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# Terra Jesuitica Grodniensia: On the Religious Houses Dependent on the Jesuit College in Grodno

Terra Jesuitica Grodniensia, czyli o domach zakonnych zależnych od grodzieńskiego kolegium jezuickiego

## **ABSTRACT**

The history of the Jesuit college in Grodno has been presented in encyclopedic and tourist publications. Many issues have been developed by historians of architecture and culture. This allows one to refer to research in Russian, Belarusian and Polish without unnecessary repetition. This article presents the results of a study on the presence of the Society of Jesus on the border of present-day Lithuania, Poland and Belarus. Apart from the architectural ensemble of the Jesuit College in Grodno (Hrodna), other tangible traces of the cultural heritage of the Jesuits in this territory are poorly preserved. Therefore, the article outlines the history of the missions in Merecz, Urdomin and Rotnica (now Merkinė, Rudamina and Ratnyčia in Lithuania), Hołny (now Hołny Wolmera in Poland) and Kotra, Dziembrowo and Wołkowysk (now Kotra, Dembrov and Vawkavysk in Belarus). The development of these posts, dependent on the College in Grodno, was linked with important yet little-known events in the history of culture and education in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Currently, in many places, there is no object that would be associated with the presence of Jesuits, although nothing prevents one from using historical and cultural research results or integrating oneself to discover historical facts and artefacts in cultural objects that can be protected.

#### KEYWORDS:

Society of Jesus,
Polish-Lithuanian
Commonwealth,
college, Terra Jesuitica
Gradniensia, missions

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:
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#### ABSTRAKT

Dzieje kolegium jezuickiego w Grodnie są przedstawione w publikacjach encyklopedycznych i wydawnictwach turystycznych. Wiele zagadnień jest też opracowanych przez historyków architektury i kultury. Pozawala to bez zbędnych powtórzeń odwołać się do istniejących badań w języku rosyjskim, białoruskim i polskim. W artykule przedstawiono wyniki badań nad obecnością Towarzystwa Jezusowego na pograniczu dzisiejszej Litwy, Polski i Białorusi. Oprócz zespołu architektonicznego kolegium jezuickiego w Grodnie (Hrodna), inne namacalne ślady dziedzictwa kulturowego jezuitów na tym terenie są słabo zachowane. Dlatego w artykule opisano historię misji w Mereczu, Urdominie i Rotnicy (obecnie Merkinė, Rudamina i Ratnyčia na Litwie), w Hołnym (obecnie Hołny Wolmera w Polsce) oraz w Kotrze, Dziembrowie i Wołkowysku (obecnie Kotra, Dembrov i Vawkavysk na Białorusi). Rozwój tych misji zależnych od Kolegium w Grodnie związany był z ważnymi, choć mało znanymi wydarzeniami w historii kultury i edukacji w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów.

Obecnie w wielu miejscowościach nie ma żadnego obiektu, który kojarzyłby się z obecnością jezuitów. Jednak nic nie stoi na przeszkodzie, aby wykorzystać wyniki badań historycznych i kulturowych, integrować odkryte fakty historyczne i artefakty w obiekty dziedzictwa kulturowego, które mają być chronione.

Terra Jesuitica Grodniensia was located in the current border-lands between Belarus, Lithuania, and Poland. The Jesuit College in Grodno was its centre, and its peripheral missions included posts in Merecz, Urdomin and Rotnica (now Merkinė, Rudamina and Ratnyčia in Lithuania), Hołny (now Hołny Wolmera in Poland), and Kotra, Dziembrowo and Wołkowysk (now Kotra, Dembrov and Vawkavysk in Belarus). Kundzin, near Grodno, now a Polish village, should be added to this list; Stefan Batory presented it to the College in Grodno, but it eventually became part of the foundation of the novitiate house in Vilnius.

The history of the Jesuit College in Grodno has been described in several encyclopaedic publications and tourist guidebooks. Historians of architecture and culture have also focused on selected aspects, and thus readers interested in the topic can find relevant information thereon in studies published in Russian, Belarusian and Polish (Załęski 1905: 1224-1246; Kvitnickaâ 1977: 30-38; Paszenda 1999: 191-212; Kałamajska-Saeed 2002: 517-525; Bažènava, Ârašèvìč 2005; Borowik 2005: 171-180; Lâvšuk 2008: 96–104; Ślìž 2010: 66-98). This article concentrates on searching for traces of the Jesuits near Grodno on the Belarusian-Polish-Lithuanian border. Limited information from Ludwik Grzebień's Encyklopedia wiedzy o jezuitach na ziemiach Polski i Litwy, 1564-1995 [Encyclopaedia of Knowledge about the Jesuits on the Territories of Poland and Lithuania, 1564–1995] (Grzebień 1996) will be used as a starting point.

## Merecz (Merkinė)

The missionary post of the College in Grodno, located in the parish church in Merecz (which became a residence in 1755), was the second largest post (the College itself being the largest) of the Society of Jesus in the vicinity of Grodno. It was founded in 1676 "for the greater glory of God" (*Volumina legum...* 1860: 213) by Michał Kazimierz Pac (1626–1682), the Starost of Merecz and the Great Hetman of Lithuania, who added to it the Hołowacze estate (*Hołowacze* 1900: 569), which he had previously purchased from the noble Rukiewicz (Załęski 1905: 1230). Moreover, using his own funds, Pac built a church and a house for missionaries in the royal lands in Rotnica (*Rotnica* 1888: 812), which he also added to the Merecz Foundation.

