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Matrimonial Politics in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: Influence and Family Network Strategies in the Marriages of Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski

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*Abstract*¹. The phenomenon of magnate “marriage politics” has recently attracted growing scholarly attention. Researchers have highlighted the importance of advantageous family connections in building the economic, political, and social standing of magnate families. Matrimonial negotiations often represented informal power struggles over conditions such as dowry amounts, financial contributions, life-tenure contracts, and royal grants of property rights extended to spouses. These negotiations significantly affected family fortunes and political influence. The reconstructed network of familial ties reveals how information, influence, and money circulated among actors engaged in the negotiation process. This article focuses on these often elusive factors that shaped prenuptial agreements, using a case study of Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski’s marriages. Drawing on a rich collection of private correspondence and archival materials related to Zamoyski’s two marriages, this study reconstructs the behind-the-scenes dynamics of marriage negotiations and magnate ambitions in eighteenth-century Poland. The

¹ This research is part of the grant project financed by National Science Centre (NCN) The Ostrog Entail under the Rule of the Sanguszkos Family. The Formation of a Network of Political Allegiance, Social Relations, and Magnate Influence in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the First Half of the Eighteenth Century (No. 2025/58/E/HS3/00106).

findings demonstrate the significant role of relatives, in-laws, and royal court connections in shaping matrimonial alliances, as well as the constrained agency of the nupturients themselves within these complex negotiations.

Keywords: *XVIII century, Family Networks, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, magnates, matrimonial policy.*

Anotacija. Didikų „vedybų politikos“ reiškinys pastaruoju metu sulaukia vis didesnio mokslininkų dėmesio. Tyrėjai pabrėžia naudingų giminystės ryšių svarbą stiprinant didikų giminių ekonominę, politinę ir socialinę padėtį. Derybos dėl santuokos dažnai buvo neformalios galios kovos dėl tokių sąlygų kaip kraičio dydis, finansiniai įnašai, sutartys dėl nuosavybės teisės visam gyvenimui ir karališkos nuosavybės teisių suteikimas sutuoktiniams. Šios derybos turėjo didelės įtakos giminių turtui ir politinei įtakai. Šiame straipsnyje, remiantis gausia privačia korespondencija ir archyvine medžiaga, susijusia su dviem Michało Zdzisława Zamoyskio santuokomis, atkurama XVIII a. Lenkijos santuokų derybų užkulisių dinamika ir didikų ambicijos. Tyrimo rezultatai rodo, kad giminaičiai, uošviai ir ryšiai su karališkuoju dvaru atliko svarbų vaidmenį formuojant vedybines sąjungas, taip pat atskleidžia pačių besituokiančiųjų ribotą veiksmų laisvę šiose sudėtingose derybose.

Esminiai žodžiai: *XVIII amžius, vedybiniai ryšiai, Abiejų Tautų Respublika, didikai, vedybų politika.*

Introduction

In recent years, the phenomenon of aristocratic “matrimonial politics” has attracted increasing scholarly interest². Researchers have already noted the significance of advantageous family connections in constructing the economic, political, and social standing

² Zob. ŁOPATECKI, Karol. Intercyza zawarta między Janem Klemensem Branickim a Katarzyną Barbarą Radziwiłłówną jako przykład realizacji strategii rodzinnych magnaterii (1720 r.). *Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski* 2016, t. 38 (3), pp. 31–54; PENKAŁA-JASTRZEBSKA, Anna. Prośba o jak najprędszą intencji swoich konkluzję. Analiza materiałów źródłowych dotyczących magnackich pertraktacji przedślubnych (przykład małżeństwa Teresy Barbary Radziwiłłów z Józefem Scipionem del Campo). *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Historyczne*, 2022, t. 149, (1), pp. 53–71; PENKAŁA, Anna. *Panieńskie ochędństwo. Kwestie posagowe i wienne w małżeństwach szlachty województwa krakowskiego w czasach saskich*. Kraków: Libron, 2016; PENKAŁA-JASTRZEBSKA, Anna. Intercyza ślubna wojewody sandomierskiego Jana Tarły (zm. 1750) i Zofii z Krasińskich (zm. 1790) jako przykład regulacji prawnych i majątkowych między małżonkami w dawnej Polsce. *Klio. Czasopismo poświęcone dziejom Polski i powszechnym*, 2022, t. 61, pp. 225–244; KUKŁO, Cezary. *Demografia Rzeczypospolitej przedrozbiorowej*. Warszawa: DiG, 2009, pp. 272–282.

of magnate families³. The broad impact of well-arranged marriages meant that their orchestration involved not only immediate family members but also extended relatives and allies whose positions and influence facilitated favourable matchmaking⁴. This aspect is also addressed in studies on matrimonial practices among members of the European aristocracy in the eighteenth century. Researchers have paid particular attention to the cultural phenomenon of the perception of marriage, which was regarded not only as a natural component of the formation of one's social and familial network but also as an object of political, social, and cultural negotiation and strategy⁵. Scholars have called for approaching the issue of eighteenth-century marriage formation—despite its complexity and its dependence on a wide range of legal, confessional, and economic factors—from a microhistorical perspective. This approach uniquely enables an in-depth analysis of how family relationships shape individuals' lived experiences. In this context, the notion of the "exceptional normal" has been embedded to underscore that, although individual cases are not—and can never be—perfectly representative of the entirety of eighteenth-century lived experience, they nonetheless illuminate the possibilities and constraints characteristic of the period⁶. A significant strand of research also focuses on examining marriage through the lens of the formation of specific frameworks of social networks, grounded in kinship ties⁷. The present study has likewise been framed within this approach, focusing on Polish magnate marriage practices, exemplified by the Zamoyski family.

Despite the assumption that members of magnate families, given their elevated social status and considerable hereditary wealth, could select their spouses with minimal constraints, the historical reality proved more intricate. Each family sought to advance its interests in the most advantageous manner possible⁸. Accordingly, considerations extended beyond mere wealth to include various benefits a prospective union might bring, particularly in advancing the political careers of noble sons. Tactics employed in matrimonial politics functioned as an informal power struggle, determining who would dictate the key

³ LUBCZYŃSKI, Mariusz. Zawieranie małżeństw przez szlachtę w świetle interczyk przedślubnych oblatowanych w krakowskich księgach grodzkich w latach 1680–1730. *Wesela, chrzciny, pogrzeby. Kultura życia i śmierci*. Ed. H. Suchojad. Warszawa, 2001, pp. 137–155; SULEJ, Katarzyna. Mariaże magnackie w XVI–XVIII wieku na podstawie interczyk przedślubnych. *Spółeczeństwo Staropolskie. Seria nowa*, t. 3. Ed. A. Karpiński. Warszawa, 2011, pp. 63–96.

⁴ DUBAS-URWANOWICZ, Ewa. Magnackie małżeństwa mieszane w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim w XVI–XVII w. *Władza i prestiż. Magnateria Rzeczypospolitej w XVI–XVIII wieku*. Ed. J. Urwanowicz. Białystok, 2003, pp. 561–586.

⁵ DE MOOR, Tine; LUITEN VAN ZANDEN, Jan. Girl Power: The European Marriage Pattern and Labour Markets in the North Sea Region in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Period. *The Economic History Review*, 2010, 1, pp. 1–33.

⁶ HARRIS, Amy. She Never Inclined to It: Childhood, Family Relationships, and Marital Choice in Eighteenth-Century England. *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, 2019, 12(2), pp. 180.

⁷ DAVISON, Kate. Early Modern Social Networks: Antecedents, Opportunities, and Challenges. *The American Historical Review*, 2019, 124(2), pp. 456–482.

