityje, pavyzdžiui, per vienuolių švietimą ir vienuolyno teatro įkūrimą. Straipsnyje taip pat parodomas abatės santykis su savo rėmėjais – Radvilų kunigaikščiais, kurie prisidėjo prie vienuolyno išlaikymo ir net jo reakcijos į svarbiausius politinius įvykius Abiejų Tautų Respublikos pabaigoje.

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