Why Merecz? There are several reasons why the Jesuits' new post was located there. One of them was connected with logistical improvements. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania of that time, the Pac family, thanks to the outstanding military and administrative skills of Michał Kazimierz (Link-Lenczowski 1979: 728-729), overshadowed the Radziwiłł and Sapieha families. Influenced by the Lithuanian nobility under the leadership of Michał Kazimierz Pac, in 1673 the pacification sejm decided that every third ordinary sejm would be held in Grodno. In the future, this would mean a cyclical relocation—from Vilnius to Grodno—of the centre of the political life of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and of various offices

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Załęski incorrectly gives the name of Bukiewicz here.



held by its clergy and laity. Travellers from Vilnius to Grodno could reach Merecz after a two-day journey and the village of Rotnica after a one-day journey.

Another reason for Michał Kazimierz Pac's generosity towards the Jesuits resulted from the changes in the political situation of the region. Pac, the Great Hetman of Lithuania, competed for political power and military glory with Jan Sobieski (1629–1696), the Great Hetman of the Crown. Sometimes the rivalry took the form of open hostility, which changed in 1676 when Sobieski was elected king.

As a boy, King John III Sobieski studied at a Jesuit school. He also entrusted the Jesuits with the upbringing of his own children. He sponsored Jesuit philosophers, corresponded with Generals of the Order, and admired St. Stanislaus Kostka, as he believed that this Saint's intercession with the Mother of God was the reason for his victories on the battlefield. The traces of the King's special cult of St. Stanislaus Kostka are still present in the former Jesuit church in Grodno: a relief depicting the revelation of St. Stanislaus Kostka praying in front of Our Lady in the clouds above the field of the Battle of Chocim in 1621 (Paszenda 2000: 44), placed in one of the side altars in 1707, can be admired to this day. (Stanisław Kosobudzki, the founder of the Grodno religious house, died in this battle (Załęski 1905: 1225). However, the composition of the battle was mistakenly modelled on the figures taken from the relief "The Battle of Chocim 1673" from Wilanów Palace in Warsaw, with Sobieski on horseback in its centre. The unknown author of the historically false reredos can be excused, however, as, on the eve of the battle of 1673, Sobieski actually prayed to Stanislaus Kostka for the victory of the Polish army. On the other hand, immediately after the Battle of Chocim in 1673, Pac, in an act of disobedience, led the Lithuanian soldiers back home, not allowing Sobieski to consolidate his military success in political terms. Later, during the sejm, this allowed the Radziwiłłs to accuse Pac of malicious counteraction to the interests of the Kingdom of Poland (Przyboś 1979: 721-728). After Sobieski was elected king, Pac had to adapt to the new structure of political power, and the Merecz Foundation helped him to gain the King's support through the Jesuits, who were the monarch's friends.

The first missionary from the College in Grodno came to Merecz in 1679. This was Father David Lindykovich (1645–1702) (ARSI,

Lit. 56: Cat. Brev. 1679, f. 245–245v), who became a preacher and confessor in the parish church and for 15 years performed his pastoral work in Polish and Lithuanian. Each year, until the beginning of the Northern War, two new Jesuit missionaries were sent to help him. Between 1707 and 1720, due to the recurring appearance of various troops, the mission in Merecz was frequently forced to cease its activity. In 1710, the misery caused by the war was further exacerbated by an epidemic, which resulted in the deaths of two missionaries who voluntarily served the sick: Father Michał Filimonowicz (1666–1710) and Father Jan Słomkewicz (1665–1710) (Grzebień 1996: 148–149).

In the period between 1723 and 1753, the mission in Merecz was drawn into the conflict between the Vilnius Academy and the Piarists over the exclusive right to run schools in the area (Szulc 1939: 70–144). Bishop Brzostowski invited the Piarists to Vilnius in 1722, initially only to assist in several duties in the seminary and the chapter. However, the Piarists from Vilnius, financially supported by the Foundation of the Starost of Merecz, Antoni Kazimierz Sapieha (1689–1739), soon started to recruit students to their schools, which, obviously, created competition for the schools run by the Jesuits. In Merecz, the Piarists received several foundations, but in Grodno, the Jesuits managed to open their schools first. Thanks to new foundations (the estates of Oława (Alovė), Lebiedzie (Lebedžiai), Massaliszki (Masališkės), and Rynkowszczyzna (Rinkai) (Załęski 1905: 1231)), in 1726 the Jesuits opened a grammar school in this town.

In 1726, during the sejm in Grodno, the Jesuits were granted the exclusive right to run schools in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and the Piarists obtained the foundation from Jerzy Józefowicz Hlebicki for their school in Szczuczyn (Shchuchyn), 60 kilometres from Grodno (Ausz 2017: 13). In 1732, the students who had been expelled from the Jesuit College for brawling were admitted to the Piarist College in Vilnius. The conflict between the Jesuit College in Grodno and the Piarist College in Vilnius was reported to both the King and the Pope: Warsaw took the side of the Jesuits, while Rome took the side of the Piarists.

Meanwhile, in 1735, the Piarists received new foundations in Błotno (now Voranava in the Grodno Region) and Gieranony (Hieraniony), and in 1736 the Lithuanian province of the Piarist Order



was separated from the Polish province. But as early as 1738, the Piarists had lost their case in the assessors' courts in Brześć (Brest) and Warsaw and were sentenced to close their schools and foreclose their property in order to cover the trial costs. The Jesuits' patron in these courts was Marcin Olizarowicz, the Carver of Grodno (Szulc 1939: 124). However, the sentence was not executed because of the active opposition of the monks. For example, the Piarists closed themselves off with guns and people in their Merecz estate, and they did not let the executors in. In 1740, the new court sentence was executed with greater determination, and on 5th May the Piarists' property in Merecz was reclaimed, and as early as 13th May, "at the instigation of Mrs. Scipio, the widow of the Castellan of Smoleńsk, an expulsion was made" (Szulc 1939: 133). In autumn 1740, the brave Piarists led by Teresa née Józefowicz-Hlebicki, the bold widow of Jan Scipio del Campo, the Castellan of Smoleńsk (she was the founder of the Piarist school in Błotno), and Anna Ogińska née Judycka (?), who incited their resistance (she was the founder of the Piarists in Lida), were again sentenced to banishment and infamy. The Piarists had to withdraw: their public schools in Vilnius were closed, with the exception of a private boarding school for several boys, and their schools in other places limited the number of students. The Jesuits maintained their monopoly, but within several years the Piarists' boarding school in Warsaw, opened in 1740 by Stanisław Konarski and modelled on the school in Vilnius, became the nucleus of a new competitive education system.

