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## Religiousness of Galician female landowners as illustrated by the Skrzyński family

The religiosity characteristic of Galician female landowners was manifested through their attachment to the Catholic Church, personal devotion, commitment to participating in the sacramental life of family members, and supporting initiatives related to caring for the sick and children. The religiousness of two representatives of the Jabłonowski and Skrzyński families, Emilia Skrzyńska nee Jabłonowska and Wanda Ostrowska nee Skrzyńska, was analyzed by means of diaries, letters, and personal notes. Information was collected regarding their external forms of religiousness as well as their spiritual lives. The image that emerges depicts a female religiosity shaped by Jesuit spirituality.

**Keywords:** Skrzyńska, religiosity, spirituality, Catholic Church, Starowiejskie Servants

The concept of religiosity is a very broad one and is interpreted depending on the scientific discipline (theology, psychology, sociology). This multidimensionality of the concept makes it necessary to clarify its understanding in the context of the issue at hand. It is most often assumed that religiousness is the attitude through which a person expresses and realises their relationship to God. Certain indicators can be used to qualify and describe the religiousness of the group or person under study. These include: living according to the principles of one's faith, fulfilling religious practices and activities influenced by religious convictions (mainly charitable activities). These are the outward manifestations of religiousness that are visible to those around them and which make it possible to determine the type of piety. In addition, a person's religiosity is evidenced by their statements revealing attitudes to religion, recorded in diaries and letters, as well as recorded inner, deepened religious experiences referred to as spirituality.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J. Mariański, *Nowa duchowość – alternatywa czy dopełnienie religijności?* [in:] *Religijność i duchowość – dawne i nowe formy*, ed. by M. Libiszowska-Żółtkowska, S. Grotowska, Krakow 2010, p. 19.

The literature on religious culture in the nineteenth century holds the opinion that women were more religious than men. Piety was one of the most desirable qualities in women, shaped from an early age. In turn, religion enabled them to function in the public space and often set the rhythm of daily life. Research undertaken on this topic has resulted in findings on the manifestations of religiosity of female representatives of different social groups, but there are still gaps to be explored and filled.<sup>2</sup>

The women from the Skrzyński family represent a circle of Galician landowners, often bearing the titles of count bestowed by Austrian emperors. They spent their lives mainly in the country manors of their family estates, although they also ran houses in Lviv and Kraków during seasonal trips. They also spent time travelling abroad to Paris, Vienna, Rome and Venice, as well as to spa resorts. It can therefore be assumed that they experienced different cultural and national environments. The main protagonists of the article will be Emilia Skrzyńska, nee Jabłonowska (1824–1892) and Countess Wanda Ostrowska, née Skrzyńska (1833–1884). Emilia Skrzyńska's daughters, Cecylia Badeniowa née Skrzyńska (1847–1932) and Maria Orpizewska née Skrzyńska (1853–1933), as well as other female representatives married into the Skrzyński family, will also be used for the purpose of exemplification of their religiosity. Emilia Skrzyńska, née Jabłonowska, officially joined the Skrzyński family in 1845 by marrying Franciszek Ksawery Skrzyński of Bachórz. However, family ties united the couple much earlier, as their mothers Konstancja and Cecylia were sisters, descended from the Count Fredro line. Emilia and Ksawery Skrzyński owned landed estates located in the Jasło, Sanok and Lviv districts. Their main residence was the manor house in Krościenko Wyżne near Krosno.<sup>3</sup>

Wanda Ostrowska, on the other hand, was the only daughter of the eldest of the Skrzyński brothers, Władysław and Wanda, née Rozwadowska, and had been the widow of Count Władysław Ostrowski of Kościelec since 1868. After her father, she took over estates in the Sanok, Brzozów and Rzeszów districts.

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<sup>2</sup> A large number of books and articles have been published about religiosity, especially of women, in the 19th century. See *Duchowość i religijność kobiet. Dawniej i dziś*, eds. E. Pakszys, L. Sikorska, Poznań 2000; *Kobiety i kultura religijna. Specyficzne cechy religijności kobiet w Polsce*, ed. J. Hoff, Rzeszów 2006; *Z życia religijnego szlachty i ziemiaństwa między Wisłą a Pilicą w XVI–XX wieku*, ed. J. Gapys, M. Nowak, J. Pielas, Kielce 2014; A.S. Więch, „Parafialna emancypacja”. *Przyczynek do badań nad religijnością mieszkanków prowincji galicyjskiej na przełomie XIX i XX wieku* [in:] *Galicja i jej dziedzictwo*, vol. 24: *Kobieta w Galicji. Nowoczesność i tradycja*, ed. J. Kamińska-Kwak, S. Kozak, D. Opaliński, Rzeszów 2016, pp. 210–219.

