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Žurnalo leidybą finansavo
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PAGAL VALSTYBINĘ LITUANISTINIŲ TYRIMŲ IR SKLAIDOS
2016–2024 METŲ PROGRAMĄ
Projekto finansavimo sutartis Nr. S-LIP-22-32

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Registruota duomenų bazė:
Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in:
The Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities.
HISTORICAL ABSTRACTS. AMERICA: HISTORY AND LIFE
EBSCO Publishing. Litanistika

Recenzuojamas mokslo žurnalas, leidžiamas nuo 1971 m. Per metus išeina 1 tomas (2 numeriai)
Elektroninę straipsnių versiją pdf formatu galima rasti internetinėje svetainėje:
<https://www.istorija.lt/leidiniai/mokslo-zurnalai-ir-testiniai-leidiniai/lietuvos-istorijos-metrastis/672>

ISSN 0202-3342
e-ISSN 2538-6549

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STRAIPSNIAI

BERNADETTA M A N Y Ś

(University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań)

BEING A MOTHER OF TWO SONS. DUCHESS FRANCISZKA URSZULA WIŚNIEWIECKA-RADZIWIŁŁOWA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HER TWIN SONS IN THE LIGHT OF HER CORRESPONDENCE

ABSTRACT. The aim of the article is to deepen the research on the inter-relations within the most influential families and their members in the eighteenth-century Grand Duchy of Lithuania by attempting to look at the relations between mothers and their children, particularly sons, through the prism of ego-documents: by examining the women's letters written to the spouse, their mother-in-law, and children. The heroine of this article is Franciszka Urszula Radziwiłłowa z Wiśniowieckich, (1705–1753), the spouse of Michał Kazimierz 'Rybeńko' Radziwiłł, one of the most influential Lithuanian noblemen of the time. Her literary works and cultural activities have been extensively studied in Polish (less so in Lithuanian) historiography. These studies introduce Franciszka Urszula as a creator, a wealthy matron, and the wife of an influential nobleman. Yet in her letters to her husband, she reveals herself as a very sensitive and loving woman, full of anxiety and concern for the well-being of her husband and children. The analysis of the duchess's correspondence of 1734 to 1746 attempted to answer, among others, the following questions: what did the correspondence of the noblewoman reveal about family relations? How did she fulfil her role as a mother? How significantly was she engaged in the upbringing and education of her sons?

KEYWORDS: noble family, familial relations, mother and sons, Franciszka Urszula Radziwiłłowa z Wiśniowieckich, upbringing.

ANOTACIJA. Straipsnyje siekiama pagilinti XVIII a. Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės įtakingiausių didikų šeimų, jų narių tarpusavio santykių tyrimus, mėginant pažvelgti į motinos santykius su vaikais – sūnumis, per egodokumentų prizmę: tiriant laiškus, rašytus sutuoktiniui, anytai ir vaikams. Straipsnio herojė – Pranciška Uršulė iš Višnioveckių Radvilienė (1705–1753) buvo vieno įtakingiausių to meto Lietuvos didikų – Mykolo Kazimiero Radvilos Žuvelės sutuoktinė. Jos literatūrinė kūryba ir kultūrinė veikla yra išsamiai tyrinėta lenkų (mažiau lietuviškoje) historiografijoje. Šiuose tyrimuose Pranciška Uršulė pristatoma kaip kūrėja, turtinga matrona ir įtakingo didiko žmona. Tačiau vyrui rašytuose laiškuose ji atsiskleidžia kaip itin jautri ir mylinti moteris, kupina nerimo ir rūpesčio dėl savo vyro bei vaikų gerovės. Analizuojant kunigaikštienės korespondenciją, rašytą 1734–1746 m., buvo bandoma atsakyti, be kitų, į šiuos klausimus: kokį šeimyninių santykių vaizdą atskleidžia didikės korespondencija; kaip ji atliko savo, kaip motinos, vaidmenį; kiek buvo įsitraukusi į savo sūnų auklėjimo ir ugdymo procesą.

RAKTINIAI ŽODŽIAI: didikų šeima, šeimyniniai santykiai, motina ir sūnūs, Pranciška Uršulė iš Višnioveckių Radvilienė, auklėjimas.

Since the 1970s, daily life of gentry and magnates in the modern era has been constantly attracting a great interest among researchers in various fields of scholarship¹ and from then on, we have been given an opportunity to familiarize ourselves with greater or lesser intensity with the findings of general historians, art historians, medical historians, philologists and even educators, who have been trying to explore the history of everyday life in the early modern era. Thus, the list of addressed issues includes court life in its broadest sense, political life, celebrations and festivities, rites of passage, *sacrum* and *profanum*, education of elites and patron-client relationship. An interesting field of research has become health-condition, mentality of the noblemen, material culture and even the feelings and emotions which were constantly present in the lives of men and women. Family life of gentry and magnates, both in its demographic sense² and through the prism of prevailing relationships between family members, mainly a wife and a husband³, has been interestingly and increasingly eagerly described. The examples of

¹ An attempt to characterize the nobility's everyday life was made by Z. Kuchowicz in his work on old Polish customs, see: Z. Kuchowicz, *Obyczaje staropolskie XVII–XVIII wieku*, Łódź, 1975, see also: W. Czaplinski, J. Długosz, *Życie codzienne magnaterii polskiej w XVII wieku*, Warszawa, 1976.

² C. Kuko, *Demografia Rzeczypospolitej przedrozbiorowej*, Warszawa, 2009. Interesting findings have been brought by the literary work of M. Liedke, *Rodzina magnacka w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim w XVI–XVIII w. Studium demograficzno-społeczne*, Białystok, 2016. Also there, extensive literature on the subject.

³ *Kobieta i mężczyzna. Jedna przestroż – dwa światy*, red. B. Popiołek, A. Chłosta-Sikorska, M. Gadocha, Warszawa, 2015; A. Jakuboszczak, *Z kobiecej perspektywy. Obraz mężczyzny w osiemnastowiecznych tekstach polskich, Mężczyzna w rodzinie i społeczeństwie – ewolucja ról w kulturze polskiej i*

research fields indicated above, bearing in mind that we have mentioned only a small part of them, are more and more frequently studied from the perspective of women, bringing thought-provoking findings on their functioning both within the social and family real of the early modern era.⁴

In the context of the outlined research, due to the lack of source material or because of its limited nature, relationships between parents and their children are hard to grasp. This issue, while extremely inspiring, is still poorly recognized.⁵ This article was

europiejskiej, t. 1: *Od średniowiecza do początku XX wieku*, red. K. Kabacińska, K. Ratajczak, Poznań, 2010, s. 139–148; B. Popiołek, „Co między mężem i żoną jest, tego nikt wiedzieć nie powinien”: intymność w źródłach czasów saskich, *Publiczne, prywatne, intymne w kulturze XVIII wieku*, red. T. Kostkiewiczowa, Warszawa, 2014, s. 113–126; B. Małyś, Radości i troski Anny z Mycielskich Radziwiłłowej w listach do męża Michała Kazimierza Radziwiłła „Rybeńki”, *Kobiece kręgi korespondencyjne w XVII–XIX wieku*, red. B. Popiołek, U. Kicińska, A. Słaby, Warszawa, 2016, s. 171–186; A. Jastrzębska-Penkala, Przemoc w małżeństwach szlacheckich – analiza zjawiska w oparciu o akta z osiemnastowiecznych krakowskich ksiąg grodzkich, *W kręgu rodziny epok dawnych. Przemoc*, red. B. Popiołek, A. Chłosta-Sikorska, M. Gadocha, Kraków, 2020, s. 167–179. Widely understood relationships, not only between spouses, have been discussed on the pages of the literary works: A. Jakuboszczak, *Rodzina i rodzinność szlachcianek wielkopolskich w XVIII wieku. Perspektywa kobieca*, Poznań, 2016; and B. Popiołek, *Kobiece świat w czasach Augusta II. Studia nad mentalnością kobiet z kręgów szlacheckich*, wyd. II poszerzone, Kraków, 2018. The research also includes introduction of source material into the scientific circuit in order to analyze spousal relationships, see: *Korespondencja Elżbiety z Lubomirskich Sieniawskiej kasztelanowej krakowskiej*, t. I: *Z serca kochająca żona i uniżona sługa. Listy Elżbiety z Lubomirskich Sieniawskiej do męża Adama Mikołaja Sieniawskiego z lat 1688–1726*, oprac. i wyd. B. Popiołek, U. Kicińska, A. Słaby, Warszawa-Bellerive-sur-Allier, 2016; *Gdybym Cię, moje Serce, za męża nie miała, żyć bym nie mogła: listy Magdaleny z Czapskich do Hieronima Floriana Radziwiłła z lat 1744–1759*, wstęp i oprac. I. Maciejewska, K. Zawilska, Olsztyn, 2016.

⁴ A partial review of previous findings in women's history research was made by: C. Kukoł, Badania nad historią kobiet w Polsce w XVI–XVIII wieku, *Acta Universitatis Lodzianis. Folia Historica*, nr. 107, 2020, s. 13–57. Noteworthy are literary works created after 2020 by B. Popiołek, *Dobrodziejki i klientki. Specyfika patronatu kobiecego i relacji klientalnych w czasach saskich*, Warszawa, 2020; eadem, *Rytuały codzienności. Świat szlacheckiego dworu w osiemnastowiecznej Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa, 2022; eadem, *Z poczucia piękna, z potrzeby posiadania. Kobiece świat rzeczy w osiemnastowiecznej Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa, 2024; by Urszula Kicińska concerning position of a widow, see: U. Kicińska, „W tym osieroconym stanie...”. *Pozycja wdowy w społeczeństwie szlacheckim w Rzeczypospolitej (od schyłku XVII do połowy XVIII wieku)*, Kraków, 2020; by Agnieszka Leszczak-Słaby devoted to maternity, see: A. Słaby, *Macierzyństwo. Studium z historii mentalności szlachty Rzeczypospolitej czasów saskich*, Kraków, 2023.

⁵ Some findings in this area have been made by the aforementioned A. Jakuboszczak, Matka-córka-siostra. O intymności i prywatności w kobiecych relacjach w świetle korespondencji wielkopolskich rodzin szlacheckich (XVIII wiek), *Publiczne, prywatne, intymne, w kulturze XVIII wieku*, s. 147–159; Anna Pękala-Jastrzębska, see eadem, Radości i troski osiemnastowiecznego macierzyństwa w świetle korespondencji Karoliny Teresy z Radziwiłłów Jabłonowskiej do matki Anny z Sanguszków Radziwiłłowej, *Horyzonty Wychowania*, t. 18, 2019, nr. 46, s. 69–82; A. Słaby, Ojcostwo – relacje ojców i córek w świetle korespondencji okresu saskiego, *W kręgu rodziny epok dawnych: dzieciństwo*, red. B. Popiołek, A. Chłosta-Sikorska, M. Gadocha, Warszawa, 2013, s. 297–309; B. Małyś, Relacje Anny z Mycielskich z dziećmi w świetle listów „drugiej pani na Nieświeżu” z lat 1754–1762, *Acta Anniversaria. Zbornik naukovykh prac Naucyjalnaha gistoryka-kulturnaha muzeja-zapavednika «Hiasviż»*, 2015, t. 3, s. 38–53.

therefore created with the idea of filling this gap, at least in part and looking at the relationship between a mother and her children, in this case her sons, through the prism of certain ego-documents which is the correspondence written to her spouse, her mother-in-law and her children.

