

Mirosław Płonka

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3806-1146>

University of the Commission for National Education, Kraków

“Coveting the Manor” — the feud between Father Józef Dembiński and Krystyna Wilkońska née Dembińska in 1758—1772

A wealthy nobleman’s manor often served an example of transmission of patterns and models adopted from representatives of the aristocracy and observed while traveling abroad. Even more often, inspiration was sought with the neighbours living in vicinity. This allows discussing the societal perception of the manor (Polish: *dwór*), a notion that not only encompasses people or real estate with the building and outbuildings but also a wealth of rights and privileges that the proprietors were entitled to.¹

- 1 See e.g.: W. Reinhard, *Introduction: Power Elites, State Servants*, in: *Power Elites and State Building*, ed. by W. Reinhard, Oxford 1996, pp. 1–18; U. Augustyniak, *Dwór i klientela Krzysztofa Radziwiłła (1585–1640). Mechanizmy funkcjonowania patronatu*, Warszawa 2001; Z. Zielińska, *Mechanizm sejmikowy i klientela radziwiłłowska za Sasów*, “Przegląd Historyczny” 62 (1971) No. 3, pp. 397–419; E. Opaliński, *Kultura polityczna szlachty polskiej w latach 1587–1652. System parlamentarny a społeczeństwo obywatelskie*, Warszawa 1995; M. Leśniakowska, “Polski dwór” — wzorce architektoniczne, mit, symbol, Warszawa 1992; M. Leśniakowska, “Jam dwór polski...”, czyli raz jeszcze o mityzacji w nauce, “Polska Sztuka Ludowa — Konteksty” 44 (1990) No. 3,

The perception of a manor house as a conglomerate of all these elements can be investigated on individual basis, using specific examples. The example used in this essay is how *dwór* was perceived by doctor of law and letters, Fr Józef Dembiński of Nieczuja coat of arms, who served as the parish priest in Stryszów in Zator Deanery in 1758–72.² Father Józef competed with Christina née Dembińska of the Rawicz coat of arms, widowed by Kazimierz Wilkoński, Standard Bearer of Zator. The conflict outlined below is but one of several that the parish priests of Stryszów and the owners of the village were involved in in the 18th century. The dispute between the parsonage and the manor, i.e., the Wilkoński family, began in the 1680s, when Michał Wilkoński became the owner of the village. The difference was that, beginning with 1758, the conflicts were initiated by the landowner, eager to put an end to the issuance of manorial wood and the mass tax at the cost of the parish. On assuming the parish, Fr Dembiński began to initiate successive conflicts, beginning with the disputes over proceeds from church benefices.³ Whatever the parish priest did, he did under the guise of the good of the parish, occasionally also invoking the interests of University of Kraków. As the parish priest, Dembiński tried to obtain successive privileges for the parish, transformed the parsonage in Stryszów into the other manor, and besmirched Krystyna's reputation, all the while emphasising his knowledge of law. The individual actions that Father Józef undertook illustrate how the *dwór* was perceived in from the 1750s to the 1770s through the lens of the patron of a church.⁴

pp. 32–33; A. Mączak, *Nierówna przyjaźń. Układy klientalne w perspektywie historycznej*, Wrocław 2003; see also: A. Mączak, *Rzeczypospolita szlacheckich samorządów*, "Przegląd Historyczny" 96 (2005) No. 2, pp. 169–193.

- 2 Save for a handful of articles, the history of the parish in Stryszów never received more comprehensive academic treatment, see e.g.: F. Lenczowski, *Dzierżawa zakrzowska pod względem osadniczym i obciążeń jej ludności w okresie XIV–XVIII wieku*, "Studia Historyczne" 13 (1970) No. 4, pp. 549–559; F. Lenczowski, *O kościołach i parafiach w Stryszowie i Zakrzowie*, "Nasza Przyszłość" 45 (1976), pp. 191–233.
- 3 Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Varia II*, ref. No. III.1.8, pp. 8, 9; see: *Urzednicy województwa krakowskiego XVI–XVIII wieku. Spisy*, eds. S. Cynarski, A. Falniowska-Gradowska, A. Gąsiorowski, Kórnik 1990, No. 772.
- 4 Under the patronage of Kazimierz Wilkoński and during the term of Fr Wojciech Jan Kanty Rzepecki as parish priest, a dispute concerning the governance of the church continued, because the owner asserted that his authority extended to the parsonage and the church. Kazimierz repeatedly caused the profanation of liturgy.

I deem that the conflict discussed here was an instance of prestige rivalry. The dispute between the manor and the parsonage in Stryśzów developed in three stages, and examining them will allow to understand the complex nature of that rivalry, and therefore the unique nature of the conflict in the context of other disputes between the parish priest and land-owner patrons in the Deanery of Zator of the Kraków diocese.⁵ In the initial part of this study, I will endeavour to address the questions pertaining to the reasons for the conflict and its axis, to use the following to present the three aforementioned stages of the conflict: vying for the proceeds from church benefices, turning the parsonage into the other manor in Stryśzów, and the fight for patronage rights.

Rivalry for prestige

As the notes of Fr Professor Franciszek Kolendowicz suggest, the parish priest of Stryśzów in 1773–84, Fr Dembiński developed an excessive envy towards the patroness of the Stryśzów parish in matters related to the manor.⁶ Kolendowicz used this, rather symbolic, phrase, to con-

In 1730, during a feast at the Stryśzów manor, Wilkoński insulted the parish priest calling him a traitor and asking him, “*Et tu, Brute, contra me?* Earlier, Your Grace served me as a page, and now you inopportune me in this way?” To which the priest replied, “Verily, I did serve as a page, which I am not ashamed of, but Your Grace cannot claim that I did something wrong and if I showed ingratitude when I left Y[our] G[race]’s service, I acted like a boy as poverty drove me away”. The dispute between Wilkoński and Fr Rzepecki, reinforced the way the manor was perceived in the 1740^s, namely as the place where future relations between the patron and the parish priest took shape. Information about the future parish priest being brought up in Stryśzów confirms the assumption that the village was dominated by purely clientelist arrangements. That made the manor the centre of the village. Fr Józef Dembiński defied this approach, considering himself equal to Krystyna Wilkońska, the owner, see: Parish Archive in Stryśzów, *Varia II*, p. 8, 9; see: K. Nowakowski, *Klientelizm jako forma korupcji*, “Ruch Prawniczy, Ekonomiczny i Socjologiczny” 69 (2007) No. 1, pp. 213–230.

- 5 See e.g.: Ł. Gołaszewski, *Spory o dziesięciny w Knyszynie w XVI i XVII w.*, in: *Parafia w Knyszynie 1520–2020. Odkrywanie dziejów*, ed. by A. Szot, Knyszyn 2019, pp. 105–128; Ł. Gołaszewski, *Konflikty o dziesięciny w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej. Aspekty prawne i społeczne na przykładzie parafii Kobylin na przełomie XVI–XVII wieku*, Warszawa 2021, pp. 292–298.
- 6 Parish Archive in Stryśzów, *Liber omnium parochorum, administratorum, cooperatorum parochiae Stryśzow*, ref. No. II.4.9, pp. 3–4.

veal a highly intricate problem, rooted in the private rivalry between the clergyman and the proprietress of Stryżów, concerning her entitlements, estate, and societal role in the village and parish. The initial clashes between Wilkońska and Fr Dembiński concerned transporting liquor from Wadowice to the parsonage in Stryżów. This was followed by taking to the court of law the parish's privilege to harvest wood in the manorial forest, and the value of the mass tax (Latin: *missalium*, Polish: *meszne*) from the manorial fields. With time, under the guise of repairs in the parish, Fr Dembiński used church benefices (including church timber) for the construction of a subsidiary church in nearby Marcówka. The next stage involved the employment of carpenter Jakub Miękiński (aka Miękiński), who was thus diverted from working for the manor. The pinnacle of the conflict was, however, the establishment of the Canonry of St Joseph, whose organisation infringed upon the patronage rights of the Wilkoński family.