⁸ Zob. KUKLO, Cezary; KAMECKA, Małgorzata. Marriage strategies in Poland: Social and spatial differences (16 th–18 th centuries). *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung*, 2003, 28(3), pp. 29–43.

terms of the union, the financial contributions involved, and the distribution of benefits arising from supplementary agreements. These might include life-tenure contracts or clauses inserted into prenuptial settlements to secure royal favour—specifically, efforts to obtain for the spouse the *ius communicativum*, or the right to share in royal estates and starosties held by the other party. Such arrangements exerted a direct influence on both a family's financial standing and its broader political influence and opportunities.

This informal contest of power between influential magnate families constitutes a fascinating and rarely explored research topic. The most commonly analysed sources are prenuptial contracts—documents that represent the culmination of pre-marital negotiations⁹. The entries typically included provisions concerning the date of the wedding itself, the amount of the dowry, its security (i.e., collateral established on the husband's property), as well as the scope of any potential life-tenure contract¹⁰. The latter served as a safeguard in the event of widowhood, ensuring the right to manage a specified portion of the estate for life and to derive appropriate benefits from it following the spouse's death. While such documents are vital for understanding a family's financial status and legal claims to property, they offer little insight into the broader context of the negotiations that preceded them. It is through informal discussions and private arrangements that the true extent of the magnate's ambition is revealed. In the eighteenth century, the influence of relatives and in-laws played a significant role, as did efforts undertaken even within the royal court itself—particularly those aimed at securing the monarch's extension of rights to starosties and crown lands in favour of the spouse. A distinct issue remains the degree of agency exercised by the prospective spouses themselves in determining the terms of marriage.

This article aims to highlight the importance of these often elusive factors as determinants shaping the provisions included in prenuptial agreements¹¹. Identifying such elements requires analysing supplementary sources beyond preserved marriage contracts. Of particular value in this regard is private correspondence. Unfortunately, due to gaps in the archival record, such inquiries are frequently impossible. Discussions of pre-marital negotiations are often confined to brief references to basic arrangements and the distribution of wedding invitations. From this perspective, the materials concerning the marriages of Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski, starosta of Bolimow (d. 1735), are exceptionally revealing. It is evident that both of his prenuptial contracts are extant: one

⁹ ŁOPATECKI, Karol. Intercyza zawarta między Janem Klemensem Branickim a Katarzyną Barbarą Radziwiłłówną jako przykład realizacji strategii rodzinnych magnaterii (1720 r.). *Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski* 2016, 38(3), pp. 65–75; PIELAS, Jacek. Zabezpieczenie praw majątkowych Annie Stanisławskiej w intercyzie przedślubnej z 1669 roku. *Almanach Historyczny*, 2000, 2, pp. 209–217.

¹⁰ KICIŃSKA, Urszula. Umowa dożywocia jako przykład regulacji majątkowej małżonków w dawnej Polsce. *Rocznik Lubelskiego Towarzystwa Genealogicznego*, 2013, t. 5, pp. 267.

¹¹ The significance of informal conversations, along with political and social influence, has already been highlighted in the study: PENKAŁA-JASTRZEBSKA, Anna. *Za cudzoziemca iść... Migracje a polityka małżeńska szlachty państwa polsko-litewskiego*. Kraków: Libron 2021, p. 13.

from his first marriage to Anna Działyńska (d. 1719) and the other from his second, to Elżbieta Wiśniowiecka (d. 1770). Furthermore, a substantial body of correspondence has also survived, providing further insight into the subject. This documentation offers rare insight into the behind-the-scenes nature of pre-marital negotiations. It reveals the extent to which this magnate was dependent on individuals who were significantly more influential and enterprising than he was.

Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski and his matrimonial connections

Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski, starosta of Bolimow, the son of Anna née Gnińska (d. 1704) and Marcin Zdzisław Zamoyski (d. 1689), contracted his first marriage with Anna Działyńska. Both belonged to wealthy and influential magnate families. Anna was born on 5 June 1686, the daughter of Teresa née Bielińska and Tomasz Działyński (d. 1714), Voivode of Chełmno¹². As her mother recorded in her memoir, “Anusia” was baptised with none other than the Crown Court Marshal, Hieronim Augustyn Lubomirski, and the Crown Chancellor’s wife, Maria Anna d’Arquien Wielopolska, as her godparents. The joy accompanying the birth of the Działyńskis’ first-born daughter was so great that an amount of silver equal to her birth weight was donated to the Church of the Holy Cross in Warsaw, where the baptism took place¹³. Upon reaching adulthood, Anna’s betrothed was revealed to be a young member of the Zamoyski family, a prominent and historically significant family. Michał Zdzisław received his early education at the Zamoyski Academy and was later sent on a foreign grand tour to further his studies¹⁴. Several accounts from this period, left by Zamoyski himself¹⁵, elucidate his profound interest in art, culture,

¹² Biblioteka Narodowa [eng. The National Library of Poland] [hereafter BN], Biblioteka Ordynacji Zamoyskiej [eng. The Zamoyski Library], [hereafter BOZ] rkps 1605. *Pamiętnik zawierający w sobie zapiski urodzin wnuków i wnuczek, a dzieci Anny żony Michała Zamoyskiego, wówiwoy smoleńskiego (następnych ordynatów Tomasza Antoniego, Jana Jakóba, Andrzeja Jozofata) tudzież notaty o przyjęciu i płacy sług oraz spisy sreber i bielizny*, p. 3.

¹³ BN, rkps BOZ 1605. *Pamiętnik zawierający w sobie zapiski urodzin wnuków i wnuczek, a dzieci Anny żony Michała Zamoyskiego, wówiwoy smoleńskiego (następnych ordynatów Tomasza Antoniego, Jana Jakóba, Andrzeja Jozofata) tudzież notaty o przyjęciu i płacy sług oraz spisy sreber i bielizny*, p. 3.

¹⁴ FEDUSZKA, Jacek. Podróże ordynatów Zamoyskich po Europie w XVII i XVIII wieku. *Facta Simonidis*, 2023, 1, pp. 130–140; KUCHARSKI, Adam. Instrukcja podróżna Anny Zamoyskiej dla synów odbywających peregrynację po Europie na przełomie XVII i XVIII wieku. *Czasy Nowożytny*, 2012, 25, pp. 209–224; KUCHARSKI, Adam. Grand Tour Tomasza, Michała i Marcina Zamoyskich z przełomu XVII i XVIII wieku. *Klio. Czasopismo Poświęcone Dziejom Polski i Powszechnym*, 2015, 33(2), pp. 73–101; GMITEK, Henryk. Czechy w diariuszu podróży Michała Zdzisława Zamoyskiego z końca XVII wieku. *Rola komunikacji i przestrzeni w średniowiecznych i wczesnonowożytnych dziejach Czech i Polski*. Ed. A. Paner, W. Iwańczak. Gdańsk, 2008, pp. 292–305.

¹⁵ BN, BOZ, rkps 1466: Dyariusz podróży i pobytu za granicą Michała Zdzisława Zamoyskiego w latach 1697–1698; BN, BOZ, rkps 1455, Dyariusz zajęć Michała Zdzisława Zamoyskiego bawiącego na naukach w Paryżu w r. 1699; BN, BOZ, rkps 1528, Notata varia.

and the European lifestyle. Upon his return from this tour in 1701, efforts began to find him a suitable bride. The institution of marriage was regarded as a logical progression toward independent adulthood. The family's affluence is well illustrated by the content of the marriage contract, which was drawn up in anticipation of such a prestigious union.