<sup>3</sup> B. Lorens, J. Kuzicki, *Wstęp* [in:] E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1844–1855*, edited, with an introduction and commentary, by B. Lorens, J. Kuzicki, Rzeszów 2020, pp. 12–23.

Her permanent residence was the palace in Bachórz, built by her grandfather, the Galician sword-bearer of the Crown, Wincenty Skrzyński.<sup>4</sup>

Both ladies left diaries and letters which have been published in fragments, becoming the source for this article. Emilia Skrzyńska's diaries, preserved in 26 notebooks (out of more than 153), are stored at the Podkarpackie Museum and were published in three parts between 2020 and 2022.<sup>5</sup> In turn, fragments of Wanda Ostrowska's personal diaries and letters were published at the beginning of the 20th century by her cousin Zofia Szeptycka née Fredro, daughter of Aleksander Fredro and Zofia née Jabłonowska.<sup>6</sup> In addition, correspondence kept with church institutions – the Bishop's Curia in Przemyśl and the General Curia of the Servite Sisters in Stara Wieś – was used.

### Religious education

The Skrzyński, Fredro and Jabłonowski families entered into numerous relationships and family affinities with each other in the first half of the 19th century. They shared similar experiences in politics (support for Napoleon Bonaparte) and in the struggle to regain Poland's independence (participation in the Napoleonic campaigns, the November Uprising and the Polish-Russian War, the Hungarian Uprising). They also shared religious views due to the strong influence of the French Enlightenment and Voltaire's views on religion. Aleksander Fredro recalled years later: "They were mocked in front of the children for any sign of religiosity. (...) Such was the spirit of the times, and it was universal".<sup>7</sup> Wincenty Skrzyński's fascination with French Enlightenment philosophy is revealed in letters written by him to his brother-in-law Aleksander Fredro.<sup>8</sup> According to Barbara Lasocka, an expert on the comic playwright's biography, his adherence to Voltairianism was more of an external nature than an ideological

<sup>4</sup> *Pisma Zofii z hr. Fredrów Szeptyckiej*, vol. II: *Wspomnienie o Wandzie z Skrzyńskich hr. Ostrowskiej*, Kraków 1907, p. passim; J. Stolarczyk, *Wanda ze Skrzyńskich hrabina Ostrowska*, „Głos Gminy Dynów” 2020, no. 3, pp. 14–15.

<sup>5</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1844–1855*, edited, with an introduction and commentary, by B. Lorens, J. Kuzicki, Rzeszów 2020; E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1855–1862*, edited, with an introduction and commentary, by B. Lorens, J. Kuzicki, Rzeszów 2021; E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, edited, with an introduction and commentary, by B. Lorens, J. Kuzicki, Rzeszów 2022.

<sup>6</sup> *Pisma...*, vol. II, pp. 77–133.

<sup>7</sup> A. Fredro, *Trzy po trzy. Pamiętniki z epoki napoleońskiej*, foreword by A. Grzymała-Siedlecki, fotnotes by H. Mościcki, Warszawa 1957, pp. 178–179.

<sup>8</sup> *Listy od Wincentego Skrzyńskiego z 3 IX 1816 r., z 5 VI 1819 r., z 5 VIII 1819 r.* [in:] A. Fredro, *Korespondencja*, selection and edition by K. Czajkowska, S. Pigoń, [*Pisma wszystkie*, vol. XIV], Warszawa 1976, pp. 272–275, 311–319.

adoption of a philosophical system. Rather, it was limited to libertinism, manifesting itself in a focus on pleasure and the pursuit of sensual experiences, and downplaying religious practices treated as social gatherings.<sup>9</sup> This atmosphere changed over the years. As Fredro's daughter Zofia Szeptycka recalled: "long ago in our family the healthy Polish spirit had shaken off Voltaireanism – but it still suffered from its many infections. Time for God came on Sunday and during great misery".<sup>10</sup> She added that piety was fostered by women, "against the opposition of husbands".<sup>11</sup>

Among these women was the comedian's younger sister, Cecylia Jabłonowska née Fredro, mother of Emilia Skrzyńska. Both her brother's and her niece's words, Zofia Szeptycka, gave Cecylia evidence of high morals and piety.<sup>12</sup> She became part of the Jabłonowski family, who owned a spa in Lubień Wielki near Gródek Jagielloński in the early 19th century. The social life of the Galician elite was concentrated there, combining health treatments with entertainment, not always moral. Her husband, Count Leon Jabłonowski, was accused of drunkenness by Franciszek Ksawery Prek; her brother-in-law Kazimierz Jabłonowski was an exceptional tyrant, and her sister-in-law Zofia Skarbek, née Jabłonowska, became the central figure of a scandal by annulling her marriage and marrying Cecylia's brother, Aleksander Fredro.<sup>13</sup>