What must primarily be considered while looking for the cause of the dispute between Wilkońska and Fr Dembiński are the private ambitions of both parties, sharing the surname yet using different coats of arms (i.e. hailing from different clans). Wilkońska divorced her husband in the 1730s due to his infidelity. She received some estate in Stryżów, while the other half was assigned to Kazimierz, and later to their son Józef. Upon Józef's death (c. 1754), Wilkońska became the lifelong proprietress of the village and acquired patronage rights over the local parish⁷. As the Dembiński family of the Rawicz coat of arms were to inherit a part of her estates, while what was left over her husband was to pass to her nephews and nieces (children of Aleksander Wilkoński), being highly versed in secular and ecclesiastical law, Fr Dr Józef Dembiński decided to exploit his advantage over the proprietress of the village. Following the death of the Master of the Hunt of Volhynia, Franciszek Michał Dembiński of the Nieczuja coat of arms, Marcówka came under the administration of his widow Salomea née Słuszkowska and her second husband, Jan Zakrzewski. In 1759, Fr Józef Dembiński leased the paternal estate from his mother and stepfather, and then became its proprietor.⁸ From

7 Archive of the Metropolitan Curia in Kraków (hereinafter: AKMK), ref. No. AOff 170, c. 33v-36.

8 In 1759, Fr Józef and his brother, Franciszek Dembiński, signed in Zator an agreement with their mother and stepfather regarding "the release of the villages of Zembrzyce and Marcówka from the life-long tenure". The Zakrzewskis

that year, the personal conflict intensified, as from 1759 Father Józef was not only the parish priest but also a landowner. Józef Dembiński spent significant sums of money on his education and self-fashioning, and after his ordination, he was received into the household of Andrzej Stanisław Załuski, Bishop of Kraków. This is how the Zakrzewski family commented on this situation: “Entertaining himself [Józef] wished to seize the opportunity, to ensure further and easier promotion, but His Grace spurned this opportunity. Instead, in his mind, he fashioned that he ought to journey to Rome for a canonry, yet he failed to mark that he lacked funds for that”.⁹ Thus, another factor in Fr Dembiński’s calculations was a personal failure.

An additionally reason for the conflict between the manor and the parsonage in Stryszów was the tension linked to the roles and prestige between the Jesuits and the University of Kraków in Kraków. The loans taken and commitments made, Krystyna was forced to sign a contract on 30 January 1755 with the rector of the Jesuit College in Kraków, Władysław Żółtowski. In return for settling debts with the Odrzywolski family (4,000 Polish złoty), the Dominican nuns (3,000 Polish złoty), Kleczkowska, Minicka, and Młotkowska (1,500 Polish złoty), and Gutowska (1,000 Polish złoty), Wilkońska pledged 10,000 Polish złoty to the Kraków Jesuits, undertaking to pay, in two instalments, an annual rent of 500 Polish złoty for the Jesuit college and chapel from her Stryszów estate. This move did not go down well with Father Józef Dembiński, who had ties to the College of Law at the University of Kraków. He sought to bankrupt the Stryszów proprietress to prevent her from financing Kraków Jesuits with her rent.¹⁰

filed the first protest against them to the district court in Oświęcim already in 1760, because the Dembińskis did not pay the first instalment due to them, ANKr., Księgi Grodzkie Oświęcimskie (hereinafter: KGO), *Relationes (copiae) 1760*, ref. No. 29/6/0/1/22, pp. 327–330; KGO, *Decreta officii (protocollon) 1778–1784*, ref. No. 29/6/0/2/55, p. 81. See also: ANKr., KGO, *Relationes (copiae) 1760*, ref. No. 29/6/0/1/22, pp. 357–359; ANKr., KGO, *Relationes 1770 r.*, ref. No. 29/6/0/1/28, pp. 63–80. See: też ANKr., KGO, *Relationes (copiae) 1768*, ref. No. 29/6/0/1/26, pp. 79–80. AKMK, *Teczka parafii Stryszów*, ref. No. APA 300, brak nr kart. ANKr., KGO, *Relationes 1770 r.*, ref. No. 29/6/0/1/28, pp. 63–80.

9 ANKr., KGO, *Relationes 1763–1765*, ref. No. 29/6/0/1/5, pp. 34–35.

10 ANKr., KGO, *Relationes 1753–1758*, ref. No. 29/6/0/1/4, pp. 1004–1010.

Rivalry for proceeds from church benefices

In the first phase of the dispute, the cleric wanted to impoverish Krystyna Wilkońska. In 1759, Wilkońska's subjects for the first time caught the parish priest, Fr Józef Dembiński, engaging in unlawful sales of alcohol, when he "had liquor bought in Wadowice by the barrel, and then secretly brought to the parsonage". Dembiński sold it to his parishioners after Sunday masses. Initially it was sold to the residents of Leśnica, Stronie, and Zakrzów under the pretext that "they were coming from afar for the celebration".¹¹ In that year, a tax collector and a court scribe apprehended Jan Merek, known as Niedźwiedź ("The Bear"), a subject of Father Dembiński, with four barrels of liquor on a cart and confiscated three of them.¹² The priest, "incensed that his subject's liquor had been taken away from him on the road, travelled in person to Wadowice in a cart drawn by four horses for selfsame liquor, and declared, 'Who shall take it from me!'" Overflowing with arrogance, the parson "on purpose travelled across the manorial estate" to emphasise his right. And when "he was on the road with the liquor he purchased in Wadowice, seeking a pretext to have it taken from him", he actually had it taken. As the successive batch of barrels were taken away from Dembiński, he leapt from the cart and beat the guard and the court scribe with a cane, "and even banished them from the church for that, cursing and refusing to let them enter". Wilkońska accused Father Dembiński of illegal alcohol sales and beating her subjects. On 20 June, 1759, the parish priest argued his case before the court, citing a legal loophole he had identified, which allowed him to trade in alcohol.¹³

11 The first to claim the right to sell liquor was Fr Wojciech Rzepecki, Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Personalia ks. J. Dembińskiego*, p. 22.

12 Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Metrica Baptisatorum 1752–1765*, pp. 105, 121, 147; *Liber Baptisatorum 1766–1780*, pp. 94–95, 112–120; *Liber Baptisatorum 1780–1785*, p. 27.

13 The matter came to light when Niedźwiedź the driver, interrogated by the tallyman and the manorial scribe admitted that he had been transporting two barrels of liquor for the parish priest and the third one for himself, "which obviously showed that not only H[is] G[race], the Parish Priest, was selling liquor, but so did his subjects.", quoted from: Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Varia II*, p. 2; see also: AKMK, ref. No. AOff 194, p. 3–3v, 49–51; see: Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Documenta*, ref. No. III.1.4, p. 31a-f.

