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## **“A tutor! What a noble soul!” Private girls’ governesses during the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski**

### **Abstract**

During the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski, the upbringing and education of wealthy noblewomen were commonly entrusted to foreign governesses. There was a strong conviction in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that for women, knowledge of foreign languages was the foundation of a proper and careful upbringing. Many parents were not choosy in the selection of governesses. Foreign origin was frequently a sufficient recommendation. The result of raising Polish women speaking a foreign language along with which they adopted foreign manners, costumes and customs, was indifference to their mother tongue, native culture and tradition, and a lack of a sense of responsibility for the country’s future.

**Keywords:** Age of Enlightenment, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, education of girls, governess, foreign languages

The issue of bringing up children and young people was a kind of thematic obsession of Enlightenment thinkers, the main period of which in the Commonwealth of Two Nations falls during the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski (1764–1795).<sup>1</sup> For centuries, the upbringing of the young generation was regarded as very important, both for the individual and society. The parents were aware of this, and they tried to provide the best possible educational paths for the children;<sup>2</sup> additionally, the writers and publicists of the

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<sup>1</sup> MROZOWSKA, K., “Rozwój koncepcji pedagogicznych w XVIII w.,” in: *Pisma i projekty pedagogiczne doby Komisji Edukacji Narodowej*, Wrocław–Warsaw–Kraków–Gdańsk 1973, pp. V–LXX.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Ojcowskie synom przestrogi. Instrukcje rodzicielskie (XVI–XVII w.)*, introduction and annotations by M.E. KOWALCZYK and D. ŻOŁĄDŹ-STRZELCZYK, Wrocław 2017; *Przestrogi i nauki dla dzieci. Instrukcje rodzicielskie (XVIII w.)*, introduction and annotations by M.E. KOWALCZYK and D. ŻOŁĄDŹ-STRZELCZYK,

different epochs also perceived it.<sup>3</sup> In the Age of Enlightenment, the motif of civic and patriotic education, covering the widest possible circles of society,<sup>4</sup> came to the forefront of pedagogical concepts. Among those who spoke on the matter were August Kazimierz Sułkowski (1729–1786), Kalisz and then Poznań Voivode,<sup>5</sup> Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski (1734–1823), general of the Podolian territories,<sup>6</sup> Franciszek Bieliński (ca. 1742–1809), Czersk starost, later a great Crown writer,<sup>7</sup> Ignacy Potocki (1750–1809), Great Lithuanian Writer and then Great Lithuanian Marshal,<sup>8</sup> Father Grzegorz Piramowicz (1735–1801)<sup>9</sup> and Father Hugo Kołłątaj (1750–1812).<sup>10</sup> They were active members of the Commission for National Education, who in their reflections on the reform of teaching and its model course did not neglect the issue of girls' education.<sup>11</sup>

A sea of ink was poured out during the reign of Poniatowski on the subject of female education. The question was no longer "if" girls should be educated, but "how."<sup>12</sup> Some believed that a man's life companion should be educated in such a way as to be able to

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Wrocław 2017; SZYBIAK, I., "O rodzicielskich zaletach i wadach w oświeceniowej polskiej publicystyce edukacyjnej," in: *Nauczanie domowe dzieci polskich od XVIII do XX wieku. Zbiór studiów*, ed. JAKUBIAK K., WINIARZ A., Bydgoszcz 2004, pp. 35–45.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. ŻOŁĄDŹ, D., *Ideal edukacyjny doby staropolskiej. Stanowe modele i potrzeby edukacyjne szesnastego i siedemnastego wieku*, Warsaw–Poznań 1990; WRÓŃSKA, K., "Uwagi o recepcji twórczości pedagogicznej Johna Locke'a w Polsce z perspektywy pedagogiki filozoficznej," in: *Filozofia wychowania w Europie Środkowej w kontekście uwarunkowań historycznych, społecznych, politycznych i filozoficznych*, ed. S. SZTOBRYN, K. KAMIŃSKI, M. WASILEWSKI, Łódź 2015, pp. 15–35; *idem.*, *Johna Locke'a koncepcja wychowania – zapowiedź oświeconych przemian w myśli pedagogicznej*, [https://ruj.uj.edu.pl/xmlui/bitstream/handle/item/22260/wronska\\_johna\\_locke%27a\\_koncepcja\\_wychowania.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://ruj.uj.edu.pl/xmlui/bitstream/handle/item/22260/wronska_johna_locke%27a_koncepcja_wychowania.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y) [accessed on: 15.06.2018].

<sup>4</sup> MROZOWSKA, K., *Rozwój koncepcji pedagogicznych w XVIII w.*, p. XIII.; SNOPEK, J., *Oświecenie. Szkic do portretu epoki*, Warsaw 1999, p. 61.

<sup>5</sup> TOPOLSKA, B., "Sułkowski August," in: *Wielkopolski słownik biograficzny*, Warsaw 1981, pp. 716–717.

<sup>6</sup> WANICZKÓWNA, H., "Czartoryski Adam Kazimierz," in: *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 4, Krakow 1938, pp. 249–257.

<sup>7</sup> WOLFF, A. and BUDKA, W., "Bieliński Franciszek," in: *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 2, Krakow 1936, pp. 50–51.

<sup>8</sup> ZIELIŃSKA, Z., "Potocki Roman Ignacy Franciszek," in: *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 28, Wrocław–Warsaw–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1984–1985, pp. 1–17.