However, the example of the women worked, because the following years and the next generation saw a kind of religious revival in the Skrzyński family. The youngest of Wincenty and Konstancja Skrzyński's sons, Henryk, became a Roman Catholic priest. Cecilia Jabłonowska's grandson Franciszek Starowieyski became a clergyman, and two of his sisters – nuns. It is also well known about the careers of Zofia Szeptycka's two sons associated with the Greek Catholic Church.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> B. Lasocka, *Aleksander Fredro. Drogi życia*, Warszawa 2001, pp. 59–60.

<sup>10</sup> *Pisma...*, vol. II, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> *Pisma...*, vol. II, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> A. Fredro, *Trzy po trzy...*, s. 205; Z. z Fredów Szeptycka, *Wspomnienia z lat ubiegłych*, edited, with an introduction, commentary and footnotes by B. Zakrzewski, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1967, pp. 56, 116–117.

<sup>13</sup> F. K. Prek, *Czasy i ludzie*, edited, with an introduction, commentary and footnotes by H. Barycz, Wrocław 1959, p. 190; L. Jabłonowski, *Pamiętniki*, ed. K. Lewicki, Kraków 1963, p. 111; Z. z Fredów Szeptycka, *Wspomnienia z lat ubiegłych*, p. 92.

<sup>14</sup> A. Wielkuk, *Skrzyński (Zaremba <Zaręba> Skrzyński) Henryk* [in:] *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. XXXVIII, Warszawa–Kraków 1997–1998, s. 460–461; J. Hoff, E. Orman-Michta, *Starowieyski (Biberstein Starowieyski) Stanisław Michał* [in:] *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. XLII, Warszawa–Kraków 2003–2004, pp. 352–353; M. Nowak, *Dwa światy. Zagadnienie identyfikacji narodowej Andrzeja Szeptyckiego w latach 1865–1914*, Gdańsk 2018, passim; idem, *Zofia z Fredrów Szeptycka – we dworze i na salonach* [in:] *Kobieta w Galicji...*, p. 378.

The moral principles instilled by their mother became a guideline for Emilia and her sister Zofia, later Stanisława Starowieyska, for the rest of their lives. The religiousness instilled in their childhood and youth, and perhaps also innate traits of character, meant that both sisters were marked by a deep attachment to the Catholic Church until their death.<sup>15</sup> Emilia's moral principles appeared to be strict. Serious by nature, however, she did not shy away from company and knew how to enjoy life. She was disturbed by certain entertainments, such as circus shows in which the performing women dressed in excessively tight, i.e. indecent, costumes.<sup>16</sup> She saw piety as a great virtue, entailing the honesty and conscientiousness necessary to place trust in a person. She looked for signs of religiosity especially in men, realising how rare a trait it was among them. Those whom she considered to be pious, she placed above others.<sup>17</sup> Her religiosity was not affected by personal misfortunes, e.g. the death of two children, which sometimes, as in the case of Anna Potocka née Działyńska of Rymanów, were able to temporarily affect her relationship with God.<sup>18</sup>

In turn, about Wanda from Skrzyńskie Ostrowska, called Dunia by those closest to her, her long-time confessor Father Henryk Jackowski said in his funeral eulogy: "Although in her parental home the old traditional integrity, honesty and piety were preserved, this one did not surpass the ordinary level of intensity".<sup>19</sup> Ostrowska's religiosity was mainly shaped by the influence of the women of the Fredro family, and it can be assumed that Wanda's grandmother, Konstancja Skrzyńska née Fredro, was more influential in this respect than her sickly and emotional mother, Wanda Skrzyńska née Rozwadowska. Ostrowska's personality (she was shy and close-minded) also meant that she was more likely to find amusement in serious reading than in merriment.<sup>20</sup> Among her favourite works were religious books. Reading the Scriptures and the Lives of the Saints undoubtedly deepened her personal piety. Her familiarity with the writings of St Francis Xavier and other saints associated with Jesuit spirituality shone through in the letters she wrote to Zofia Szeptycka and in her personal reflections which she noted down.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See: Memoirs of Zofii Starowieyskiej-Morstinowej, *Dom*, Poznań 2012, pp. 137, 146–152. Zofia Starowieyska, nee Jabłonowska, was portrayed as Helena Zabielska.