The case taken to the Consistory did not resolve the issue, as liquor was sold to parishioners at the house of Urban and Błażej Brandys on 1 February 1761, and at Niedźwiedź's house, all of whom were subjects of the parish, on 2 and 3 February. Furthermore, on 3 May of that year, as testified by Wilkońska's witnesses, "during the Mass, Fr Dembiński encouraged the purchase of [liquor] from the pulpit, even though he had no licence for it."¹⁴ In 1761, the lifelong proprietress of Stryszów lodged a complaint against Fr Dembiński to the church authorities in Kraków, requesting that the cleric presented his legal grounds for sale of alcohol.¹⁵ Despite the allegations made, Dembiński, „paying no heed, purchased liquor in Wadowice, and when it was taken away from him while he was crossing the Stryszów manorial estate on the way from Wadowice, being somewhat inebriated, he beat Sroka and Drożdż with a reed cane, and furthermore refused to allow them in the church for it, shouting that they should not go to church.”¹⁶ As the matter did not subside, in November 1761, Wilkońska began collecting peasants' testimonies against the parish priest, who claimed the right to sell liquor ("coming into succession as a parish priest, without any right to sell, knowing that his predecessors never usurped the right to such sale and were never in possession of such a licence").¹⁷ As a lawyer, Fr Dembiński realised that there was nothing preventing him from importing beverages, for example from the town, for his personal or home use. That made him claim that the requirement only to consume liquor only from manorial inns and taverns imposed by the nobility who owned them was in no way derived from national law. Aware of this nuance, the priest sold liquor "both at the parsonage and in the tiny houses owned by the parsonage [...] at a great detriment to the manor's income."¹⁸

14 Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Varia II*, p. 20; see: Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Fundationes parochiae Stryszów. XVIII wiek*, p. 18, 19.

15 AKMK, ref. No. AOff 193, p. 136–137v.

16 A similar testimony was presented on 8 January 1762 by the witnesses for Krystyna Wilkońska: her servants Stanisław Bodzański and Józef Józefowski, known as Dryja, see: Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Personalia ks. J. Dembińskiego*, ref. No. V.2, p. 1; *Documenta*, p. 39, 40.

17 Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Personalia ks. J. Dembińskiego*, ref. No. V.2, p. 1; *Documenta*, p. 39, 40.

18 AKMK, ref. No. AOff 194, p. 49–51; see: Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Fascykul kopii wszystkich znanych Kolendowiczowi spraw zw. z przeszłością parafii Stryszów*,

A fascinating context of this conflict emerges from the testimonies of the peasants who, on behalf of Krystyna Wilkońska, testified about Fr Dembiński usurping the right to sell alcohol in Stryżów. With the situation aggravating, the priest entrusted the liquor he bought to his subject, Kazimierz Skalski, for resale. Another unnamed subject of the parish priest, likely Błażej Brandys, was also involved as he distributed the priest's alcohol in Rzyczki. Father Dembiński continued with his plan of weakening the manorial inn by implemented further, increasingly immoral solutions, for example "the drunk prayers".

H[is] G[race] the Parish Priest intentionally made the parishioners gather at the parsonage for the prayers, to sell the liquor, which he dispensed at the parsonage to those who would come to pray several times, and would leave such prayers drunk, and then shout, and lie drunk along the way, vomiting. Then [the parish priest] took revenge on those who drank in the manorial inn, and had them incarcerated.¹⁹

The proprietress found herself unable to levy accusations against the parson, for he used the spirits purchased in the town for personal use within the parsonage. Furthermore, witnesses on behalf of Wilkońska asserted that the parish priest purportedly prohibited his subjects, "on pain of fines, from drinking beverages at the lady's inn, and he had [music] played for them at Skalski's at the Shrovetide and later at the parsonage". The assault on Wilkońska's inn entailed more than just competition in sales of spirits, as it extended to salt and meat. "Having bought procured salt, Dembiński instructed his subject, Skalski, to vend it, thereby causing a detriment to Her Grace the Standard Bearer's Widow's profits". Furthermore, summarising their losses from 1759 onwards, the innkeepers in Wilkońska's employ noted that the gravest were incurred by the permission the parish priest gave his subjects to slaughter cattle "and sell its meat, which was also to the detriment of the manor, as the tallow-makers, expected to donate to the manor [...] did not do so."²⁰ Thus, Fr Dembiński turned the parsonage cellar into a quasi-inn. A sharp surge

pp. 155–162. Attempts to compete for peasant clients and alcohol sale during Sunday masses and church fairs were nothing out of the ordinary in the second half of the 18th century, see: T. Kargol, Ł. Jewuła, K. Ślusarek, *Dwór, wieś i plebania*, p. 306.

19 Parish Archive in Stryżów, *Varia II*, p. 2.

20 All the quotes in this paragraph are taken from: Parish Archive in Stryżów, *Varia II*, p. 2.

in liquor prices put an end to the dispute.²¹ While it was confirmed in 1762 that the parish priests of Stryśzów had held a licence for distilling spirits for the past thirteen years,²² the subjects of Fr Dembiński withdrew from the previous cooperation, declining any further sales of spirits.²³

In defiance of the stipulations set forth in 1687 for the felling of timber from the manorial forest, Fr Dembiński first ordered such felling of timber in the parochial woods, and “sold it to his subjects in Stryśzów, while he unnecessarily orders the felling of prominent in the manorial woods.”²⁴ In 1761, Krystyna Wilkońska filed a complaint concerning self-willed felling of timber before ecclesiastical authorities against the priest, starting a legal dispute with the cleric, who unwaveringly maintained that the wood was used for the repairs of the parsonage, to which he was entitled.²⁵ Tensions rose with each successive legal proceeding, as the priest did not feel guilty. He even felled further trees that belonged to the manor of a total value of 70 złotych górskich.²⁶ He allegedly needed that much for the overhaul of the subsidiary church in Zakrzów. The conflict aggravated, as the parochial woods were earmarked for timber covering

21 Some caution should be exercised regarding certain testimonies, especially those given by servants and subjects of Wilkońska. However, these testimonies probably did not deviate significantly from the contemporary practice, as indicated, for instance, by the tone of the letter of Fr Mikołaj Kralewicz, the parish priest of Złota, admonishing Fr Dembiński on 5 November 1761 — “Twice in my court have you been accused of disobedience and reprimanded, recognise now that on both occasions I have treated Your Grace with fatherly kindness, and now I see that my leniency has made you worse”, see: Parish Archive in Stryśzów, *Personalia ks. Józefa Dembińskiego*, p. 1; see: J. Szczepaniak, *Duchowieństwo diecezji krakowskiej w XVIII wieku. Studium prozopograficzne*, Kraków 2010, p. 621.

22 Parish Archive in Stryśzów, *Documenta*, p. 31, 43.

23 Parish Archive in Stryśzów, *Varia II*, p. 7.

24 Parish Archive in Stryśzów, *Varia II*, p. 2.

25 In 1687, church courts confirmed the parish priest’s privilege of free felling in manorial forest in several cases (e.g., for repairing church buildings) with the manor’s concession, see: AKMK, ref. No. AOff 157, p. 470–470v; Parish Archive in Stryśzów, *Fascykuł z dokumentami w sprawie sporów między księdzem Aleksandrem Piotrowskim i Michałem Wilkońskim*, ref. No. II.2.5, p. 59v–65v, 84–89.