<sup>9</sup> ALEKSANDROWSKA, E., "Piramowicz Grzegorz Wincenty," in: *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 26, Wrocław–Warsaw–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1981, pp. 529–536.

<sup>10</sup> LEŚNODORSKI, B., "Kołłątaj Hugo," in: *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 13, Wrocław–Warsaw–Kraków 1967–1968, pp. 335–346.

<sup>11</sup> MITERA-DOBROWOLSKA, M., "Zainteresowanie Komisji Edukacji Narodowej sprawą wychowania dziewcząt," in: Ł. KURDYBACHA, M. MITERA-DOBROWOLSKA, *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej*, Warsaw 1973, pp. 173–189; STETKIEWICZÓWNA, W., "System wychowania kobiet według KEN," *Przegląd Pedagogiczny*, 1924, bk. IV, pp. 222–236.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. ŻOŁĄDŹ-STRZELCZYK, D., "Jako rządzić mają rodzice córki swe'. Poglądy na wychowanie kobiet w XVI–XVIII w.," in: *Rola i miejsce kobiet w edukacji i kulturze polskiej*, ed. W. JAMROŹEK i D. ŻOŁĄDŹ-STRZELCZYK, vol. 1, Poznań 1998, pp. 53–63; PODGÓRSKA, E., *Sprawa wychowania kobiet w znaczniej-*

understand him, have discussions with him, and above all, to raise his children sensibly and responsibly. Others, in turn, argued that the differences in education between the sexes should be eliminated as much as possible, ensuring that women had a place in society.<sup>13</sup> In the opinion of Franciszek Bieliński, the role of a woman was as important as that of a man, and her poor upbringing brought a great deal of harm to society and the homeland. According to this, he postulated: "In order for good customs to flourish in the country, there is a need to try to implant them in the hearts of young women and their education should relate to male education, if we want our education to be effective."<sup>14</sup> Hugo Kołłątaj agreed: "No matter how much effort we put into improving our customs, we will always be what the other half of us will be, what the women, with whom Providence has destined us to live and share our social responsibilities."<sup>15</sup>

Not only did men speak about female upbringing, but women themselves did so more and more boldly.<sup>16</sup> Konstancja Zamoyska née Czartoryska (1742–1797), wife of Klemens Jerzy Zamoyski (1738–1767), 8th Ordynat of the Zamoyski Family Fee Tail, and after his death, wife of Andrzej Zamoyski (1717–1792), 10th Ordynat, wrote: "A woman should not try to be a scientist, a politician, nor should she have an exaggerated perception of herself, because it will [only] humiliate her. But she should know enough to understand everything, not to be bored by anything, to be able to make observations on a given topic and to be able to draw joy from the knowledge of others."<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, in 1779, on the pages of *Monitor*, a popular magazine in the times of Poniatowski, a certain Karolina complained that girls' education in law, history and geography was negligible, and the deficiencies and inadequacies of mental education resulted in women being removed from social life. She wrote: "I don't dare to open my mouth to demand travels, and I know my misfortune in the country and at home."<sup>18</sup> In her opinion, women were disadvantaged compared to men, who received careful home or school education, often supplemented by months of educational journeys across Europe. The girls, on the other hand, were ordered "to sit at home, read only books needed for services, to study in French, German, with madame, and rarely with the metre, not allowed to read the printed writings of

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*szych czasopismach polskich drugiej połowy XVIII wieku*, "Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty," 1961, vol. IV, pp. 19–33;

<sup>13</sup> Cf. BOGUĆKA, M., *Białogłowa w dawnej Polsce. Kobieta w społeczeństwie polskim XVI–XVIII wieku na tle porównawczym*, Warsaw 1998, pp. 145–147, 161–162; GODINEAU, D., "Kobieta," in: *Człowiek Oświecenia*, ed. M. VOVELLE, Warsaw 2001, p. 416.

<sup>14</sup> BIELIŃSKI, F., "Sposób edukacji w XV listach opisany, które do Komisji Edukacji Narodowej od bezimiennego autora były przesyłane R. P. 1775," in: *Pisma i projekty pedagogiczne doby Komisji Edukacji Narodowej...*, p. 118.

<sup>15</sup> KOŁŁĄTAJ, H., *Wybór pism naukowych*, ed. K. OPAŁEK, Warsaw 1953, pp. 195–197.

<sup>16</sup> PODGÓRSKA, E., *Sprawa wychowania kobiet w znaczniejszych czasopismach polskich drugiej połowy XVIII wieku...*, p. 26.

<sup>17</sup> Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, Zamoyski Archive, call number 76. *akta Konstancji z Czartoryskich Zamoyskiej*, p. 45. Translated from the French by A. PIKOR-PÓLTORAK.