After the turbulent events of 1740, it was decided to expand the Jesuit mission in Merecz, which was achieved in the period between 1742 and 1745 (Grzebień 1996: 416). In 1755 the mission was enlarged to a size allowing it to be transformed into a residence, with four priests working in the church, two teachers-scholastics teaching at school, and two coadjutor brothers helping with its daily maintenance activities. Initially, the Jesuits conducted their pastoral services within the walls of the parish church. Their own wooden church of the Elevation of the Holy Cross was built in the period between 1742 and 1746. The Jesuits received silver, church equipment and home-made clothes as gifts from Łaniewski, the Master of the Hunt of Grodno, and his wife and from Salomea Radziwiłł *née* Sapieha, the wife of the Voivode of Nowogród, who embroidered the altar

cloths herself. In 1753, Jan Dauksza (1715–1758) became the superior of the residence in Merecz, and managed this religious house until his death in 1758. His achievements include the introduction of agricultural innovations in the area and placing a clock on one of the two towers of the Jesuit church, whose bell signalled the beginning and the end of school and set the pace of life in the town. The Provincial catalogues note that, at that time, the missionaries from Merecz were engaged in pastoral activities in the neighbouring Belarusian villages (perhaps in the Belarusian language, although there is no direct evidence of this) and periodically stayed in Urdomin and Rotnica.

The lower school with the Infima class was opened in Merecz in around 1696, and the Grammatica class was added to it in 1726. In around 1740, the Jesuits opened a music boarding house for poor boys at the residence. Between 1742 and 1746, a new school building was built next to the church, and in 1747 Poetics and Rhetoric classes were opened; the former included history as a subject. After the dissolution of the Order in 1773, the school was taken over by the Commission of National Education, but the Jesuits continued to teach there. In 1776 they handed the school and the library over to the Dominicans (Grzebień 1996: 416). In the 19th century, the Dominican monastery was also closed down and all their property, including the items inherited from the Jesuits, was transferred to other places.

# Rotnica (Ratnyčia)

The Foundation Act of the mission in Merecz stated that the Jesuits were to provide pastoral services for the inhabitants of the village of Rotnica, located in the forests belonging to Michał Kazimierz Pac, the Starost of Merecz. For this purpose, following the provisions of the sejm constitution from 1676, Pac built a small "church with a house" for missionaries (*Volumina legume...* 1860: 213). Rotnica was situated midway between Grodno and Merecz. A missionary from Merecz went there once in a while to offer pastoral services. The *Stownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego* [*The Geographical Dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland*] states that Leon Sapieha built a new wooden church in Rotnica in 1762 to honour St. Bartholomew the Apostle (*Rotnica* 1888: 812). The *Encyklopedia wiedzy o jezuitach* 



[Encyclopaedia of Knowledge about the Jesuits] emphasises the fact that Sapieha built this church for the Jesuits (Grzebień 1996: 580). The documents regarding the Sapieha family do not mention any family member whose first or second name was Leon who was alive in 1762, and therefore the question of the identity of the second founder (Pac was the first) of the church in Rotnica remains unanswered. The church was dismantled in 1910 and replaced by a neo-Romanesque temple. Nowadays Rotnica is a district of the city of Druskininkai.

# Urdomin (Rudamina)

The Provincial catalogues do not provide a lot of information regarding the third Jesuit mission in Lithuania—their post in Urdomin (Rudamina). It was first mentioned in the catalogues in 1756 as a mission of the residence in Merecz, with Father Adam Skorodyński (1712–1748) and Father Maciej Widziski (1724–1788) working there (ARSI, Lit. 59: Cat. brev. 1756–57. Typ. Acad. Vilnae, pp. XII–XIV). In 1759 they were replaced by Father Michał Zacharewicz (1726-after 1773) and Father Szymon Lenartowicz (1716-1782) (ARSI, Lit. 59. Cat. brev. 1759–60, f. 50–51. Typ. Acad. Vilnae, pp. IX-XI). Szymon Lenartowicz worked there for fifteen years, and after the dissolution of the Order in 1773, he lived and worked in Merecz. In the academic year 1772/73, Lenartowicz was helped by the prefect of schools in Merecz, Father Stanislaw Peter (1720after 1773) (Grzebień 1996: 711). It is possible that he compiled an inventory before the school was handed over to the Commission of National Education.

Despite a lack of information about the Jesuit mission in Urdomin, outlining the links between this village and the Society of Jesus embedded in a broader historical context allows us to notice the connections between global processes and local history. In 1563 King Sigismund Augustus bestowed the town of Urdomin, located in the Merecz Forest, on his subject, Grzegorz Massalski (d. 1596), as a reward for his implementation of the Volok Reform (a land reform) and for developing uninhabited royal forests (Wiśniewski 1975: 134). In 1592, Massalski and his wife Maria founded a church and parish in Urdomin (*Urdomin* 1892: 817).