26 This is a reference are to “złote” or “tymfy górskie”, the currency used in the Duchy of Zator. One such coin was equivalent to 18 to 30 groszy, see: T. Kargol, Ł. Jewuła, K. Ślusarek, *Dwór, wieś i plebania w przestrzeni społecznej zachodniej Małopolski w latach 1772–1815*, Kraków 2015, p. 7.

the needs of the church in Zakrzów. Nevertheless, Fr Dembiński, DLL, exulted in his superiority over Wilkońska as he demonstrated his grasp of canonical and secular law during the trials.²⁷

Despite Wilkońska's pursuit of legal remedies to curtail the priest's arbitrary actions, the Official General of Kraków confirmed the parish priest's right to harvest timber from the manorial forest in 1761. The terms of such logging were clearly itemised, and were to be proclaimed by the parish priest from the pulpit, so that the subjects of both the manor and the parish were familiar with the limits of activities of both parties.²⁸ Wilkońska's failure to conform to the provisions of the document led to her excommunication in the same year, as elaborated upon later.²⁹ Consequently, Fr Dembiński embarked upon a fervent spree of felling timber in manorial forests. On 2 May 1762, he removed 25 beeches and 15 other trees from Wilkońska's woods, "and even the subjects of H[is] G[race] the Parish Priest purloined wood by night, and [so did] his blacksmith for charcoal". For contrast, it is worth noting that in the last decades of the 17th century, Michał Wilkoński had took Fr Aleksander Piotrowski to court over the felling of 20 trees, while Fr Dembiński felled no fewer than forty. Fr Dembiński justified the felling of the manorial trees under the pretext of his right to use it for the needs of the parish. In 1763, Fr Dembiński was already negotiating a settlement with Wilkońska, and yet, as Wilkońska testified, "upon returning to his place, without notifying me, he had several trees logged in my woods for his own barns, and is to fell more for the construction of a new parsonage.³⁰ Such logging of the manorial woods by the parish priest, left Krystyna Wilkońska with but one solution,

27 AKMK, ref. No. AOff 193, p. 136–137v; see: Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Fundationes parochiae Stryszów. XVIII wiek*, p. 19.

28 AKMK, ref. No. AOff 193, p. 132–132v; Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Fascykuł kopii wszystkich znanych Kolendowiczowi spraw zw. z przeszłością parafii Stryszów*, ref. No. II.2.2, pp. 121–136.

29 AKMK, ref. No. AOff 193, p. 132–132v; see: Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Fundationes parochiae Stryszów. XVIII wiek*, ref. No. III.1.3, p. 16, 17; Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Fundationes parochiae Stryszów. XVIII wiek*, p. 22.

30 Wilkońska rightly argued that "the true copy from the *Liber Retaxationum* lists everything including the fields yet says nothing about any forests for the parsonage [...]. No parson fell what they wanted from the manorial forest without asking, nor did they fell even a single little beech without permission, for also his predecessor, Fr Rzepecki, built a new vicarage from his and not the manorial

namely reaching a settlement with him without delay. Nonetheless it took decades of revitalisation to amend for the devastation of the manorial beech forest caused by Fr Dembiński.³¹

A dispute parallel to the one about the right to timber felling unfolded around the reinstatement of the payment of the mass tax by Wilkońska. On 10 June 1761, Suffragan Bishop Franciszek Potkański issued a judgment in this matter, which Krystyna Wilkońska, however, declined to accept. That is why, 18 days later, “during a public assembly before the service among the congregation” she was declared excommunicated from the pulpit by the parish priest. She was consequently forbidden entry into the church in Stryzów, which Fr Dembiński greatly desired.³² However, Wilkońska clarified the case quite fast and by paying the penalty by July 1761, she had the punishment imposed on her lifted, which the parish priest refused to accept, deeming it a lie. Under the testimonies of those present at the announcement of the excommunication, the cleric recorded incidents associated with Wilkońska’s attempts to enter the church. One such incident allegedly occurred on 8 January 1762, when the patroness wished to attend a mass in the church, yet the parish priest did not permit her entry, considering her (in his view) still excommunicated. For that reason, Wilkońska’s retainers, Stanisław Bodzański and Józef Józefowski known as Dryja, demanded with racket and threats, that the church doors be opened for Wilkońska, asserting that the excommunication had already been lifted.³³ Wilkońska was excommunicated once again a year later, for failing to comply with the decision of the commissioners sent to Stryzów in June of that year. They had ordered her to settle the dues from the title of the mass tax on the manorial fields overdue since 1757 and to pay the dues from Ligoczyna regularly, which she failed to do.³⁴ Additionally, Fr Dembiński obtained, on behalf the right to graze parish cattle on the meadows of the former Lgocki grange, which belonged to Wilkońska. She in turn offered to give him that hamlet so that he could see for himself the quality of the soil, yet — due to soil quality and land

forest”, see: Parish Archive in Stryzów, *Fundationes parochiae Stryzów. XVIII wiek*, p. 39.

31 Parish Archive in Stryzów, *Fundationes parochiae Stryzów. XVIII wiek*, p. 77v.

32 Parish Archive in Stryzów, *Fundationes parochiae Stryzów. XVIII wiek*, p. 17.

33 Parish Archive in Stryzów, *Fundationes parochiae Stryzów. XVIII wiek*, p. 17–18, 39.

34 Parish Archive in Stryzów, *Fundationes parochiae Stryzów. XVIII wiek*, p. 29.

types of crops — the parish priest desisted, satisfied with the aforementioned solution.³⁵

The parsonage as Stryśzów's other manor

After 1759, the Stryśzów parsonage began to serve not only as the residence of the parish priest but also as the abode of landowner from Marcówka. Beginning with the early 1760s, the parish priest took steps that directly indicated a rivalry with Wilkońska concerning the appearance of the parsonage, which he was turning into a manor. A common practice in these quarters of the Duchy of Zator was to construct “noblemen’s manor houses largely of wood, with few chambers, yet one or two spacious halls designed for hosting guests and a sizable entry hall” as Aleksander Wybranowski noted in the 19th century.³⁶ It was evident that Fr Dembiński intended to conduct a comprehensive renovation of the parsonage. While we lack information on the extent of work carried out in the 1760s under Fr Dembiński, there exists a description of the building penned by his successor. The parsonage had two storeys, as Fr Kolendowicz reported in 1781, with “the lower lacking windows for straw, while the upper floor was intended as the residence for the parish priest and featured a porch, with one huge hall with two large windows; only here the walls were new, constructed of thin unplastered timber.”³⁷ That means that Fr Dembiński failed to complete the renovation and construction work he had initiated. The changes affected more than just the parsonage, which Fr Dembiński expanded, but also to its vicinity. In the last quarter of the 18th century, there were a total of ten buildings near the church, as listed by Fr Kolendowicz as the surrounding of the Stryśzów parsonage. These were arranged into two additional yards on the south side of the parsonage.³⁸ Furthermore, in his capacity of the Rector of the Church of St Anne in Zakrzów, Fr Dembiński made sure to have a new parish house with a stone chimney erected in Zakrzów for the visiting Stryśzów priest. It was a modest structure with a hallway and one room, which had a private room in wood added. The interior was accessible through

35 Parish Archive in Stryśzów, *Varia II*, p. 6.

36 A. Wybranowski, *Ze starych wspomnień: silva rerum*, Lwów 1887, p. 69.

37 A. Wybranowski, *Ze starych wspomnień: silva rerum*, p. 36.

38 Parish Archive in Stryśzów, *Opisanie parafii w Stryśzowie ks. F. Kolendowicza*, ref. No. II.4.4, pp. 36–39.

a solid door with a lock, hooks, and hinges in the hallway.³⁹ Thus, Father Dembiński became a landowner with three residences — in Marcówka, Stryszów, and Zakrzów.