The heroine of our considerations is Franciszka Urszula née Wiśniowiecka-Radziwiłłowa (*Pranciška Uršulė iš Višnioveckijų Radvilienė*; 1705–1753), whose literary work has been well recognized particularly in the Polish historiography (less so in the Lithuanian). As the first Polish playwright and an author of numerous comedies and dramas, as well as a creator of the Nesvizh Theater, her person has received a detailed analysis.⁶ We cannot say the same about her family life or her activity in the economic or political field.⁷ So far, the subject of research has been mainly her marriage to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł *Rybeńko* (*Mykolas Kazimieras Radvila Žuvelė*, 1702–1762), later Grand Hetman of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Palatine (Voivode) of Vilnius, son of Anna Katarzyna Radziwiłłowa neé Sanguszko (*Ona Kotryna Sanguškaitė Radvilienė*, 1676–1746), who was a resourceful woman and pursued mainly the interests of the Radziwiłł House, and of Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł (*Karolis Stanislovas Radvila*,

⁶ J. Krzyżanowski, Talia i Melpomena w Nieświeżu. Twórczość U. F. Radziwiłłowej, *Pamiętnik Teatralny*, 1961, t. 3, s. 385–398; A. Sajkowski, Z dziejów teatru nieświeckiego (1748–1762), *ibid.*, s. 399–433; B. Judkowiak, Z dziejów teatru nieświeckiego. U początków teatru, *Pamiętnik Teatralny*, 1990, z. 3–4, s. 305–327; eadem, *Słowo inscenizowane. O Franciszce Urszuli Radziwiłłowej – poetce*, Poznań, 1992; eadem, Formacja umysłowa sawantki połowy wieku (świat książek i środowisko literackie Franciszki Urszuli Radziwiłłowej), *Kultura literacka połowy XVIII wieku w Polsce. Studia i szkice*, red. T. Kostkiewiczowa, Wrocław, 1992, s. 147–161; eadem, Arystokratyczna tożsamość księżąt nieświeckich w świetle obrazów literackich i teatralnych. W kręgu twórczości Franciszki Urszuli Radziwiłłowej, *Socialinių tapatumų reprezentacijos Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės kultūroje*, sud. A. Paliušytė, Vilnius, 2010, p. 432–447; eadem, Franciszka Urszula Radziwiłłowa (1705–1753), *Pisarze polskiego oświecenia*, t. I, red. T. Kostkiewiczowa, Z. Goliński, Warszawa 1992, s. 66–89; eadem, *Franciszka Urszula Radziwiłłowa – w poszukiwaniu własnego głosu. Propozycje interpretacyjne, dokumentacyjne i edytorskie*, Poznań, 2013; I. Maciejewska, Nie tylko pochwała rodu – o znaczeniu ramy wydawniczej *Komedyj i tragedyj* Franciszki Urszuli Radziwiłłowej w upamiętnianiu pierwszej polskiej dramatopisarki, *Napis. Pismo poświęcone literaturze okolicznościowej i użytkowej*, nr. 26, 2020, s. 249–263; B. Siwek, Obraz Franciszki Urszuli, Radziwiłłowej w dramacie Siarhieja Kavaloua „Franciszka, abo Navuka kachannia”, *Pomiędzy Białorusią a Polską. Dramaturgia Siarhieja Kawaloua / Паміж Беларуссю і Польчай. Dramатургія Сяргея Кавалёва. Зборнік артыкулаў*, пад рэд. А. Ліпа, А. Баровец. Мінск, 2009, с. 128–137.

⁷ So far, the biographies of the Duchess contained in the Polish Biographical Dictionary (*Polski Słownik Biograficzny*) have been still valid (further – *PSB*), see: K. Wierzbicka-Michałska, Radziwiłłowa z Wiśniowieckich Franciszka Urszula (1705–1753), *PSB*, t. 30, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź, 1987, s. 388–390; and in the literary work of I. Czamańska devoted to the House of Wiśniowiecki, see: I. Czamańska, *Wiśniowieccy. Monografia rodu*, Poznań, 2007, s. 391–404. The court of Franciszka Urszula has recently come under scrutiny, at least partly, see: B. Popiołek, *Dobrodziejki i klienci. Specyfika patronatu...*, s. 531–536.

1669–1719), Grand Chancellor of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.⁸ Franciszka Urszula thus appears to us as an author, a wealthy matron and a spouse of an influential and wealthy magnate. Meanwhile, the correspondence written to her husband shows us a woman exceptionally involved in her family life and family interests, tender and loving, full of concern and care for the welfare of her spouse and her children. What becomes distinctive against this background are her relations with her twin sons, the elder Janusz Tadeusz (*Jonušas Tadas Radvila*) and the younger Karol Stanisław (*Karolis Stanislovas Radvila*). At this point, therefore, it is worth posing the question not only of what information about the children the lady of Nesvizh provides in her written correspondence and what picture of the relationship she pictures in this way. Above all, it is necessary to ask about the magnate's feelings in the role of a mother, the extent of her parental involvement in the process of upbringing and education of her offspring and finally, her range of influence or lack of it. Furthermore, it is worth posing a question of how Franciszka Urszula perceived herself in this important and responsible role, what caused her pain and suffering, and what she derived joy and satisfaction from. Another important aspect that requires closer attention considers the values that guided the magnate in the process of raising her children. The questions formulated are intended not only to reveal the essence of the relationship between this particular woman and her sons, and at the same time to bring new findings on the roles played by the magnate but also to take a broader look at aspects related to parenting and the issue of raising noble sons in the early modern era.

As it has been already indicated, the source basis for considerations are the ego-documents collected in the Radziwiłł Archives of the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. In this case, it is the correspondence written by the Duchess mainly to her spouse and her mother-in-law Anna Radziwiłłowa neé Sanguszko. Also single letters addressed to the boys have been preserved in her collection. Epistles from 1734–1746 have been analyzed as well, i.e. from the time the twins were born until the interruption of their education at the Jesuit school in Nesvizh,⁹ most likely due to smallpox. Correspondence written within the indicated chronological framework allows us to grasp the relationship under study which cannot be said of the later period. This state of affairs was caused by

⁸ A. S a j k o w s k i, Michasieńko i Franusia, idem, A. S a j k o w s k i, *Od „Sierotki” do „Rybeńki”*, Poznań, 1965, s. 133–174; K. Ł a c h a c z, *Pokaż calemu światu, że mnie cokolwiek kochasz. O sposobach wyrażania uczuć w listach Franciszki Urszuli z Wiśniowieckich Radziwiłłowej do męża Michała Kazimierza Radziwiłła Rybeńki*, Warszawa, 2017; R. J a n k o w s k i, Śmierć matki i bliskich Michała Kazimierza Radziwiłła „Rybeńki” (1702–1762) w świetle jego diariusza, *Miscellanae Historico-Archivistica*, t. 22, 2015, s. 203–218; A. J a k u b o s z c z a k, B. M a n y ś, Interesa światowe i sprawy rodzinne w korespondencji Teofili z Leszczyńskich Wiśniowieckiej (1680–1757), *Balkanica Posnaniensia*, t. XXIX, 2022, s. 159–166.

⁹ Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych (further – AGAD), Archiwum Radziwiłłów (further – AR), dział (further dz.) IV, nr. 660–664.

several factors, including the frequent absence of sons and their entry into the ‘sphere of influence’ of their father and the exit from under the ‘wings’ of the mother. Although women’s epistolography in recent years is a willingly researched material, it must be stated that in the context of considerations over family life, motherhood, or parenthood in their broadest sense, it still creates a space to pose further research questions.¹⁰ The picture created by the Duchess is complemented by Prince Radziwiłł’s diary, which presents the male perspective of the described events and the decisions made by the spouses, both in the matter of medical treatment as well as care for development, upbringing and education of their children.¹¹

In the present discussion, issues concerning the Radziwiłł’s education will be addressed, however, at this point, it is crucial to underline that the purpose of this article is not to analyze the educational path taken by Janusz Tadeusz and Karol Stanisław in detail, as this area of interest has been largely studied by Andrea Mariani.¹² Here, it will be important to show the involvement of the Duchess in the educational process of her sons, and thus refer to previous findings on the influence of mothers on the education of their offspring.¹³

Welcoming a child into the world was a special moment for every woman. On the one hand, it was the end of a long, but truly fascinating time of waiting, often accompanied by various troublesome ailments, fear for her own life and that of the ‘God’s gift’, as well as uncertainty associated with the course of the baby delivery.¹⁴ On the other hand, after the labor, which often took long hours, there was a moment of rest, which brought only temporary relief and the new life held in the arms, seemed to compensate for the physical and mental effort of the act of birth. How emotional these moments were, often accompanied by horror and fear, is well reflected in a letter written by Franciszka Urszula on the day of the delivery, most likely during the labor that had already begun, which was to end with the welcoming of twin brothers into this world. On February 27, 1734, at five o’clock in the afternoon, the Duchess marked down some very telling words to her husband. To some extent, she reported to *Rybeńko* on the progress of the delivery, indicating that she remained

¹⁰ See A. Słaby, *Macierzyństwo...*, s. 37.

¹¹ AGAD, AR, dz. VI, sygn. II-80a.

¹² A. Mariani, *Jezuici w kręgu Radziwiłłów nieświeżkich w XVIII wieku. Społeczna i kulturowa rola kolegiów w Nieświeżu i w Słucku*, Poznań, 2015 (Ph.D. thesis written under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Maciej Serwański), s. 468–478.

¹³ Compare: D. Żołądź-Strzelczyk, M. E. Kowalczyk, *Dyspozycje Ludwiki Marii z Rzewuskich Chodkiewiczowej dotyczące dzieci, Klio. Czasopismo poświęcone dziejom Polski i powszechnym*, t. 63, 2022, nr. 3, s. 71–91.

¹⁴ W. Kocela, *Trudna sztuka babienia. Kultura medyczna Polski II połowy XVIII wieku*, Warszawa, 2020, s. 99–101. The problem of anxiety and dangers associated with childbirth has been analyzed by A. Jakuboszczak in her literary work devoted to the noblewomen of Greater Poland, see A. Jakuboszczak, *Rodzina i rodzinność...*, s. 149.

in labor pains, and that an hour and a half had passed since the amniotic fluid breakdown. Being, however, filled with fear and anxiety, having had experiences of miscarriages and two labors ending in the birth of living children, she made the following written declaration: ‘If, however, I am to part with my life at this hour I humbly ask from my heart and soul to keep in memory that I am and was the only and the most beloved wife <...>’¹⁵. The Duchess’s words are a kind of farewell to her spouse, an aftermath of a thought that came to her mind as a result of anxiety felt during her labor.¹⁶ It seems that in Franciszka Urszula’s case there was an additional stress-factor that added up to the worries, namely the child’s sex. On another page of the same letter, already as a mother, she probably noted with her own hand the following sentence ‘Two sons we have whom I am asking you to bless’.¹⁷ Most likely, sending the letter was held until the end of childbirth, which meant announcing happy or sad news. In this case, the Duchess reported ‘double happiness’ of the birth of her sons. Let us recall that the first-born son of *Rybeńko* and Franciszka Urszula’s Mikołaj Krzysztof, born in 1727, died at the age of two.¹⁸ For the couple and the other family members, especially his grandmother, the wife of the Grand Chancellor of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, it was an extremely painful experience.¹⁹ In this case, the child’s sex was important for yet another reason, as in 1732, the House of Radziwiłł welcomed a daughter Anna,²⁰ into the world, so this time, as we may guess, the family especially looked forward to a son.