<sup>16</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, p. 206.

<sup>17</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, pp. 182, 238.

<sup>18</sup> A. z Działyńskich Potocka, *Mój pamiętnik*, Kraków 1927, pp. 133–136.

<sup>19</sup> *Mowa żałobna miana na pogrzebie ś.p. Wandy z Skrzyńskich hr. Ostrowskiej w Harcic d. 30 grudnia 1884 r. przez x Henryka Jackowskiego TJ*, Kraków 1885, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> *Pisma...*, vol. II, pp. 4–7.

<sup>21</sup> *Pisma...*, vol. II, p. 121.

## Religious practices

In Emilia Skrzyńska's personal life, attendance at religious services was very important. In her diary she repeatedly recorded the feeling of distress she experienced at not being able to attend mass on Sundays and feast days because of illness or difficult weather conditions. On the other hand, she described starting the day by praying in church as 'happiness'. This attitude intensified especially from the 1860s, when, after raising her children, she had more time for religious practice. She then made an effort to be at Mass every day and to start her day with it. She repeated this many times in the pages of her "Diary".<sup>22</sup>

She partook of the Holy Sacraments more often than the Church's commandments dictated. She went to confession and received Holy Communion at least once a month. She greatly appreciated it when her confessor allowed her to take communion more often than just immediately after confession. In May 1858, she described this situation as follows: "At eight o'clock I went to church to receive once more the Most Holy Body and Blood of the Lord. For I was inexpressibly fortunate that the priest Złowodzki allowed me, after yesterday's confession, to continue communion today. I would not be able to describe the emotion and the feeling of gratitude towards God which I experienced for such a great and inestimable favour which He granted me".<sup>23</sup> Wanda Ostrowska, of whom her confessor said the same thing, acted in this regard: "Her confessions were sometimes so exact, and at the same time so full of simplicity and love of God, that the priest who listened to her sometimes came out of the confessional as a better man himself and benefited more from her example than she did from his teaching".<sup>24</sup>

The ladies also tried to ensure that their loved ones, especially those in danger of death, benefited from sacramental ministry. Emilia Skrzyńska made sure that her husband, who was ill in the last years of his life, went to confession and received Holy Communion.<sup>25</sup> Wanda Ostrowska also prayed, as Szeptycka put it, for his father, who was quite far from God, to receive the sacraments at the moment of his death.<sup>26</sup> Emilia Skrzyńska took great care of the religious upbringing of her children. She encouraged and led them to the parish church and was very pleased that the children willingly did so. She also provided them with religious education, which was offered by the local vicar.<sup>27</sup> Their attitudes,

<sup>22</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1844–1855*, p. 44; E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1855–1862*, p. 347.

<sup>23</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1855–1862*, p. 239.

<sup>24</sup> *Mowa żałobna miana na pogrzebie ś.p. Wandy z Skrzyńskich hr. Ostrowskiej...*, p. 13.

<sup>25</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, pp. 407, 414–416.

<sup>26</sup> *Pisma...*, vol. II, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1855–1862*, pp. 245, 273, 348, 372.

especially those of their sons, changed when they reached adulthood. Emilia noted that her eldest son Włodzimierz and his wife were “very cold and indifferent in religious regard”, which filled her with great sadness. However, she was relentless in her efforts to make her sons keep the precepts of the church commandments, e.g. going to confession at Easter.<sup>28</sup>

Both ladies valued and practised paraliturgical services. Emilia Skrzyńska was very fond of the service associated with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and the singing of supplications and litanies: “I thank God that he has allowed me to be a participant twice in the service on the days of the cross, because I find that these litanies sung by all the people are so beautiful, so elevating the spirit to God, that it seems impossible that God would not listen to such a common prayer. I do not understand how one can be insensitive to the beauty and sublimity of the rites of the Holy Catholic Church, how non-believers can persist in their indifference and not come to the bosom of our Church”.<sup>29</sup> She practised the services of Bitter Lamentations, Stations of the Cross, May services, days of the cross, and processions in the octave of Corpus Christi. She introduced the celebration of May services in the manor chapel, and in 1890 she practised rosary services.<sup>30</sup>

For her there was nothing more beautiful than the litanies and songs sung by the parishioners of Krosno. As she wrote, “the service in our church is far nicer to me than in the beautiful churches of Kraków” and “nowhere is the Sunday service so nice to me and so satisfying to the needs of my soul as in the church here”.<sup>31</sup>

Emilia Skrzyńska joined religious confraternities introduced in the parish in Krościenko Wyżne – the Brotherhood of Sobriety on 1 II 1874<sup>32</sup> and the renewed Brotherhood of St. John Nepomucen in 1862,<sup>33</sup> as well as the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Kraków in 1857<sup>34</sup> and the Confraternity of Christian Mothers in Lviv in 1883.<sup>35</sup> Wanda Ostrowska, in turn, joined the Confraternity of the Holy Scapular and wore the scapular as a special expression of devotion to Virgin Mary.<sup>36</sup> She also promoted the worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus through church services on the first Fridays of the month

<sup>28</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, pp. 370, 437.