<sup>18</sup> *Monitor*, 1779, no. LIX, p. 435.

witty authors.”<sup>19</sup> Who was the madame mentioned by Karolina? In the Old Polish times, this honorific was usually used to describe a governess, that is, a home teacher and educator, who was most often a French woman.<sup>20</sup>

Wealthy noble parents commonly entrusted the education and upbringing of their daughters to governesses. Girls were assigned their caretakers and mentors very early on. Livonian Friedrich Schulz, who spent time in the Commonwealth of Two Nations in 1791–1793, stated straightforwardly: “The girls, as soon as they start speaking, are assigned governesses. These are rarely not French.”<sup>21</sup> Natalia Kicka née Bisping (1801–1888) recalls her aunt, Izabela Sobolewska (1776–1858), daughter of Jerzy Grabowski (died 1789), Lieutenant General of the Crown Army and Elżbieta Grabowska née Szydłowska (1748–1810), the long-time mistress of Stanisław August Poniatowski, noted down on the pages of her diary: “Raised like all our magnate women of that time by a French teacher.”<sup>22</sup> Józefa (1786–1813 or 1814) and Henrieta (1794–after 1860), daughters of General Ignacy Józef Działyński (1754–1797) and Szczęsna née Woronicz, learned French and acquired manners under the watchful eye of a governess, a certain Miss Roux. Henrieta noted in her diary that she was widely praised for her excellent French accent. “I have had this language from the cradle, because Miss Roux, who was by my sister’s side, still spoke this language to me, and it was after her advice that I was given my name.”<sup>23</sup> Zofia Zamoyska née Czartoryska (1778–1837), the youngest daughter of Podolian General Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski and Izabela née Fleming (1746–1835), was assigned a French governess at the age of five. This was Miss Petit – “good and esteemed, but very old and sickly.”<sup>24</sup> She first brought up Izabela Czartoryska and later her two older daughters: Teresa (1765–1780), who died tragically,<sup>25</sup> and Maria (1768–1854), who married Duke Louis of Württemberg (1756–1817) in 1784.<sup>26</sup> Zofia, who was entrusted to the sole care of the elderly Miss Petit, wrote about her years later: “She was wise, kind and had a certain originality [...], but she was often irritable and suffering, and could not pay more attention to my education, so there was a lack of supervision in my teachings, health, and even the guidance of principles – and I felt this deficiency strongly later on. I have to admit that I was ex-

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>20</sup> LINDE, S.B., *Słownik języka polskiego*, vol. 1, pt. 2, Warsaw 1808, p. 803.

<sup>21</sup> SCHULZ, F., “Podróże Inflanctyka z Rygi do Warszawy i po Polsce w latach 1791–1793,” in: *Polska stanisławowska w oczach cudzoziemców*, ed. W. ZAWADZKI, vol. II, Warsaw 1963, p. 591

<sup>22</sup> KICKA, N., *Pamiętniki*, introduction and annotations J. DUTKIEWICZ, ed. T. SZAFRAŃSKI, Warsaw 1972, p. 96.

<sup>23</sup> BŁĘDOWSKA H. Z DZIAŁYŃSKICH, “Pamiętka przeszłości. Wspomnienia z lat 1794–1832,” ed. K. KOSTENICZ and Z. MAKOWIECKA, Warsaw 1960, p. 35.

<sup>24</sup> DĘBICKI, L., *Puławy (1762–1830). Monografia z życia towarzyskiego, politycznego i literackiego na podstawie archiwum ks. Czartoryskich w Krakowie*, vol. 4, Lviv 1888, p. 285.

<sup>25</sup> KOWALCZYK, M.E., “Pamięć o tragicznie zmarłej księżniczce Teresie Czartoryskiej (1765–1780),” in: *Nie wszystkie umrę. Pamięć o zmarłych w kulturze staropolskiej*, ed. A. JANKOWSKI, A. KLONDER, Bydgoszcz 2015, pp. 232–243.

<sup>26</sup> DĘBICKI, L., *Puławy (1762–1830)...*, vol. 4, pp. 285–286.

tremely neglected."<sup>27</sup> Wirydianna née Radolinska (1761–1826), *primo voto* Kwilecka, *secundo voto* Fiszerowa, had more luck. When she turned five, her parents, Katarzyna née Raczyńska (1744–1792) and Józef Radoliński (1730–1781), the chamberlain in Wschowa, employed a foreign governess for her upbringing, about whom she wrote in her diary: "It was an extraordinary coincidence that the choice fell on an educated person. This accident was extremely rare at the time, when ignorant girls undertook to teach what they did not know themselves. They were believed more so that few were able to judge their work."<sup>28</sup>

Of course, there were parents who, before they decided to bring a governess into the home, sought information about her competencies in the circle of relatives, kin, friends and acquaintances. This was the case with Ludwika née Rzewuska (1744–1816), wife of Jan Mikołaj Chodkiewicz (1738–1781), starost of Samogitia. In 1777, she decided to hire a new French teacher for her daughters Rozalia (1768–1793) and Elżbieta (1771–1804). People recommended her a certain Madame de Savoie. The wife of the Samogitian starost promised her a job at the manor in Chernobyl without hesitation.<sup>29</sup> However, when she found out that de Savoie "knew nothing more than speaking and reading French," she decided to dismiss her, claiming: "It would be superfluous if I brought her here in place of one who knows so much."<sup>30</sup> Ludwika Chodkiewicz was afraid that the offended governess would accuse her of failing to keep her promise. She asked her friends to tell the governess that she decided to place her daughters "at a certain French woman's boarding house," which was why she did not need her or anyone else."<sup>31</sup> This was a procedure calculated to mislead de Savoie. The wife of the Samogitian starost admitted frankly: "I am not thinking of sending my children to a boarding house, I am only writing this to calm madame, so she can be sure that she will not have a place with me."<sup>32</sup> The previous governess retained her position at the Chernobyl manor to the joy of the girls. She was the owner of "a starling, which knew more than 40 words in French."<sup>33</sup> The bird aroused widespread admiration. One day, the Chodkiewicz family cook stole it with the intention of selling it to someone else. "Which, when we found out, my husband retrieved the starling from his rooming house and ordered him to leave," Ludwika reported from Chernobyl in a letter to a friend on the 27th of July 1777.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *Kufer Kasyldy, czyli wspomnienia z lat dziewięćdziesiątych*. Selection from journals from the 18th and 19th century made by D. STĘPNIEWSKA and B. WALCZYNA, Warsaw 1974, p. 18.