Additionally, the parish priest brought to the parish house Jakub Miekiński, a carpenter from Kalwaria who had worked at the Stryszów manor from the late 1750s to the early 1760s. Through the efforts of Fr Józef Dembiński, he was practically diverted from the work assigned to him at the manor by Krystyna Wilkońska, under the pretext of adorning the church and, by the way, also the parsonage. Miekiński's works encompassed more than just the altars, as he also fashioned the still-extant doors to the sacristy, and two pairs of entrance doors.⁴⁰ He furthermore renovated the stone slab leading to the crypt of the benefactors, remodelled the altar steps, and repaired the ossuary.⁴¹ Thus the number of works Miekiński completed (with another craftsman from Kalwaria of the name Łukasz Dragan working with him) in the church of Stryszów in the 1750s and 1760s was truly impressive. It is worth noting that both were at the same time employed in the church in Zakrzów, where they mended the flooring and modified three altar tables, relocating them together with the altar steps to new locations. The parish priest did not conclude a written contract with Miekiński, promising compensation based on a record of all completed works and purchased materials. In total, Miekiński valued his work at 920 złoty. Suddenly, the verbal agreement with Fr Józef Dembiński, who sought payment of this sum from the patroness of the parish, obliged to care of the church, suddenly ceased to be binding. Attempting to recover his wages, as instructed by the priest, Miekiński took the case to the Bishop of Kraków⁴²

39 Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Opisanie parafii w Stryszowie ks. F. Kolendowicza*, ref. No. II.4.4., pp. 38–39.

40 AKMK, ref. No. AV 35, p. 479; see: Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Kopiarz uniwersałów, zakazów i dyspozycji władz duchownych i świeckich*, ref. No. II.2.1, pp. 6–8; Z. Gloger, *Encyklopedia staropolska*, vol. 3, Warszawa 1902, pp. 118–119.

41 AKMK, ref. No. AV 35, p. 473; Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Opisanie parafii Stryszów ks. F. Kolendowicza*, pp. 1–2, *Inwentarz z dnia 10 lipca 1835 roku*, ref. No. II.3.3, pp. 5–7; *Inwentarz kościelny i parafialny (beneficjalny) probostwa w Stryszowie*, 1927, ref. No. II.3.5, pp. 3–7.

42 The case was brought before the church authorities in 1762. “Then, rightfully reminding H[is] G[race] the Parish Priest of Stryszów, I squandered twenty days, and H[is] G[race] Fr Dembiński told me to subpoena him, which I am doing, and

and to the municipal court in Oświęcim.⁴³ Infuriated by the behaviour of the parish priest, Miekiński even charged alcoholic beverages and food to Fr Dembiński's account at the manorial inn, a practice that Krystyna Wilkońska herself demanded compensation for in 1761.⁴⁴

In the 18th century, the manor in Stryszów served not only as the residence of its owners but also as home to representatives of the administration responsible for managing the estates. Their number included individuals actually managing the estate and supervisory ones. During the lifetimes of Michał and his sons Aleksander and Kazimierz Wilkoński, the manors in Stryszów and Dąbrówka were an example of borrowing solutions observed in the estates of aristocracy by the wealthy gentry of the Duchy of Zator.⁴⁵ Despite the dominance of paid officials in the vicinity of Chełm, there was no shortage of honorary officials. One of them was e.g., Krystyna's nephew, Piotr Dembiński of the Rawicz coat of arms, and ones generally referred to as *aulici* (courtiers). In the 1740s, these were Antoni Wolski, Józef Jakubowski, and Józef Dryjkowski.⁴⁶ The presence of the latter two during the lifetimes of Standard Bearer Kazimierz Wilkoński and the Kraków Chamberlain Józef Wilkoński confirms they had purely cliental relationships with the owners of Stryszów.⁴⁷ The manors in Stryszów and Dąbrówka were also

I shall confirm everything before the court under oath”, see: AKMK, ref. No. APA 300, brak nr kart.

43 ANKr., KGO, *Relationes 1763–1765*, ref. No. 29/6/0/1/5, pp. 602–603.

44 At that time, Wilkońska argued in support of the payment of 43 zlotys and 13 groszy, which “[the parish priest’s] carpenter owes to the innkeeper [...], who will not give it back until Y[our] G[race], the Parish Priest has paid for the work.”, see: Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Fundationes parochiae Stryszów. XVIII wiek*, p. 33.

45 These issues were discussed at the international academic conference From the Ruler’s Court to the Magnate’s Manor: The Evolution of the Court Environment from the Middle Ages to the Late 18th Century, held on 1–3 June 2022 in Wawel.

46 The parish registers, recorded the following by the names of paid officials “*famulus/servus aulici*”, see e.g.: Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Liber Matrimonialis (1772–1782) et Liber Baptisatorum (1722–1751)*, pp. 115, 127, 143, 162.

47 See: A. Mączak, *Nierówna przyjaźń. Układy klientalne w perspektywie historycznej*, Wrocław 2003; K. Nowakowski, *Klientelizm jako forma korupcji*, “Ruch Prawniczy, Ekonomiczny i Socjologiczny” 69 (2007) No. 1, pp. 213–230; see also: A. Mączak, *Rzeczypospolita szlacheckich samorządów*, “Przegląd Historyczny” 96 (2005) No. 2, p. 169.

where members of local noble families who belonged to the faction of Kazimierz and Aleksander Wilkoński were brought up.⁴⁸ Thus, the manor of a wealthy nobleman, such as Michał, his sons Kazimierz and Aleksander, and later Józef and Antoni Wilkoński, represented a milieu centred around the landowner, forming a microcosm of social and political life. Following the death of Kazimierz (d. 1746 or 1748) and his son Józef (d. c. 1754), when Krystyna Wilkońska assumed control of Stryszów, only paid officials were found in the manor, ranging from chamberlains to domestic servants and the ones known as “livery”.⁴⁹ Thus, the hierarchy at the manor did not differ significantly from that present in the parsonage. Therefore, Fr Dembiński increased the number of the staff and artisans working exclusively for him. Their number included the parish blacksmith of unknown name, who stole manorial timber. Present at the same time were individuals named Skalski and Niedźwiedź, acting as butchers in the employ of Fr Dembiński, who “for the past three years [...] have slaughtered cattle, being an obstruction for the butchers [of the manor]”. When previously there were no subjects responsible for slaughtering parish livestock, such services were procured from the manorial craftsmen.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the retinue of Father Józef, who also served as a protonotary of the curia, included appearances by higher church officials. One of them was Tomasz Rafałowicz, a scribe of the nunciature, whose daughter Anna was baptised by Father Józef in Stryszów in 1762. The godparents were the widow of the Zakrzów

48 Using sources known to himself, Adam Gorczyński presented the education process of the title character, Mateusz Gieraltowski, with Michał Wilkoński. “I was 14 when my father sent me to the court of His Grace [Wilkoński]. That good man loved me like one of his own, [...] he said the prayers with me, sang the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, etc. [...] And my service pleased him for he always wanted me by his side. At night, I lay on the straw mattress by his bed, we fell asleep together, yet the Lord woke me up at dawn, calling, *Surge puer, hora matutina*”, BJ, *Bruliony pism literata Adama Gorczyńskiego*, rkps, ref. No. BJ Rkp. 7516 IV, p. 5v–6.

49 Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Fundationes parochiae Stryszów. XVIII wiek*, p. 33.