Massalski sent two of his sons to study abroad. In 1584 Łukasz Felicjan Massalski and Aleksander Massalski were listed as students of the University of Königsberg, in 1589 they were students of the University of Heidelberg, in 1590—the University of Basel, and in 1592—the University of Padua. In Padua, their guardian was Andrzej Skorulski of Skorulej (now a district of the city of Jonah), a faithful companion of Mikołaj Krzysztof "the Orphan" Radziwiłł (1549–1616). Skorulski's daughter, Katarzyna Konstancja, married Łukasz Felicjan, who inherited Urdomin (Lulewicz 1997: 269–270). From then on, Urdomin was under the influence of the Jesuits.

In 1582, Skorulski (d. 1637) accompanied Radziwiłł "the Orphan" during the pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Archiwum Domu Radziwiłłów... 1885: XII), which had far-reaching consequences for the Society of Jesus in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This pilgrimage took place at the time when the first generation of Jesuits who were to replace the generation of the founding fathers received their education in the Order. As the Jesuits expanded their structures, they urgently needed more people and, at the same time, faced an organisational crisis connected with self-determination. Therefore, the presence of Jesuits among other members of a small group of pilgrims from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is worth noting. Radziwiłł's nine companions included two of them—Father Leonard Pacificus, whom Radziwiłł personally chose as his companion and asked the General of the Order for special permission for him, and a coadjutor brother, of whom we only know that he was from Cyprus (Mikołaja Krzysztofa Radziwilla... 1925: 39). Two other Jesuits sent by the Pope on a mission to Syria sailed with them on the same ship.

The peregrinations of Radziwiłł "the Orphan" are similar to those of Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order (Loyola 2013: 184). For example, like Loyola, at the age of 26 (in 1575), Radziwiłł "the Orphan" reflected on his previous life and found it sinful and meaningless (*Mikołaja Krzysztofa Radziwiłła* ... 1925: 2). Loyola reflected on his life during the recovery period after his war injuries, which he mostly spent in silence and stillness, while Radziwiłł was motivated by an illness that caused his temporary deafness. Both vowed to make a pilgrimage if they healed and then recovered. However, unlike Loyola, Radziwiłł "the Orphan" did not keep his vow immediately, but only after his head was wounded under the walls



of Połock (Polotsk), which he interpreted as a reminder of the unkept vow. Radziwiłł, like Loyola, chose the road to Jerusalem through Venice and not through Turkey, as Stefan Batory had advised him (Mikołaja Krzysztofa Radziwiłła... 1925: 4). And finally, after his return, Radziwiłł, like Loyola, radically changed his life. He gradually withdrew from active public life, got married and started to change the world around him. The first important events in Radziwiłł's new life were the foundation of the Jesuit College and the building of the Corpus Christi Church in Nieśwież (Nesvizh).

Andrzej Skorulski accompanied Radziwiłł "the Orphan" all the time. His wife Zofia helped to raise and educate Radziwiłl's children, who had lost their mother, in Nieśwież. The Skorulski family showed great generosity towards various religious orders, especially the Jesuits. In 1620 Andrzej offered 20,000 zlotys to establish a boarding house for the poor youth in Nieśwież, and in 1628 he founded a college in Kaunas and a chapel in the Corpus Christi Church in Nieśwież, where he was buried in 1637. His eldest daughter joined the Benedictine Order, for whom Andrzej founded a monastery in Kaunas. His eldest son joined the Franciscans, and his other two sons became Jesuits. One of them, Zachariasz Skorulski (1589–1639), was one of three Jesuits who were engaged in organising the post in Grodno in 1622. During the first months of this organisation, they lived in a private house owned by members of the Massalski family (Załęski 1905: 1226)—Łukasz Felicjan and Katarzyna Konstancja née Skorulska, who owned Urdomin.

In 1773 the history of the first Jesuits in Grodno ended with the presence of another representative of the Skorulski family. Józef Skorulski (1718–1776), the last rector of the Jesuit College in Grodno, was a younger brother of Father Antoni Skorulski (1715–1777), the most eminent philosopher of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the second half of the 18th century (Darowski 1997: 270–272). Antoni Skorulski was also the penultimate Provincial of the Lithuanian Province and the last rector of the Vilnius Academy appointed by the General of the Order. As the Rector, he received permission from the General of the Order to introduce radical changes in the educational process: for example, professors and students could use not only handwritten notes, but also textbooks.

Today visitors who go to Urdomin can admire the church and a manor house built by the Bishop of Vilnius Ignacy Massalski (1726–1794), who earned an unsavoury, though perhaps undeserved, reputation for the way in which he handled the former Jesuit property (Szybiak 1975: 135–139). However, there are no material traces of the Jesuit mission there.

## Hołny (Hołny Wolmera)

The missionary post of the Jesuit College in Holny operated in the years 1664-1773 next to the lake of the same name. Today the village is called Hołny Wolmera and is located in the Podlaskie Voivodeship in Sejny County. The estate was purchased by the Jesuit Provincial Jan Rywocki (1600–1666) at the same time as the Kotra estate. In return, the Provincial sold the Świsłocz (Svislach) estate. This happened in around 1664, when, before the transformation of the residence into a College, the Provincial sold several geographically scattered estates of the Jesuits and bought the adjacent ones in their place, trying to create large economic units that would be able to secure the future College's financial stability with minimum human resources. The estate of the Jesuits from Grodno in Miłaszewszczyzna was located one mile from Holny. In 1630 Krzysztof Morawiecki and his wife Konstancja, née Miławska, had bequeathed Miłaszewszczyzna with the manor farms of Kukła, Jurczyna, Kajmiele, Bojary and Moteiki to the Jesuits with a view to establishing a music boarding house for five boys (ARSI. Pol. 75, f. 161 [Elenhus benefactorum Collegii Grodnensis elogiae propositus, f. 157-164v]). Sometimes the Jesuit priests were appointed prosecutors of the estates in Holny to facilitate their missionary work in this area. They included: Father Jan Rittel (1661–1710), who worked there between 1702 and 1708; Father Jan Chojnowski (1659–1711), who worked there between 1708 and 1711; Father Stefan Kostrowski (1661–1739), who worked there between 1711 and 1712; and Father Józef Gasiorowski (1699–1749), who worked there between 1743 and 1744 (Grzebień 1996: 219).