News of the boys’ confinement reached *Rybeńko* on March 16. In the diary we read: <...> I met Mr. Kayzer my lieutenant of reitar, who reported to me that in Nesvizh my wife gave happily birth to a son on the 27th of February, at half past eleven, to whom they gave the

¹⁵ *Jeżeli zaś w tym terminie życiem się rozłączyć przyjdzie o tej suplikuje pamięci, żem jest y była z serca y duszy jedynie najukochańszą żoną...*, F. U. Wiśniowiecka-Radziwiłłowa to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, February 27, 1734, ADAD, AR, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 15–16 (the author of all letters used in this article is Franciszka Urszula Wiśniowiecka-Radziwiłłowa. For this reason, further only the addressees of the letters are indicated in the footnotes. All her letters used in this article are stored in AGAD, AR). Compare: A. Słaby, *Macierzyństwo...*, s. 269.

¹⁶ W. Kocela, *Trudna sztuka babienia*, s. 102.

¹⁷ *Dwuch synów mamy, których chcecie błogosławić*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, February 27, 1734, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 16.

¹⁸ *Rybeńko* recorded the birth of his son under the date May 18, 1727, see: *ibid.*, dz. VI, sygn. II-80a, p. 222–223. Two days later under the date July 1, 1729 he recorded that ‘After lunch I was leaving for Vishniovets, when my servant Michałowski arrived from Biała reporting that God’s will over my son had already been done and that [on] the 27th day of June my son Mikołaj Krzysztof Erik Augustyn Michał’s life in its second year had ended <...>’ [*Wyjechałem po obiedzie do Wiszniowca dokąd wyjeżdżajacemu zbiegł pokojowy mój Michałowski z Białej donosząc że się już wola Boża nad synem moim wypełniła y że [d]ie 27 junij syn mój Mikołaj Krzysztof Erik Augustyn Michał w drugim roku dni swoje zakończył...*], see: *ibid.*, p. 312.

¹⁹ See: A. Słaby, *Macierzyństwo...*, s. 547.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 474.

name Janusz Tadeusz Jozafat Piotr from Alkantara and Theofil and, on the same day, half an hour after Janusz she gave birth to a second son, to whom they gave the name Karol Stanisław Onufry Jan Nepomucen and Justus, <...>.²¹

Based on the cited sources, we can conclude that the labor lasted about eight hours and was certainly exhausting for Franciszka Urszula. Being already an experienced woman who was aware of the importance of the postpartum period and the complications it could bring she tried to rest and gain strength, not only for her husband, but also for her sons. This may be evidenced by her low activity in the epistolographic field during this period. Radziwiłłowa wrote another letter to the absent spouse not sooner than two weeks later, namely on March 16.²² The available historical material shows that in the meantime she informed her husband's mother about the birth of the twins, who she humbly asked for a blessing for her newborns.²³ She also edited a letter to Hieronim Florian (*Jeronimas Florijonas Radvila*, 1715–1760),²⁴ however, in the collection we do not find correspondence sent to her mother Teofila Wiśniowiecka née Leszczyńska (*Teofilė iš Leščinskių Višnioveckis*, 1680–1757) and father Janusz Antoni (*Jonušas Antanas Višnioveckis*, 1678–1741) which does not mean that such letters were not sent.

The first two weeks were probably the time for the Duchess to organize the care of the twins and in this case, unlike in the case of Mikołaj Krzysztof, Janusz Tadeusz and Karol Stanisław were not sent away to be taken care of by their grandmother but they were left with their mother.²⁵ It should be remembered that the boys were born at an anxious moment for Franciszka. It was the time of the absence of Michał Kazimierz, the period of Russian army movements and the civil war caused by the election of Stanisław Leszczyński (1677–1766). All this meant that her confinement, as well as the following weeks, passed in an atmosphere of fear, anxiety and uncertainty, which she often expressed on the pages of her written correspondence.²⁶ Added to this were the infections and illnesses that plagued her and her both sons.²⁷

Building a parent-child bond, in the first days of its life, was certainly fostered by breastfeeding, to which, as we can infer from the analyzed letters, the Duchess, similarly

²¹ *Spotkałem pana Kayzera porucznika mego raytarskiego, który doniósł mi, że w Nieświeżu żona moja powiła szczęśliwie [d]nie 27 februarij o godzinie wpół do jedynastey syna, któremu dali imię Janusz Tadeusz Jozafat Piotr z Alkantary i Theofil tegoż dnia wpół godziny po Januszu powiła drugiego syna, któremu dali imię Karol Stanisław Onufry Jan Nepomucen i Justus*, see: *ibid.*, p. 633–634.

²² To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, March 16, 1734, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 21–26.

²³ To A. K. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, March 2, 1734, dz. IV, nr. 657, p. 1.

²⁴ To H. F. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, March 15, 1734, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 18–19.

²⁵ A. Słaby, *Macierzyństwo...*, s. 427.

²⁶ To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, July 3, 1734, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 43.

²⁷ To M.K. Radziwiłł, from Slutsk, April 6, 1735, *ibid.*, p. 136.

to other magnates, had a positive attitude²⁸ which probably stemmed from an awareness of health benefits of this form of feeding.²⁹ Therefore, in a letter written in mid-March to *Rybeńko* she reported ‘<...> by the grace of God I keep both of them at my breasts and in perfect health <...>’.³⁰ It is likely that Franciszka Urszula, prior to the delivery, did not have a wet nurse appointed to feed her little ones. The research of A. Słaby, on the other hand, proves that pregnant women scrupulously, even long before their childbirth, sought an appropriate woman for such role.³¹ The Jesuit Szymon Waber informed another noblewoman, namely Anna Działyńska (1724–1812), the wife of Augustyn Działyński (1715–1759) about specific qualities and skills which the appointed wet nurse should possess. He recommended that this one should be ‘in her early years’, diligent, ‘of good conscience’, pious, knowledgeable about ‘the humor and weaknesses of children’, as well as having ‘expertise with children’.³² We might pose a question: did Duchess Radziwiłłowa not plan to put her children in the hands of a wet nurse? It is difficult to determine the reason for such approach, perhaps it was due to the fact that after losing Mikołaj Krzysztof, Franciszka Urszula wanted to take care of her sons on her own and be able to decide what was and what was not good for them, including especially such an important matter as feeding.³³

It is known, however, that the length of time her sons were at the breast varied in both cases. At the end of March, Franciszka Urszula sent a letter to her mother-in-law, reporting that only Janusz remained at her breast, while Karol was already in the hands of a wet nurse.³⁴ According to the correspondence, for the younger of the brothers, just a three-week-old infant, was found a woman who originally met the requirements, meaning she was healthy and of a good character. As it turned out, however, she did not feed the younger boy for very long. With the help of the second wet nurse, as Franciszka Urszula reported to her husband in early April, Karol Stanisław was said to be growing ‘strong and healthy’.³⁵ It can therefore be assumed that it was the child’s overall development that was the main reason for the replacement of the wet nurse.

²⁸ Another magnate trying to breastfeed her babies at least during the first few weeks was, for example, Karolina Teresa Jabłonowska née Radziwiłł, see: A. P e n k a ł a - J a s t r z ę b s k a, *Radości i troski osiemnastowiecznego macierzyństwa...*, s. 73. Examples of other women, see: A. S ł a b y, *Macierzyństwo...*, s. 359–361.

²⁹ To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, March 16, 1734, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 21.

³⁰ *Z łaski Bożej obydwu przy piersiach moich w doskonałym zdrowiu trzymam*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, March 16, 1734, *ibid.*, p. 21.

³¹ A. S ł a b y, *Macierzyństwo...*, s. 355–359. The requirements for the candidates have been discussed by W. Kocela, eadem, *Trudna sztuka babienia...*, s. 130–131.

³² See: A. J a k u b o s z c z a k, *Rodzina i rodzinność...*, s. 145.

³³ Comp. B. J u d k o w i a k, *Franciszka Urszula Radziwiłłowa – w poszukiwaniu własnego głosu...*, s. 25.

³⁴ To A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, March 28, 1734, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 27.

³⁵ *Czerstwo się i zdrowo hodować*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, June 3, 1734, *ibid.*, p. 36.

The situation was completely different in the case of Janusz for the fact that this baby, as we read in the Duchess's letters, suffered badly after the weaning of his mother, by whose breast he remained for seven weeks which was much longer than his younger brother. In one of the letters written to Michał Kazimierz, Franciszka Urszula lamented that weaning was the reason for development of some unspecified illness in the older boy. A major concern for the Duchess was finding a suitable wet nurse for her son. She explained to her husband that '<...> the wet nurse already is the sixth one, which has made him weak so far <...>'.³⁶ The Duchess's words confirm that feeding problems weakened the health of her son. The older twin was fed by his wet nurse until June 1735, that is, for the period of one year and four months. Franciszka Urszula, with a sense of relief, in a letter sent on June 18, 1735 reported to her mother-in-law that '<...> Janusz is already on his bread and separated from his wet nurse, by the grace of the Highest God healthier and stronger, Karol, on the other hand, vigorous in an unspeakable way <...>'.³⁷ The attitude of Franciszka Urszula to her breastfeeding has been reflected best in the words written to *Rybeńko* in a letter sent in November 1738. Two months earlier, on September 3, the married couple welcomed into the world their daughter Teofila, whom the Duchess fed on her own. At the time, she reported to Michał Kazimierz that Tolka, as she fondly called her daughter, remained '<...> with a strong body, in a merry mood, she plays with my titties, which serve her health well'.³⁸ Breastfeeding, however, is not just a matter of providing nourishment, but, above all, of building a bond with a little child. It is a special time when a mother wraps her baby in her arms, sharing her warmth and a sense of security with her child.

The health of the children, for the Duchess, as for every woman, was of the highest value and she paid much attention to it on the pages of her letters. Feeling the responsibility that rested on her shoulders, especially for the proper development of the boys, she extensively informed her husband and her mother-in-law on ailments that they developed.

³⁶ *Mamkę zaś już szóstą ma przez co dotąd słaby...*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, June 3, 1734, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 36.

³⁷ *Już Janusz na swój chleb poszedł y odłączony od Mamki, daleko teraz z łaski najwyższego Boga zdrowszy y czerstwiejszy, Karol zaś niewypowiedzianym sposobem czyżywy*, to A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszkó, from Nesvizh, June 18, 1735, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 177–178.

³⁸ *Przy czerstwym ciałku, w wesolym himorze, cycką się moją bawi, która dobrze zdrowiu jej służy*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, November 14, *ibid.*, 1738, dz. IV, nr. 661, p. 146. Eventually *Tolka* also had her wet nurse. The Duchess mentions her in a letter dated November 1, 1739, when she explained to her husband: *I had to detach our daughter from her mamma, when the latter suffered from fever and Tolka is a bit weak. [Córkę naszą musiałam od mamki odłączyć, gdysz ta na gorączkę zachorowała y Tolka trochę słaba]*, see: To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, November 1, 1739, *ibid.*, p. 194. See also: To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, April 18, 1742, dz. IV, nr. 662, p. 208. May 11, 1742, Franciszka Urszula reported to her husband that Ludwisia was still 'playing with my titties' [*moją cycką się bawi*], see: To M. K. Radziwiłł, [s. l.], May 11, 1742, dz. IV, nr. 663, p. 7.

The twins struggled with illnesses typical of the period of first infancy and then childhood, ranging from runny noses and coughs,³⁹ that resulted from a cold or weakness caused by teething,⁴⁰ to diarrhea, fevers,⁴¹ infectious diseases like measles or smallpox,⁴² ear infections,⁴³ sore throats,⁴⁴ or finally ulcers that formed in the head, which ‘leaked through an ear’,⁴⁵ appeared behind the ears⁴⁶ or in the ‘mouth’⁴⁷ as well as many other ailments.⁴⁸ In these difficult and anxious moments, the Duchess emerges as a woman full

³⁹To A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Mir, November 3, 1737, dz. IV, nr. 661, s. 60. In a subsequent letter, she reported to Anna that the children felt much better during the day but that the cough increased at night, see: To A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Mir, November 8, 1737, *ibid.*, p. 61.