<sup>29</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1855–1862*, pp. 341–342.

<sup>30</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, pp. 214, 224, 349, 360.

<sup>31</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1855–1862*, pp. 274, 289, 320; E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, pp. 181, 208, 358.

<sup>32</sup> Krościenko Wyżne Parish Archive, Book of the Brotherhood of Sobriety,

<sup>33</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1855–1862*, pp. 338–339.

<sup>34</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1855–1862*, p. 137.

<sup>35</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, pp. 296–297.

<sup>36</sup> *Mowa żałobna miana na pogrzebie ś.p. Wandy z Skrzyńskich hr. Ostrowskiej...*, p. 10.

and led the incorporation of the inhabitants of Bachórz into the then developing Apostolate of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1878.<sup>37</sup>

Representatives of the Skrzyński family took part in public services, not limiting themselves to those reserved for their social group, e.g. on the occasion of the coronation of the image of Mother of God in Stara Wieś on 8 September 1877,<sup>38</sup> in the consecration of the church in Ustrobnia on 24 June 1877, and in the mass on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the bishopric of Pope Pius IX in the Krosno market square.<sup>39</sup> They participated in parish missions, e.g. in Odrzykoń in June 1854, not excluding themselves from them because of their focus on improving peasant religiosity, which was often the excuse of landowners and intelligentsia.<sup>40</sup> They were also involved in retreats intended for their social group (“conferences for ladies”), listening to teachings given mainly by the Jesuits for ladies at the convent of the Servite sisters in Stara Wieś and in Kraków at the church of St Barbara.<sup>41</sup>

Wanda Ostrowska had a deep inner life, which was proven by her thoughts and prayers written down in notebooks kept from 1875 for the last nine years of her life. She called them ‘black booklets’ due to their black binding, and in her will she dedicated them to Zofia Szeptycka, who published extracts from them.<sup>42</sup> It is worth noting that Wanda Ostrowska reflected on her attitude to her neighbours, described as ‘Symptoms of a lack of love’, dividing it into categories ‘towards servants’, ‘towards the poor’, ‘towards the home environment’, ‘towards family, friends and in worldly relations’.<sup>43</sup> Having lost her immediate family, her husband, who died in 1868, with whom she did not have children, her mother in 1872, her father in 1873, she dedicated her life to her distant relatives and the community among which she lived. From 1875 until her death, she annually attended closed retreats for ladies run by the Jesuits in Stara Wieś. These were followed by the writing down of concrete resolutions to be implemented in everyday life.<sup>44</sup> After the retreat in 1880, she wrote down: “Faithful to God, helpful to people – helpful to everything, in everything, except sin. Courteous in the drawing-room, economical in the larder, prudent and pertinent in administrative matters, charitable to all in need – in a word, all for all. Not to be

<sup>37</sup> *Pisma...*, vol. II, pp. 88–89, 92.

<sup>38</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, pp. 125–129.

<sup>39</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, pp. 92, 99–100.

<sup>40</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1844–1855*, pp. 324–325; D. Olszewski, *Kultura i życie religijne społeczeństwa polskiego w XIX wieku*, Lublin 2014, pp. 246–247.

<sup>41</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, pp. 38, 57, 197, 198, 205.

<sup>42</sup> *Pisma...*, vol. II, pp. 72–73; E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, p. 313.

<sup>43</sup> *Pisma...*, vol. II, pp. 70–71.

<sup>44</sup> *Pisma...*, vol. II, pp. 77–78, 90–91, 121.



lazy in any sacrifice or work, but in each seek the fulfilment of God's will, not the satisfaction of self-love".<sup>45</sup> In the middle of the 1870s the idea of entering the convent of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Sacré Coeur) in Lviv arose in her mind, and she had long discussions on this subject with her confessor Fr. Jackowski, who, however, dissuaded her from doing so. It was not until 1884 that she obtained permission to enter the convent and took steps to put her property affairs in order, but her plans were interrupted by her death.<sup>46</sup>

The described attitude of the women raises the question whether their piety did not result from a desire to show off in company and prove their superiority over others, or was it a devotion of little spiritual value? An analysis of the notes they left behind, however, leads us to deny such statements. In my opinion, they did so out of a need of the heart. In their devotions and prayers, they sought the strength they needed for their daily lives, which were not short of worries. They did not confine their religiousness to the interior of the church, but in fact followed religious precepts in their lives, especially with regard to speaking ill of others or indulging in their duties.