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Hołny was hit by several heavy blows. In 1708 it was looted by Sapieha's soldiers (Chorągiew) during the Northern War. In 1710 a plague killed 628 people and almost depopulated the village (Załęski 1905: 1241). In the winter of 1737, when the



Volhynian cavalry (Chorągiew) stopped there, a careless soldier started a fire, in which the entire village burned down and 21 people died (Rąkowski 2005: 125). In 1767 a man named Buchowiecky (Załęski 1905: 1244) invaded Hołny with his followers and attempted to take the estate away from the Jesuits. He might have been a descendant of Michał Buchowiecki (d. 1727), a writer from Grodno, who owned a part of Hołny and had bequeathed it to the Dominicans in Sejny (Seinai) (Kłapkowski 1938: 100–101). This part of Hołny passed from hand to hand, and—named after its last owner—it was called Meyer's Hołny. The Jesuits from Grodno sued the perpetrator of the invasion with unknown results.

After the dissolution of the Order, the Jesuit parts of the estates in Hołny and Miłaszewsczyzna were transferred to the Fund of the Commission of National Education. At first they were managed by Michał Borewicz and then by Kazimierz Wolmer (d. after 1795), a district magistrate from Grodno. Together with Bishop Ignacy Massalski, Wolmer worked on the commission for the first partition of the Kingdom of Poland. In 1781 he paid the Commission of National Education 6,000 zlotys annual rent for the lease of the estates and registered them as his property, which is reflected in its modern name—Hołny Wolmera (Wolmer's Hołny) (Grzebień 1996: 219).

### Kundzin

Today Kundzin is a small Polish village in the immediate vicinity of the border checkpoint between Belarus and Poland. The Kundzin estate, which was part of the Grodno domain, was donated by King Stefan Batory to the foundation of the College in Grodno. After the King's death, the Jesuits leased Kundzin out, which brought them an annual income of about 600 zlotys. For a long time this money was the main source of income for the Jesuit novitiate house in Vilnius. Gradually, however, due to the dishonesty of its tenants, the Jesuits almost lost their income and tried to regain their control over this estate. King Sigismund III Vasa decided to fulfil Batory's will and gave Kundzin back to the Jesuits, which happened in 1632 thanks to the efforts of the Provincial Mikołaj Łęczycki (1574–1653), the author of ascetic and polemical works written in Latin that were very popular in Europe at that time. The Vilnius novitiate rebuilt the former

royal hunting palace in Kundzin into a villa, which served as a shelter for novices and professors during the war and the plague (1656–1662). Before 1655 the Jesuits also rebuilt the old wooden church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (built in 1562 or 1565 by King Sigismund Augustus), where they founded a mission. It was a place where the professed fathers worked as priests and the Jesuit novices acquired practical skills in teaching catechism. In 1668 King John II Casimir Vasa visited Kundzin and bade farewell to the novices before his abdication and departure from the country. As the owners of land and property, the Jesuits had certain military obligations. Thus, in 1765, on behalf of the Vilnius novitiate house, the Jesuits from Kundzin put up a "horse rider on a chestnut-coloured horse with a sword and a pistol" for the poviat military inspection of the nobility (Akty, izdavaemye Vilenskoù arheografičeskoù komissieû, vol. 7, 1867–1915: 396).

After the dissolution of the Order, Kundzin returned to the Grodno domain and was sold to Franciszek Bouffał-Doroszkiewicz (d. 1805), the Marshal of Sokólszczyzna and the commissioner of the Boni Ordinis Commission of Grodno Poviat, whose epitaph can be found in the left nave of the former Jesuit church in Grodno (Mościcki 1936: 378). In the 18th century, two Jesuits came from the Bouffał family: Józef Bouffał (1720-after 1774) and Michał Bouffał (1788–1835). The former was the head of the mission in Wołkowysk (Vawkavysk) in the years 1769–1770, and the dissolution of the Order found him in the College in Grodno, where he probably died, and he was buried in the crypt of the Jesuit church. The latter joined the Order in Połock in 1802, where he studied and taught, and from 1820 he worked in the houses of the Society of Jesus in Galicia.

There are many more material traces of the Jesuit presence on the Belarusian side of the Belarusian-Lithuanian-Polish border than in Poland and Lithuania. The College in Grodno and its missionary posts in Kotra, Dziembrowo (Dembrov) and Wołkowysk (Vawkavysk) were located at the shortest distance from the present-day border.

## Kotra

The Kotra estate, like the Holny estate in the Suwalki region, was purchased by the Jesuits from Grodno thanks to the efforts of their Provincial Jan Rywocki in 1664, who paid 24,000 Polish zlotys for it



(ARSI, Lit. 40, f. 290). Like Hołny, Kotra remained their estate for a long time, and was managed by a brother oekonomus. Kotra was mentioned in the chronicle of the College in Grodno for the first time in 1733 because of its demolition by Piotr Lassi (1678–1751) and his Russian Cossacks on their way to Warsaw to the election sejm. Lassi had a supply problem because he had received an order from St. Petersburg to pay for food for people and animals only with Russian money. The local inhabitants did not know such currency and did not want to accept it. Lassi's foragers soon resorted to looting. In Kotra, the nobility from Lida stood up for the Jesuits, chased away a group of marauders and killed some of them. Then a regular unit of 100 Cossacks was sent to Kotra from the main camp. The brother oekonomus was wounded twice, but managed to take refuge in the forest, together with all the local population, but the village, the farm, and the chapel were completely looted (Załęski 1905: 1243).