50 Wilkońska complained with these words: “While every butcher should give me a stone of lard each year, I did not take what was mine from any of them, as mine did not slaughter for them. So both those who were an obstacle to me should give me six stones for three years, or the parish priest should return or pay for them”, see: AKMK, ref. No. AOff 193, p. 136–137v; Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Fundationes parochiae Stryszów. XVIII wiek*, p. 60d.

village headman, Marianna Toryania née Padlewska, and Franciszek Dembiński, Father Józef's brother.⁵¹

Competing for the right of patronage

In the 1760s, Father Józef passed on to the final stage of his plan to establish an outstation in Marcówka, aiming to secure the right of naming a cleric serving as a curate in Stryżów and an outstation priest in Marcówka.⁵² On 8 March 1771, Fr Dembiński made a commitment to pay an annual rent of 4,000 Polish złotys from the estates in Marcówka that already belonged exclusively to him as compensation for the second priest in Stryżów.⁵³ Moreover, Father Józef began the construction of a wooden subsidiary church on a piece of land known as "U dworu" in Marcówka, forcing his parishioners and the subjects of the manor from the village to labour on it. During the construction, there were incidents between Fr Dembiński and Krystyna Wilkońska because the parish priest began to fell the manorial forest on Mt Chełm. Under the pretext of repairing the parsonage or the church in Zakrzów, the new owner of Marcówka used the timber from the manorial estate for the construction of the church in Marcówka. That was timber that the Wilkoński family sold and rafted down the Skawa River to Zator.⁵⁴

Due to its specific connection to the Stryżów parish, the bequest made by the parish priest for the Collegiate Church of All Saints in Kraków was a different form of endowment. On 31 January 1771, Fr Dembiński assigned 6,000 Polish złotys from his estate in Marcówka for the foundation of a St Joseph prebend in the Collegiate Church of All Saints in Kraków.⁵⁵ The canonry founded by Fr Dembiński was

51 Parish Archive in Stryżów, *Metrica Baptisatorum 1752–1765*, p. 102.

52 ANKr., KGO, *Relationes 1770 r.*, ref. No. 29/6/0/1/28, pp. 63–80.

53 The endowment for the vicar was established by Fr Dembiński on 31 January 1771, that is at the time of founding the St Joseph's canonry discussed below, see: AKMK, ref. No. AOff 201, p. 150–151v; Parish Archive in Stryżów, *Fascykuł kopii wszystkich znanych Kolendowiczowi spraw zw. z przeszłością parafii Stryżów*, pp. 403–408, 409–415; *Opisanie parafii w Stryżowie ks. F. Kolendowicza*, pp. 27–29; *Liber documentorum copiatorum Ecclesiae Stryżoviensis*, pp. 21–22.

54 Parish Archive in Stryżów, *Fundationes parochiae Stryżów. XVIII wiek*, p. 19.

55 B. Szady, *Pralatury i kanonie kolegiaty Wszystkich Świętych w Krakowie w II połowie XVIII wieku*, "Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne" 86 (2006), pp. 331–354.

officially erected on 27 March 1772 in Kraków.⁵⁶ An annual rent of 300 Polish złotys, meticulously specified, was to be paid out from the sum secured on Marcówka. Of this, Fr Dembiński designated 150 złotys by for the collegiate chapter *pro fabrica Ecclesiae* (as rent from 3,000 złotys) and 100 złotys were allocated for wax, wine, and liturgical paraments for the sacristy of the collegiate chapter (as rent from 2,000 złotys). The remaining 50 złotys constituted a fund “for the payment of various rents” (as rent from 1,000 złotys).⁵⁷ In return, one of the canons of the chapter was obliged to say thirty masses for the soul of the benefactor, along with *suffragium* among other services.⁵⁸ Dembiński instructed that the masses in his intention be celebrated either in the Collegiate Church in Kraków or in the church in Stryzów, depending on the current whereabouts of the parish priest-prebendary.

The foundation was highly indicative for the Stryzów parish due to the obligations imposed by Fr Dembiński. The most significant requirement set by the benefactor was that the new canon should simultaneously be the parish priest in Stryzów and hold at least a doctoral degree. Thus, the parish priest of Stryzów could only be a canon of the Collegiate

56 At that time, corroborated were “the 6 conditions of the foundation”, whose number included the information that the prebend would be exempt from the right of supervision of the owner of Stryzów. Therefore, the Wilkoński family as patrons had no option to choose the parish priest of Stryzów without the consent of the college, see: AKMK, ref. No. AOff 201, p. 145v–150; Parish Archive in Stryzów, *Fascykuł kopii wszystkich znanych Kolendowiczowi spraw zw. z przeszłością parafii Stryzów*, pp. 382–395; *Varia I*, ref. No. III.1.7, p. 16, 62.

57 Parish Archive in Stryzów, *Fundationes parochiae Stryzów. XVIII wiek*, p. 80.

58 *Suffragium* was a short votive intercessory prayer recited during Lauds or Vespers, offered in intercession for the patrons, who were given special honour in the church where the service was celebrated. Fr Dembiński also counted on extending the funerary liturgy by adding specific missal rubrics, in this case the prayers *Commemoratio de Cruce* (Commemoration of the Holy Cross) and supplication prayers (memories) for the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Joseph, to whom he had a special devotion, see: Parish Archive in Stryzów, *Varia I*, p. 16; see: *Archidiocesan Liturgical Handbook*, Portland 2018, p. 194; S. Fedorowicz, *Wawelskie kolektarze jako źródło poznania liturgii katedralnej w XVI wieku*, in: *Powrót do źródeł – metodologia i teologia w badaniach źródeł liturgicznych*, ed. by J. Mieczkowski, P. Nowakowski, Kraków 2012, p. 85 (*Ad Fontes Liturgicos*, 1).

Church of All Saints in Kraków and an academic lecturer. Even more importantly, the selection of the canon was to be supervised by the legal college of the University of Kraków. This conferred upon the college the passive right to elect the parish priest of Stryków: it proposed a particular cleric who had to be accepted by the patron of the parish. The college was responsible for ensuring that the candidate met the requirements set by Fr Dembiński. This represented a significant infringement of the patronage rights over the Stryków parish, particularly the privilege of naming (*prezenta*) that belonged to the Wilkoński family. From that moment onwards, patrons had to take into account the opinion of the legal college and could appoint parish priests from a narrow, not always favourable, pool of university clergy. Fr Dembiński reserved for himself the lifelong right to occupy the prebend he endowed. He instructed the prelate as well as the doctors and professors of the legal college, to oversee the selection of the first prebendary being at the same time the parish priest of Stryków after his death.⁵⁹ In the following years, some of the documented canons affiliated with St Joseph Canony included Professor Franciszek Kolendowicz, Provost of the Rorantist Chapel at Wawel, Fr Maciej Zieleniewicz, whose resignation led to the installation of Subdeacon and Prebendary of Andrychów, Adam Jan Kanty Ziębiński.⁶⁰

The manner of organization of the canonry and the selection of a prebendary challenged patronage rights in the Stryków parish. A conflict between the lifelong possessor of Stryków and the patron of the local parish, Krystyna Wilkońska, and the Collegium Iuridicum emerged already in October 1772. As part of the endowment named *Dembinsciana* after the benefactor, the college was to propose a candidate for the position of parish priest or confirm the conformity of the candidate with the requirements of Fr Józef Dembiński. Following the death of the benefactor, the college proposed Fr Professor Franciszek Kolendowicz for the prebendary and parish priest of Stryków. At that time, Fr Kolendowicz also served as the parish priest in the nearby Klecza. Defending her right of nomination, Wilkońska did not accept this proposal and instead nominated Fr Józef Zaćwilichowski, a chaplain at St Mary's Church in Kraków.⁶¹ As a result,

59 Parish Archive in Stryków, *Varia I*, p. 14–23.

60 Ziębiński was installed in the canonry on 15 September 1780; see: AKMK, ref. No. AOff 204, p. 104–104v.

61 Some sources also noted that he presented Fr Maciej Zieleniewicz, the Rorantist prepositus at Wawel Cathedral. Yet that was likely a clerical error Fr Kolendowicz

the vacancy left by Fr Dembiński in the collegiate church in Kraków and the parish church in Stryszów continued for several months. Through out the time, the parish priest in Stryszów was replaced by an administrator, curate Marcin Grywalski and later a Franciscan monk Marcin Katnowicz.⁶² In 1774, the experience of the ongoing dispute made Suffragan Bishop Franciszek Potkański decide (after consultations with Wawrzyniec Jan Kanty Bularny) to annul Fr Dembiński's foundation starting from the following appointment of the parish priest and prebendary. In return, Wilkońska agreed to the appointment of Fr Kolendowicz, which took place.⁶³

In light of the provisions of the Act of the Sejm from 1768 “on not severing landed properties from the secular estate”, Fr Dembiński's endowment was unlawful, “without the consent of the State”.⁶⁴ That is why, after the death of Fr Józef Dembiński, a problem regarding the two bequests he had made for Marcówka, namely of 4,000 Polish złotys for the endowment of the vicar in Stryszów and of 6,000 Polish złotys for the Canonry of St Joseph arose.⁶⁵ Upon the cleric's death in 1772, his brother, Franciszek

made, as Zieleniewicz was made a canon in the Collegiate Church of All Saints, see: AKMK, ref. No. AOff 201, p. 256–256v, 299v, 310–312v.

