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Historical outline of the place of filiation and the circumstances of the foundation of the Cistercian abbey in Paradyż (Greater Poland) in the Middle Ages

*Bernardus valles, montes Benedictus amabat, oppida Franciscus, celebres
Dominicus urbes* (a medieval proverb).

Historical background of the site

The former Cistercian abbey in Paradyż is located in one of the most beautiful parts of the Lubusz land. This charming valley, formed by a glacier, through which flows the Paklica river (whose name comes, nota bene, from the name of the Slavic goddess Pakla, who protected the statue of the pagan deity Swiatowid, standing in Międzyrzecz – later the place of martyrdom of the Hermit brothers, patrons of the Lubusz diocese) was almost an ideal place for the Cistercians, looking for a place for their new monastery¹. According to the statutes of the General Chapter of the Order, such a place should be ‘far from major human centres, in an area mostly neglected, lowland, among marshes, lakes and forests, and thanks to systematic and planned work will be transformed into a flourishing centre in a relatively short time’². To this day, the place breathes tranquillity and seems to be filled with the prayers recited by the monks over the centuries.

The area within which the abbey’s foundation took place has well-documented centuries-old links with the Catholic Church. In the Middle Ages, the whole area

¹ Cf. *Opactwo cysterskie w Paradyżu. Jego rola w dziejach i kulturze pogranicza*, ed. J. Karczewska, Zielona Góra 2004, p. 5.

² G. Dogiel, *Paradyż. Opactwo pocysterskie i jego zabytkowy zespół*, Kraków 1988, p. 5.

originally belonged to the Bishopric of Poznan, which in turn was subject to the Archdiocese of Gniezno. According to Tomasz Jurek, the bishopric of Poznan, established around 1075, stretched 'across the whole of Poland'. In the west, it must have included the Lubusz land, reaching beyond the Oder to the banks of the Spree³. In the reorganisation of church structures that took place in 1123/1124, it was decided to detach the castle of Lubusz, which, thanks to the papal legate Gilo of Tusculum, became the capital of the Lubusz bishopric, and the Diocese of Poznan, as compensation for the detachment of the above-mentioned lands, was then given the southern part of the Mazovian lands⁴. Due to its location, the Lubusz land was the subject of rivalry between the Piasts, Ascanians, Griffins and Brandenburgian rulers, and by virtue of pacts concluded, was often incorporated into neighbouring districts. Associated with Christianity since the time of St Ansgar's missions to Slavic lands⁵ in addition to Scandinavia, and with the state of Mieszko I from the very beginning of his reign, it owes its name to the now small town of Lubusz (German: Lebus) located near the mouth of the Warta River on the Oder. Nowadays, Lebus does not have any cultural, economic or political significance, but in the Middle Ages (around the 10th century), Lubusz was described by German sources as the 'biggest town of the tribe' of the Lubusz people, called by the Latin name *Leubuzzi*⁶. During the reign of the Piasts, the castle played an important role in the political, economic and ecclesiastical life of the Polish state, and by the 13th century, it was already a significant early urban agglomeration⁷. The location of the castle on the hills, the proximity of the rivers and its economic and political importance guaranteed the security of the bishop and his administration. For this reason, in 1123–1124, Cardinal Gilo of Tusculum, during his legation to Poland, established the Bishopric of Lubusz, the boundaries of which are the same as those of the present-day Lubusz Land⁸.

After the territorial changes that took place after 1123/1124, the Bishopric of Poznan bordered on the Lubusz Bishopric, which had been carved out of its own territory and was situated on both banks of the middle Oder, neighbouring Silesia to the south, Pomerania to the north, Greater Poland to the east and finally

³ T. Jurek, *Biskupstwo poznańskie w wiekach średnich*, Poznań 2018, p. 157.

⁴ Cf. T. Jurek, *Biskupstwo poznańskie*, p. 157.

⁵ Z. Lec, A. Put, *Wprowadzenie*, in: *Kościół na Pomorzu Zachodnim i Ziemi Lubuskiej w XII w.*, ed. Z. Lec, A. Put, Szczecin 2008, p. 7.

⁶ Cf. R. Skarżyński, *Plemiona lubuskie i pomorskie*, in: *Kościół na Pomorzu Zachodnim i Ziemi Lubuskiej w XII w.*, p. 9.

⁷ Cf. A. Put, *Powstanie diecezji lubuskiej i pomorskiej (wolińskiej)*, in: *Kościół na Pomorzu Zachodnim i Ziemi Lubuskiej w XII w.*, p. 52.

⁸ Cf. A. Put, *Powstanie diecezji lubuskiej i pomorskiej (wolińskiej)*, p. 53.