The drafting of the prenuptial agreement was scheduled for 14 August 1703, with the meeting actively involving Michał Zdzisław's brother, Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, owner of the Zamoyski family entail¹⁶. While the specific date of marriage was not stipulated in the document, it was agreed that the final decision would be left entirely to the discretion of the bride's parents¹⁷. The Commonwealth's unstable political situation influenced this flexibility. As noted in the prenuptial agreement, the uncertainty was caused by the "entry of Swedish forces and their expansion into Prussian territories"¹⁸. It was thus preliminarily agreed that the marriage would take place only after political tensions had eased—ideally "upon the conclusion of a treaty or the end of war"¹⁹ – a condition that ultimately proved unrealistic. Nevertheless, it was confirmed that the couple's official betrothal would follow the contract's signing without delay.

Działyńska's dowry was set at as much as three hundred thousand Polish złoty (in both movable and immovable property), a sum considered exceptionally high at the time²⁰. It was determined that the dowry could be rendered in either monetary form or via entitlements secured on landed estates²¹. A bridal trousseau would complement this; the details were to be set out in a separate document²². In return, Zamoyski pledged to

¹⁶ See POPIOŁEK, Bożena; KICIŃSKA, Urszula. Panie Zamoyskie: Anna Franciszka z Gnińskich, Teresa z Potockich i Urszula z Kalińskich – okrucieństwa biografii i w świetle korespondencji i aktów ostatniej woli. *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, 2017, 65(1), pp. 23–24.

¹⁷ *Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych* [hereafter – AGAD] *Archiwum Zamoyskich* [hereafter – AZ], rkps 2375, p. 21.

¹⁸ AGAD, AZ, rkps 2375, p. 22.

¹⁹ AGAD, AZ, rkps 2375, p. 21.

²⁰ For comparison, the Zamoyski's mother – Anna Zamoyska, née Gnińska – brought a dowry of one hundred thousand Polish złotys to Marcin Zdzisław, when her marriage contract was drawn up in 1674.; AGAD, AZ, rkps 2375, p. 16.

²¹ Such was the case, among others, with the Biezuń estates, BERGMAN, Eleonora. Historia budowy miasta Bieżunia. *Bieżuńskie Zeszyty Historyczne*, 1995, 5, p. 20.

²² The considerable size of this estate had already been indicated by: SPASOWICZ, Włodzimierz. O stosunkach majątkowych między małżonkami wedle dawnego prawa polskiego. *Pisma*, t. IV. Ed. W. Spasowicz. Petersburg 1892, pp. 4–49; SZYMCAKOWA, Alicja. Wyprawy szlacheńskie sieradzkie w XV wieku. *Niebem i sercem okryta. Studia historyczne dedykowane dr Jolancie Malinowskiej*. Ed. M. Malinowski. Toruń, 2002, pp. 139–147; TURSKA, Krystyna. Wyprawy ślubne dwóch Jagiellonek: Jadwigi (1475) i Katarzyny (1562). *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, 1992, 40(1), pp. 5–32; KOCZERSKA, Maria. Wyprawa szlacheńki polskiej w końcu XIV i w XV wieku. *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, 1977, 25(3), pp. 375–388; PENKAŁA, Anna. Szlacheckie wyprawy ślubne jako źródło do badań historii kultury materialnej XVIII wieku. *Zielonogórskie Spotkania Źródłoznawcze. Na tropie źródła i jego interpretacji*. Ed. M. Dalidowicz, J. Dudek, A. Górski. Zielona Góra, 2015, pp. 155–166.

secure the dowry by granting his wife legal rights to his immovable property²³. The issue, however, was that much of the Zamoyski family estate remained under the control of Michał Zdzisław's mother, Anna née Gnińska, and the main family entail was held by his elder brother Tomasz. As a result, the young magnate did not possess a designated portion of the family estate on which such a substantial dowry could be secured²⁴. The contract, therefore, included a guarantee by Michał Zdzisław's relatives that he would soon be granted ownership of an appropriate estate by releasing part of the family property from his mother's life-tenure contract.

Additional provisions were made to secure Anna Działyńska's *ius communicativum*. This right, granted by the king, would allow the spouse to benefit from royal landholdings and starosties in the event of her husband's death²⁵. In Zamoyski's case, this applied initially to the Starostwo of Gniew, which he held at the time, and potentially to other non-castle starosties or leases he might later obtain through royal favour. The couple also agreed to conclude a life-tenure contract (*dożywocie*) following their marriage, ensuring mutual lifetime rights to their movable and immovable assets²⁶. The marriage contract included a customary clause stating that the husband would not compel his wife to make any financial commitments in his favour²⁷. If such a situation arose, any decisions were to be made in consultation with Anna's parents or, after their deaths, with her closest male relatives. Both parties agreed to uphold all terms of the contract under penalty of a 600,000-złoty forfeiture for breach of agreement.

Given the extraordinary nature of these provisions and the considerable gains anticipated by the couple, it is worth noting specific additional clauses concerning inheritance. At the time the contract was negotiated, the Działyńskis had no male heir to inherit the remainder of their estate. It was therefore agreed that, should Anna's parents—Teresa née Bielińska and Tomasz Działyński—have another child of the male sex, Anna would be required to submit a declaration to the municipal court records, formally renouncing any potential claims to further shares in the division of the estate left by her parents (a process

²³ A more detailed discussion of the legal foundations of this arrangement, as well as the functioning of dowry administration [pol. Rząd posagowy] can be found in PŁAZA, Stanisław. *Historia prawa w Polsce na tle porównawczym*. Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2002, p. 14; MAKIEŁA, Dariusz. *Historia prawa w Polsce*. Warszawa: PWN, 2008, p. 200; DUBAS-URWANOWICZ, Ewa. O prawie w świecie kobiet-szlachcianek w Rzeczypospolitej w XVI–XVII wieku. *Kobieta i mężczyzna, jedna przestrzeń – dwa światy*. Ed. B. Popiołek, A. Chłosta-Sikorska, M. Gadocha. Kraków, 2015, p. 65.

²⁴ These had to be estates entirely free of encumbrances, preferably hereditary, see. PENKAŁA, Anna. *Panińskie ochędstwo. Kwestie posagowe i wienne w małżeństwach szlachty województwa krakowskiego w czasach saskich*. Kraków: Libron, 2016, pp. 193–223.

²⁵ The principle of *ius communicativum* has been extensively discussed in the work: PENKAŁA, Anna. *Panińskie ochędstwo. Kwestie posagowe i wienne w małżeństwach szlachty województwa krakowskiego w czasach saskich*. Kraków: Libron, 2016, pp. 111–116.

²⁶ AGAD, AZ, rkps 2375, p. 21.

²⁷ PENKAŁA, Anna. *Panińskie ochędstwo. Kwestie posagowe i wienne w małżeństwach szlachty województwa krakowskiego w czasach saskich*. Kraków: Libron, 2016, p. 127.

known as *abrenunciatio*)²⁸. What stands out is the uncommon specification—rare in this type of property agreement—that the *abrenunciatio* act was to be executed only after the birth of a potential male heir. This was a departure from standard practice, where the dowry payment itself was typically deemed sufficient grounds for waiving future inheritance rights. In noble marriage contracts of the time, the full payment of the dowry was thus regarded as sufficient to ensure the obligation to draft the *abrenunciatio*²⁹. The inclusion of an additional clause conditioning the execution of the *abrenunciatio* on the birth of a male heir in the Działyński family was, however, a precautionary measure. The absence of a male descendant would have significantly increased Anna's share in the inheritance. This contingency was explicitly addressed in the marriage contract itself, which stipulated that if the Działyńskis failed to produce a male heir, Anna should be included in the division of the estate, sharing it equitably with any surviving sisters—though with the proviso that her share be reduced by the amount of the dowry she had already received. Ultimately, this scenario did not materialise: Anna's father, Tomasz Działyński, died in 1714, leaving no surviving children other than Anna³⁰.