62 Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Liber omnium parochorum, administratorum, cooperatorum parochiae Stryszow*, pp. 3–4.

63 Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Varia I*, p. 15; *Fundationes parochiae Stryszów. XVIII wiek*, p. 62; *Fascykuł kopii wszystkich znanych Kolendowiczowi spraw zw. z przeszłością parafii Stryszów*, pp. 395–399; see: *Profesorowie Wydziału Prawa Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, ed. by W. Uruszczak, Kraków 2015, pp. 33–34.

64 Fr Franciszek Kolendowicz discussed this constitution referring to the Stryszów and Klecza parishes and the ongoing dispute with Franciszek Dembiński over the Marcówka endowment Fr Józef Dembiński left. “The Constitutions of 1635, 1669, 1726, and 1674, as regards the failure to alienate estates *favore communitatem* to the clergy, we hereby reaffirm, and from the current Constitution henceforth, we forbid the establishment of new endowments *sine concensu* of the Commonwealth”, see: Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Documenta*, p. 89; *Fundationes parochiae Stryszów. XVIII wiek*, p. 66; see: S. Śreniawski, *Rzeczpospolita i Galicja w latach 1772–1795: uwagi o programie politycznym ziemiaństwa polskiego*, “Przegląd Historyczny” 43 (1952) No. 1, pp. 83–104; B. Kumor, *Ustrój i organizacja Kościoła polskiego w okresie niewoli narodowej (1772–1918)*, Kraków 1980, pp. 628–638; J. Malec, *Polska myśl administracyjna XVIII wieku*, Kraków 2008, pp. 53–99.

65 ANKr., *Teki Antoniego Schneidra, Materiały do encyklopedii krajoznawczej Galicji Antoniego Schneidra, hasła: Myślenice cyrkuł. Różne wykazy podatkowe, dotyczące m.in.*

Dembiński, was not interested in completing the construction of the new church and paying the rents. For that reason he allowed the peasants to take the church apart and use the material obtain for own purposes, and sought to annul the rents.⁶⁶ Dembiński argued that both the acts infringed the law because Fr Dembiński had violated the rules ensconced in the Act approved by the Sejm in in 1768.⁶⁷ Thus, immediately after the death of Fr Dembiński, the fate of the endowment for St Joseph Canonry in the Collegiate Church of All Saints was analogous to that of the endowment for the curate. Having learnt from the dispute surrounding the earlier bequest, parish priest Franciszek Kolendowicz staunchly defended the endowment for St Joseph Canonry.⁶⁸ Although it was retained, the *Dembinsciana*e endowment fund was transferred to a public fund on 27 April 1805, reduced to the amount of 1,000 Austro-Hungarian gulden (its rent being 40 Austro-Hungarian gulden), in return for which, the parish priest in Stryszów officiated 12 masses for the soul of the founder.⁶⁹ In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the Collegiate Church of All Saints declined until it was completely disassembled in 1835–38 and in 1842.⁷⁰ The endowment fund for St Joseph Canonry was abolished by the Imperial and Royal Fiscal Office in 1856. The Consistory of Tarnów, concluding all the endowments for individual prebends in the dissolved collegiate church, delivered documents related to St Joseph Canonry to Stryszów

Kościół i duchowieństwa z lat 1784–1830, ref. No. 29/684/0/1/1829, p. 20.

- 66 Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Opisanie parafii w Stryszowie ks. F. Kolendowicza*, pp. 15–18.
- 67 Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Fundationes parochiae Stryszów. XVIII wiek*, p. 80.
- 68 Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Opisanie parafii w Stryszowie ks. F. Kolendowicza*, pp. 27–29.
- 69 Subsequent owners of Marcówka accepted this endowment. For example, assuming Marcówka on 5 April 1835, Marianna Kowalewska confirmed the endowment of the canonry, see: Parish Archive in Stryszów, *Varia I*, p. 6, 43.
- 70 See e.g.: D. Rederowa, *Studia nad wewnętrznymi dziejami Krakowa porozbiorowego (1796–1809). Część I: Zagadnienia urbanistyczne*, “Rocznik Krakowski” 34 (1957) No. 2, pp. 62–178; K. Walczak, *Klejnot miasta zaginiony. Zarys dziejów krakowskiego kościoła Wszystkich Świętych do końca XVI wieku*, “Folia Historica Cracoviensa” 19 (2013), pp. 133–158.

on 10 September 1858.⁷¹ In 1859, Fr Ludwik Andrusikiewicz (parish priest in 1849–96) submitted all copies related thereto to state authorities.⁷²

Conclusion

Disputes over benefices between the nobility and the parish clergy were not uncommon, especially in matters concerning the endowments of local churches. Nonetheless, the conflict between the two Dembińskis was unique on the scale of the whole Silesian County as the pretext of disputes over church benefices and the welfare of the University of Kraków concealed the private interests of either party, fuelled by family animosities. The traits of characters of the individuals leading the two conflicting parties proved essential. Kazimierz Wilkoński himself accused his wife of seizing his properties in Ujazd and Stryżów and neglecting them, of the abuses her officials committed by felling woods within the royal demesne in the Starosty of Bodaczów, and of separating his son Józef from him.⁷³ Each action of Fr Józef Dembiński was aimed *ad personam* against the patroness of the parish, with whom he had no intention of reconciling.⁷⁴ The subsequent tensions were motivated by the rivalry between the

71 There is also a preserved letter dated 17 January 1853, in which Fr Ludwik Andrusikiewicz explained to the members of the consistory that what complicated the endowment of the canonry was the transfer of episcopal jurisdiction from Kraków to Tarnów, and all the furnishings purchased by Fr Dembiński were relocated to the Church of St Peter and St Paul in Kraków, as the collegiate church itself was beginning to fall into decline, see e.g.: Parish Archive in Stryżów, *Varia I*, p. 17, 18, 60.

72 On 5 July 1860, the fiscal authorities in Kraków decided that this sum were transferred to a church foundation for Stryżów, yet with the proviso that it were accepted by the patron and corroborated by the consistory, which occurred in the same year., Parish Archive in Stryżów, *Varia I*, p. 14–23, 28, 30, 74.

73 As part of the protest, Kazimierz responded to accusations levelled by his wife, including allegations of his marital infidelity, ANKr., KGK, *Relationes (inducta)* 1732, ref. No. 29/5/0/2/826, pp. 2411–2420.