Brandenburg to the west⁹. Over the centuries, the boundaries of the Lubusz region changed frequently, 'their course was still fluid in many sections'¹⁰ and the whole area was subject to the influence of the counts of Brandenburg or the count (Latin: *comes*) of Greater Poland. It should be emphasised, however, that the village of Gościkowo (Latin: *Goscichowo, Gostekove*), which was the location of the Cistercian abbey in Paradyż, remained at that time within the boundaries of Greater Poland and was subject to the decisions of Bishop Paul, then Bishop of Poznań (1211–1242).

Considering the ethnic character of the lands of Greater Poland, it is worth mentioning, following T. Jurek, that its territories were generally inhabited by Polish people, but 'on the whole western edge there lived a German-speaking population'¹¹. The author of 'Biskupstwo poznańskie w wiekach średnich' [The Poznań Bishopric in the Middle Ages] emphasises that 'Germans lived not only in the parts of the diocese already located in Silesia or Brandenburg, but also in the regions adjacent to the Polish side of the border, especially in the Wałcz County, located beyond the Noteć River, in the vicinity of Wschowa and Międzyrzecz'¹² (the latter is located 15 kilometres north of Paradyż). Jurek also mentions that German was the language of the bourgeoisie living in Poznań, Kościan, Wschowa, Śrem, Międzyrzecz or Szamotuły, so undoubtedly the medieval upper classes of Greater Poland.

Both Greater Poland and the above-described Lubusz land were from their beginning the object of interest of many medieval monasteries, which in turn were accepted and financially supported by local rulers not only as apostles of the Christian faith, although, as Bp A. Put points out, 'the population inhabiting the area [...] was often Christianised only superficially', retaining 'many pagan customs'¹³. The construction of new monasteries, especially Cistercian ones, was also seen as an opportunity for the economic development of the smaller centres of the Polish state and the economic and cultural revival of neglected areas¹⁴. In addition, the newly erected Cistercian monasteries, established by, among others, Duke Henry the

⁹ Cf. R. Kufel, *Zarys dziejów Ziemi Lubuskiej*, in: *Chrześcijańskie dziedzictwo Ziemi Lubuskiej. Konferencja naukowa z okazji 1050 rocznicy Chrztu Polski w Zielonogórsko-Gorzowskim Wyższym Seminarium Duchownym Gościkowo-Paradyż 2 czerwca 2016*, ed. R. Kufel, Zielona Góra 2016, p. 7.

¹⁰ T. Jurek, *Biskupstwo poznańskie*, p. 215.

¹¹ T. Jurek, *Biskupstwo poznańskie*, p. 232.

¹² Cf. T. Jurek, *Biskupstwo poznańskie*, p. 232.

¹³ A. Put, *Rola zakonów w szerzeniu chrześcijaństwa na Pomorzu Zachodnim i Ziemi Lubuskiej*, in: *Kościół na Pomorzu Zachodnim i Ziemi Lubuskiej w XII w.*, ed. Z. Lec, A. Put, Szczecin 2008, p. 63.

¹⁴ Cf. G. Dogiel, *Paradyż. Opactwo pocysterskie i jego zabytkowy zespół*, p. 5.

Bearded within the border belt of the Lubusz land and the abbeys founded by the count of Greater Poland with the consent of Duke Władysław Odonic, created a kind of barrier against enemy attacks coming from the territory of Brenna (Latin name of today's Brandenburg)¹⁵ due to the fact that the Cistercians who arrived in the Lubusz area in the 12th century were of German provenience and their presence was supported by their mother monastery in Lehnin, located in Brandenburg.

Circumstances of the foundation of the abbey and the arrival of the monks in Paradyż

The first Cistercian monasteries in Poland were founded while St Bernard of Clairvaux was still alive. The oldest of these are the monastery at Łekno in Wielkopolska (the foundation process began in 1143 or 1145 and was completed in 1153)¹⁶ and at Jędrzejów in Małopolska (the foundation documents date to 1153, but the consecration of the monastic church took place between 1166 and 1167). It should be noted that the 12th and 13th centuries in Europe were a very turbulent time: a time of power struggles, a time of local civil wars and looting. As Dr Kowalczyk points out, Cistercian monasteries, operating on the basis of the reformed Rule of St Benedict, could be seen as 'a sure refuge offering hope for a better tomorrow'. In his 'Cistercian ideas in the Roman-German Empire in the 12th-13th centuries'. Kowalczyk also sees the emergence of many abbeys as a consequence of 'people's longing for spiritual peace and a certain stability'¹⁷. Fr G. Dogiel, on the other hand, notes that 'during the 12th and 13th centuries alone, the Cistercians "flooded" almost all of Europe, as evidenced by the number of their monasteries scattered around'. The author of the study 'Paradyż. The post-Cistercian abbey and its historic complex' boldly posits that the first Cistercian abbeys and monasteries in Poland were founded in a period of great vigour, gaining momentum for expansion and dynamic development of the Cistercians¹⁸.