⁴⁰To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, April 11, 1736, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 232. In a letter written in 1739, she reported on the suffering of her daughter *Tolka*, who is supposedly crying because of her teeth for the second day already...., [już drugi dzień na zębki podobno poplakuje...], see: To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Karelichy, June 26, 1739, dz. IV, nr. 661, p. 176.

⁴¹To A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Mir, November 3, 1737 *ibid.*, p. 60; To A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, April 3, 1738, *ibid.*, p. 92–93. On *Tolka*’s weakness, see: to A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Zhovkva, February 1, 1741, dz. IV, nr. 662, p. 115.

⁴²To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Mir, July 27, 1742, dz. IV, nr. 663, p. 60.

⁴³Such was most likely what Karol underwent in 1736, see: To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, May 5, 1736, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 235. The disease sometimes took an extremely invasive form. In 1740. Franciszka Ursula noted that her daughter *Tosia* very much fell sick with her eyes, all the matter that went out from the ear through the eyes goes which makes me very upset [...bardzo na oczy upadła, wszystka materia co szła z ucha przez oczy idzie czymem y ja bardzo zalternowana], see: to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, April 6, 1740, dz. IV, nr. 662, p. 33.

⁴⁴To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Olyka, October 25, 1740, *ibid.*, p. 87. See also: to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Olyka, September 1, 1740, *ibid.*, p. 92.

⁴⁵The matter concerned Karol, who became very weak due to an ulcer. To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, August 22, 1735, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 208–210. In 1740, Karolina most likely fell ill with otitis, see: To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, May 28, 1740, dz. IV, nr. 662, p. 44.

⁴⁶*From the health of my Toleńka in whom an enormous ulcer behind her ear has already grown very much, I understand that today or tomorrow it will swell up, healthier, however, she is and with what patience she endures it is difficult to express and although it is not a dangerous disease, to the little one greatly unpleasant [Z tego zdrowia mojej Tolenki u której wrzód wielki za uchem już bardzo zebrał, rozumiem, że dziś albo jutro się rozpuchnie, zdrowsza jednak y z jaką to cierpliwością znosi trudno wyrazić, lubo to nie jest choroba niebezpieczna jednak małemu bardzo dotkliwa], to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Olyka, November 4, 1740 *ibid.*, p. 94. See also: to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Olyka, November 7, 1740, *ibid.*, p. 98.*

⁴⁷It was frequently preceded by a high fever. The illness usually lasted up to 7 days and it was more often experienced by the older of the sons, Janusz. Karol was clearly distinguished by stronger immunity, see: To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, March 15, 1738, dz. IV, nr. 661, p. 85. In October 1737, she wrote with great concern to Anna née Sanguszko that blisters are showing in *Jasiu*’s mouth, which so far, I have been lubricating with medicament from H.E. Dr. Florek recommended from Königsberg from my husband [...w gębie u *Jasia* pokazują się pęchyrze, które dotąd smariuję lekarstwem od JMci p. Doktora *Florka* naznaczonym z *Królewca od męża mego*], to A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Mir, October 26, 1737, *ibid.*, p. 44–45.

⁴⁸In 1740, Janusz fell ill with *terciana*, which lasted one and a half Sundays, see: To A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, May 15, 1740, dz. IV, nr. 662, s. 42.

of care, emotional warmth and a sense of great concern and commitment for her children. Despite many other responsibilities, frequent travels and supervision of her estates, she kept vigil with her children both day and night, especially when the first signs of illness appeared. Not infrequently, she did so crying, being on the verge of emotional exhaustion. She paid for her devotion and sacrifice by weakening of her own body, sometimes even endangering the pregnancy she was in.⁴⁹ The picture obtained from the analysis of Lady Radziwiłł's letters does not match the one created in previous historiography. Franciszka Urszula appears to be a woman who personally cared for her little children, feeding them, carrying them when they needed it, cuddling them when they cried like a truly committed mother.

In July 1734, the Duchess wrote about measles which developed her four-month-old Janusz.⁵⁰ At that time, filled with fear and trouble she wrote to her husband quite generally, informing him only that the boy had fallen ill. In the epistle, the female author clearly emphasized the worry she had to deal with, after all, measles, next to smallpox and rose were seen as one of the biggest threats.⁵¹ The message contained on the pages of her correspondence was mainly intended to evoke sympathy in the recipient, namely her beloved husband. She wrote 'How various mortifications afflict me it is difficult to express, and the most the weakness of my son Janusz, who still severely suffers from measles <...>'.⁵² She underlined her sorrow with the words '<...> additionally constant duties and necessary expenses worry me greatly <...>'.⁵³ All the above was meant to create a picture of a mother carrying the burden of her son's illness, as well as the one concerned about current affairs. Probably this is how Franciszka Urszula hoped to expedite her spouse's return to the family as she knew how important the health of her beloved twins was to her husband.

Conversely, the tone of the letter addressed to her mother-in-law was completely different and here, we find more details about the course of the boy's disease. As we know, at the time of writing the epistle to Anna, Janusz was struggling with its symptoms for the sixth day. During the first three days he suffered from a very high fever, after which he developed pimples. As the Duchess noted, despite the fact that Karol was staying in the same room with Janusz, the younger boy did not contract measles (in this case, one should doubt the Duchess' correct diagnosis of the disease). Giving evidence of her devotion to

⁴⁹ To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, September 21, 1739, dz. IV, nr. 661, p. 182.

⁵⁰ To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, July 3, 1734, dz. IV, nr. 660, s. 43. Comp. A. Słaby, *Macierzyństwo...*, s. 439.

⁵¹ A. Słaby, *Macierzyństwo...*, s. 434.

⁵² *Jak mie tu różne umartwienia trapią trudno wyrazić, a najbardzi słabość syna mego Janusza, który cienszko na odrę do tąd chory*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, July 3, 1734, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 43.

⁵³ *Do tego interesa ustawiczne y expensa bez której być nie podobna martwią mie nie pojęcie*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, July 3, 1734, *ibid.*, p. 43.

her children, Franciszka Urszula made assurances to her mother-in-law that she should by no means be saddened by her grandchildren's bad health.⁵⁴ By juxtaposing the two different accounts of the twins' health, we receive two distinct images of the Duchess. In one, she presents herself as a troubled and overwhelmed spouse with problems, needing and waiting for her beloved husband, while in the other as a mortified woman, entrusting the health of her little ones to divine providence, but much stronger, proving that she can sort herself out in difficult moments. Such a creation most likely had its source in the relationship between Franciszka Urszula and Anna Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko and we know that these, at least in the first years of the Radziwiłłs' marriage, were tense and did not go well. The situation changed when Mikołaj Krzysztof was born.⁵⁵ In addition, we can assume that Franciszka Urszula lived in fear that at any moment by her husband's decision the twins could be transferred to the care of their grandmother, therefore she tried not to provoke her spouse to take such steps.

A difficult time for her was the period when the boys were teething which took place at the beginning of the 7th month. It is likely that they were going through this stage parallelly, which was a heavy burden for their mother. The Duchess wrote about general irritability, tearfulness and impatience; additionally, the boys were often tormented by catarrh and cough or a fever⁵⁶ or some other 'indisposition'.⁵⁷ However, she always proudly reported on the appearance of each tooth. In one of her letters, she wrote to her husband's mother:

<...> with a thousandth respect greeted my children both healthy and toothy, as Janusz already three teeth has while Karol has preceded his brother as he is of better health and with four teeth and the fifth one is expected any day <...>⁵⁸.

Equally worrying was the period of teething of molars, which she reported about to Michał Kazimierz in a letter written on March 17, 1738. The Duchess was conscious of what this time entailed and the dangers it could bring.⁵⁹ She compared this extremely painful and difficult process for the child, very figuratively, with coming out 'stones from the flesh'.⁶⁰

⁵⁴To A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, July 4, 1734, *ibid.*, p. 46.

⁵⁵B. P o p i o ł e k, *Kobiety świat w czasach Augusta II...*, s. 217–218.

⁵⁶To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, September 4, 1734, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 70. Ludwika also went through teething in a difficult manner, see: To A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, December 26, 1742, dz. IV, nr. 663, p. 132.

⁵⁷To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, March 17, 1738, dz. IV, nr. 661, p. 86.

⁵⁸*Z tysięcznym respektem ucalowawszy z dziatkami y zdrowemi y zębatemi, gdysz u Janusza już trzy ząbki, Karol zaś uprzedził y w tym y w czerstwiejszym zdrowiu brata cztery zęby mając, a piątego się co dzień spodziewamy*, to A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Slutsk, January 7, 1735, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 97.

⁵⁹To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, March 17, 1738, dz. IV, nr. 661, p. 86.

⁶⁰*...kamieni w mięsie*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, March 17, 1738, *ibid.*, p. 86.

As already noted, the Duchess placed the issue of her children's health in the first place, therefore she tried to act preventively and she ordered, through her husband, mainly from Jesuit pharmacies proven pharmaceuticals, including lotions, syrups, pills, oils, powders or drops.⁶¹ The list of pharmaceuticals available for her in the College pharmacy in Nesvizh included medicaments intended for the two twins, such as lemon juice and fried cherry juice which were supposed to improve the boys' health in general. In accordance with the humoral concept, *laxative liquors* were used, cathartics to help remove poisonous liquids from the body, or almond oil, which had an exceptionally wide range of uses. In addition, the list includes the names of mixtures that were to be prepared individually for Janusz and for Karol. For the older of the brothers, who was characterized by weaker immunity and showed a greater predisposition to contract various diseases, his mother asked, among other things, for preparation of *spiritus nitri dulcis* which was prescribed to him.⁶² The agent, which is petroleum ether or a spirit solution of ethyl nitrite, had a wide range of medicinal applications. It was used as a diuretic, especially in certain ailments occurring in children. It alleviated swelling that appeared after scarlet fever, to take an example. It also had cooling and perspiration-inducing uses therefore it was great for combating febrile complaints and when combined with ammonia acetate it became a vomiting agent. It could also be administered as a carminative so it often aided in treatment of flatulence and relieved nausea.⁶³ For example, Regina Salomea Pilsztynowa née Rusiecka, who lived at the end of the 18th century and was a practitioner of healing, used this remedy along with other specifics to cure delirium, severe cough, or vomiting in the process of curing Sultan Mustafa's sister, Aisha Sultana.⁶⁴ It is known that at the beginning of the 19th century, *spiritus nitri dulcis* mixed, for example, with an emulsion of almonds, with camphor, or with a remnant of Indian pipevine, gave a painkiller, used, for instance, after an amputation of a body part.⁶⁵ As it is clear, its broad spectrum of use enabled treating various ailments which tormented Janusz. For Karol, it was only requested to prepare an emulsion

⁶¹ E.g. to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Karelichy, May 5, 1736, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 236. She also mentioned examples of such ones ordered for her daughters Karolina and Teofila. A. Słaby, *Macierzyństwo...*, s. 416. A. Mariani, meanwhile, points out that assignments and receipts for medicines delivered between 1745 and 1747 have been preserved. See A. Mariani, *Rola społeczna aptek jezuickich w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej, Wiek Oświecenia*, t. 37, 2021, s. 61.

⁶² Нацыянальны гістарычны архіў Беларусі (further – НГАБ), ф. 694, оп. 2, № 17091. At this point, I would like to thank Dr. Andrea Mariani for providing a transcription of the document.

⁶³ J. Pereira, *The elements of materia medica and therapeutics*, vol. 2, part 1, London, 1857, p. 482.

⁶⁴ M. Pluta, *Osiemnastowieczne metody leczenia nieprofesjonalnego w pamiętniku Reginy Salomei z Rusieckich, Medycyna Nowożytna*, t. 10, 2003, z. 1–2, s. 159.