The old church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, previously a branch of the parish church in the town of Jeziory (Aziory), was given to the Jesuits in around 1750 for their missionary services in Kotra. The church housed a miraculous painting of Our Lady (ARSI, Lit. 50, f. 189; Kurczewski 1912: 224, 259), and, during the epidemic in 1710, thanks to the protection of the painting, Kotra was the only post belonging to the College in Grodno not to be affected by the plague (Załęski 1905: 1241). In the period between 1749 and 1750, the Jesuits from Grodno built a new wooden church in Kaszubińce, the village belonging to the Kotra estate. There is evidence that in 1939 the main altar of the church was still decorated with a painting of Our Lady of the Snows (Szydłowski 2012), whose cult was typical of the Jesuits. Ludwik Grzebień's Encyklopedia wiedzy o jezuitach [Encyclopaedia of Knowledge about the Jesuits] states that the church was built on the foundations of the dismantled building of the orthodox Uniate church and then used to serve God in Latin and Greek rituals (Grzebień 1996: 311). A sundial has been preserved on the wall of the church. At that time, knowing the exact hour was necessary only to conduct classes at school, but no information about the Jesuit school in Kotra-Kaszubińce is available. The missionaries working there changed annually and included (from 1750 onwards): Father Kazimierz Borucki (1711–1751), who laid the foundations of the church, Father Andrzei Rozwadowski (1698-1772), Father Piotr Stapowicz (1710-1770), Father Franciszek Paszkowski (1711-1767), and Father Michał Tracewski (1702-1764). In 1755 missionary fathers stopped living there and went to Kotra only to perform their pastoral services, and then for the next three years, i.e. 1756-1758, Father Ignacy Brudnicki (1716–1780) lived there. Afterwards, the Jesuit missionaries only occasionally lived there permanently. In principle, the Jesuits who worked with the local inhabitants on a permanent basis specialised in this kind of pastoral service. Therefore, the appointment of a person who specialised in something else, e.g. teaching, preaching or administration, was to be treated as a special case. In this context, it is worth noting that Father Josef Sadecki (1715-1764) worked as a missionary in the area in the period between 1759 and 1760, although he had previously worked as a professor of philosophy at the College in Grodno, and Father Fabian Dochtorowicz (1694–1766), a former royal and parliamentary preacher, who had also been the rector of the Colleges in Pułtusk, Warsaw and Grodno, was a missionary there in the years 1763 and 1764. In the following years, 'ordinary' missionaries working in Kotra included Father Felix Orda (1734-after 1783) in the years 1767-1768 and Father Matthew Schultz (1734-1794) in the years 1768-1769.

After the dissolution of the Order, the Kotra estate became part of the Grodno royal domain. Before 1814, the former Jesuit church in Kaszubińce was probably left without parishioners, and then it was suggested to pass it to the Orthodox clergy of the village of Kotra, whose temple was old and dilapidated. In the *Grodzieński prawosławny kalendarz* [*Grodno Orthodox Calendar*], this event is mentioned in the following way:

Less than a mile from the church in Kaszubińce—in the village of Kaszubińce—there is a church without a parish in which there is a picture of Nicolas the Wonderworker, worshipped by the local people; it was transformed from an Orthodox church into a church with the courage of the Bernardines and the Dominicans from the town of Jeziory on 9th May 1814, who came here with their own organ from the church in Jeziory and reintroduced their ecclesiastical service here—with a confirmation of this, as if the actual right, on the basis of the Latin consistory on 9th July 1815, as this and the church in Kotra were written about in "Litewskie jeparchiane wiadomości" ["Lithuanian diocesan news"] in 1866, no. 9: 340–357 and no. 8: 302–303—because there are



188 Orthodox inhabitants in Kaszubińce and there is hardly any Latin rite—only one family of the former governor of Duke Czećwierciński is mentioned, who watch over the church, protect it and maintain it. (Ep. Iosif [Sokolov] 1899: 17–18)

In the modern encyclopaedia (Kulagin 2001: 79), only six lines are devoted to the church in Kaszubińce: it was built by the Jesuits in 1750, closed by the Soviet authorities in 1962, and returned to the parishioners in 1999.

## Dziembrowo (Dembrov)

The village of Dziembrowo is situated in the present Szczuczyn area of the Grodno region. In 1669 an ambitious young politician, Judge Elijah Michał Rymwid (Rynwid) (d. 1696) of the Lis coat of arms, founded the town on the site of the village that had been destroyed during the Swedish Deluge, Cossack and Moscow invasions (Rachuba 1994: 554-555). To make this town stand out from the rest of the area, Rymwid decided to build a brick temple of the Holy Trinity with a view to creating a parish there. Together with his third wife, Beata Teresa née Piękosławska, Rymwid founded a Jesuit mission at the church in 1676, which was subordinated to the College in Grodno (Volumina legum... vol. V, 1860: 308). The Constitution of the coronation sejm in 1676 mentions that King John III Sobieski, who was generous to the Jesuits, extended this foundation of the Rymwid family to the village of Oplejki, created de novo radice (i.e. from a raw trunk), which was part of the royal estate (Volumina legum... vol. V, 1860: 308).