The foundation of the Cistercian abbey in Gościkowo on the river Paklica would not have taken place if it had not been for the efforts of the count Nicolaus Bronisz, probably of the Doliwa coat of arms, the voivode of Greater Poland

¹⁵ Cf. Z. Wielgosz, *Wielka własność cysterska w osadnictwie Śląska i Wielkopolski*, Poznań 1964, p. 169.

¹⁶ Cf. J. Swastek, *Opactwo w Paradyżu pod zarządem opatów polskiej narodowości (1558–1776)*, in: *Opactwo cysterskie w Paradyżu. Jego rola w dziejach i kulturze pogranicza*, p. 64.

¹⁷ M. Kowalczyk, *Idee cysterskie na terenie Cesarstwa rzymsko-niemieckiego w XII–XIII w.*, in: *Pro animarum salute. Księga pamiątkowa z okazji siedemdziesiątych urodzin Księźca Profesora Tadeusza Rogalewskiego*, ed. E. Wiszowaty, Olsztyn 2007, pp. 300–318.

¹⁸ Cf. G. Dogiel, *Paradyż. Opactwo pocysterskie i jego zabytkowy zespół*, p. 5.

(Poznan) and starost of Głogów. The foundation documents presented on p. 126 of the Diplomatic Codex of Greater Poland (Codex Diplomaticus Maioris Poloniae) and constituting the source material for the foundation state that: 'Bronisius comes Poloniae 1230 Jan. 29, Posnaniae; confert hereditatem suam dictam Gostekove Henrico abbatii de Lehnin ad construendam abbatiam Ordinis Cisterciensis, nomine Paradisus'¹⁹.

In turn, the following pages (pp. 127 to 129) indicate that:

'Paulus episcopus Poznaniensis. 1230 s. d. et l.; decimas de villa Goscichowo, ecclesiae quam comes Bronissius ibidem fundaverat confert' (p. 127)

'Comes Bronissius 1230 Jan. 29, s. l.; confert coenobio Paradisus, sive Gostichowo, omnia bona sua et uxoris suae mobilia et immobilia, nec non et hereditates' (p. 128)

and

'Paulus episcopus Posnaniensis 1230 Jan. 29, s. l.; confert monasterio novae fundationis, dicto Paradisus, omnem decimam villae Gostecove' (p. 129)²⁰.

From the above documents we learn that the count's initiative was supported by the Bishop of Poznan, Paul, who in 1230 granted the newly established abbey a tithe from the village of Gościkowo. In addition, S. Wiliński mentions the support of the Duke of Poland, Władysław Odonic²¹, specified in the same Diplomatic Code of Greater Poland (p. 183): 'fratres Ordinis Cistersiensis in loco qui vocatur Paradisus [...] in nostram recepimus protectionem simul et tutelam', while J. Swastek indicates that the foundation of the count Nicolaus Bronisz was supported by Pope Innocent IV in 1247²². It is also worth mentioning that the monastery to be established in Paradyż was the first branch of the Cistercian monastery in Lehnin (Brandenburg)²³.

¹⁹ *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, Poznaniae 1877, no. 126, <https://www.wbc.poznan.pl/dlibra/publication/12458/edition/20061/content>

²⁰ *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, no. 129.

²¹ Cf. S. Wiliński, *Gotycki Kościół pocysterskiego opactwa paradyjskiego w Gościkowie*, Poznań 1953, p. 7 (cf. *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, p. 183).

²² Cf. J. Swastek, *Opactwo w Paradyżu pod zarządem opatów polskiej narodowości*, p. 65.

²³ Cf. S. Warnatsch, *Geschichte des Klosters Lehnin*, Berlin 2000, p. 150.