⁶⁵ A. Magowska, *Statystyki amputacji a powstanie chirurgii jako dyscypliny akademickiej (ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem kliniki chirurgicznej w Wilnie)*, *Acta Medicorum Polonorum*, t. 7, 2017, nr. 2, s. 34.

for sweats and concoctions to prevent fever, or *internal alternation*, that is, remedies with a much smaller spectrum of use.⁶⁶ Note that the lady of Nesvizh also used natural products and as a keen observer of her children, she could notice, for example, an increasing cough, a change in skin color or weight loss. Therefore, in order to support her children's health condition and as a form of a preventive measure, she gave them goat's milk,⁶⁷ for example. Furthermore, in order to help her children recover faster during illness, she gave them broth to eat.⁶⁸ Fear for the health of her offspring, not just her two sons, was with the Duchess every day. This is clearly reflected in the words written to her spouse in one of her letters, when she sent him a message about the illness of her daughter Ludwisia '...> all my insides torn with grief, so that I almost sealed my life with an end <...>'.⁶⁹ The Duchess constantly feared accidents, diseases of the digestive system,⁷⁰ various complications from infections, and was especially concerned about contagious diseases, which were perceived by the people of the time as God's punishment.⁷¹ Often, unfortunately, they became an announcement of inevitable death, which Franciszka Ursula had already experienced, losing her daughter Anna Maria⁷² as a result of smallpox on May 22, 1732. That's why the mother tried to protect her children from unhealthy air each time it was necessary. This was the case in August 1742, when she reported to her spouse that 'In Nesvizh so far the air is such that children die, and adults get sick <...>'.⁷³ From her subsequent letters we learn that the residents of Nesvizh were falling ill with 'severe malign and dysentery',⁷⁴ as a result of

⁶⁶ НГАБ, ф. 694, он. 2, № 17091.

⁶⁷ To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, August 26, 1742, dz. IV, nr. 663, p. 80.

⁶⁸ To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Zathura, September 19, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 97.

⁶⁹ *Targały się i moje wnętrzości żalu, tak żem mało życiem nie zapieczętowała*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, December 6, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 112. Unfortunately, the girl died in 1744 as a result of an oozing ulcer in her head, see: to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Lakhva, August 12, 1744, *ibid.*, p. 177.

⁷⁰ To A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, s.l., September 1, 1737, dz. IV, nr. 661, p. 41.

⁷¹ A. K a r p i ń s k i, *W walce z niewidzialnym wrogiem. Epidemie chorób zakaźnych w Rzeczypospolitej w XVI–XVIII wieku i ich następstwa demograficzne, społeczno-ekonomiczne i polityczne*, Warszawa, 2000, s. 237. Lady Radziwiłł's letter written on August 26, 1742 to her husband began with the words *God has sent a peculiar punishment on me which I avoided in Nesvizh, where children still die* [*Osobliwsze na mnie Bóg dopuścił kare, lubom unikala od niej z Nieświeża, gdzie dotąd dzieci umierają...*], see: to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, August 26, 1742, dz. IV, nr. 663, p. 80.

⁷² AGAD, AR, dz. VI, sygn. II-80a, p. 496.

⁷³ *W Nieświeżu dotąd jak powietrze tak dzieci mrą, a starsi chorują*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, August 30, 1742, dz. IV, nr. 663, p. 82.

⁷⁴ *...ciężkie maligny, dysenterie*, to A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, 4 IX 1742, *ibid.*, p. 85. The dysentery mentioned by Lady Radziwiłł is also known as bacterial dysentery or bloody diarrhea, an acute infectious disease of the mainly large intestine, manifested by persistent diarrhea and the presence of blood and mucus in the stool.

which 86 children died, as Franciszka Urszula informed her mother-in-law. She wrote ‘<...> buried in churches without accordance to Russian religion’.⁷⁵ In another letter, she reported to her that ‘<...> from the day of the Blessed Virgin of the Herbs, only in Nesvizh 38 children were buried after bloody *diserterie* <...>’.⁷⁶ Concerned about her children’s well-being and understanding the mechanisms of the spread of the epidemic, she decided to leave Nesvizh and went with her daughters to Zaturi, where she spent six Sundays.⁷⁷ Her sons, due to their studies, had to stay in the city, which greatly worried the Duchess. As we learn from further reading of the letters, Franciszka Urszula did not manage to protect her children – including the boys, who fell ill,⁷⁸ and her ‘<...> constant grief <...> made her health worn out <...>’⁷⁹ as well. She faced the same fate in 1745, when she wrote that ‘<...> here [in Nesvizh] there is severe malign, peculiarly in the castle, so already my two ladies have died, and two are deathly ill, <...>’.⁸⁰ She and her daughters then left for Mir, while her sons stayed in the municipal palace in Nesvizh, as she assured ‘<...> with all caution and comfort <...>’.⁸¹ As it later turned out, the girls fell ill, first with smallpox⁸² and just three months later Karolina developed measles,⁸³ while Theophila was tormented by tercian fever.⁸⁴

In the light of the analyzed correspondence, Franciszka Urszula appears to us as a mother who not only cared about the health of her children, but also took a keen interest in their development and was involved in their educational process. She tried to devote a lot of time to them, thanks to which she strengthened her bonds with her sons, observing their development and the progress they made. Thus, she often reported on their acquisition of basic skills, such as speaking and walking. In a letter addressed to her husband’s family, she noted that

⁷⁵ *Pochowano po kościołach nie rachując ruski religij*, to A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, September 4, 1742, *ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Od Naświętzy Panny Zielny 38 dzieci w jednym Nieświeżu na diserterie krwawe pochowali*, to A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Zathura, September 7, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 89.

⁷⁷ To A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, September 4, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 85.

⁷⁸ To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Diampol, September 13, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 95; to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Zathura, September 19, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 97.

⁷⁹ *...ustawiczny żal <...> zdrowie stargał*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Diampol, September 12, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 91.

⁸⁰ *Tu [w Nieświeżu] ciężkie maligny panują, osobliwie w zamku, więc już mi panien dwie umarło, a dwie śmiertelnie chorują*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, January 20, 1745, *ibid.*, p. 188.

⁸¹ *...przy wszelki ostrożności y wygodzie*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, January 20, 1745, *ibid.*, p. 188.

⁸² To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, February 18, 1745, *ibid.*, p. 192.

⁸³ To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, May 4, 1745, *ibid.*, p. 213; to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, May 5, 1745, *ibid.*, p. 216.

⁸⁴ To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, May 10, 1745, *ibid.*, p. 218.

[...] yesterday my Karol called out ‘Baba’ several times throughout the room, which makes me joyful that the first words out of their mouths were about our gracious and loving Grand Duchess Mother Benefactor.⁸⁵

On the pages of the letters written to her mother-in-law, we find numerous information about the children’s health and their progress and such state of affairs was caused by several reasons. Agnieszka Jakuboszczak noted that the subject of physical well-being was one of the most important topics discussed in the correspondence between a mother and a father, but also among distant relatives.⁸⁶ In this case, the children certainly constituted a ‘communication bridge’ between the demanding mother-in-law and the often disobedient daughter-in-law. Therefore, in the analyzed correspondence, we can sense that the problems concerning the offspring were treated by the Lady of Nesvizh as a kind of platform that allowed her to ‘equally’ participate in the ‘conversation’ with her husband’s mother. After all, there was something that united both of them, namely the role they performed – that of a mother. The letter was also a tool for Franciszka Urszula to build and maintain family relations based on the bond between the grandmother and their grandchildren.⁸⁷ These were to remain in the constant memory of the Chancellor’s wife, but in order for this to happen it was necessary to solicit the favor of the Duchess Anna. Therefore, Franciszka Urszula assured her that Janusz and Karol often remembered her, ‘<...> their grandmother is on their lips all the time <...>’.⁸⁸ According to Lady Radziwiłłowa, this ‘constant’ mentioning of her mother-in-law’s name was an omen of a quick meeting, which the Chancellor’s wife cared more about than did her daughter-in-law.

Franciszka Urszula provided detailed accounts of her observations to the frequently absent Michał Kazimierz. She reported to her spouse that the children were developing well, ‘<...> both evenly <...> polite, I make sure that in nothing one is over the other, they walk by the grace of God, but still speak very little’.⁸⁹ Shortly after that, she wrote that the boys ‘<...> already walk far <...>’, while at another time she reported that ‘<...> better [they] pronounce themselves than before <...>’.⁹⁰ From the perspective of the

⁸⁵ *Dnia wczorajszego mój Karol po kilka razy na cały pokój zawołał „Baba”, co mi cieszy, że pierwsze z ust ich słowa o laskawy y kochający W.X.Mci dobrodźce*, to A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Slutsk, October 13, 1734, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 84–85.

⁸⁶ A. Jakuboszczak, *Rodzina i rodzinność...*, s. 143.

⁸⁷ The portraits sent to each other played a similar role, see: A. Słaby, *Macierzyństwo...*, s. 454.

⁸⁸ *...gdysz babki z ust nie wypuszczają*, to A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Slutsk, March 24, 1735, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 129.

⁸⁹ *Obydwy równo <...> grzeczni, upewniam, że nic nie ma jeden nad drugiego, chodzą z laski Bożej, ale jeszcze bardzo mało mówią*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, December 24, 1735, *ibid.*, p. 227.

⁹⁰ *...lepi [się] wymawiają, jak pirwy*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Mir, December 26, 1737, dz. IV, nr. 661, p. 46–47.

relationship between the mother and her children, reports written in October 1737 seem to be particularly interesting. At that time, the Lady of Nesvizh decided to separate the boys, i.e. move them to two different bedrooms. As it turned out, the task was not easy. Janusz was given a ‘big new room’, while Karol, according to correspondence, was not ready for independent sleeping away from his mother. He remained not only in her dormitory room, but even slept with her

<...> in a single bed, as by the grace of God, he not only unlearned to rock on pillows, but in a cradle rests very seldom and only for a moment, to which the elder I cannot urge, since as you know my Heart, that he was always weaker <...>.⁹¹

The citation shows us not only the practices used, presumably with the aim of pacifying the 3.5-year-old boys and putting them to sleep, but also indicates a lively commitment to caring for the twins, concern for their general well-being and proper development, and above all, the bond built between the mother and the sons. This is also confirmed by the words written by the Duchess in an earlier period, namely in 1735, when Franciszka Urszula reported that Karol

<...> has become extremely accustomed to me and they tell me [in] Slutsk that he misses me and without me he storms into my rooms, and as he enters there and comes to know that I am not there, he cries immensely, therefore I must rush to them and make dispositions for others to continue my duties <...>.⁹²

On the one hand, the boy’s reaction can be linked to the developmental period he was in, but on the other hand, such a condition could only have occurred when a child was strongly attached to his mother.

It seems that the wife of the Voivode was aware of the fact that the boys at the age of 3 should be more independent, yet at the same time she knew that such a situation contributed to strengthening the relationship built between her and her sons. This was probably noticed by *Rybeńko*, who insisted on some independence concerning his beloved kids. Therefore, Radziwiłłowa tried not so much to move the boys to separate bedrooms, but to teach them to sleep in individual beds. She partially succeeded in achieving this goal, because at the end of the same year Franciszka Urszula proudly reported to her husband that the boys were already sleeping in separate beds, but she further explained that ‘<...>

⁹¹ *W jednym łuszk, gdysz już z łaski Bożej nie tylko się oduczył kołysać na poduszkach, ale y kołysce bardzo rzadko y to na moment, do czego starszego nie mogą naglić, gdysz jak wiesz moje serce, że zawsze słabszy,* to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Mir, October 26, 1737, *ibid.*, p. 46–47. She continues this theme in another letter to her husband, see: to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Mir, October 29, 1737, *ibid.*, p. 54.