From the marriage of Anna née Działyńska and Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski, four sons and five daughters were born. Several additional children are also mentioned in the sources, who died shortly after birth. The known children were: Teresa; Tomasz Antoni (designated as a prospective heir to the entail); Marcin Michał (who died in childhood); Zofia Kunegunda; Ludwika Petronela; Marianna; Jadwiga Eleonora; Andrzej Hieronim (later Grand Chancellor of the Crown and ordynat); and Jan Jakub Zamoyski. The family also experienced several further births that resulted in neonatal deaths.

Anna née Działyńska Zamoyska unexpectedly passed away on 16 January 1719 as a consequence of complications arising from her last, particularly difficult, childbirth. Her husband, Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski, was closely bound to his wife and was profoundly affected by her death, which he experienced as a severe personal loss and mourned deeply. He received numerous letters of condolence from relatives, allies, and political associates. As per the stipulations of the marriage contract, Anna remained the sole heir to the Działyński estate until her death. However, actual control over the estate remained in her mother's hands, Teresa née Bielińska, widow of Tomasz Działyński, who, exercising her

²⁸ AGAD, AZ, rkps 2375, s. 21.

²⁹ A more in-depth analysis of the significance of *abrenuncjacja* (formal renunciation of inheritance rights) can be found in PENKAŁA, Anna. *Panięskie ochędństwo. Kwestie posagowe i wienne w małżeństwach szlachty województwa krakowskiego w czasach saskich*. Kraków: Libron, 2016, pp. 130–131.

³⁰ Działyński's funeral, however, did not take place until a year later, in May 1715; AGAD, Archiwum Warszawskie Radziwiłłów, dz. V, rkps 3478, Teresa z Bielińskich Zamoyska do J. Przebendowskiego, Gulczew, 27 IV 1715, s. 4; A funeral sermon prepared in honor of Tomasz Działyński has also been preserved: BN, The Department of Old Prints [pol. Dział Starodruków; hereafter– SD] XVII.4/2718. *Strzała wybrana w stropy niebieskie zawiedziona dusze pobożnie zmarłego senatora znacząca : albo kazanie na dzień pogrzebu świętej pamięci [...] Thomasza z Kościelca i Działyńia Działyńskiego, wojewody chełmińskiego [...], syndika i fundatora konwentu Łakowskiego pod Bratianem w Prusiech Oycow Reformatow Zakonu świętego Franciszka w kościele tamecznym przy wslawioney tam cudami znacznymi Bogarodzicy Mariey Pannie*. Poznań, 1715.

rights under a life-tenure contract, had no intention of relinquishing the property. Thus, Zamoyski had to rely solely on his own limited share of the family inheritance, as the major part of the entailed estate belonged to his elder brother Tomasz (d. 1725).

Second Marriage – ambitions and family ties

Under these circumstances, Michał Zdzisław began seeking a second marriage, setting his sights on the Wiśniowiecki family³¹. One of the daughters available for marriage was Elżbieta, daughter of Grand Chancellor of Lithuania Michał Serwacy Wiśniowiecki (d. 1744) and Katarzyna née Dolska (d. 1725). Negotiations for this marriage began in late spring of 1721. Notably, this coincided with the marriage arrangements of Teresa Zamoyska, Michał's daughter from his first marriage, who was to wed Jan Ansgary Czap-ski (d. 1742)³². The discourse surrounding Teresa's matrimony revealed the challenging financial circumstances Michał Zdzisław faced. In contrast to his older brother, Tomasz, who held a significant estate, Zdzisław did not have the same advantage. In correspondence, he complained to his brother that he could barely meet his obligations, stating that "neither time nor purse" allowed him to do so³³. Notwithstanding the matrimonial union between Teresa Zamoyska and Czapski, it is evident that Zamoyski was incapable of providing his daughter with a sufficient dowry³⁴. However, given that the Czapski family was still establishing its position in the Commonwealth, its primary interest lay in forging advantageous alliances rather than financial gain. They accepted Zamoyski's explanation—recorded in the prenuptial agreement—that he could not free assets tied to the matrimonial estate³⁵. Teresa's noble lineage, despite her lack of wealth, was deemed sufficient to compensate for the financial shortcomings.

The financial context of Michał Zdzisław's daughter's marriage sheds further light on why the prospect of a hasty remarriage to the wealthy Wiśniowiecka seemed so advantageous to him personally. A subsequent marriage was intended as a remedy for his dire financial situation, and the union with a rich bride offered hope of swift, tangible benefits, potentially restoring his precarious material position. However, realising this ambitious goal was far from simple. Wiśniowiecka and Zamoyski were – albeit distantly – related. Their kinship stemmed from the sibling line of Anna and Konstanty Wiśniowiecki, whose descendants were, respectively, Michał (Anna's great-grandson) and Elżbieta (Konstanty's

³¹ See CZAMAŃSKA, I. *Wiśniowieccy. Monografia rodu*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2007, pp. 442–443.

³² AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 25 VIII 1721, p. 261.

³³ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 14 VII 1721, p. 244.

³⁴ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Gulczew, 28 IX 1721, p. 280.

³⁵ *Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Kyiv* [Org. Центральний Державний Історичний Архів України] [hereafter – CPAH Kijów], fond 256, opis 1, sprawa 588, p. 1.

great-great-granddaughter)³⁶. According to canon law, the marriage of relatives required a papal dispensation. To this end, a review of genealogical charts was initiated in an attempt to establish the line of kinship as precisely as possible³⁷. Interestingly, this turned out to be exceptionally problematic. As noted as late as May 1721, it was difficult to conclude the matter as “we cannot establish with certainty whose daughter Princess Anna, the great-grandmother of Dear Benefactor, and wife of Jan Zamoyski, Castellan, was; although we have searched among the sons’ inheritances and other family transactions, we found nothing specific”³⁸. It was further noted that “even in the genealogy of the princes, we cannot find whose daughter she was”³⁹.

This is particularly symptomatic, considering that noble families typically maintained extensive collections of economic, political, and familial documents. However, even the review of existing documents failed to yield a breakthrough initially. Due to the slow pace of gathering the necessary documentation, Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski asked his influential brother, Tomasz, to assist in preparing the required materials in early July 1721. It was essential to resolve ambiguities and definitively establish the degree of kinship between the prospective spouses. The beleaguered nobleman wrote to his relative, “I urgently request the indication and information from the genealogy as soon as possible,” arguing that any delays might significantly postpone the marriage, since “even the time required to obtain the dispensation is pressing, and I fear it may already be too late.”⁴⁰. Zamoyski openly admitted that he was particularly invested in bringing the marriage to fruition and that the abandonment of further negotiations due to a lack of genealogical documentation would be a “severe disappointment” for him⁴¹. These endeavours ultimately proved successful, and the parties obtained the requisite approval from Rome⁴². Although the Pope did not question the possibility of marriage, he did instruct local Church officials (specifically the Lviv official) to carry out additional procedures. He ordered that, before the wedding, it be verified whether there was any closer kinship between the couple than had been disclosed in the submitted documents, and whether both intended spouses would continue to adhere to the Catholic faith after marriage⁴³. Additionally, it was to be

³⁶ See: ANUSIK, Zbigniew. O książętach Wiśniowieckich i czasach, w których żyli. Suplement do monografii rodu. *Przegląd Nauk Historycznych*, 2009, 8(2), p. 239.