Following the foundation documents, the general chapter of the Cistercian order decides to send two abbots from Kołbacz and Łekno in 1232, whose task it is to familiarise themselves with the foundation conditions. Another source mentions an invitation sent by the general chapter to the abbots of Zinna, Sittichenbach and Kolbacz²⁴. The abbots did not fulfil their task in the time indicated, so the general chapter renewed the order in 1235, additionally requesting that – in accordance with the rules laid down by the general chapter – the abbots, having found the place suitable, send a convent ‘de domo de Lehnin’ to Gościkowo²⁵. It was not until 1236, after the chapter’s request had been complied with, that a group of 12 German monks, led by abbot Henry, appeared in Gościkowo and settled at the Church of Our Lady and St Martin consecrated by Bishop Paul of Poznań²⁶. Upon arrival, the monks, in accordance with Cistercian tradition, consecrate the place to the Virgin Mary, renaming Gościkowo *Paradisus Beatae Mariae Virginiae*, i.e. The Paradise of the Blessed Virgin Mary (some sources also refer to the name *Paradisus Matris Dei*), later known as Paradyż²⁷.

The argument related to the provenance of the Abbey of Paradyż is also interesting. The Cistercian abbey of Citeaux (*Cisterium*) was the mother of all Cistercian monasteries, but between 1113 and 1115 the four oldest branches were founded: La Ferte, Pontigny, Clairvaux and Morimond. As the parent German monastery at Lehnin (a village about 20 km east of Brandenburg in Germany) is of Morimond provenance, the abbey of Paradyż is also an indirect branch of the abbey of Morimond²⁸.

The twelfth-century statutes of the general chapter of the Cistercians contain the commandment that ‘twelve monks accompanied by the thirteenth abbot may move to a new monastery, but may not be confirmed there until a place has been prepared for the books, dwellings and necessary things, at least for the mass books, rule, exercises, psalter, hymnbook, collector, dormitory, guest cell and curtail friar and things necessary for worldly life, so that one can live there and immediately

²⁴ Cf. S. Warnatsch, *Geschichte des Klosters Lehnin*, p. 151.

²⁵ Cf. S. Wiliński, *Gotycki Kościół pocysterskiego opactwa*, p. 7; G. Dogiel, *Paradyż. Opactwo pocysterskie i jego zabytkowy zespół*, p. 65.

²⁶ Cf. J. Swastek, *Opactwo w Paradyżu pod zarządem opatów polskiej narodowości*, p. 65.

²⁷ Cf. G. Dogiel, *Paradyż. Opactwo pocysterskie i jego zabytkowy zespół*, p. 6; *Chrześcijańskie dziedzictwo Ziemi Lubuskiej*, p. 34.

²⁸ Cf. J. Swastek, *Opactwo w Paradyżu pod zarządem opatów polskiej narodowości*, p. 66; M. Kowalczyk, *Idee cysterskie na terenie Cesarstwa rzymsko-niemieckiego w XII i XIII w.*, pp. 300–318.

keep the rule²⁹. S. Wiliński thus puts forward the thesis that, due to the requirements set out by the statutes of the general chapter of the order, count Bronisz had to settle the monks of Lehnin only after the buildings most needed by them had been built³⁰.

Due to the lack of sources stating the number of monks in the Abbey of Paradyż, one of the most valuable source texts allowing to assess the composition, organisation and functions of individual monks in the community were the *libri mortuorum* or obituaries. The Mortuary of Paradyż contains, among other things, a list of 54 abbots starting from Henry I of Lehnin (*Series Abbatum*) and the *Numerus Professorum Pardisiensium* with the names of about nine hundred monks of Paradyż: from the original convent coming from the abbey of Lehnin to the last three brothers joining the ranks of the Cistercians of Paradyż in 1816³¹. We know that in 1236 an abbot with twelve monks arrives in Paradyż from Lehnin, in accordance with the Cistercian rule. From the comparative research carried out by J. Kłoczkowski, it can be concluded that in the 13th century, the abbey consisted of an abbot (the first of whom, Henry, bore the title '*dominus*'), 12 monks (*fratres*) and about 18 converts – lay brothers living in the monastery, whose main task was manual labour³².

The abbot presided over the community of monks and was the spiritual father of the monks that were subordinate to him. His authority in the abbey was comparable to that of a bishop in a diocese. The second important member of the community was the prior of the convent, whose task was to look after the monastery, its condition and its property. He also directed the monastic life of the abbey. His deputy was the sub-deacon. Other important functions included *cellararius* (economic administrator), *bursarius* (treasurer), *magister conversorum* (a monk responsible for supervising the converts), *infirmarius* and *hospitarius* (caring for the sick and running the infirmary), curtail friar, treasurer, sacristan, kitchen manager, *refectorius*, cantor, book copyist and copyist working in the scriptorium³³. R. Tomczak states that 'the monks did not live in separate cells, but together in larger rooms. They all shared a refectory where they ate their meals while listening to devotional

²⁹ *Statuta Capitulorum Generalium Ordo Cisterciensis ab anno 1116 ad annum 1786*, ed. J. M. Canvez, vol. 1, Louvain 1933, no. 12, p. 15.