⁹² *Niezmiernie do mnie przywykł, dlaczego dano mi znać [w] Slucku, że beze mnie tęskni, wdziera się do moich pokojów, a jako tam wejdzie y pozna, że mnie nie masz, to płacze niezmiernie, dlatego musze do nich spieszyć, interesa inszym zdać rozporządziwszy,* to A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, June 18, 1735, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 177–178.

they sleep with me, every other day, but the cradles are already removed completely from the room <...>'.⁹³ She also explained that rocking pillows were also no longer needed.

Franciszka Urszula was supported in the upbringing process of her twins by, among others, a housekeeper named Mrs. Maliewska.⁹⁴ In a letter written on September 1, 1737, she mentioned her serious illness, as a result of which the sitter's health was in danger.⁹⁵ Four months later, the Duchess wrote to her mother-in-law that the children's sitter had died, which caused her 'great inconvenience' as the entire care of the boys fell on her.⁹⁶ Certainly, the twins ended up under the wings of another woman or even several women. This is evidenced by the information given to her husband, in one of the undated epistles in which we read that Radziwiłłowa, at the request of her husband, decided to move women away from the twins, while in the room set aside for them, which was located in the hallway of the bedroom where she gave birth, Janusz and Karol were to be accompanied, both day and night, by men.⁹⁷ Franciszka Urszula also gave information to her husband when the boys were learning '<...> perfectly, to read and write'.⁹⁸

The first mention of the lessons being taken can be found in correspondence sent in 1740⁹⁹ in which the wife of the Palatine of Trakai set down on paper what follows 'sons are learning, daughters are playing'.¹⁰⁰ Her words perfectly reflect the educational reality, in which special attention was paid to the boys' education, while the girls, under their mother's watchful eye, spent their time playing, and later learning such skills as: writing, reading, basic calculus, foreign languages and in the case of Radziwiłł's daughters, French and Italian,¹⁰¹ as well as dancing, playing musical instruments, sewing and embroidering. It is therefore possible that the boys' independence from women's guardianship started precisely in 1740, when the twins were 6 years old, which can be assumed to be the usual time.¹⁰² In addition, the presence of the children in the bedroom posed a challenge for the married couple in obtaining intimacy. When Franciszka Urszula finally succeeded in changing the suite and putting the boys in a separate room, she wrote

⁹³ *Nayczęści ze mną, co jeden to co dzień, ale kołyski już cale y w pokoju nie masz*, to M. K. Radziwiłła, from Mir, November 16, 1737, dz. IV, nr. 661, p. 66.

⁹⁴ To A. Radziwiłł née Sanguszko, September 1, 1737, s.l., *ibid.*, p. 40. Comp. A. Słaby, *Macierzyństwo...*, s. 457–458.

⁹⁵ To A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, September 1, 1737, s.l., dz. IV, nr. 661, p. 40.

⁹⁶ To A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, January 27, 1738, from Nesvizh, *ibid.*, p. 79.

⁹⁷ To M. K. Radziwiłł, [from Nesvizh], s.a., dz. IV, nr. 669, p. 173.

⁹⁸ *...doskonale, czytać i pisać*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, [from Nesvizh], s.a., *ibid.*, p. 173.

⁹⁹ To M. K. Radziwiłł, [s.l.] March 14, 1740, dz. IV, nr. 662, p. 17.

¹⁰⁰ *Synowie się uczą, córki się bawią*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Olyka, November 18, 1740, *ibid.*, p. 103.

¹⁰¹ To A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, December 26, 1742, dz. IV, nr. 663, p. 132. See also: To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, October 28, 1736, dz. IV, nr. 664, p. 63–64.

¹⁰² A. Mariani reaches similar conclusions, *Jezuici w kręgu Radziwiłłów...*, s. 470.

tellingly to her beloved Michasinek that ‘<...> I will be waiting with a bed wide enough for the both of us, <...>’.¹⁰³

We can state that Lady Radziwiłł was keenly interested in each successive developmental stage of her children and in influencing their educational process, from the very first years. In turn, the boys were quickly thrown into the vortex of acquiring various skills, not only educational ones, but also social ones. Janusz, already at the age of less than 3 years old, participated, which was probably largely limited to observation only, in a hunt organized by his mother. At that time he had his own ‘hunt chase’ group, which consisted from the city boys, and which accompanied the Duchess on various trips to the field¹⁰⁴ where she probably showed her sons the animal trophies she acquired. This must have been the case in 1737, when she managed to hunt, or rather catch, a small hare. The Duchess tried to keep the animal alive until the arrival of Michał Kazimierz,¹⁰⁵ however with no success. The love of hunting, one could say, was a family tradition of the House of Radziwiłł. Michał Kazimierz, his wife, Hieronim Florian and even the Duchess’s eldest daughter Teofila, all of them hunted. It was a time for children to learn about hunting customs, but also to be in the companion of often noble politicians in order to be able to listen to conversations and learn to build relationships with different people.¹⁰⁶ As Philip Ariès points out, children’s participation and observation of an adult life were the primary pedagogical methods for a transfer of skills and ‘learning of life’.¹⁰⁷

The space for education in the above regard was the involvement of children in various ceremonies. The Duchess’s three eldest children, two sons and one daughter, accompanied their mother in January 1742 during the ‘mournful act of the death of the Prince Majority H.O. Father’, i.e. the mourning ceremony held on the first anniversary of Janusz Antoni’s death.¹⁰⁸ At the time, Radziwiłł’s daughter, little Teofila ‘<...> in great mourning assisted, dressed in black, with all her modesty and mournful appearance to weeping and grieving all the service brought, <...>’.¹⁰⁹ As we may suspect, this was one

¹⁰³ *Czekać będę z łuszką z szychom na nas oboje*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, [from Nesvizh], s.a., dz. IV, nr. 669, p. 173.

¹⁰⁴ To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Lakhva, February 6, 1737, dz. IV, nr. 661, p. 7.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁰⁶ A. M a r i a n i, O XVIII-wiecznych praktykach łowieckich w świetle diariusza księcia Michała Kazimierza Radziwiłła „Rybeńki”, *Europejskie tradycje łowieckie. Tom wydany z okazji III Międzynarodowego Kongresu Kultury Łowieckiej*, red. T. J. Żuchowski, Warszawa, 2013, s. 74.

¹⁰⁷ P. A r i è s, *Historia dzieciństwa. Dziecko i rodzina w dawnych czasach*, Gdańsk, 1995, s. 196.

¹⁰⁸ Died on January 16, 1741, see: I. C z a m a ń s k a, *Wiśniowieccy. Monografia rodu...*, s. 383.

¹⁰⁹ *W gruby żalobie asystowała y w flurze czarny, ze wszystkich swoją modestią y żalem do placzu y żalu oraz nabożeństwa przyprowadziła*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, January 16, 1742, dz. IV, nr. 662, p. 184.

of the first roles that this girl had to play. In the 1740s Franciszka Urszula, being an active literary artist, tried to theatricalize the court reality at every opportunity which became especially evident during family celebrations and was probably the case here as well, when Theofila, a girl displaying an utter cultural interest, acted as a weeper (based on the Roman model) and lead the mourners.¹¹⁰

At another time, the Duchess sent the boys to Slutsk, to Hieronim Florian, the then Great Deputy Cup-bearer (*podczaszy wielki*) of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, '<...> to pay due honor to the Prince of the Grand Viceroy, and to congratulate him on all the better condescension at the day of his birth, <...>'.¹¹¹ The uncle received the nephews with a 'distinction' that was difficult to express. The Duchess underlined that he '<...> loves [them] unspeakably <...>'.¹¹² Their presence and behavior were rewarded by Hieronim Florian with a gift as each of them received a gold watch.¹¹³

The Duchess, when writing to her spouse, tried to emphasize the qualities of her children, and tended to make assumptions about their future careers. In one of her letters she reported to her husband:

Janusz today was a little weakened, but already healthy by the grace of God and like a minister advises and ponders on current prosperity while Karaś [diminutive form of Karol – B. M.] like a leader tributes to the hearts of citizens and guards of the Nesvizh, almost commandeers it by himself <...>.¹¹⁴

As we can see, Franciszka Urszula in the cited passage creates the future of her sons, thus painting a certain image of them before the eyes of her husband. She sees in it taking over the highest ministerial and military offices as well as missions and service to both the individual citizen, society as a whole and, above all, the state. It was a picture of her offspring 'indescribably polite and beautiful' which, she further wrote, 'I expect they can satisfy the father's heart'.¹¹⁵ However, as another letter, written on November 9, 1735, proves, this was not just a vision built for her husband. Franciszka Urszula saw the future of her sons precisely in Hetman's colors. The inspiration to verbalize this desire turned out to be the ceremony of granting the privilege of holding

¹¹⁰ See: J. A. Chrościcki, *Pompa funebris. Z dziejów kultury staropolskiej*, Warszawa, 1974, s. 17.

¹¹¹ *Na oddanie należytego xięciu podczaszemu honoru, y na powinszowanie onemu wszelki lepszy konduity przy dniu urodzenia*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, May 2, 1742, dz. IV, nr. 663, p. 1.

¹¹² *...kocha [ich] niewypowiedzianie*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, [s.l.], May 11, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 7.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Janusz dziś trochę był osłabiał, ale już zdrow z laski Bożej jak minister radzi y zważa terażniejsze koniunktury, Karaś zaś kształtem wodza hoduje serca obywatelom y strażnikom forticy nieświski, ledwie już sam mu komenderuje*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, August 30, 1734, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 64.

¹¹⁵ *Spodziewam się, że potrafią kontentować serce ojcowskie*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Slutsk, February 28, 1735, *ibid.*, p. 126.

the Field Hetmanship of Lithuania¹¹⁶ to Michał Kazimierz. Interesting, not only due to the expressed wish, but the mistake made by the sender, are the words that she directed to her sons at that time

<...> the abundance of God's hand descends upon your name, when your grandfather, H. E. the Duke Registrar and my husband and your father today [from] the benevolent grace of the Great King August, one received the Great Hetmanship of Lithuania and the other the Field Hetmanship of Lithuania, so counting the eighteenth Hetman in the House of Radziwiłł. I wish you that one of you was honored with this title in Lithuania, and the other in the Crown, and also the same to your successors <...>.¹¹⁷

The privilege of the Great Hetmanship of Lithuania was then granted by the King to Michał Serwacy Wiśniowiecki (*Mykolas Servacijus Višnioveckis*, 1680–1744),¹¹⁸ Janusz Antoni's brother, so therefore an uncle of Franciszka Urszula. The desire expressed by the mother of the twins on the pages of the letter is also absorbing. She wanted both sons to become hetmans, one to head the Lithuanian army, the other the Crown army. The vision expressed by the Duchess was broadly in line with the lineage aspirations which were mainly embodied in the person of Franciszka Urszula's mother-in-law.

The correspondence of the Lady of Nesvizh from 1738 onward is based on the subject of education and progress of her beloved sons which became increasingly prevalent. In one of her letters written in that year, she reported to her husband that both boys already learned to read, probably to syllabicate, and to drill.¹¹⁹ This one, according to Franciszka Urszula, was the aftermath of the court proceedings they were able to watch, which made a strong, nevertheless negative impression on them. Being only four years old, they were regularly disciplined which was common practice in those days.¹²⁰ What has been revealed is that until the age of five it was the mother who personally taught the boys to read and syllabicate, using an unspecified primer. She was also supported in their education by Antoni Wetzel, a Prefect of the Ducal Archives, who taught the twins the alphabet, reading and writing.¹²¹ As it turns out, however, he practiced methods to which

¹¹⁶ He took this position after S. Denhoff, see: *Urządnicy centralni i dygnitarze Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego XIV–XVIII wieku. Spisy*, oprac. H. Lulewicz, A. Rachuba, Kórnik, 1994, s. 47, nr. 175.