³⁷ BISKUPSKI, Stefan. *Prawo małżeńskie kościoła rzymskokatolickiego, cz. 1–2*. Warszawa: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1971, pp. 57–59; a more detailed account of the procedure for obtaining a dispensation in the case of an impediment of consanguinity between prospective spouses in: AUGUSIEWICZ, Sławomir. *Stryj i bratanica. O małżeństwie Anny Marii i Bogusława Radziwiłłów. Między barokiem a oświeceniem. Radości i troski dnia codziennego*. Ed. S. Achremczyk. Olsztyn, 2006, p. 362.

³⁸ AGAD, AZ, rkps 607. Franciszek Antoni Żywart to Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski, Zwierzyniec, 25 V 1721, p. 113.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 4 VII 1721, p. 240.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² AGAD, AZ, rkps 588, p. 7.

⁴³ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 8 X 1721, p. 283.

confirmed whether the bride had been abducted or subjected to any form of coercion that would invalidate the marriage under canon law⁴⁴. The latter two points of papal instruction were relatively easy to affirm; hence, Michał Zdzisław treated them as minor formalities, dismissing any suggestion of conversion or coercion as absurd. In this matter, the burden of obtaining evidence proving the absence of a closer relationship between Wiśniowiecka and Zamoyski was once again delegated to Tomasz Zamoyski. Michał Zdzisław again asked his brother to dispatch his agents to Lviv and handle all formalities on his behalf, which Tomasz dutifully did⁴⁵.

However, bringing the marriage to completion required far more involvement than merely assembling the documentation required by the Church. It soon became evident that negotiating with Wiśniowiecki exceeded not only Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski's financial capacities but also his organisational abilities. The magnate persistently begged his wealthy brother for help in resolving every problem. Difficulties quickly arose concerning the estate on which the considerable dowry could be secured. Zamoyski tried to assure the other party that although property matters were dragging on, they "could not be resolved before the act."⁴⁶ The goal was to persuade Teresa, née Bielińska, to release some property from her life-tenure contract. In private correspondence to Tomasz, Michał Zdzisław expressed hope that the Wiśniowiecki would be satisfied with a solution whereby, "when *jus communicativum* is obtained, I have a place to *ad interim* record those twice one hundred thousand [złoty]"⁴⁷. An argument intended to encourage further negotiations was the safeguarding of the young woman's interests through a guarantee of securing the *jus communicativum* rights to certain starosties, as well as the proper securing of her dowry. However, he requested that the Ordynat use his influence and personally travel to Wiśniowiec on his behalf to assure the Grand Chancellor of Lithuania that the financial difficulties had been resolved, that the dowry intended for Katarzyna would indeed be secured promptly, and that the promised starosties would be granted under the *jus communicativum*. Michał Zdzisław placed his hope in his brother's support, believing that, with his intervention, "no further difficulties" would arise concerning the marriage contract⁴⁸.

Prenuptial Agreement

These explanations seemed sufficient, as Wiśniowiecki agreed to set a preliminary date for drafting the prenuptial agreement for the end of September 1721. Encouraged by the progress, Zamoyski began informing close friends and relatives about the forthcoming

⁴⁴ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 8 X 1721, p. 286.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 14 VII 1721, p. 245.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

ceremony. He also began concrete preparations, intending to lend the marriage ceremony the utmost splendour. He envisioned that during the ceremonial meeting of both parties – culminating in the signing of the prenuptial contract – a skilled orator would speak on his behalf, and he himself would give „a brief speech of thanks⁴⁹, showcasing the greatness of the Zamoyski family. These intentions, while ambitious, proved premature. The preserved correspondence indicates that despite optimistic declarations about readiness to sign the prenuptial agreement, the parties had not reached consensus on all financial matters.

The assurances given by Michał Zdzisław were regarded by the Wiśniowiecki family merely as a preliminary step toward further negotiations. The point of contention remained the granting of *ius communicativum* to specific starosties. Although, as noted, it was common in marriage contracts to include such declarations—where both spouses pledged to jointly seek the king’s concession of this privilege for certain starosties or crown estates—in this case, a mere declaration of intent to obtain royal favour was deemed too uncertain. The surviving historical records, however, rarely indicate how these matters were practically arranged or what determined the extent of such provisions ultimately included in the final prenuptial agreement. In the case of the planned marriage between Zamoyski and Wiśniowiecka, preserved correspondence proves especially valuable. It reveals that Michał Zdzisław unexpectedly learned that Wiśniowiecki, leveraging his close ties to the king, had begun independently organising the matter of granting his daughter *ius communicativum* over starostwos belonging to Zamoyski. He was reportedly petitioning Augustus II for a binding declaration that, should his daughter secure such a provision in the contract, the entire starostwo of Gniew would be bound by it.

Two points are critical here. First, that these efforts were undertaken before the marriage contract had even been signed. Second, and more strikingly, that Zamoyski – from whose holdings this starostwo was to be extracted – was not only unaware of the king’s negotiations but had expressly objected to including the starostwo of Gniew in any agreement. His correspondence clearly emphasised that, under no circumstances, did he wish the starostwo of Gniew to be included in the marriage provisions⁵⁰. This stark imbalance in negotiating power between Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski and Michał Serwacy Wiśniowiecki is further evidenced by the fact that even in the face of such serious reports from Warsaw, Zamoyski felt too weak to oppose the influential Chancellor. Once more, he sought the protection and assistance of his brother Tomasz, emotionally recounting the situation and writing, “I have received news from Warsaw that even before the king’s departure, discussions had begun concerning *ius communicativum* over the entire starostwo of Gniew, which would completely ruin me”⁵¹. The magnate implored his brother to immediately meet with Wiśniowiecki and persuade him to temper his demands. He, in turn, had to settle for written promises from Wiśniowiecki, who month after month

⁴⁹ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 17 VIII 1721, p. 255.

⁵⁰ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 17 VIII 1721, p. 257.

⁵¹ Ibid.

continued to lure him with “hopes of a great reward”⁵². The Chancellor assured him that he would receive what was due to him in the marriage and that when the time came, the bride would be delivered as promised, noting that both “the elder and the younger princess will have equal proportion”⁵³. Wiśniowiecki thus viewed Zamoyski purely through the lens of influence and wealth, believing that satisfying his own financial needs sufficed to extract all desired starostwos from Zamoyski. The income from these lands would, in turn, guarantee his daughter a secure dowry and provision in the event of widowhood.

Despite the controversy surrounding the attempted appropriation of the starostwo of Gniew without Zamoyski’s consent, marriage negotiations were not terminated. In letters, Michał Zdzisław admitted to being deeply affected by the affair and hoped that the wedding act would soon follow⁵⁴. However, this too became problematic. The power-wielding Wiśniowiecki was in no hurry. He again demonstrated this by postponing the signing of the prenuptial agreement and, by extension, the wedding itself. Originally, the agreement was to be signed on the feast of Saint Michael, September 29, 1721. It soon became clear, however, that Wiśniowiecki had no intention of keeping that date. Zamoyski was informed that the signing would be delayed by at least two weeks. The Chancellor felt that Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski had not yet shown sufficient willingness to expand the *ius communicativum* provisions to the degree that would satisfy him

Moreover, during this time, Wiśniowiecki sought to arrange another marriage for his older daughter, Anna, who was promised to the starosta of Gorzów, Józef Ogiński (d. 1736). Since Elżbieta was younger than Anna, customary practice dictated that her marriage should follow. In reality, this issue became a convenient excuse to delay negotiations with Zamoyski and to increase pressure on him to concede further, with promises of accelerated proceedings. The problem escalated to the point that the Zamoyskis sought the intervention of Michał Serwacy’s brother, Janusz Antoni Wiśniowiecki (d. 1741), and his wife, Teofila née Leszczyńska Wiśniowiecka (d. 1757). It was Princess Wiśniowiecka herself who, in one of her letters to Tomasz Zamoyski, pledged to persuade their relative to ensure that “the wedding date of the elder princess would not hinder the swifter marriage with the younger one”⁵⁵. She promised that when the Chancellor next visited Biały Kamień, she would attempt to initiate a conversation on the matter, though – as she herself acknowledged – success would only be possible if “my husband persuades him on such a difficult matter, for which I will request and do everything in my power”⁵⁶.