74 In a letter of 16 June 1764 to a Warsaw burgher, Paweł Barszcz, Fr Dembiński wrote: “I don’t even think about conciliation with M[adam] Wilkońska, as she’d be glad to surrender nothing to me”. Under the interests of the parish as a pretext, Fr Dembiński concealed his personal animosity towards Krystyna, see: Parish Archive in Stryżów, *Personalia ks. J. Dembińskiego*, ref. No. V.2, p. 10.

priest and a member of the same family but of a different coat of arms.⁷⁵ This supposition is confirmed, for instance, by the fact that after dominating Krystyna and signing a settlement that was unfavourable for her, Fr Dembiński seemed to be sympathetic towards his former rival, who had left Stryżów and taken up residence in the Bernardine Convent in Kraków. However, that empathy was beyond doubt feigned, as at that time Fr Dembiński was competing with Antoni Wilkoński, the nephew of Kazimierz and Krystyna Wilkoński. Despite the fact that the lifelong possessor of Stryżów was still alive, Antoni Wilkoński organised a foray, considered “absolutely unjustified” by Fr Dembiński, in Stryżów on 13 March 1770 and violated the previous right of the parish priest to fell timber. It was sparked by an incident caused by the subjects of Fr Dembiński sent “to the parish’s own woods to cut branches for fence poles”. Antoni sent against them his men led by his servant Franciszek Gadomski, who “having brandished a pistol, he attempted to shoot at the priest’s people”, which made the priest’s subjects “afraid that a misfortune might strike, stopped chopping, giving later the valid reason that we were felling timber in the parish’s and not the manor’s woods”.⁷⁶ In 1770, Dembiński complained that Antoni had usurped the right of patronage and ownership, “having yet no power or right to manage the aforementioned lands in the village of Stryżów, and all the more so, as he was fully aware of the perpetual and perfect health and life of the born Krystyna

75 Krystyna’s father, Wojciech (Albrycht) Dembiński, was the Standard Bearer of the Principality of Zator-Oświęcim, a position later taken over by his son-in-law, Krystyna’s husband, Kazimierz Wilkoński. Subsequently, The following Standard Bearer was Krystyna’s brother, Franciszek. It is not surprising that disputes primarily arose from tensions between the families. Franciszek held various other titles and positions, including Captain of the Crown’s Army (1722), Royal Chamberlain, Steward of Zator-Oświęcim (1727–34), Deputy Voivode of Kraków (mention from 1732), and Kraków county judge of (1734–46). From 1746 to his death, he held the post of Standard Bearer of Zator-Oświęcim. For the sake of context, it may be worth mentioning that Fr Józef’s father, Franciszek Michał Dembiński, was only the Master of the Hunts of Volhynia and Braclaw, and a lieutenant colonel., see: AKMK, ref. No. APA 300, brak nr kart; *Testamenty szlachty krakowskiej XVII–XVIII wiek. Wybór tekstów źródłowych z lat 1650–1799*, ed. by A. Falniowska-Gradowska, Kraków 1997, pp. 61, 82, 237; *Urzednicy województwa krakowskiego XVI–XVIII wieku*, p. 612.

76 Parish Archive in Stryżów, *Varia II*, p. 4.

Wilkońska née Dembińska, formerly the wife and now the widow of born Kazimierz Odrowąż Wilkoński from Wilkonice, the Standard Bearer of the Duchy of Zator and Oświęcim, then owner and possessor of the village of Stryzów, and the lady of the said estate of Stryzów”.⁷⁷

On 12 September 1772, the parish priest arrived in the fields of Marcówka to pick the sheaves in the fields of Andrzej Klaptas known as Maślanka, Maciej Pilsak known as Kocur, and Jan Dudziak. Despite their pleas to withhold the tithe in exchange for a cash equivalent, the peasants found no understanding from the parish priest and owner of the Marcówka estate. Blinded by his conflict with Wilkońska, the priest was deaf to the pleas of his Marcówka subjects, who begged for a change of the unfavourable form of the tribute. For that reason, in their anger and helplessness, the peasants unhorsed and killed him. The parsonage retainers erected a mound of stones at the place of his death, naming not only the cairn but also the vicinity of the fields of the murderous peasants “Mogiła”, that is “grave”.⁷⁸ The tensions related to the honours and offices of the two families spilled over into the micro-region. The rivalry made the priest and his entourage imitate the manor of Wilkońska, and at times even assumed the form of a perverse obsession. Naturally, the ones to bear the brunt of the competition for the broadly understood manor most painfully were naturally the subjects and servants of Wilkońska and Fr Dembiński. Despite the cruel death of Father Józef and the ensuing consequences for the entire parish, the peasants were hiding priest-killers of Marcówka and even named them the “saviour of the Marcówka people”.

77 Parish Archive in Stryzów, *Varia II*, p. 4.

78 Parish Archive in Stryzów, *Memorabilia. Kronika Parafii 1772–1941*, ref. No. II.4.5, p. 1; Parish Archive in Stryzów, *Liber omnium parochorum, administratorum, co-operatorum parochiae Stryzow*, p. 3.

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Abstract

Mirosław Płonka

“Coveting the Manor” – the feud between Father Józef Dembiński and Krystyna Wilkońska née Dembińska in 1758–1772

In 1758, Krystyna née Dembińska of Rawicz coat of arms, widowed by Kazimierz Wilkoński, of Odrowąż coat of arms, the Standard Bearer of Zator and Oświęcim, presented on the personage of Stryków Fr Józef Ferdynand Michał Tomasz Dembiński of Nieczuja coat of arms. The young clergyman was a son of the owner of Marcówka and Zembrzyce villages, situated near Stryków, which belonged to the Wilkoński family. Until 1772, the parish priest engaged in a lasting feud with the patroness of the church over proceeds from benefices and church privileges. As a doctor of laws and letters, Father Józef masterfully conducted his affairs to prevail finally over the landowner of the village and the patroness of the parish. The conflict was primarily caused by the private rivalry between the cleric and Wilkońska concerning her entitlements, estate, and her role within the village and parish community. This article examines the tension between the manor and the parsonage in Stryków as an example of competition for prestige, pointing to three stages of the rivalry. The actions of both the estranged parties discussed in the article illustrate the perception of the manor in Stryków from the 1750s to the 1770s through the lens of the patron of a country church.

Keywords:

Duchy of Zator, parish in Stryków, manor house, church benefice

Abstrakt

Mirosław Płonka

„Zazdrość o dwór” – spór księdza Józefa Dembińskiego z Krystyną z Dembińskich Wilkońską w latach 1758–1772

W 1758 roku Krystyna z Dembińskich herbu Rawicz, wdowa po chorążym zatorsko-oświęcimskim Kazimierzu Wilkońskim herbu Odrowąż, zaprezentowała na probostwo w Stryszowie ks. Józefa Ferdynanda Michała Tomasza Dembińskiego herbu Nieczuja. Młody duchowny był synem właściciela wsi Marcówka i Zembrzyce, położonych w pobliżu Stryszowa, należącego do rodziny Wilkońskich. Aż do 1772 roku proboszcz toczył spory ze stryszowską patronką o beneficja i przywileje kościelne. Jako doktor obojga praw ks. Józef tak prowadził sprawy, by triumfować nad posesorką Stryszowa. Konflikt polegał nade wszystko na prywatnej rywalizacji duchownego z Wilkońską o przysługujące jej prawa, majątek i społeczną rolę we wsi oraz parafii. Autor rozpatruje spór między dworem a plebanią w Stryszowie jako przykład współzawodnictwa prestiżowego, wskazując na trzy etapy tej rywalizacji. Jednocześnie omówione w artykule działania zważnionych stron ilustrują sposób postrzegania dworu w latach 50.–70. XVIII wieku w Stryszowie przez pryzmat prawa patronatu.

Słowa kluczowe:

księstwo zatorskie, parafia Stryszów, dwór szlachecki, beneficjum kościelne