Perhaps Rymwid planned to open a Jesuit school in Dziembrowo, but it never happened. He was more interested in political activity in Warsaw and Grodno than in the development of Dziembrowo, which remained a small town. However, when Rymwid died in 1696, the foundation of the Jesuit mission in Dziembrowo grew to a size that allowed for the permanent presence of two priests (Grzebień 1996: 141), which indicates that the Jesuits must have been mentioned in his will. In around 1700, the only son of Elijah Michał Rymwid, Jan Eliasz Rymwid, the Starost of Nowy Dwór (Novy Dvor) and Stejgwile (Steigviliai), died. At the same time, from 1700, the annual catalogue of the College in Grodno called one of the missionaries in

Dziembrowo a superior, which may indicate a further increase in the size of the foundation.

Belarusian researchers of the history of the (post-Jesuit) parish church in Grodno mention Rymwid as the founder of the chapel of the student congregation in the new Jesuit church (Bažènava, Ârašèvič 2005: 36). Today it is the chapel of Archangel Michael, because the congregation and the miraculous painting of Congregational Our Lady (Student Mother) were moved to the opposite chapel, founded in 1698 by the Puchalski family. In the chapel of Archangel Michael, there is a stone slab with the Lis and Abdank coat of arms. The third wife of Michał Rymwid, Beata Teresa née Pienkosławska (d. after 1710) (Rachuba 1994: 554-555), was of the Abdank coat of arms; she is often mistaken (including even by the Encyklopedia wiedzy o jezuitach [Encyclopaedia of Knowledge about the [Jesuits]) with Krystyna Rymwid née Grużewska (Załęski 1905: 1232; Grzebień 1996: 141), who could have been the wife of Jan Eliasz, the son of the founder of Dziembrowo. (After the death of her husband, Krystyna Rymwid, née Grużewska, married a man named Grabowski (Niesiecki 1839: 302-303). For the years 1712-1713, the Provincial catalogues mention two missionaries in Dziembrowo: Father Andrzej Sielawski, a commuter missionary, and Stefan Kostrowski, a missionary living in the manor house of the noble Mrs Rymwid (ARSI, Lit. 50, f. 189).

From 1720 only one missionary served in the mission in Dziembrowo and lived in a parsonage built by Rymwid. In 1752 two missionaries worked there again, and in 1756, after a mission house was built, three. For some time one of them served as an assistant missionary in Wołkowysk Wołkowysku (ARSI, Lit. 59: Cat. Brev. 1756/57, pp. I–LVIII).

After the dissolution of the Order, the Jesuit property in Dziembrowo became the material basis of the functioning of the local parish and a school run by it. The parish in Dziembrowo was closed in 1863, when Father Romuald Skibiński (1832–1888) was sent for eight years to Siberia for *katorga* (hard labour) as punishment for his reading out the Manifesto of the January Uprising. The parish was liquidated and the church was transformed into an Orthodox church (Krahel 2003a). At the beginning of the German occupation in 1915, the church was left without a priest, and the military



authorities transformed it into a granary. The Catholic parish in Dziembrowo was reactivated in 1905. In 1915 Father Witold Kuźmicki (1885–1943) was appointed its parish priest. Thanks to his efforts, the church was returned to the Catholics in 1919. In 1943 Father Kuźmicki and other hostages were imprisoned by the Germans in the building of the former Grodno college and shot on 17th July 1943 in Fort No. 2 in Naumowicze (Naumovichi) near Grodno (Krahel 2003b). After being closed by the Soviet authorities in 1950, the building of the former Jesuit church in Dziembrowo was used for various purposes. The parish was reactivated in 1989 and the building returned to it in 1990. After being consecrated, it has been used as a church to this day.

## Wołkowysk (Vawkavysk)

Although the Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego [The Geographical Dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland] states that the Jesuit religious house in Wołkowysk was founded by Oskerko in 1598 (Wołkowysk 1893: 87), according to the information obtained by Jan Marek Giżycki (whose pen name was Wołyniak) (Wołyniak 1905: 10) in 1905, the mission of the Jesuits in Wołkowysk was founded by Jerzy Linowski (1699–1744), who had been the procurator of the Jesuit Province for a long time and who, before making his solemn vows (professions), bequeathed his hereditary property to the Order in 1736. The article in the Encyklopedia wiedzy o jezuitach [Encyclopaedia of Knowledge about the Jesuits (Grzebień 1996: 757–758) is based on this information. However, a contemporary researcher, Marcin Zgliński (Zgliński 2006: 81-91), found an important document from 1797 in the inventory of the former Jesuit church in Wolkowysk, kept in the Library of the Academy of Sciences of Lithuania (Lietuvos mokslų akademijos Vrublevskių biblioteka. Signature 43-23855). According to this document, the foundation was established by Katarzyna Elżbieta Puzyna née Ogińska, the wife of the Castellan of Mścisław, and Józef Antoni Kaczanowski (d. 1949), the chamberlain of Wołkowysk. Most probably, all these estates bequeathed to the Jesuits were small, scattered or did not have a clear legal status. Therefore, the further history of the mission in Wołkowysk described by Giżycki appears to be a very complicated story. In the years

1737-1740, two missionaries from different places were engaged in the missionary service in Wołkowysk: Father Jerzy Linowski from the Professors' House in Vilnius and Father Stanisław Karwacki (1700–1759) from the College in Grodno. In 1740 Father Linowski had to take certain documents to Vilnius, however he was beaten, robbed and lost the papers on the way (Załęski 1905: 1234). In 1740 the former rector of the College in Grodno, Franciszek Grzymała (1796-1866) (ARSI, Lit. 58: Cat. Brev. 1740/41, f. 124v), was appointed as a missionary in Wołkowysk. He tried to add the village of Modejki (Modeiszki), the property of his family, to the mission, but due to disputes between his relatives, these attempts failed. Grzymała regained his position as the rector in Grodno but, after the mission in Wołkowysk was subordinated to the Jesuit residence in Słonim (Slanimas), it almost ceased its activity due to a lack of resources. This is evidenced by the fact that from 1741–1748 only one missionary worked there—Franciszek Karp (1694–1756), who helped the priests from St. Nicholas Church in their pastoral activities.