⁵² AGAD, AZ, rkps 606. Michał Serwacy Wiśniowiecki to Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski, Lwów, 1 IX 1721, p. 3.

⁵³ AGAD, AZ, rkps 606. Michał Serwacy Wiśniowiecki to Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski, Biały Kamień, 29 IX 1721, p. 52.

⁵⁴ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 25 VIII 1721, p. 261.

⁵⁵ AGAD, AZ, rkps 581. Teofila née Leszczyńska Wiśniowiecka to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biały Kamień, 7 X 1721, p. 5.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

(To) Challenging Social Strategy

Michał Zdzisław received yet another postponement of the marriage decision as “distressing news” and regarded the undertaking as one carried out against him “with great injustice”⁵⁷. Nevertheless, he was once again unable to halt the process. It is important to note that, despite the public declaration of intent to finalise the marital agreement, it became evident that Michał Zdzisław played a relatively minor role in the proceedings⁵⁸. Rather than taking the initiative to engage in negotiations with Wiśniowiecki, he once again adopted a passive, expectant stance. Although he did not wish to delay the wedding further, he lacked the strength to oppose the influential Chancellor. As before, he transferred all his concerns to his brother, lamenting that the ceremony had already been scheduled “for three Sundays after St. Michael,” while the parents still wanted to postpone, leaving him unsure “what to hold on to”⁵⁹. Tomasz once again advised his brother that, given the mounting difficulties and miscommunications, he should forgo intermediaries and not await his intervention but instead personally travel to Wiśniowiec to conduct the talks. However, this did not align with the younger Zamoyski’s temperament. Though in correspondence he insisted that he was eager to negotiate—saying he wished to “fly there, not ride”—he once again subtly avoided responsibility for his own affairs⁶⁰. Rather than act, he continued to complain to his brother that the planned wedding was so costly that he could afford nothing else. He claimed he was unable to leave Biežuń, as he was “seeking money by *omni possibili modo* for purchases and other expenses, without success”⁶¹. He dramatised his situation, stating that every trip away from the manor ruined him financially and increased his burdens. In effect, the only thing he could still afford was “to have something to ride in for the act itself.”⁶² Once more, he begged Tomasz to resolve all issues on his behalf, set the wedding date, and persuade Wiśniowiecki to accept terms slightly more favourable to the Zamoyski family. In a letter to his brother, Michał Zdzisław wrote plainly, “seeing no other remedy but to supplicate Your Honour [...] that you yourself might deign to go and there agree upon and draft the arrangement”⁶³. He pleaded with his brother to preserve for him the starost of Gniew, which he did not wish to include in the prenuptial agreement, “so that I might always have always *liberam disponendi facultatem*, and that the *ius communicativum* be not obtained”⁶⁴.

⁵⁷ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biežuń, 7 IX 1721, p. 271.

⁵⁸ It was not an isolated example of matters of marriage being handled in a way, that excluded the future newlyweds from the discussions see: PENKAŁA-JASTRZEBSKA, Anna. *Za cudzoziemca iść... Migracje a polityka małżeńska szlachty państwa polsko-litewskiego*. Kraków: Libron, 2021, pp. 200–203.

⁵⁹ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biežuń, 25 VIII 1721, p. 262.

⁶⁰ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józefa Zamoyski, Biežuń, 7 IX 1721, p. 265.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

At this stage of the negotiations, Michał Zdzisław's correspondence reveals additional facts. He was unable to refuse Wiśniowiecki's demand for a dowry of 200,000 Polish złoty to be secured on the Biezuń estates. His acquiescence to this arrangement stemmed—like many other matters—from deficiencies of character and the subordinate position to which Wiśniowiecki had relegated him. As with other aspects of the matter, the magnate expected his influential brother to solve all problems arbitrarily and to impose a version of the agreement that would be satisfactory to Michał Zdzisław—ideally by transferring all obligations to another part of the estate. Ultimately, Wiśniowiecki issued an ultimatum to his future son-in-law: either he would concede and accept the proposed terms, or, if no decision was made before mid-October, the marriage talks would be deferred until the following year. At the same time, unwilling to forfeit his negotiating position, Wiśniowiecki once again offered vague assurances that the wedding would take place, albeit at an unspecified time⁶⁵. At the turn of September and October, he instructed Zamoyski to wait until Carnival (Zapusty), which Michał Zdzisław once again received with undisguised disappointment⁶⁶. Yet, as before, his response was limited to lamenting to his brother and imploring him to change the Chancellor's will somehow. Tomasz, indeed, wrote a courteous letter to the Chancellor requesting clarification. Still, Wiśniowiecki remained unyielding, replying that "Carnival is not far off" and excusing himself from further appeals due to poor health⁶⁷.

The protracted negotiations increasingly exposed Michał Zdzisław's lack of organisational and negotiating competence. He was wholly unprepared to manage his estate, let alone handle serious economic matters (a task that would eventually fall to him following Tomasz's premature death a few years later). His involvement in financial negotiations consisted solely of repeated pleas that his brother's influence would resolve everything for him, such that he might "face no difficulties or disputes before the act itself"⁶⁸. The preserved correspondence further illustrates Michał Zdzisław's temperament. He was highly emotional, prone to melancholy, and interpreted incoming messages less through their substantive content and more as indicators of emotional indifference or personal affronts. He was, however, elated by letters from his always-devoted sister, Marianna Zamoyska Dzieduszycka (d. 1753), who expressed heartfelt sympathy for the prolonged negotiations. Seeking to console her relative, she wrote: "I sincerely lament Your Grace's just discontent with the delay of the wedding act, but what can be done? We must accept God's will; He shall reward it."⁶⁹. Such assurances did not satisfy the magnate. Unwilling to accept solutions that conflicted with his idealised vision of the wedding, Zamoyski reacted emotionally not only to expressions of dissent but also to any delays in receiving

⁶⁵ AGAD, AZ, rkps 607. Paweł Zelski to Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski, Zamość, 3 X 1721, pp. 24–25.

⁶⁶ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 13 X 1721, p. 291.

⁶⁷ AGAD, AZ, rkps 581. Michał Serwacy Wiśniowiecki to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biały Kamień, 29 IX 1721, p. 3.

⁶⁸ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 7 IX 1721, p. 269.

⁶⁹ AGAD, AZ, rkps 592. Marianna née Zamoyski Dzieduszycka to Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski, [b. d.], pp. 52–54.

correspondence. When he received no reply for merely a few days after sending a letter to his brother, he wrote: "Having received no message yet either by courier or by post, I presume the response must be unfavourable"⁷⁰. Clearly resigned and devoid of agency, he immersed himself in pessimistic visions, writing: "I see these declarations will go on from autumn to spring, and from spring to the next autumn"⁷¹.

Given Michał Zdzisław's passivity and weak character, all substantive matters were resolved without his participation. The chief decision-makers were the Wiśniowiecki family and, representing his interests, brother Tomasz. Michał Zdzisław was not even consulted on the wedding date, with arrangements made by the actual decision-makers. Marginalised entirely, the magnate was forced to request, in writing, that someone at least inform him of the outcome of the discussions. He begged his brother: "I implore you to inform me, even by courier, of the wedding date, for I have heard it is to be two Sundays after St. Michael, and they write to me to arrive by St. Michael"⁷².