### Attitude towards the clergy and church hierarchy

Surrounded by the women of the Skrzyński family, clergymen functioned on a daily basis as relatives, teachers of the children, neighbours and friends of the house. Guided by the high morals and spiritual preparation of the priests, the women consciously chose their confessors, treating them as true spiritual guides. They were accompanied by clergymen who were regarded as outstanding priests in the second half of the 19th century. These included the Jesuit Henryk Jackowski, priests Jan Koźmian, Julian Żłowodzki and Zygmunt Golian.

In the Krosno manor house, Emilia Skrzyńska willingly hosted the clergy. She was visited by: Father Józef Sebastian Pelczar, at that time a professor and later the rector of the Jagiellonian University and the Ordinary of the Przemyśl diocese, later a saint. Her regular guests were priests who served as her children's teachers, very often persecuted because of their political involvement in national uprisings. She also invited to the manor diocesan priests who came from the peasantry and from the villages where she had her estates.<sup>47</sup>

As a collator of the parish she took care of the staff of the rectory in Krościenko Wyżne, acquiring for this post persons worthy and well prepared for

<sup>45</sup> *Pisma...*, vol. II, pp. 103.

<sup>46</sup> *Pisma...*, vol. II, pp. 80–82; E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, p. 308.

<sup>47</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, pp. 107, 111, 116.

pastoral work. She particularly valued Fr. Roman Piekosiński, who first served as vicar at the parish church in Krościenko Wyżne between 1859 and 1864, and in 1867 she supported him in his application for the post of parish priest and for the next 20 years he remained in this position. She valued his qualities, such as his piety, open-mindedness and accessibility. She saw him as an excellent confessor. She was similarly sympathetic towards his predecessor, Fr. Andrzej Ujejski, and his successor, Fr. Wincenty Telega, whom she praised as a good preacher.<sup>48</sup> She also cooperated very well with them in the maintenance of the church and parish. Like her mother, she made her own liturgical vestments and altar linen and took care of decorating the altars with flowers.<sup>49</sup>

She respected clergymen, but was able to notice and point out to them the shortcomings in their pastoral work or character flaws. She paid attention to the length of the sermon, believing that an excessively long sermon was not conducive to the attention of the listeners and did not bring spiritual benefit.<sup>50</sup> She was surprised at the read sermons she listened to in Kraków churches in the 1850s, stating that there was no such practice in the diocese of Przemyśl.<sup>51</sup> She admired the logical and content-rich sermons delivered in beautiful Polish by her brother-in-law Fr. Henryk Skrzyński.<sup>52</sup>

She disliked the mannerism associated with emotional preaching to the people, which Skrzyńska associated with the Italian style of preaching, when the preacher “throws himself around like an actor, shouting, banging his fist on the pulpit”.<sup>53</sup> She was also not a fan of making her listeners laugh or cry. For this reason, the sermons of the then well-known Jesuit preacher Fr. Karol Antoniewicz, whom she listened to in Lviv in 1847 and 1848, did not appeal to her.<sup>54</sup>

Emilia Skrzyńska’s religious views, as expressed in the pages of the Diaries, did not differ from her sphere, that is, the views of the conservative Galician landed gentry with ultramontane views. The prominent role of the Church, alongside the court, was seen as a necessary condition for social existence. Attempts to undermine the authority of the clergy by popular movements, or socialist movements, or simply disgruntled peasants were received with indignation.<sup>55</sup> Her val-

<sup>48</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, pp. 181, 247, 249, 395.

<sup>49</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1855–1862*, p. 338; E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, p. 170.

<sup>50</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1855–1862*, p. 234; E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, pp. 133, 325.

<sup>51</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1855–1862*, p. 93.

<sup>52</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, p. 134.

<sup>53</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dziennik z lat 1855–1862*, p. 276.

<sup>54</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1844–1855*, pp. 89, 115.

<sup>55</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, p. 366.

ued qualities of social manners, conversational skills and behaviour in the salon were an important addition to the theological knowledge and pastoral zeal of the priests around her.