¹¹⁷ *Obfitości ręki Boski splywa na imię wasze, kiedy dziad wasz xiężę jmci regimentarz y mąż mój a wasz oyciec, dziś [z] dobrotliwy łaski króla jmci Augusta, jeden buławę wielką litewską, drugi polną odebrał, więc tedy rachując osiemnastego w domu Radziwiłłowskim hetmana. Życzę Wam aby który z Was tym że się zaszczycał honorem w Litwie, a drugi podobnym że w Koronie, y także sukcesorom waszym*, to J. Radziwiłł, K. S. Radziwiłł, from Warsaw, November 9, 1735, dz. IV, nr. 660, p. 224–225.

¹¹⁸ *Urządnicy centralni...*, s. 44, nr. 149. See: AGAD, AR, dz. VI, sygn. II-80a, p. 728.

¹¹⁹ To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, April 26, 1738, dz. IV, nr. 661, p. 103.

¹²⁰ P. A r i è s, *Historia dzieciństwa...*, s. 151–152.

¹²¹ A. M a r i a n i, *Jezuici w kręgu Radziwiłłów nieświeskich...*, s. 471.

Franciszka Urszula, unlike her husband, expressed great criticism. She complained to her mother-in-law that the prefect

<...> invented an unpopular method to teach them how to read and did not want to educate them how to syllabify and now only with syllables they know how to read and not how to assemble <...>. ¹²²

She went on to explain

<...> not only did he not approve that they could syllabify from the primer, but a whole year until the age of seven he did not order to give them the primer, so that they would forget my old-fashioned custom, and learn fashionably <...>. ¹²³

Most likely, there were tensions between the Duchess and Wetzel on this ground, as further she wrote that he took offense at her.

Despite the differences presented in the boys' teaching methods, we find reports in the Duchess' letters that the sons were learning *ec perfektion* ¹²⁴ and she proudly put on paper that <...> with their own hands they wrote without corrections, God sees but only Weszel said to them a syllable after a syllable, they improved themselves by the grace of God, and on their own they had the honor to write, <...>. ¹²⁵

In 1742 the Radziwiłłs' education was taken care of by a private teacher, the Jesuit Mikołaj Kuczewski, ¹²⁶ whose attitude to the sons and the education they received describes the epistle from September of the aforementioned year, in which the Duchess emotionally commented on the disposition given by Michał Kazimierz, according to which she was to leave her sons in 'schools' and with her daughters go to Olyka and await a meeting with her spouse there. At the time, Franciszka Urszula wrote that

<...> my heart greatly shuddered to abandon my sons at such a young age, especially strangely often ill and in great need of diligence, and moreover I would prefer that my soul be separated from my body than I am from them, <...>. ¹²⁷

¹²² *Wymyślił methodę cele niepraktykowaną uczył ich czytać, a słabiezować nie chciał uczyć y tak tylko sylabami czytać umieją, a składać liter nie*, to A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, September 4, 1742, dz. IV, nr. 663, p. 85.

¹²³ *Nie tylko nie aprobował już umiejącym na alamentarzu sylabizować, ale rok cały aż do lat siedmiu nie kazał alamentarza dawać, ażeby zapomnieli mojego staroświeckiego zwyczajū, a modnie się uczyli*, to A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, September 4, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 85.

¹²⁴ To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, May 17, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 22.

¹²⁵ *Własną ręką pisali [list (letter) – B. M.] bez poprawy, bez powodzenia Bóg lepiej widzi, tylko im po sylabie Weszel powiadał, aplikują się z laski Bożej, a że sami mieli ten honor pisać*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, [from Nesvizh], June 4, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 54.

¹²⁶ A. M a r i a n i, *Jezuici w kręgu Radziwiłłów nieświeskich...*, s. 471.

¹²⁷ *Lubo się serce moje synów w tak młodym wieku wzdrygło porzucić, zwłaszcza dziwnie często chorujących y wielki pilności potrzebujących, a nadto wolala bym żeby dusza moja była od ciała odłączona jak ja od nich*, to A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, September 4, 1742, dz. IV, nr. 663, p. 84.

This short passage is the voice of a woman standing at an emotional crossroads. On the one hand, here speaks the mother concerned and saddened by the fact of leaving her sick, as she emphasizes, sons in Nesvizh; a woman who compares this separation to death, while on the other hand, an obedient wife to the will of the husband. The words quoted are an expression of rebellion and opposition to the incomprehensible decision of her beloved one which she had to accept, though.¹²⁸ Explaining her lack of understanding for Michał Kazimierz, she clarified to her mother-in-law that her goal was not to stand in the way of the boys' education which leads us to put forward a thesis that this is how Franciszka Urszula's approach must have been interpreted by *Rybeńko*. It seems intriguing that we encounter yet another situation which reveals differences of opinions between both parents towards the possible education of their sons. The Lady of Nesvizh, wanting to express her point of view, as she assures in her epistle, tried to support the professors appointed by *Rybeńko* to exercise and study boys.¹²⁹ Faced with the situation, and wishing to show the rationale for the arguments she raised, she recalled the story with Wetzel. At the time, she explained to her mother-in-law that

<...> now the new professor and the whole world are against this farcical maxim, from the beginning they teach to read fundamentally and syllabify as they know how to write, but they need to be dictated to by letter.¹³⁰

It was her way of showing her point.

The further content of the letter allows us to conclude that the boys' education, and perhaps even their relationship with their mother, generated tensions between Franciszka Urszula and *Rybeńko*. Here, the Duchess reveals the plans that Michał Kazimierz made for their children's schooling. He decided that the sons would explore the secrets of knowledge and acquire skills in Nesvizh, while the daughters should be 'bred' in Olyka. All indications are that this decision was made by the then Castellan of Vilnius without consulting Franciszka Urszula which was connected with the fact that he took charge of his sons' educational process when they reached the age of seven.¹³¹ It is difficult to say whether his intention was to restrain his wife's schooling inclinations or to 'slow down' the woman's excessive involvement in the role of a mother as well as to loosen her bond with their sons. One thing is certain – this decision shook the Duchess. Not only did she not understand the division made by her husband (the girls go to Volhynia, the boys stay

¹²⁸ *However, I would have to act according to his will with the curtailment of my life, though*, see: To A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, September 4, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 84.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Teraz nowy profesor y cały świat przeciwny tej szalony maxime z początku czytać fundamentalnie y sylabizować uczą gdysz pisać umieją, ale im trzeba po literze dyktować*, to A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, September 4, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 85.

¹³¹ D. Żołędź-Strzelczyk, *Dziecko w dawnej Polsce*, Poznań, 2002, s. 10, 12, 18–19.

in Lithuania), but she also refused to consent to separation from her sons. Full of frustration, bitterness, as well as impotence, she wrote to her mother-in-law, hoping that the woman would 'listen' to her, understand, support her, take on the role of a 'mediator' and, as a mother, stand on the other mother's side. Let us then give the floor to the Duchess, who complained to her mother-in-law in the following manner:

My husband took it upon himself to make a maxim that daughters should be bred in Olyka, sons in Nesvizh, for the love of God, Your Excellency, may I not live in this distraction because I would rather die than to live without my children, how can I live a restless life constantly running from one to another, after all it is an unpracticed law to to separate a heartily loving mother from her children, <...>. Your Highness the Duchess Benefactor, I myself breast-fed them, gave birth to them, carried them and what a crime is to love them <...>.¹³²

The quoted words build a picture of a desperate, but at the same time determined woman, for whom children and the love she gave them were most important. She refers to the hardships that every mother faces when giving birth to her offspring. Therefore, she does not understand why her spouse tried to limit her basic right which she acquired at the birth of her children, that is, the right to love. The words of the Lady of Nesvizh are very telling and they enable to polemicize with the thesis put forward by Elisabeth Badinter in the late 1990s, that motherhood is of no great value to a woman.¹³³ The content of the letters shows not only the affection that Franciszka Urszula had for the boys, but also her involvement in the process of raising the children. Radziwiłłowa emphasizes that separation would make her a constant traveler, while her spouse '<...> as a custom neither here nor there, is only after business <...>'.¹³⁴ The Duchess thus eloquently demonstrates to the addressee her husband's involvement in the process of raising the children and indicates that she had to face many situations alone.

The content of the letters enables us to discover, so to speak, the 'second bottom' of the situation described by Franciszka Urszula. The Duchess's account indicates that there were tensions between the spouses due to her numerous absences during various visits planned by Michał Kazimierz. Radziwiłłowa attempted to create a home full of warmth, care and attention for her children. Both her and the knitting were haunted by numerous

¹³² *Wziął sobie mąż mój za maxime żeby córki hodowali się w Olyce, synowie w Nieświeżu, dla miłości Bożej mci xiężno dobrodziko, niechajże ja w tym roztargnieniu nie żyje bo wole umrzeć, jak żyć bez dzieci, czy mogę ja niespokojne życie prowadzić, ale ustawicznie od jednych do drugich biegać, wszak to niepraktykowane prawo matke serdecznie dzieci kochające od nich odrywać, <...> mci xiężno dobrodziko. Ja ich sama piersiami karmiła, rodziła, nosiła y cóż za kryminał, że ich kocham, to A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, September 4, 1742, dz. IV, nr. 663, p. 86.*

¹³³ E. B a d i n t e r, *Historia miłości macierzyńskiej...*, Warszawa, 1998, s. 62.

¹³⁴ *...jak zwyczaj ni tu, ni tu nie jeździć tylko za interesami jeździć, to A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, September 4, 1742, dz. IV, nr. 663, p. 87.*

illnesses, and she was often incapacitated by pregnancy, its loss or the impending labor. This caused Franciszka Urszula's existence to take place where her children were, rather than her spouse, whom she often had to refuse to visit in the towns where he was stationed at a given time. Radziwiłłowa commented on Michał's behavior with a sense of spitefulness with the following words:

In my seventeenth year of age and in the twenty-third of my husband, my spouse did not order me to follow him, and now that his forty have passed and mine are coming, he wants me, the mother to our children, my health and life to spend on the way <...>.¹³⁵

She pointed out the hardships of traveling especially in autumn and winter, and the fact that she continued to breastfeed her daughter, *Kostulka* but as she wrote '[...] more with tears than the food <...>'.¹³⁶ September 1742 passed for Franciszka Urszula as the time of worrying mainly about the health of her children. At that time, Nesvizh was plagued by an illness manifested by cough, fever and headache. Janusz Tadeusz and Karol Stanisław were not spared from the illness either. Despite these tormenting ailments, the boys managed to continue their studies under the guidance of an appointed professor. The Jesuit proved to be a diligent person and committed to the boys' educational process. Spending whole days with the twins, he taught them first to syllabify, then to write, as well as to speak Latin language.¹³⁷ The Duchess communicated in one of her letters that

<...> the sons have been coughing strangely for the third week, and moreover with headache and fever they could barely formulate these letters. I am, however, sending you them to present you the style of their professor <...>.¹³⁸

The situation stabilized in October, when Radziwiłłowa wrote that 'the sons benefit from their studies'.¹³⁹ A time of intensive study began for them, which continued at the school at the Jesuit College in Nesvizh for at least the next three years, that is, until the end of the 1744/1745 school year.¹⁴⁰ Franciszka Urszula's attitude toward her sons'

¹³⁵ *W siedemnaście roku moim, a we dwudziestym trzecim męża mego nie kazał mi mąż za sobą jeździć, a teraz kiedy jemu 40 minęła a mnie dochodzi, chce żebym matką będąc dzieciaków zdrowie y życie na duszku prowadziła*, to A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, September 4, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 84–87.