³⁰ Cf. S. Wiliński, *Gotycki kościół pocysterskiego opactwa*, p. 8.

³¹ Cf. K. Kaczmarek, *Nekrolog opactwa cystersów w Paradyżu*, in: *Opactwo cysterskie w Paradyżu. Jego rola w dziejach i kulturze pogranicza*, pp. 15 and 19.

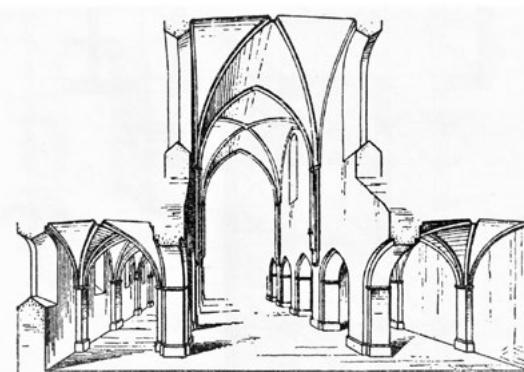
³² Cf. J. Kłoczkowski, *Zakony na ziemiach polskich w wiekach średnich*, in: *Kościół w Polsce, vol. 1: Średniowiecze*, ed. J. Kłoczkowski, Kraków 1968, pp. 428–432.

³³ Cf. O. Borkowski, *Powstanie i rozwój opactwa cysterskiego w Paradyżu-Gościkowie w XIII–XIV wieku*, „Rocznik Lubuski” 14 (1986), p. 195.

works read throughout the meal. The monks took solemn vows prescribing obedience, chastity and poverty'. Cistercian monks also took a vow called *stabilitas loci* – obedience of place³⁴.

As already mentioned in this thesis, the statutes of the Order's general chapter prescribed the search for desolate places, often marshy and surrounded by forests, in order to lead the life of monks and devote themselves to manual labour in seclusion. With the help of the converts living on the abbey grounds and in possession of suitable equipment, the Cistercians were practically self-sufficient. According to the prescribed rule, they could not extend spiritual care to the local population and the presence of natives in their churches in the Middle Ages was rather occasional. As Novinski describes, 'Officially, there was also no permission for pastoral service to them by the monks (e.g. the prohibition of confession to the laity), and the monastery church was basically a place for the liturgy and devotional practices of the monastic community'. However, the author of 'Ars Cisterciensis' emphasises that from the second half of the 14th century onwards, the participation of the lay faithful in masses celebrated by the monks was permitted; from then onwards the laity (apart from the converts) were also allowed to move freely in the non-cloistered parts³⁵.

Fig. 1. The monastery church in Paradyż. Reconstruction of the spatial layout



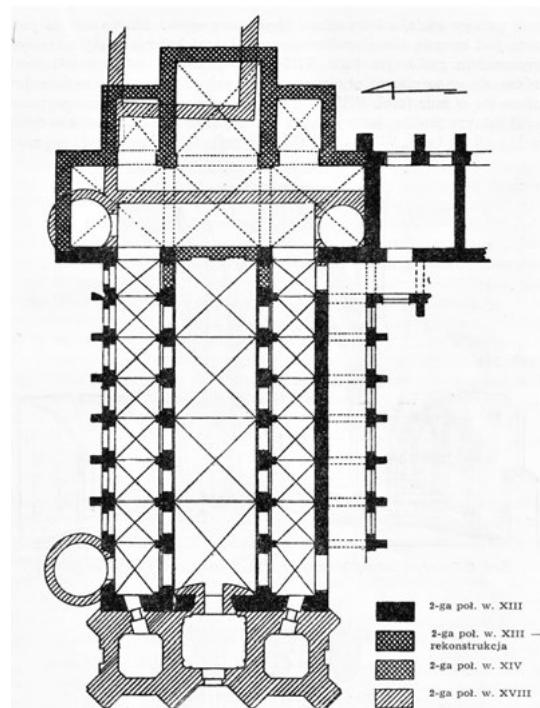
Source: S. Wiliński, *Gotycki kościół pocysterskiego opactwa*, p. 24.

³⁴ Cf. *Diecezjalne Wyższe Seminarium Duchowne Gorzów Wlkp. – Paradyż: 1947–1997. Księga jubileuszowa*, ed. R. Tomczak, Paradyż 1997, p. 22.

³⁵ Cf. J. Nowiński, *Ars cisterciensis. Kościół cysterski w średniowieczu – wyposażenie i wystrój*, Warszawa 2016, p. 371.