At the same time, Zamoyski did nothing himself to change this state of affairs. He preferred to lament that others had not settled his affairs, that he had no assets to secure the bride's dowry, and that "I do not know how I shall make up an income of 40,000 zlotys in a few months"⁷³. In his letters to his brother, he even subtly accused the Zamoyski family's inheritance customs of being the cause of his unfavourable social and economic standing, stating: "for being the younger, I shall receive no estate and in recompense obtain only particular grievance and affliction"⁷⁴. He suggested that his brother should help him attain more wealth and influence—perhaps by pleading his case to Wiśniowiecki himself—"if nothing else may be persuaded, to extricate me from this unjust course"⁷⁵. He imagined that marrying the Chancellor's daughter would be a straightforward path to his long-awaited social promotion and a convenient means of financial advancement. He boasted that the Chancellor, when speaking to him, had already referred to Wiśniowiecka as his future wife—"and myself [...] as her husband"⁷⁶. Although these words did not lead to the drafting of a prenuptial agreement, Zamoyski—pleased with any sign that his person was being acknowledged—interpreted them as expressions of loyalty and goodwill⁷⁷.

⁷⁰ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 22 IX 1721, p. 273.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 17 VIII 1721, p. 259.

⁷³ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 22 IX 1721, p. 273.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 313.

⁷⁷ Michał Zdzisław was extremely sensitive to who addressed him and in what manner. He was particularly troubled by his inability to compete in terms of titles and social standing with his significantly more influential and prominent brother. This disparity gave rise to deep-seated insecurities, which he frequently attempted to counterbalance by emphasizing his own importance and wealth. In one letter, he expressed his indignation over an incident in which a man mistakenly referred to him as a "principal" rather than recognizing him as the heir. Although the matter was trivial, these words wounded Zamoyski to such an extent that he began devising ways to avenge the perceived insult, writing that he would not tolerate such disrespect and will punish him: "by giving him an improper title"; AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Wiśniowiec, 6 I 1722, p. 319.

Notwithstanding the organisational and financial paralysis experienced by Zamoyski, he demonstrated notable vigour in one respect: his conceptualisation of the wedding ceremony. He believed that this event should reflect the stature of the Zamoyski family. An analysis of the preserved source materials suggests that these ceremonial matters were the only ones Michał Zdzisław was truly interested in influencing. This enthusiasm stemmed largely from his desire to realise a vision of a dazzling event, which he became thoroughly immersed in. He imagined the wedding as a nearly historic act, where its presentation and ceremony would carry supreme significance. As a result, he begged his brother to help him find a skilled “orator for the act”⁷⁸, capable of endowing the event with a unique tone.⁷⁹ He was uncertain whether, given his widower status, it would be appropriate for him to present the bride’s wreath himself, and so asked for suggestions. He also requested assistance in securing the attendance of a few noblewomen to help organise the event. In planning the ceremony, Zamoyski did not shy away from expressing scornful opinions about the local nobility around Biezuń, deeming their presence a disgrace to his standing. He asked his brother to bring people from other regions, for “to take someone from here, or from Kashubia or Masuria [...] would appear to be *peccatum originale*”⁸⁰. Zamoyski did not wish to permit himself to suffer such dishonour.

In fact, he intended to dedicate all his available funds to the visual splendour of the ceremony. Using financial hardship as an excuse, he avoided visiting Wiśniowiec to conduct the prenuptial negotiations himself, yet during the same period ordered “a hundred pairs of torches and four scores of white table candles from abroad, and the rest to be spent on good wine”⁸¹. He declared that the entire event would proceed “with all conventions,” having scheduled both formal speeches and “the presentation of gifts”⁸². Zamoyski focused on attracting the finest culinary masters to his court. Though the wedding date had not even been set and Wiśniowiecki evaded every matter brought to him, this did not prevent Zamoyski from writing in the autumn of 1721 that “all necessities for the act are at the ready; a good confectioner with all provisions of confections is also prepared; another head chef I cannot find, but our own shall suffice”⁸³. By November, it was confirmed that “the wine and candles are ready,” and all that remained was to await “the definitive wedding date”⁸⁴. His supposedly empty purse, which made visiting the Wiśniowiecki household impossible, did not prevent him from sending gifts for his future wife from Gdańsk⁸⁵.

⁷⁸ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józefa Zamoyskiego, Biezuń, 7 IX 1721, p. 267.

⁷⁹ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józefa Zamoyskiego, Biezuń, 20 VII 1721, p. 250.

⁸⁰ *Peccatum originale* (łac.) – „Original Sin”; AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 7 IX 1721, p. 269.

⁸¹ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 20 VII 1721, p. 250.

⁸² AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 7 IX 1721, p. 269.

⁸³ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 13 X 1721, p. 292.

⁸⁴ AGAD, AZ, rkps 607. Paweł Zelski to Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski, Lublin, 6 XI 1721, p. 29.

⁸⁵ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Biezuń, 13 X 1721, p. 293.

Although the prenuptial agreement between Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski and Elżbieta née Wiśniowiecka was drawn up on December 29, 1721, in Biała Krynica, the marriage itself was not scheduled to take place until February 1722⁸⁶. The prenuptial contract emphasised the rank and status of both parties, underlining that the union was being concluded “in enduring memory of the longstanding and more recent kinship with the esteemed house of Their Excellencies the Zamoyski Family, from which not long ago the Polish throne was held by the late Most Serene King Michał, born of Gryzelda Zamoyska”⁸⁷. In this way, the most illustrious point of shared history between the two families was highlighted, and hope was expressed that the marriage would be a worthy continuation of efforts to build the power and prestige of both houses throughout the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Aware of Michał Zdzisław’s financial situation, the Wiśniowiecki family ensured from the outset that the magnate would “immediately upon the wedding” settle a sum of one hundred thousand Polish złotys, secured “on his hereditary estates or on those free from pledge”⁸⁸. In the most contentious matters—the life-tenure agreement and the *ius communicativum*—Wiśniowiecki ultimately made some concessions. The prenuptial agreement made no further mention of the *ius communicativum* regarding the Starostwo of Gniew, which Zamoyski was determined to exclude; instead, it applied solely to the Starostwo of Międzyłęcz. However, the contract stipulated that, should Zamoyski ever relinquish this starostwo, he would be obligated to endow lands generating 200,000 złoty and place them under a life-tenure arrangement in favour of his wife⁸⁹. This was not Elżbieta Wiśniowiecka’s only financial safeguard. Regardless of the fate of the Międzyłęcz Starostwo, Zamoyski was to guarantee her a life tenure agreement on estates yielding at least 20,000 złoty in annual income. This provision, together with guaranteed revenues from the *ius communicativum*, mentioning starostwo or its financial equivalent, was intended to ensure that, in the event of widowhood, the magnate’s wife would retain an adequate financial base⁹⁰.

⁸⁶ In the transcriptions of the Zamoyski family’s estate documents preserved at the Central Archives of Historical Records (AGAD) in the Zamoyski Archive, an error can be found. The scribe accurately copied the established date of the wedding, which was to take place “in the year soon to follow, on February 20, 1722.” However, when recording the date of the contract’s conclusion, he mistakenly wrote: “this took place in Biała Krynica on December 29, 1722.” The correct year should have been 1721. See: AGAD, AZ, rkps 2375, p. 32.

⁸⁷ AGAD, AZ, rkps 2375, p. 32.

⁸⁸ AGAD, AZ, rkps 2375, p. 32.

⁸⁹ The starosty had previously drawn the attention of external parties. As early as the late seventeenth century, the transfer of the Międzyrzec and Gniew starosties had been proposed to Anna Zamoyska, née Gnińska, the mother of Michał Zdzisław; see: AGAD, AZ, rkps 1365, p. 1.