### Religious motives in social activities

By virtue of their origins and estates, the Skrzyński ladies stood high in the social hierarchy of Galicia. Despite the fact that their activities fell during the post-enfranchisement era, they still took seriously their duty of care for the people living in the villages where their estates were located. “Lady of noble lineage and considerable fortune”, as Father Jackowski called Wanda Ostrowska, took care of the rural population living in the estates belonging to her, looked after the sick and peasant children, and provided material assistance out of sincere affection and with great tenderness.<sup>56</sup> Both ladies, following the example of representatives of the Galician aristocracy – Maria Potocka née Sanguszko and Jadwiga Sapieżyna née Zamoyska – funded and cared for the servant nuns’ orphanages. By 1871, 9 such houses had been established in Galicia.<sup>57</sup> Orphanages on the Skrzyński estates were founded in the 1870s. In 1873, when a cholera epidemic was raging in Galicia, Wanda Ostrowska brought the Servite nuns from Stara Wieś to Bachórz to care for the sick. She also asked for two sisters to work in Harta, the estate of her cousin Zdzisław Skrzyński. When the epidemic ceased, she kept the sisters, funding an orphanage. As well as caring for village children, the sisters taught the basics of writing, reading, and maths. On Sundays and holidays, they gathered the young and the old to read religious books and teach church songs. They also kept the church clean and washed the church linen. Initially, there were two sisters in Bachórz, but Countess Ostrowska applied for a third to be sent to help. Until the building was adapted for the orphanage, the sisters lived in the Bachórz manor. The official opening of the orphanage took place on 17 November 1873. The foundress was involved in its functioning, conducting May services.<sup>58</sup> Seeing the good effects of the sisters’

<sup>56</sup> *Mowa żałobna miana na pogrzebie ś.p. Wandy z Skrzyńskich hr. Ostrowskiej...*, p. 6.

<sup>57</sup> *List do s. Leony Jankiewicz w Starej Wsi z 11 IV 1871 r.* [in:] *Korespondencja Edmunda Bojanowskiego z lat 1829–1871*, vol. I: *Listy Edmunda Bojanowskiego z lat 1836–1871*, commentary by L. Smółka, Wrocław 2001, p. 450; P. Gołdyn, *Udział ziemianek w organizacji ochronek w świetle zachowanej korespondencji błogosławionego Edmunda Bojanowskiego* [in:] *Życie prywatne Polaków w XIX wieku*, vol. II: „Portret kobiety”. *Polki w realiach epoki*, ed. J. Kita, M. Sikorska-Kowalska, Łódź–Olsztyn 2014, pp. 33–47.

<sup>58</sup> Main Archives of the Servant Sisters in Stara Wieś (AGSS), Files of the General Curia of the Servant Sisters (AKGS), A IV d, 9, Letter of Wanda Ostrowska of 7 May 1874; Files of the Przemysł Province of the Servant Sisters (APPS), III, Bachórz.

work, Ostrowska also settled them in another of her estates – in Rączyna near Kańczuga. She asked for the nuns to be sent as early as in November 1873 in connection with a cholera epidemic. She motivated her request by claiming that “it is impossible to leave poor people without help, all the more so as there is no doctor near there and the people are very abandoned”.<sup>59</sup> Finally, the four sisters arrived in Rączyna in November 1876, and on 17 November the consecration ceremony of the orphanage took place.<sup>60</sup> On 26 April 1877, Wanda Ostrowska created a foundation for the Congregation of the Servant Sisters by notarial deed, giving the sisters of Rączyna free use of a house with a garden and an annual pension of 300 złr, paid in two instalments constituting interest on a capital sum of 6000 złr, approved by the signature of the Superior General of the Congregation – Leona Jankiewicz on 8 June 1878.<sup>61</sup>

Similarly, Emilia Skrzyńska took care of the servant nuns brought to Krościenko Wyżne in 1873 by the then parish priest, Father Roman Piekosiński. She considered them to be very useful for the inhabitants of the village.<sup>62</sup> A house belonging to the manor house was given to the sisters for their use, but due to the increasing number of children in the sisters’ care, the construction of a new nursery building was started. The sisters were supported by Emilia Skrzyńska’s daughter, Maria Orpizewska nee Skrzyńska, who donated a diamond necklace, which was her daughter’s dowry, as well as part of the manor’s field to the orphanage.<sup>63</sup>

In the 1870s, Wanda Ostrowska founded a new brick church dedicated to St Adalbert in Bachórz, replacing the old wooden one, with the intention of founding a parish next to it in the long term.<sup>64</sup> She earmarked 20,000 złr guaranteed in her last will for this purpose.<sup>65</sup> In the end, Countess Ostrowska’s desire to establish an independent parish in Bachórz was fulfilled in 1909.<sup>66</sup> She also took care of the furnishings of the church by founding a silver and gold-plated chalice

<sup>59</sup> AGSS, AKGS, B III b,2, Letter from Wanda Ostrowska of 11 November 1873.