<sup>28</sup> FISZEROWA, W., *Dzieje moje własne i osób postronnych. Wiązanka spraw poważnych, ciekawych i błahych*, ed. E. RACZYŃSKI, Londyn 1975, p. 31.

<sup>29</sup> National Archives in Krakow, Branch No. 1 at Wawel, AMCh, call number 479, *Kopiarz listów Ludwiki Chodkiewiczowej oraz listy do różnych osób, 1768–1807*, p. 159.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 381.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 381.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 161.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 159.

Despite the custom of transferring teachers with recommendations from one manor to another, people also sought out tutors through the press.<sup>35</sup> Not all parents had someone among their family or friends who could recommend a suitable teacher to them. Therefore, they placed advertisements in newspapers, specifying their requirements: “A certain Couple, living 22 miles from Warsaw, seeks a middle-aged madame, who speaks French and German, or at least French, to educate their children.”<sup>36</sup>

There is no doubt that parents paid some attention to whom they engaged in raising their daughters, all the more so because education in the Commonwealth of Two Nations was not cheap at all. Frederick Schulz wrote: “While in Italy and Germany nothing is cheaper than the upbringing and supervision of children, in Poland it is the most expensive. [...] If one requires manners, worldly civility, living languages, no one has these here; one needs to bring in tutors from Germany, France, Italy at great cost and pay them dearly, as the rarity of these talents in Poland and the sacrifice they make when leaving their country, family and friends, and moving abroad requires. This is usually the case with those teachers hired by leading families for the mental and moral education of their children, as well as with the maîtres of riding, dancing, drawing and music. Almost all of them are foreigners and they have to demand remuneration for their relocation, which would pay for their return to their country, and they demand to be paid dearly.”<sup>37</sup>

During the Enlightenment, there were many voices in Europe on the employment of strangers to bring up children. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), famous Geneva pedagogue and writer working in French, was against putting the youngest children under the care of strangers. His literary works, in particular *Julie, or the New Heloise* (1760), *Emile, or On Education* (1762), and *Confessions* (1788), had a huge impact on a wide range of readers.<sup>38</sup> The master of upbringing theory wrote in *Emile*: “A tutor! What a noble soul! Indeed, for the training of a man one must either be a father or more than man. It is this duty you would calmly hand over to a hireling!”<sup>39</sup> Rousseau, on the one hand, protested against the practice of placing children under the care of teachers and, on the other hand, encouraged fathers and mothers to raise their own offspring.

Meanwhile, in the Commonwealth of Two Nations, publicists and educators strongly opposed the upbringing of the young generation of wealthy nobility, not so much by governors as by foreigners. This was due to the focus on education in the patriotic spirit. Education theorists stressed the role of very good knowledge of the Polish language in speech and writing, as well as national history. In line with this, it was intended that young people should be educated as conscious citizens of their own country, up to date on public

<sup>35</sup> CHYRA, Z., “Nauczyciele prywatni (1764–1807),” in: *Spółczesność polskie XVIII i XIX wieku*, ed. J. LESKIEWICZOWA, vol. VI, Państwowe Wydawnictwa Naukowe, Warsaw 1974, p. 25.

<sup>36</sup> *Gazeta Warszawska*, 1782, no 5, supplement.

<sup>37</sup> SCHULZ, F., op. cit., p. 552.

<sup>38</sup> LUDWISIAK, M., “Postać Jana Jakuba Rousseau i jego wpływ na współczesnych,” *Acta Universitatis Lodzianis. Folia Historica* Vol. 81, 2007, pp. 87–108.

<sup>39</sup> ROUSSEAU, J.J., *Emile, or On Education*, trans. B. FOXLEY, 2004, <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/5427>.

matters. The most popular work concerning the upbringing and education of women during the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski became *Listy Imci Pana Doświadczyńskiego*, written in 1782 by Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski, which were to be a response to his friend's request for advice on upbringing his daughters. In addition to a number of different guidelines concerning the upbringing of girls, the author warned against admitting foreign women into people's homes, noting that "it is easy and inexpensive to get people capable of learning from national schools."<sup>40</sup> Piarist Antoni Maksymilian Prokopowicz (1738–1807), pedagogue, historian and translator wrote in the same spirit.<sup>41</sup> Emphasising the importance of learning the Polish language and patriotic upbringing, in his famous work entitled *Sposób nowy, najłatwiejszy pisania i czytania razem dla panienek z przypisami dla nauczycielek*, he appealed to mothers and fathers: "It is time for the parents, while governed by reason, not superstition, to recognise the fact that it is better to choose a Polish woman than a French woman to choose to be a teacher to her daughter. [...] Where are these Polish female teachers? You will find enough of them, if you want to, and the Polish women should enjoy as much regard from you, although they should be worth more, as those French madames or the Francisised German ones."<sup>42</sup>

Unfortunately, none of the journals or diaries known so far from the times of Poniatowski's reign note a Polish governess bringing up wealthy daughters of nobility. Girls commonly had home teachers of foreign origin. Despite the emphasis placed on good mastery of the mother tongue, there was a strong conviction in the Commonwealth of Two Nations that the knowledge of foreign languages in women was the basis for good and careful upbringing. Hubert Vautrin (1742–1822), who spent time in Poland in the 1770s, noted: "The education of a young lady who cannot speak at least French is considered to be very neglected. This applies only to wealthy homes, so other girls are never said to have been educated."<sup>43</sup> In the general opinion of the Polish nobility, good knowledge of foreign languages was guaranteed by teachers of foreign origin.