⁹⁰ Zob. PIELAS, Jacek. Wdowa-matka a kwestie majątkowe w rodzinach szlachty koronnej w XVII wieku. *Spółeczeństwo staropolskie. Seria nowa*, t. 3. Ed. I. Dacka-Górzyńska, A. Karpiński. Warszawa, 2011, pp. 171–193; JAKUBOSZCZAK, Agnieszka. Panny i wdowy – w poszukiwaniu własnej przestrzeni. Losy osiemnastowiecznych szlachcianek z kręgu rodziny Działyńskich. *Kobieta i mężczyzna, jedna przestrzeń – dwa światy*. Ed. B. Popiołek, A. Chłosta-Sikorska, M. Gadocha. Kraków, 2015, pp. 295–305.

Ultimately, the terms formalised in the prenuptial contract were considerably less stringent than those originally proposed by Wiśniowiecki. Zamoyski managed to retain exclusive control over the Gniew Starostwo, and the clause concerning the properties on which financial sums were to be secured was broadened to include not only hereditary estates but also those “free from pledge”. Delighted at the conclusion of the protracted negotiations, Michał Zdzisław enthusiastically sent correspondence in the following months with the postscript: “my wife extends her deepest veneration”⁹¹. It is worth noting that in November 1722, Zamoyski attempted to fulfil part of the prenuptial promises—specifically, those most valued by the Wiśniowiecki family, concerning the procurement of rights for his wife to the starostwo specified in the agreement. However, this attempt was unsuccessful, and as Zamoyski wrote at the time, “the starostwo had previously been entirely refused, and they are still unwilling to grant it”⁹². Earlier measures undertaken at the royal court proved to be premature.

Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski died thirteen years after concluding his second marriage. Elżbieta née Wiśniowiecka outlived her husband by 35 years, passing away only in 1770, having been actively engaged in economic and philanthropic endeavours for decades⁹³.

Sources

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2. *The National Library of Poland*, The Zamoyski Library. Manuscript No. 1466: *Dyariusz podróży i pobytu za granicą Michała Zdzisława Zamoyskiego w latach 1697–1698*; manuscript No. 1455, *Dyaryusz zajęć Michała Zdzisława Zamoyskiego bawiącego na naukach w Paryżu w r. 1699*; manuscript no 1528, *Notata varia*; manuscript No. 1605, *Pamiętnik zawierający w sobie zapiski urodzin wnuków i wnuczek, a dzieci Anny żony Michała Zamoyskiego, woiwody smoleńskiego (następnych ordynatów Tomasza Antoniego, Jana Jakóba, Andrzeja Jozofata) tudzież notaty o przyjęciu i płacy sług oraz spisy sreber i bielizny*.
3. *The National Library of Poland*, The Department of Old Prints, No. XVII.4/2718, *Strzała wybrana w stropy niebieskie zawiedziona dusze pobożnie zmarłego senatora znacząca: albo kazanie na dzień pogrzebu świętej pamięci [...] Thomasza z Kościelca i Działynia Działynskiego, woiwody chełmskiego [...], syndyka i fundatora konwentu Łakowskiego pod Bratianem w Prusiech Oycow Reformatow Zakonu świętego Franciszka w kościele tamecznym przy wsławionej tam cudami znacznymi Bogarodzicy Mariey Pannie*. Poznań, 1715 r.

⁹¹ AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Gniew, 29 V 1722, p. 325.

⁹² AGAD, AZ, rkps 585. Michał Zdzisław Zamoyski to Tomasz Józef Zamoyski, Warszawa, 19 XI 1722, p. 339.

⁹³ BARCZYK, Alina. Bieliny nad Sanem. Założenie dworskie w czasach Elżbiety z Wiśniowieckich Zamoyskiej i jej spadkobierców. *Miraże natury i architektury. Prace naukowe dedykowane Profesorowi Tadeuszowi Bernatowiczowi*. Red. A. Barczyk, P. Gryglewski. Łódź, 2021, pp. 221–244.

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Vedybinė politika Abiejų Tautų Respublikoje: įtaka ir giminystės ryšių strategijos Michała Zdzisławo Zamoyskio santuokose

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Santrauka

Derybos dėl Zamoyskio ir Wiśniowieckos santuokos yra vertingas šaltinis, atskleidžiantis dažnai sunkiai suvokiamus veiksnius, kurie formavo kilmingųjų vedybų politiką. Priešvedybinių sutarčių turinys iki galo neatspindi visų pastangų, kurių reikėjo, kad tokios sąjungos būtų įgyvendintos. Nors istorikai dažnai sutelkia dėmesį į nuotakos šeimos suteiktą kraitį, dažnai buvo svarbesni kiti aspektai, pavyzdžiui, situoktinių ilgalaikio ekonominio saugumo klausimas. Jį užtikrino ne tiek pats kraitis, kiek nauda, gaunama iš turimų valdų, pavyzdžiui, seniūnijų ir karališkųjų dvarų.

Nuostatos dėl *ius communicativum*, kurias mokslininkai dažnai vertina tik paviršutiniškai, iš tiesų turėjo didžiulę reikšmę pačioms didikų šeimoms. Jos suteikė galimybę gauti ilgalaikę naudą, o moterų atveju – kartu su teisėmis valdyti turtą iki gyvos galvos – sudarė esminį finansinio saugumo elementą našlystės atveju. Taip pat reikia atkreipti dėmesį į pastangas, dedamas dar prieš santuoką, siekiant nustatyti, ar karaliaus suteikiama teisė valdyti seniūnijas ar karališkąsias valdas realiai įmanoma. Nuostatos, pagrįstos vien tik formuluote „siekti“ ar „prašyti“ *ius communicativum* iš monarcho, nesuteikė jokios garantijos, kad ši privilegija iš tiesų bus suteikta.

Kitas svarbus aspektas – derybų proceso pobūdis. Michała Zdzisława Zamoyskio vedybų atvejis rodo, kad didelę įtaką darė ne tik būsimi sutuoktiniai, bet ir jų galingiausi giminaičiai bei šeimos nariai. Be ordinato (paveldėjimo teisės turėtojo) Tomasz Zamoyskio paramos Michalas Zdzisławas nebūtų turėjęs jokių galimybių užbaigti derybas su Wiśniowieckųjų šeima. Tai parodo ne tik turto, bet ir politinės bei socialinės padėties, įtakos tinklų svarbą, lemiant kilmingųjų santuokų sąjungų baigtį. Zamoyskių giminės atstovo sudaryta santuoka atitinka strategijas, kurių laikėsi didikų elito nariai XVIII a. vedybų rinkoje. Tokios strategijos buvo orientuotos į finansinės naudos ir (arba) socialinio mobilumo užtikrinimą, o lemiamos svarbos turėjo veiksmingas giminystės tinklų mobilizavimas ir įtakingų asmenybių parama.

Mikroistoriniu požiūriu šis pavyzdys ypač vertingas tyrinėjant, kaip socialiniai ir giminystės santykiai formavo vedybų politiką. Tai leidžia smulkiai atkurti veiksnius, kurie šiame procese pasirodė esantys svarbiausi, įskaitant giminaičių globą, finansinio įsipareigojimo mastą bei numatomas politines naudas, susijusias su šia santuoka. Taip pat reikia pabrėžti, kad, norint išsamiai suprasti XVIII a. santuokų rinkos veikimą Abiejų Tautų Respublikoje, būtina atidžiai pažvelgti į konkrečias teisinės sistemas ir abipusius finansinius susitarimus, kuriais ji buvo grindžiama. Šios struktūros iš esmės formavo nuosavybės, finansinio saugumo ir teisių sampratą, taip pat numatomas naudas, kurias gauna kiekvienas sutuoktinis.

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