The mission in Wołkowysk began its rapid development in 1747 when the Piarists acquired the suburban estate of Dunikówka. They had already acquired the town of Roś, not far from Wołkowysk, with a missionary post subordinated to the College in Szczuczyn, and they also owned some lands in Wołkowysk. The purchase of the suburban areas indicated their intention to open a Piarist school in this town, which triggered an increase in the local activity of the Jesuits. In the same year, Father Jan Dauksza, who was a relative of Father Franciszek Grzymała, offered his part of the village of Modejki to the mission in Wołkowysk. Moreover, the claims of the relatives of the deceased Father Jerzy Linowski were satisfied: the Order paid them 14,000 zlotys for the village of Kropiwnica that belonged to him. This allowed Infima, Grammatica and Syntaxis classes to be opened in Wołkowysk in the autumn of 1747. Due to the insufficient financial and human resources of the residence in Słonim, which at that time was busy with building and furnishing its own brick church, as well as problems with recruiting students for a philosophy course (opened in order to compete with the Piarists of Szczuczyn), the mission in Wołkowysk was once again placed under the jurisdiction of the College in Grodno. In 1750 Marcin Śledziewski (1702-1762) came to Wołkowysk from Merecz as a superior of the mission consisting of



three priests. It is worth noting here that none of them was named as a teacher in the catalogue from 1750 (Biblioteka Naukowa Księży Jezuitów w Krakowie. Fot. 149, k. 1–19: Cat. Brev. 1750–1751 pp. VI–VII). Perhaps the number of students was too small for a school. However, as a result of the missionaries' activity, through purchases, exchanges and donations, they soon became the owners of a large area in the centre of Wołkowysk, east of the market square. In 1753 they laid the cornerstone of the church there and quickly built the vaults of the crypt. Meanwhile, in 1754, the Piarists, seeing the futility of the competition in the area, gave up and sold their lands in Dunikówka to the Jesuits for 5,600 zlotys (Załęski 1905: 1234). In 1755 the Jesuits in Wołkowysk finished building a wooden but large church (with two rows of windows on the perimeter, a two-storey building adjacent to the chancel with a vestry, two towers in the front, and a small dome). In 1757 Bishop Jan Zieńkowicz of Vilnius consecrated the church with the name of the Most Holy Redeemer (Redemptoris). The church had eight altars (Zgliński 2006: 84), which indicates the presence of a large number of Jesuit votive duties to the local benefactors of their Order. The ideological contents of the paintings, sculptures and decorations of the altars in the church in Wołkowysk were intended to convey the Ignatian spirituality in a way that was characteristic of the Order. Only the main altar was unusual: it had a niche, covered with the painting of the Saviour's crucifixion, inside which there was a sculpture of the Pensive Christ, probably a copy of the miraculous sculpture from the church in Rosi, which had been famous for miracles since 1618 (Piramidowicz 2003: 112–113). The Jesuits also worshipped their sculpture of Jesus, as evidenced by the votive offerings surrounding it and the presence of the altar veil, suggesting a special ritual of opening and hiding the niche. The remaining altars were typical of Jesuit churches, intended primarily for students and only then for other believers. These were the altars of St. Ignatius, the founder of the Jesuit Order and the creator of the retreat; St. Stanislaus Kostka, the patron saint of the young of the Polish Crown; St. Aloysius de Gonzaga, the patron saint of students; St. Francis Xavier, the missionary in India; St. Joseph, the patron saint of teachers; Congregational Our Lady (of local value, with a copy of the miraculous painting of the Sodality of Our Lady of students from Grodno); and Our Lady of Loreto (with a copy of

the miraculous sculpture of world importance, which was particularly worshipped by students in the academic church of St. John in Vilnius).

When the church was ready, the Jesuits from Wołkowysk began to build a brick cloister building, i.e. a religious house, which in the vetting inventory of 1773 was described as unfinished. It is not clear where exactly the Jesuits had a school in Wołkowysk. It cannot have been a small building, because after the dissolution of the Order it was transformed into a subdistrict school. The church operated as an academic church until 25th April 1800, when it burned down completely. The objects that were saved from the fire were moved to the parish church of St. Nicholas, which also burned down in 1827. However, as Marcin Zgliński emphasised, the list of liturgical vessels of the parish church in Wołkowysk until 1914 included a golden cup (chalice) with the engraved inscription "Miss. Wolk. Soc. Jesu excur. 1751 Dominici Scholasticae et D. Ladislai memento," as well as a vessel for carrying the Blessed Sacrament to the sick and dying with the inscription "Collegii Polocensis Soc. Jesu" (Zgliński 2006: 83). The documents left by the Jesuits of Wołkowysk, which survived the two fires mentioned above, burned during the fire of the parish church in 1929, and they are known only through Giżycki's publication.

Summarising the study of the traces of the presence of the Society of Jesus on the border of contemporary Lithuania, Poland and Belarus, it should be stated that—except for the architectural ensemble of the Jesuit College in Grodno—the material heritage of the Jesuits in this area is poorly preserved. Wooden buildings have not been preserved at all. The temples of the Jesuit missions have either been totally rebuilt (in Rotnica and Kundzin), completely redecorated inside as a result of the change of their function (in Kaszubińce), or passed on to other religions (in Dziembrowo). There are no objects evidencing the presence of the Jesuits in Merecz, Urdomin or Wołkowysk. However, there is nothing to prevent us from using the findings of historical and cultural studies to add historical facts and artefacts to the cultural heritage of the region with a view to protecting them.



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