Meanwhile, Polish education theorists offered aid with problems with competent domestic governesses. "And if there are not enough Polish women capable of being educated, then you, o noble ladies, glory of the homeland, the Spartan women of our nation [...] step forth with your fierceness, with which you will be able to do much."<sup>44</sup> Not only was it suggested that noblewomen should be trained as teachers and that

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<sup>40</sup> CZARTORYSKI, A., "Drugi list Imć Pana Doświadczyńskiego do przyjaciela swego względem edukacji córek," in: S. TYNC, *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej: (pisma Komisji i o Komisji): wybór źródeł*, Wrocław 1954, p. 298.

<sup>41</sup> ŻOŁĄDŹ-STRZELCZYK, D., "Antoniego Maksymiliana Prokopowicza *Sposób nowy najłatwiejszy pisania i czytania razem dla panienek z przypisami dla nauczycielek* – pierwszy polski podręcznik edukacji elementarnej dla dziewcząt, *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, 2014, year 62, no 4, pp. 553–565.

<sup>42</sup> PROKOPOWICZ, A.M., *Sposób nowy, najłatwiejszy, pisania i czytania razem dla panienek, z przypisami dla nauczycielek*, Krakow 1790, *Przedmowa do rodziców*.

<sup>43</sup> VAUTRIN, H., "Obserwator w Polsce," in: *Polska stanisławowska w oczach cudzoziemców*, ed. W. ZAWADZKI, vol. I, Warsaw 1963, p. 796.

<sup>44</sup> PROKOPOWICZ, A.M., op. cit., *Przedmowa do rodziców*.

appropriate schools should be created for them,<sup>45</sup> but mothers themselves were encouraged to continue their education so that they could educate their daughters responsibly. Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski suggested that women read specific works by outstanding Polish teachers: Karol Wyrwicz (1717–1793),<sup>46</sup> Teodor Waga (1739–1801),<sup>47</sup> Antoni Popławski (1739–1799).<sup>48</sup> “Let mothers become acquainted with these,” Czartoryski write, “they will have fewer idle hours.”<sup>49</sup> Let us not forget that at that time, the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau himself were very popular among Polish women. Wirydianna Fiszerowa directly admitted in her diary that reading the works of the Geneva pedagogue in her youth aroused an “ardent and hot affect for their author. I only dreamt of getting married in order to visit him as soon as possible and take advantage of his teachings.”<sup>50</sup> Other fervent Rousseauophiles included Izabela Lubomirska née Czartoryska (1736–1816)<sup>51</sup> and her sister-in-law Izabela Czartoryska née Fleming<sup>52</sup>, who had the opportunity to meet the writer in person when she spent time with her husband in Paris in 1761.<sup>53</sup> Under the influence of Rousseau’s works, the Princess Lubomirska named her youngest daughter, born in France in 1767, Julia, and called her beloved pupil Henryk Lubomirski (1777–1850) “her Emile.”<sup>54</sup> Konstancja Zamoyska née Czartoryska tried to raise her seven children according to Rousseau’s advice.<sup>55</sup> Szczęsna Działyńska née Woronicz, when she finally dismissed her unsuitable governess, also began educating her daughter *à la Rousseau*.

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>46</sup> WYRWICZ, K., *Geografia czasów teraźniejszych, albo opisanie naturalne i polityczne królestw, państw, stanów wszelkich, ich rządu, rzemiosł, handlu, przemysłu, przymiotów, obyczajów etc. ku pożytkowi narodowej młodzi wydana*, vol. I, Warsaw 1768; Idem, *Geografia powszechna czasów teraźniejszych albo opisanie krótkie całego świata, ich położenia, granic, płodu ziemnego, skłonności obywatelów, handlu, obyczajów etc. etc. Z najświeższych wiadomości, krajopisarzów i wędrowników zebrana ku pożytkowi młodzi narodowej na szkoły publiczne wydana*, Warsaw 1770. Cf. AUGUSTOWSKA, K., “Karol Wyrwicz,” in: *Dziewięć wieków geografii polskiej. Wybitni geografowie polscy*, pod ed. B. OLSZEWICZA, Warsaw 1967, pp. 117–137.

<sup>47</sup> WAGA, T., *Historia książąt i królów polskich krótko zebrana z niektórymi uwagami nad dziełami narodu dla oświecenia młodzi narodowej przez...* do druku podana, Warsaw 1770, Cf. T. SŁOWIKOWSKI, “Pijarskie podręczniki do nauczania historii w Polsce w XVIII wieku,” *Nasza Przyszłość*, vol. 54, 1980, pp. 181–299.