The poetic description of the abbey from the second half of the 16th century by Achatius Curaeus entitled '*Paradisus Silesiae Cisterciensibus fratribus a Bronisio ... fundatus, Carmine illustratus ...*' mentions the monastery buildings such as the church, the monastery, the defensive tower called the archive, as well as the outbuildings: a brickyard, a lime kiln, a sawmill and a mill. Curaeus also provides information about the cloisters of the monastery and the frescoes and paintings inside them, the refectory supported by only one column and the church with a Gothic vault built according to the scheme of Clairvaux II³⁶, the temple of the Cistercian abbey of Fontenay (Burgundy)³⁷.

Fig. 2. The monastery church in Paradyż – ground plan



Source: S. Wiliński, *Gotycki Kościół pocysterskiego opactwa*, p. 23.

³⁶ Cf. S. Wiliński, *Gotycki kościół pocysterskiego opactwa*, p. 34.

³⁷ Cf. Z. Lec, *Z dziejów działalności cystersów w Paradyżu w latach 1230/36–1834*, in: *Diecezjalne Wyższe Seminarium Duchowne Gorzów Wlkp. – Paradyż*, p. 27.

According to the Cistercian statutes, stone bell towers were not allowed to be built; therefore, a bell tower rose on the roof of the upper nave of the monastery church. The church was designed as a basilica with a transept and apses, in a form resembling the church of the mother monastery and other Cistercian monasteries of Lesser Poland. It was built on a Latin cross plan according to the monastic regulations of the time. The body of the church was kept in the Gothic style, modest in its external decoration, in the spirit of poverty adopted back in the time of St Bernard. The west side of the church had a portal with a statue of the convent's patron saint, the Blessed Virgin Mary³⁸.

Both the church, the monastery and the other buildings were incastellated, i.e. defensive in nature. We do not know whether the incastellation was primary or secondary³⁹. Describing the 12th-century layout of the monastery buildings in Paradyż, Olgierd Borowski notes that 'the monastery buildings were quadrilateral in shape, one side was occupied by the church, which was connected to the chapterhouse. Then there was a passage to the refectory, and from it to the dormitory'⁴⁰. As St. Wilinski states that in the middle of the 18th century, the interior of the oriented church, built of brick on stone foundations, was baroqueised, replacing 'the pointed arches of the inter-nave arcades with semi-circular ones' and adding two towers in the new front elevation with a baroque character⁴¹.

Given the content of the statutes of the Order's general chapter, which speak of the need to provide newly arriving monks with housing, a temple and its furnishings, we can guess that the first liturgical books came from the mother abbey – in the case of the Paradyż abbey, from the abbey of Lehnin. We also know that each Cistercian abbey had its own library, but unfortunately we do not have many studies on their appearance and size, despite quite a number of sources referring to Cistercian abbeys in Poland⁴². Undoubtedly, the monks were equipped only with a basic book collection, necessary for the celebration of liturgy and *Officium Divinum*, which, as J. Grzeszewski states, became 'over-read' with time, so they had to face the problem by purchasing more books or setting up their own scriptorium, often with an illuminator's workshop, printing house and bookbindery. The possession of a large book collection may have indicated that there was a scriptorium in the abbey. Unfortunately, Grzeszewski draws attention to the fact that the destruction

³⁸ Cf. J. Kłoczkowski, *Zakony na ziemiach polskich w wiekach średnich*, pp. 428–432.

³⁹ Cf. S. Wiliński, *Gotycki kościół pocysterskiego opactwa*, p. 13.

⁴⁰ O. Borkowski, *Powstanie i rozwój opactwa cysterskiego*, p. 194.

⁴¹ Cf. S. Wiliński, *Gotycki kościół pocysterskiego opactwa*, pp. 13, 17 and 20.

⁴² Cf. J. Kaliszuk, "Codices deperditi". *Średniowieczne rękopisy łacińskie Biblioteki Narodowej ultracone w czasie II wojny światowej*, vol. 1: *Dzieje i charakterystyka kolekcji*, Wrocław 2016, p. 301 (Dziedzictwo Kulturowe po Skasowanych Klasztorach, 8.1).