<sup>60</sup> AGSS, AKGS, A IV d, 9, Letter from Wanda Ostrowska of 7 May 1874; Letter from Wanda Ostrowska of 11 November 1876; B. Wilman, Rączyna (typescript).

<sup>61</sup> AGSS, AKGS, E-a, 32, Assets of the Congregation – Property of Rączyna 1877–1957, Foundation Deed.

<sup>62</sup> AGSS, APPS, XL, 2–3, Krościenko Wyżne. Files of the house of Servite Sisters, p. 1; E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, p. 121.

<sup>63</sup> AGSS, AKGS, A IV d, 9, Letter of Eleonora Jankiewicz, mother general of the Congregation of the Servant Sisters, of 20 October 1923; B. Wilman, *Historia domów zakonnych prowincji przemyskiej Zgromadzenia Sióstr Służebniczek NMP NP (Starowiejskich)*, Przemysł 2016, pp. 127–129.

<sup>64</sup> W. Domino, J. Sienko, *Kronika wioski Bachórza*, p. 61.

<sup>65</sup> Archdiocesan Archive in Przemysł (AAP), TPS ref. 3/1 – Bachórz, the last will of countess Wanda Ostrowska, nee Skrzyńska, 1884.

<sup>66</sup> P. Łysek, *Parafia Bachórz w latach 1886–1939*, Lublin 1995, (master’s thesis written under the direction of Rev. Prof. Dr. Bolesław Kumor at the Catholic University of Lublin), pp. 29–33.

for the Mass in 1878, together with the peasant Anna Domin. Its characteristic feature was the incorporation into its base of a silver Hungarian thaler from the time of Empress Maria Theresa.<sup>67</sup>

## Summary

The surviving source materials (diaries and letters) provide an insight into the religious attitudes of two women from the Skrzyński family and their activities based on religious motives. Emilia Skrzyńska and Wanda Ostrowska grew up in a similar family environment and it seems that they shared similar character traits. Both were characterised by religiousness, which in Emilia's case took on a more external form, focused on the care for practising faith by those close to her – her husband and children. Wanda Ostrowska, due to her lack of offspring and early widowhood, focused on her own inner religious experiences, living a rich spiritual life. The religiosity of both ladies and members of their families was greatly influenced by the Jesuits and the spirituality they promoted. Their involvement in the life of the Church resulted in many permanent works, such as the construction of a church and the founding of a parish in Bachórz, the construction of a brick church in Krościenko Wyżne, or bringing the servant sisters to the village and taking care of their orphanage. Their efforts were continued by Emilia's daughter, Maria Orpiszewska née Skrzyńska. In 1929 the parish priest of Krościenko applied for rewarding her contribution with the papal medal "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice".<sup>68</sup> Undoubtedly, the financial support of works connected with the Catholic Church by representatives of the Skrzyński family was a testimony to their personal attitude and contributed to the religious and cultural enrichment of local parish communities.

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<sup>67</sup> J. Stolarczyk, *Kielich mszalny i srebrny talar – okruchy pamięci z dziejów kościoła w Bachórze*, „Głos Gminy Dynów” 2022, no. 1, p. 26.

<sup>68</sup> E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, pp. 197, 198; AAP, TPS ref. 126/1 – Krościenko Wyżne.

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## Religijność ziemianek galicyjskich na przykładzie rodziny Skrzyńskich

### Streszczenie

Religijność charakterystyczna dla ziemianek galicyjskich przejawiała się w przywiązaniu do Kościoła katolickiego, osobistej pobożności, dbaniu o uczestnictwo w życiu sakramentalnym członków rodziny i wspieraniu inicjatyw służących opiece nad chorymi i opieką nad dziećmi. Do analizy ich religijności wykorzystano dzienniki, listy i zapiski osobiste dwóch przedstawicielek rodziny Emilii z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńskiej i Wandy ze Skrzyńskich Ostrowskiej. Zebrano informacje na temat zewnętrznych form religijności, jak również ich życia duchowego. Wyłania się z nich obraz religijności kobiecej ukształtowanej pod wpływem duchowości jezuickiej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Skrzyńska, religijność, duchowość, Kościół katolicki, służebniczki starowiejskie