<sup>48</sup> POPLAWSKI, A., *Nauka o prawie przyrodzonym krótko i jaśnie zebrana*, (n.p.) 1771, Cf. ALEKSANDROWSKA, E., “Popławski Antoni,” in: *Dawni pisarze polscy od początku piśmiennictwa do Młodej Polski*, ed. R. Loth, Warsaw 2002, pp. 272–273; CHAMCÓWNA, M., “Popławski Jacek,” in: *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 26, Wrocław 1983, pp. 602–603.

<sup>49</sup> CZARTORYSKI, A.K., op. cit., p. 298.

<sup>50</sup> FISZEROWA, W., op. cit., p. 73.

<sup>51</sup> MAJEWSKA-MASZKOWSKA, B., *Mecenat artystyczny Izabelli z Czartoryskiej Lubomirskiej (1736–1816)*, Wrocław 1976, pp. 177–179.

<sup>52</sup> ALEKSANDROWICZ, A., *Izabela Czartoryska. Polskość i europejskość*, Lublin 1998, pp. 139–152.

<sup>53</sup> DĘBICKI, L., *Puławy (1762–1830). Monografia z życia towarzyskiego. Politycznego o literackiego na podstawie archiwum ks. Czartoryskich w Krakowie*, vol. 1, Lviv 1887, pp. 95–96.

<sup>54</sup> MAJEWSKA-MASZKOWSKA, B., op. cit., p. 177.

<sup>55</sup> Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, Zamoyski Archive, call number 76. *Akta Konstancji z Czartoryskich Zamoyskiej*, pp. 29–63.



As Henrieta Błędowska née Działyńska recalls, "there was freedom to learn or not."<sup>56</sup> However, these are individual examples. As a rule, after wetnurses and nannies, who had been with them since birth, girls were then assigned governesses.

Zofia Zamoyska née Czartoryska recalled the times of Poniatowski's reign: "Mothers took little care of their children, who lived far away, completely entrusted to teachers and governesses."<sup>57</sup> Ladies from the wealthy nobility rarely saw their daughters. From time to time, they monitored only the girls' figures and hygiene, offering them various trinkets.<sup>58</sup> "Often the mother's care was limited to inspecting the cleanliness of children's clothes and hands before lunch, preparing medicines in case of illness, occasionally 'under the covers' in the bedroom in the morning, and administering punishments."<sup>59</sup> Izabela Czartoryska née Fleming had an innovative approach to children. Zofia Zamoyska proudly wrote about her mother: "She was the first in Poland to surround herself with children, she was seen often strolling with them and spending part of the day with them. This example was imitated first because of fashion, then because of real feelings."<sup>60</sup> Unfortunately, while the princess devoted a lot of attention and time to her older children, she saw Zofia, her youngest daughter, sporadically. This was due to her numerous travels and involvement in patriotic political activities. Zofia wrote: "My mother had great reasons for total trust in Miss Petit, who brought her up and so excellently directed the upbringing of my older sister Maria. Governesses in those times had unlimited power. Miss Petit was loved and respected by my parents, who were convinced that everything under her direction had to go well."<sup>61</sup>

Many parents handed over the rights and duties they had to their daughters onto the governesses without hesitation. Since home teachers spent a lot of time with the girls, strong emotional bonds were formed between them. Apolonia Helena Massalska (1763–1815), daughter of the Lithuanian court treasurer Józef Adrian (ca. 1726–1765) and Antonina née Radziwiłł (1730–1764) described the great attachment to her guardian. Her parents orphaned her very early on. Ignacy Massalski (1726–1794), Bishop of Vilnius and political activist, took over the guardianship of the minor. In the autumn of 1771, Apolonia's uncle took her to Paris and placed her in the Abbaye-aux-Bois monastery boarding house. The girl was in very delicate health and the frequent infirmities and illnesses she suffered for weeks at a time meant that she received her own apartment and a governess, Miss Bathilde Toutevoix, who "loved her madly" and took care of her. In return, on the day when Apolonia Helena Massalska married Prince Charles Joseph-Antoine de Ligne (1759–1792), Miss Toutevoix received a voucher for 600 livres of lifetime

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<sup>56</sup> BŁĘDOWSKA, H. Z DZIAŁYŃSKICH, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>57</sup> DĘBICKI, L., *Puławy (1762–1830)...*, vol. 4, p. 289.

<sup>58</sup> BERDECKA, A., TURNAU, I., *Życie codzienne w Warszawie okresu Oświecenia*, Warsaw 1969, p. 129.

<sup>59</sup> BARTNICKA, K., "Dziecko w świetle pamiętników i powieści polskiego Oświecenia," *Rozprawy z dziejów oświaty*, no. 35, 1992, p. 61.

<sup>60</sup> *Kufer Kasyldy, czyli wspomnienia z lat dziewczęcych...*, p. 21.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*.

income.<sup>62</sup> Even Zofia Zamoyska née Czartoryska, who complained about neglected upbringing and education, recalling the elderly Miss Petit, confessed: “She was good, I loved her [...], I liked her company.”<sup>63</sup>