that occurred as a result of warfare, depleted the contemporary knowledge of some medieval Cistercian scriptoriums: for example, during the Warsaw Uprising, a copy of Maria Hornowska's manuscript describing manuscript books found in several Cistercian monasteries was irretrievably lost: Koprzywnica, Łąd, Sulejów and Paradyż⁴³. However, citing the research cited in the study *Codices desperditi. Medieval Latin manuscripts of the National Library lost during the Second World War*, only in the collection of the above-mentioned library collected in the pre-war period were there 11 codices of Paradyż provenance⁴⁴. The scattered monastic book collection was handed over, among others, to the libraries of the PAU and PAN in Cracow, the Royal Library in Berlin, the Poznań Seminary Library, the Kórnik Library, and the Library of the Court of Appeal in Warsaw, from where it later found its way to the Public Library at the University of Warsaw. Some of the manuscripts also appeared on the antiquarian market in the 19th century in Greater Poland and were quite a morsel for collectors. 30 manuscripts from the 13th-14th centuries, such as a homily from 1275 (Ms. 1), two lectionaries from 1282 (Ms. 2 and Ms. 5), a Cistercian missal from the turn of the 13th-14th century (Ms. 67) and a two-volume gradual (Ms. 68 and Ms. 69) have found a safe haven in the Archdiocesan Museum in Ostrów Tumski in Poznań⁴⁵. Alicja Karłowska-Kamzowa, referring to the research conducted by Z. Rozanova presented by her in 'Katalog Zabytków Sztuki w Polsce' (vol. 7, part 1), puts forward a bold thesis that the above liturgical books were prepared in the Paradis scriptorium⁴⁶. For example, she claims that the two-volume Paradyż Gradual was written in 1297 and is an example of a typical Cistercian choir book from the 13th-14th centuries, due to the fact that it has no figural decoration, while the most common way of decorating the book is with filigree decoration. Unfortunately, the information is rather perfunctory and not supported by any source information. On the other hand, the argument of the existence of a scriptorium in Paradyż A. Karłowska-Kamzowa supports the thesis that some Paradyż books from the 13th-16th centuries have precise dates and places of their writing, such as the homilies, which are the oldest codex compiled in Paradyż as early as 1275 (Ms 1)⁴⁷.

⁴³ Cf. J. Grzeszewski, *Ze stanu badań nad księgozbiorami cysterskimi w Polsce*, "Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Bibliologia" 2–3 (1998) issue 328, p. 336.

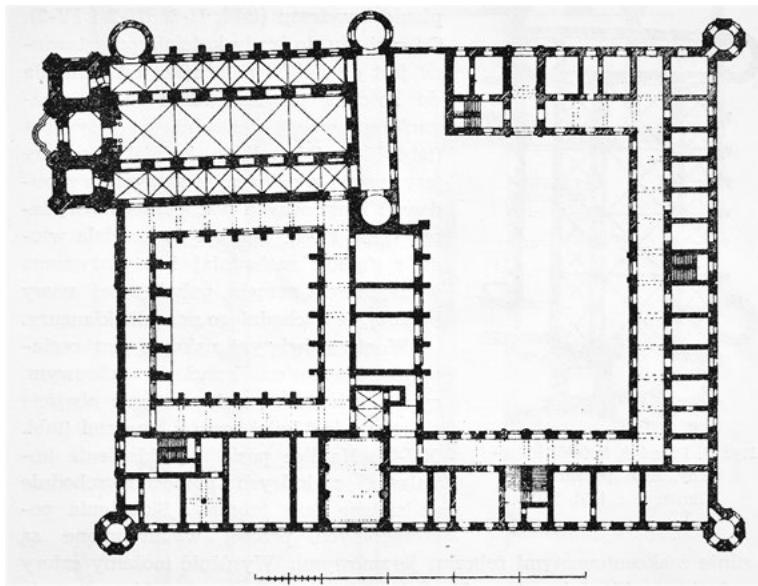
⁴⁴ Cf. J. Kaliszuk, "Codices desperditi". *Średniowieczne rękopisy*, p. 301.

⁴⁵ Cf. J. Kaliszuk, "Codices desperditi". *Średniowieczne rękopisy*, pp. 326–328.

⁴⁶ Cf. J. Grzeszewski, *Ze stanu badań nad księgozbiorami*, p. 336.

⁴⁷ Cf. A. Karłowska-Kamzowa, *Znaczenie iluminatorstwa cysterskiego*, in: *Historia i kultura cystersów w dawnej Polsce i ich europejskie związki*, red. J. Strzelczyk, Poznań 1987, p. 378.

Fig. 3. Floor plan of the church and monastic buildings of the abbey in Paradyż



Source: S. Wiliński, *Gotycki kościół pocysterskiego opactwa*, p. 21.