¹³⁶ *...bardzi łzami jak pokarmem*, to A. Radziwiłłowa née Sanguszko, from Nesvizh, September 4, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 84–87.

¹³⁷ To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, s.l., s.a, *ibid.*, p. 136.

¹³⁸ *Synowie dziwnie kaszlą już trzeci tydzień, a nadto z głowy bólem y gorączką ledwie uformować mogli te listy. Posyłam ci jednak y drugie dla pokazania stylu ich profesora*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Zathura, September 21, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 101.

¹³⁹ *Synowie z nauk profitują*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, October 11, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 106.

¹⁴⁰ To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, November 21, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 108: *With the vacations' beginning, my sons a moment of time do not have to write as their current promotion obligations do not allow them so, now on continuous examinations and that they do not write I apologize... [Przy zaczynających się wakacjach*

schooling is perfectly reflected in her written words sent to her husband, in which she explained

<...> I confess to you that as much as the soul is strenuously separated from the body, so am I from my sons, whom I do not prevent from their education, for I love them dearly, yet not so blindly that I should not want to see them <...>. ¹⁴¹

These statements are quite meaningful and they indicate that the woman's reason took the upper hand over her maternal love and the desire to meet her beloved offspring. In addition to the son's absences caused by their education process, their separation from their mother was caused by frequent trips they took with their father. This was the case in October 1743, when they joined Michał Kazimierz, who was returning from Lublin. The latter participated in court proceedings against Jan Tarło, the Governor of Sandomierz, concerning the Sobieski estate. ¹⁴² The twins remained under their father's care for almost two weeks then.

The Radziwiłłs did not have to wait too long for the effects of their son's education. Already in December of the aforementioned year 1742, the Duchess proudly forwarded to her husband information that '<...> at this moment I am returning [from] a school convention at which each of our sons gave three speeches with great presentence <...>'. ¹⁴³ A. Mariani points out, the speeches of both princes during deliberations of various institutions were an important part on their path of education and were especially important for Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, who was keen on the earliest introduction of the twins to public life and the practice of speeches was intended to serve this purpose. ¹⁴⁴

It seems compelling to note that in the same year Teofila, the eldest daughter of the Radziwiłł, who was to be taught Latin by the prefect in the first place, began her studies under the tutelage of the aforementioned Wetzell. The girl had previously been taught reading and writing by her own mother ¹⁴⁵. According to the Duchess's letters, the boys competed with their sister concerning the skills they acquired and so did their teachers ¹⁴⁶.

*synowie moi czasu momentu nie mają pisać, bo im ocupatie promociej terażniejszych nie pozwalają więc teraz na examinach ustawicznych, że nie piszą przepraszam], to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, July 29, 1745, ibid., p. 236. See: A. Mariani, *Jezuici w kręgu Radziwiłłów nieświeskich...*, s. 471–472.*

¹⁴¹ *Przyznam ci się, że jak dusza od ciała cieszko się rozłącza, tak ja od synów moich, którym nie przeszkadzam do edukacyi, bo lubo ich kocham, jednak nie tak ślepo, żebym ich nie miała chcieć widzieć, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Diampol, August 25, 1742, dz. IV, nr. 663, s. 77–78.*

¹⁴² A. Mariani, *Jezuici w kręgu Radziwiłłów nieświeskich...*, s. 476.

¹⁴³ *W tym momencie powracam [z] seymiku szkolnego, na którym synowie nasi po trzy mowy z niepomięszaną prezencją mieli, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, December 6, 1742, dz. IV, nr. 663, s. 112.*

¹⁴⁴ A. Mariani, *Jezuici w kręgu Radziwiłłów nieświeskich...*, s. 476.

¹⁴⁵ To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, s.l., s.a, dz. IV, nr. 663, s. 136.

¹⁴⁶ To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, December 7, 1742, ibid., p. 116.

The younger progeny, however, was ‘<...> incomparable in her learning, <...>’¹⁴⁷ which she treated extremely diligently.¹⁴⁸

The same probably cannot be said of the boys, as in the mid-1840s Franciszka Urszula made the following request to her spouse ‘<...> write to your sons to learn and to obey the tutor and me, or send me a letter that I could give them, <...>’.¹⁴⁹ In the words written by Radziwiłł, we can observe two problems with which she had to contend as a mother, on the one hand the disobedience that the boys showed both to her and to the tutor Antoni Ronchber, on the other hand also the lack of enthusiasm for learning. As can be suspected, the scale of the problem was quite large since she was forced to ask for a letter to be sent which she could use to talk to the twins. Certainly, a period of rebellion was beginning in their lives, which, according to A. Mariani, grew in intensity in the following years¹⁵⁰ and their impishness, impetuosity, as well as high-handedness and contemptuousness increased significantly.¹⁵¹ Their behavior was greatly disappointing to both their mother and father, and the recommendations written by *Rybeńko* in his instructions to the tutor often remained a mere request.¹⁵²

According to an analysis of the Duchess’s correspondence, the presence of the mother must have been a strong distraction for the boys, and on top of that, it must have introduced some relaxation and deflected them from their studies. Seeing this, Franciszka Urszula, tried to limit the visits to her sons, who lived at the market square, in the city palace of the Radziwiłł family in Nesvizh. In 1746 she explained to her husband that ‘<...> the children are healthy, they are accustomed to me not disturbing them, I have not seen them yet after your departure, the daughters are also developing in various languages, <...>’.¹⁵³ Although she missed her offspring a lot, she tried to comply with the recommendations of her husband and their tutor.

In conclusion, in the light of the analyzed correspondence, Franciszka Urszula appears as her sons’ loving and devoted mother. She certainly filled the role she had come to play. She was aware of the career that awaited her sons, so she wished them not only to

¹⁴⁷ ...*incomparable w swojej nauce*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, December 13, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 121.

¹⁴⁸ To M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, December 13, 1742, *ibid.*, p. 126.

¹⁴⁹ *Napisz do synów, żeby się uczyli y guwernera sluchali oraz y mnie, albo też przyślij do mnie list, który bym mogła oddać*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, z Mir, June 16, 1745, *ibid.*, p. 226.

¹⁵⁰ A. Mariani, *Jezuici w kręgu Radziwiłłów nieświeskich...*, s. 475–476.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł zwany Rybeńko, *Instrukcja dla pana Antoine Ronchberga guwernera synów* (ok. 1742–1743), *Przestrogi i nauki dla dzieci. Instrukcje rodzicielskie (XVIII w.)*, wyd. M. E. Kowalczyk, D. Żołędź-Strzelczyk, Wrocław, 2017, s. 117–126.

¹⁵³ *Dziatki zdrowe, uczą się do czego żebym im nie przeszkadzała, jeszcze im po twoim wyjeździe nie widziała, córki także w różnych językach profitują*, to M. K. Radziwiłł, from Nesvizh, July 8, 1746, dz. IV, nr. 664, p. 48.

obtain proper education, but also to be socially skilful. Being well-educated herself, she tried to supervise her sons' schooling, and exert her influence where possible and direct their educational path properly. She managed to build a strong bond with the boys, which she maintained in later years when they came under their father's care. Correspondence shows that more than once she came to fight for this affection, as can be assumed, with the jealous *Rybeńko*. From the beginning she taught the children to respect and love their father, grandmother and the family. She struggled with the problems of everyday life – illnesses, the twins' bad moods and, eventually, their rebellious approach to learning. Nonetheless, her sons gave her much joy and provided reasons for pride. Often, however, her motherhood was marked by pain, suffering, loneliness and misunderstanding, against which she frequently became powerless. It seemed to be of particular importance to her that she was able to take proper care of both boys and the common household. Every little success they had, an illness they fought off, a skill they acquired, caused Franciszka Urszula to grow in strength in order not to be afraid to confront her standpoint with the views of her husband or her mother-in-law.

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BŪTI DVIEJŲ SŪNŲ MAMA. KUNIGAİKŠTIENĖS PRANCIŠKOS URŠULĖS IŠ VIŠNIOVECKIŲ RADVILIENĖS SANTYKIAI SU SŪNUMIS DVYINIAIS PAGAL JOS KORESPONDENCIJĄ

Santrauka

BERNADETTA M A N Y Ś

Pastaraisiais dešimtmečiais Lenkijos ir Lietuvos istoriografija įdomiai ir vis drąsiau tyrinėja bajorų ir didikų šeimos gyvenimą tiek demografijos aspektu, tiek per šeimos narių, daugiausia sutuoktinių, tarpusavio santykių prizmę. Dėl šaltinių trūkumo ir jų riboto pobūdžio sunkiau yra atskleisti tėvų ir vaikų santykius. Šis klausimas, nors ir labai įdomus, vis dar yra menkai iširtas.

Šiame straipsnyje siekiama bent iš dalies užpildyti minėtą spragą ir bandoma pagilinti XVIII a. Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės didikų šeimų, jų narių tarpusavio santykių tyrimus. Šiuo atveju mėginama pažvelgti į motinos santykius su vaikais – sūnumis, per egodokumentų prizmę – tiriant laiškus, rašytus sutuoktiniui, anytai ir vaikams. Straipsnio herojė – Pranciška Uršulė iš Višnioveckių Radvilienė (1705–1753) buvo vieno įtakingiausių to meto Lietuvos didikų – Mykolo Kazimiero Radvilos Žuvelės sutuoktinė. Jos literatūrinė kūryba ir kultūrinė veikla yra išsamiai tyrinėta lenkų (mažiau lietuviškoje) istoriografijoje. Šiuose tyrimuose Pranciška Uršulė vaizduojama kaip kūrėja, turtinga matrona ir įtakingo bei turtingo didiko žmona. O jos vyrui rašytuose laiškuose ji atsiskleidžia kaip itin įsitraukusi į šeimos gyvenimą ir jos interesų gynimą moteris, kuri tuo pačiu metu yra švelni ir mylinti bei kupina nerimo ir rūpesčio dėl savo vyro bei vaikų gerovės.

Šiame fone išsiskiria santykiai su sūnumis dvyniais: Jonušu Tadu ir Karoliu Stanislovu. Straipsnyje ne tik bandoma nustatyti, kokią informaciją apie savo vaikus Nesvyžiaus ordinatė pateikia savo laiškuose, bet ir apibūdinti šeimyninių santykių vaizdą, kurį atskleidžia jos korespondencija. Stengiamasi atsakyti į klausimą, kaip didikė realizavo save kaip motiną, kiek ji įsitraukė į sūnų auklėjimo ir ugdymo procesą, kiek čia ji turėjo įtakos, o kas jai liko nepasiekiamas. Svarstoma, kaip Pranciška Uršulė suvokė save atliekant šį svarbų ir atsakingą vaidmenį, kas jai kėlė skausmo ir kančių, o kas suteikdavo džiaugsmo ir pasitenkinimo.

Atliekant tyrimą remtasi egodokumentais, saugomais Radvilų archyve Vyriausiajame senųjų aktų archyve Varšuvoje. Tai daugiausia kunigaikštienės rašyta korespondencija savo vyrui Mykolui Kazimierui Radvilai Žuvelei ir anytai Onai iš Sanguškų Radvilieni, taip pat jos kolekcijoje išlikę keli berniukams adresuoti laišškai. Analizuojami 1734–1746 m. rašyti laišškai, t. y. nuo dvynių gimimo iki jų mokymosi Nesvyžiaus jėzuitų mokykloje nutrūkimo, greičiausiai dėl raupų ligos.

Gauta 2024 m. liepos mėn.

Priimta 2024 m. rugpjūčio mėn.

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