The presence of a foreign-language governess in a magnate’s house granted prestige, it was a determinant of the prevailing fashion and trends in the way of upbringing. The education provided by foreign women had its good and bad sides. The former included the dissemination of stage acting in Poland and the increase in interest in literary and cultural life. Many governesses taught music and singing at a very good level. Polish women owed their excellent knowledge of the language of Voltaire or Goethe to them as well. As early as 1764, the French writer and traveller Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (1737–1814) noted that in the Commonwealth of the Two Nations, “the majority of [noblewomen] speak German and French with perfection rarely seen even among the inhabitants of these countries, [...] and in their spare time they take up literature, music and fine arts.”<sup>64</sup> Thus, the daughters of Tekla Despot-Zenowicz (died ca. 1818) and Józef Sosnowski (died ca. 1783), a Lithuanian field writer, later Lithuanian field hetman and finally voivode of Polotsk – Ludwika (ca. 1750–1836) and Katarzyna (ca. 1748–1832) – received a thorough language education thanks to a French governess. As teenagers, the sisters already knew French so well that they translated the work of the Swiss agronomist Hans Kaspar Hirzel. Professor Ignacy Nagurczewski (1725–1811), poet, literary historian, translator of the works of Cicero, Demosthenes and Homer, and a lecturer at the Knights’ School, as well as a participant of Stanisław August Poniatowski’s famous “Thursday dinners,” expressed great appreciation and admiration for their translation. The book – *Sokrates wieśniak albo opisanie życia gospodarskiego i cnotliwego filozofa rolę bawiącego się. Przez J.J. WW. Jmć Panny Katarzynę i Ludwikę Sosnowskie pisarzówny polne W. X. Litewskiego z francuskiego na polskie przetłumaczony* was published in Warsaw in 1770. The publication brought Ludwika and Katarzyna fame as savants.<sup>65</sup>

Apart from purely didactic duties, governesses also played the role of faithful companions of adolescent girls. They were liaisons between them and their parents, and often without understanding the language, they guaranteed discretion in educational problems.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, voices against private teachers from abroad were raised for good reason. Hubert Vautrin recalled that “the governess, to whom local customs and language are al-

<sup>62</sup> KOWALCZYK, M.E., “Wstęp,” in: *Apolonia Helena Massalska. Pamiętnik pensjonarki. Zapiski z czasów edukacji w Paryżu (1771–1779)*, introduction and ed. M.E. KOWALCZYK, translated from the French by A. PIKOR-PÓŁTORAK, Krakow 2012, p. 20.

<sup>63</sup> DĘBICKI, L., *Puławy (1762–1830)...*, vol. 4, p. 285.

<sup>64</sup> BERNARDIN DE SAINT-PIERRE, J.H., “Podróż po Polsce,” in: *Polska stanisławowska...*, vol. I, p. 207.

<sup>65</sup> KOWALCZYK, M.E., “Wstęp,” in: K. Z SOSNOWSKICH PLATEROWA, *Moja podróż do Włoch. Dziennik z lat 1785–1786*, Łomianki 2013, pp. 9–12.

<sup>66</sup> ZIELIŃSKI, M.G., “Rola cudzoziemek w procesie edukacji młodzieży w okresie stanisławowskim (1764–1795),” in: *Rola i miejsce kobiet w edukacja i kulturze polskiej*, vol. 1, ed. W. JAMROŻEK and D. ŻOŁĄDŹ-STRZELCZYK, Poznań 1998, pp. 104–107.

ien, either does not see the danger hidden behind words and bad example, or has too weak an authority to prevent it.”<sup>67</sup> He also wrote that “entrusting children to foreigners does not, in most cases, ensure a better management of the development of mind and heart [...]. Governors and teachers are often villains whose evil deeds have banished them from their homeland.”<sup>68</sup> Antoni Maksymilian Prokopowicz also sharing this opinion, writing harshly about teachers of foreign origin: “These madames, or mademoiselles, are veritable troublemakers, who, having committed some infamous deed, leave their country or flee from it, and look for a way to settle in Poland. [...] How much trouble, pandering and giving in had to be taken with these fugitive madames, fattening themselves on Polish bread, with these governesses disparaging Poland.”<sup>69</sup>

A large group of foreign teachers could be found in Poland after 1789. The outbreak of the French Revolution forced many representatives of the French *noblesse* to emigrate. Anna Tyszkiewiczówna (1779–1867), *primo voto* Potocka, *secundo voto* Dunin-Wąsowiczowa, daughter of Konstancja née Poniatowska (1759–1830) and Ludwik Tyszkiewicz (1748–1808), Grand Marshal of Lithuania, noted on the pages of her diary that by being educated among the French, she instinctively absorbed the “spirit of their language” and read their literature with great passion.<sup>70</sup> Another woman who absorbed the culture of the French court was Izabela Sobolewska, aunt of Natalia Kicka, who wrote in her diary: “In the eyes of women educated under the influence of the French émigrés, so hospitably received by us, all those who did not feel the need to sacrifice their life for the Bourbons was worthy of sincere pity.”<sup>71</sup>

Young girls, almost constantly spending time with their foreign governesses, not only gained an excellent language education, but also adopted various other traits – the way of moving, gesturing, speaking, and even thinking.<sup>72</sup> As Friedrich Schulz noted, French women brought children up in the French fashion, German women in the German fashion.<sup>73</sup> It was a normal and quite frequent practice. Magnate parents, having the choice of sending their daughters to a boarding school or educating them at home, usually chose the latter. Thus, the great Lithuanian writer Ignacy Potocki (1750–1809) after the death of his wife, Elżbieta née Lubomirska (1755–1783), preferred to entrust the care of his daughter Krystyna (1773–1800) to a German governess, rather than to send his only child to

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<sup>67</sup> VAUTRIN, H., op. cit., p. 796.

<sup>68</sup> Ibidem, p. 792.

<sup>69</sup> PROKOPOWICZ, A.M., op. cit., *Przedmowa do rodziców*.