Taking into account the works of other researchers, such as M. Bielińska⁴⁸, F. Sikora⁴⁹, A. Ciesielski⁵⁰ or K. Kaczmarek⁵¹, Jerzy Kaliszuk also makes a bold thesis that 'the library in Paradyż, like the scriptorium, probably existed from the beginnings of the monastery itself'; however, little can be said about the location of the scriptorium, its size and shape in the Middle Ages⁵². On the other hand, the book by M. Bielińska entitled *Kancelarie i dokumenty wielkopolskie XIII wieku* [The Chancelleries and Documents of Greater Poland], Fr. F. Lenort emphasises that the author, based on available documents, was able to conclude that the Cistercian

⁴⁸ M. Bielińska, *Kancelarie i dokumenty wielkopolskie XIII wieku*, Wrocław 1967, pp. 186–187, 197–204.

⁴⁹ F. Sikora, *Dokumenty i kancelaria Przemysła I oraz Bolesława Pobożnego 1239–1279 na tle współczesnej dyplomatiki wielkopolskiej*, Wrocław 1969, pp. 85–87, 156–158.

⁵⁰ A. Ciesielski, *Materiały archiwalne do dziejów bibliotek w Wielkopolsce (biblioteki klasztorne cystersów)*, "Roczniki Biblioteczne" 8 (1964) issue 3–4, pp. 457–462.

⁵¹ K. Kaczmarek, *Z badań nad studiami uniwersyteckimi polskich cystersów w średniowieczu*, "Nasza Przeszłość" 79 (1993), pp. 77–88.

⁵² J. Kaliszuk, "Codices deperditi". *Średniowieczne rękopisy*, p. 326.

monasteries located in Greater Poland (Łąd, Łekno, Obra, Ołobok, Owińska and Paradyż) ‘did not have their own chancelleries as offices’, but ‘they were replaced to some extent by well-organised scriptoria, which, apart from transcribing books, dealt at the same time with writing down the documentation of legal actions’.⁵³

Leaving aside the theses put forward by the above-mentioned authors, but taking into account the size of the monastic complex, which is one of the largest and best preserved abbeys in the Lubusz land, as well as the momentum behind it, one can conclude that Paradyż was undoubtedly an intellectual and cultural centre of considerable size, whose intensive economic development lasted from the 13th to the 14th century. This economic boom was linked to the abbey receiving many donations from local nobles and, consequently, to a rapid increase in the number of monks arriving and settling permanently at the Paradyż monastery. This is evidenced, among other things, by the foundation of the first branch of the abbey in Wielen already ca. 1280.

The 15th century, on the other hand, was the peak of the intellectual and cultural flourishing of the abbey in Paradyż. The development of the theological and intellectual thought of the place is also evidenced by the figure of James of Paradise (1380–1464), an eminent philosopher, theologian and preacher. His scholarly legacy, i.e. works treating mysticism, asceticism and those calling for ecclesiastical reform, also point to the intellectual greatness of the abbey of Paradyż and, consequently, the possibility of having its own scriptorium. Nevertheless, its location – as a result of the confiscation of the abbey following the Second Partition of Poland and the multiple changes in the function of the monastic complex itself over the centuries – has not yet been discovered.

In the following centuries, the abbey of Paradyż experienced numerous difficulties. In the 16th century, it fell into debt, which led to the neglect of its buildings. In the 17th century, the material situation of the monks improved thanks to the development of the agricultural economy, but the development of the monastery was interrupted by the Thirty Years’ War. In the 18th century, the abbey was rebuilt, giving it a Baroque style, but after the Second Partition of Poland, the monastery grounds fell under Prussian rule, which led to the confiscation of the property and the final liquidation of the abbey in 1834. After 600 years, the Cistercians left this place forever. Today, the monastery complex is owned by the Diocese of Zielona Góra and Gorzów and is the seat of the diocesan seminary.

⁵³ K. Kaczmarek, *Z badań nad studiami uniwersyteckimi polskich cystersów w średniowieczu*, pp. 77–88.

Abstract

Historical outline of the place of filiation and the circumstances of the foundation of the Cistercian abbey in Paradyż (Greater Poland) in the Middle Ages

The article explores the historical development, filiation connections, and foundational circumstances of the Cistercian abbey in Paradyż, located in Greater Poland, during the Middle Ages. The analysis begins with an examination of the abbey's origins, tracing its roots within the broader Cistercian monastic network and highlighting the role of its mother abbey in its establishment. It further investigates the socio-political, economic, and religious factors that influenced its foundation, including the patronage of local nobility and the interplay with regional ecclesiastical structures. By situating the abbey within the context of the medieval monastic expansion, the paper sheds light on its significance as a spiritual, cultural, and economic centre in Greater Poland, contributing to the broader narrative of monasticism in medieval Europe.

Keywords: Cistercians, Paradyż, Greater Poland, middle ages, count Nicolaus Bronisz, bishop Paul of Poznan, Poznan bishopric, Lubusz bishopric

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