<sup>70</sup> POTOCKA-WĄSOWICZOWA, A. Z TYSZKIEWICZÓW, *Wspomnienia naocznego świadka*, Warsaw 2010, p. 23.

<sup>71</sup> KICKA, N., op. cit., pp. 96–97.

<sup>72</sup> ZIELIŃSKI, M.G., op. cit., pp. 103–104.

<sup>73</sup> SCHULZ, F., “Podróże Inflantczyka z Rygi do Warszawy i po Polsce w latach 1791–1793,” in: *Polska stanisławowska...*, vol. II, pp. 591–592.

a monastery.<sup>74</sup> Miss Regina Hoffmann was for many years a private guardian and teacher of the great Lithuanian writer's daughter.<sup>75</sup>

When a governess was no longer able to pass on the appropriate knowledge and skills to a young aristocrat, parents hired additional teachers, the so-called *maîtres*. Girls most often learned music, dance, drawing, or the so-called pleasant talents, which were to prepare them for success at balls, parties and social gatherings. Thus, royal chamberlain Michał Weysenhoff (1715–1789), signing a contract with music teacher Jan Cybulski on 6 October 1786, stipulated that he wanted him to teach not only his sons, but also two daughters, on the harpsichord and harp, assigning him a salary of fifty red złoty per year.<sup>76</sup> For many young aristocrats, learning music was not pleasant. This is how Zofia Zamoyska née Czartoryska recorded her memories of her youth: "I had a good piano *maître*, who beat me sometimes, and I cried very much, but he taught well, and I would be a good musician if I hadn't neglected this talent at the time."<sup>77</sup> Henrieta Błędowska née Działyńska was taught music by Mr Gabel – rarely satisfied with her progress. The general's daughter was often punished with a switch for failing to complete her lessons.<sup>78</sup>

From an early age, every noblewoman learned dance steps and rhythm. Dance played an important role in the upbringing of youth in the early modern times. Zofia Zamoyska née Czartoryska loved her lessons with her dance *maître*, "These lessons," she recalled years later, "entertained me a lot, and since I danced well and was praised very much, it awoke in me a great love for dance, as if for an important thing."<sup>79</sup> It was similar with many other magnate daughters. They danced with all seriousness, imitating gestures, facial expressions and adult movements, quickly learning the art of performing and sparkling. During the dance lessons they also learned how to walk elegantly and bow accordingly.<sup>80</sup> Wealthy parents did not neglect to teach their daughters even when travelling. During her stay in Rome in 1785–1786, Katarzyna Platerowa née Sosnowska, the wife of the former Lithuanian field writer, hired Mr Pelli, a teacher of singing and harpsichord, to teach her daughter Cecylia (1772–1858).<sup>81</sup> Being in a city where art flourished so strongly, she also provided a drawing teacher for her daughter.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Ibidem, p. 592.

<sup>75</sup> JANECZEK, Z., *Ignacy Potocki (1750–1809)*, Katowice 1992, p. 39.

<sup>76</sup> Lithuanian State Historical Archive in Vilnius Litewskie Państwowe Archiwum Historyczne w Wilnie, set 1505, call number 224, Kontrakt między Michałem Weysenhoffem i nauczycielem muzyki Janem Cybulskim.

<sup>77</sup> *Kufer Kasyldy, czyli wspomnienia z lat dziewczęcych...*, p. 20.

<sup>78</sup> BŁĘDOWSKA, H. z Działyńskich, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>79</sup> *Kufer Kasyldy, czyli wspomnienia z lat dziewczęcych...*, p. 20.

<sup>80</sup> SCHULZ, F., op. cit., p. 592.

<sup>81</sup> PLATEROWA, K. Z SOSNOWSKICH, *Moja podróż do Włoch. Dziennik z lat 1785–1786*, introduction and ed. M.E. KOWALCZYK, translated from the French by A. PIKOR-PÓLTORAK, Łomianki 2013, p. 135, 149.

<sup>82</sup> Ibidem, p. 139, 142.

Governesses were important individuals in the circles of the wealthy nobility during the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski. Every respected parent provided their daughter with a teacher and a carer who was appropriate to the local requirements. Most of them came from other countries, mainly from France, because in the Commonwealth of Two Nations, there were not enough educated women who could teach at the appropriate level. In reality, the idea of educating Polish female teachers was only emerging and slow steps were being taken in the implementation of these intentions. In the meantime, girls had various degrees of luck with their governesses. Some of them were older, others could speak only in a foreign language, others still completely neglected their pupils. Sometimes there were individuals who had more education than just the ability to communicate in another language. The aristocrat women of the late 18th century were becoming more aware of their own educational shortcomings and observed the changes taking place around them at the time. They started to pay close attention to the people whom they entrusted with their daughters, though not always. However, when the governess did not have knowledge in all areas of life, which could be useful for a young lady in the future, additional teachers were hired to help her. These were usually men who taught drawing, dance, music. The focus was therefore on the development of girls' "talents" and their acquisition of polish. Girls educated in this way, according to the contemporary world, could enter society and conquer male hearts in search of a good and wealthy husband. During the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski, the education of young aristocrat women was commonly subordinated to plans to marry them off well. Hubert Vautrin stated directly: "As everywhere, in Poland there is the opinion that the only destiny of women is to please the ugly sex."<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> VAUTRIN, H., op. cit., p. 791.

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