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PROTECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN SKOKI IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 18TH CENTURY, AS AN EXAMPLE OF INVESTMENT IN THE WELL-BEING OF RESIDENTS

Abstract: In 1717, the First Polish Republic (the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) introduced a constitution that limited the freedom of worship for dissenting faiths and allowed for the closure of non-Catholic churches. The new law has also become a problem for the Wielkopolska's non-Catholic communities. It forced them to make additional investments in legal protection and maintenance of their congregations. The purpose of this article is to show how important it was to maintain the possibility of fulfilling the spiritual needs of non-Catholic inhabitants of the Commonwealth for the balanced development of local societies. The problem was discussed on the example of the private town of Skoki, inhabited by the Evangelical Reformed and Evangelical Augsburg communities. The article used financial sources used in the court process of the local congregations in 1720 and sources describing the fight against the effects of the fire in 1740. The main conclusions of their analysis indicate that investments were made collectively and had a supra-state dimension. The funds raised through donations and local and national collections were managed by influential people with personal assets, and then transparently accounted for. The financial effort made despite legal obstacles allowed for maintaining the social position of communities, balance between denominations, and finally, the well-being of residents, which translated into economic development of the locality.

Keywords: Evangelicals in Central and Eastern Europe, Poland in the 18th century, the First Polish Republic, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Skoki, congregation, investments, court case, fire

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INTRODUCTION

In the first half of the 18th century, Greater Poland remained an important center for dissident communities in the First Polish Republic (the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth), despite the advancing Counter-Reformation and the tightening of laws regarding religious issues. Nobles and burghers of various Protestant confessions were involved in this effort. Both groups shared a common interest in preserving *liberum exercitum*, understood as freedom of religion and worship. In practice, this meant investing in the maintenance and protection of churches. Ownership of churches was crucial for the development of local communities. After all, the ability for individuals to fulfill their spiritual needs through participation in services, along with the capacity to live according to the principles of their faith, were essential elements of both individual and social well-being in multi-confessional cities. The preservation of religious freedoms contributed to the economic development of urban centers, where non-Catholic migrants were more likely to settle.

The purpose of this article is to discuss investment in Protestant churches as a crucial element of residents' well-being. This topic will be illustrated through two selected events from the history of the Evangelical-Reformed Church in Skoki that took place in the first half of the 18th century, while also considering the theme of the Evangelical-Augsburg temple there. The first event was the trial before the bishop's court in 1720, aimed at preserving the activities of the Calvinist and Lutheran churches. The second event involved the renovation of the Reformed parish's place of worship and the reconstruction of the city after the 1740 fire. By analyzing the expenditures and methods of raising funds for the maintenance of these places of worship, I aim to highlight the significance of financial investments for the spiritual development of the residents and the social order of the town.

Economic issues concerning the functioning of Protestant religious communities in the First Polish Republic are not fully documented in the literature. Basic information about the endowment and maintenance of churches in the 16th and the first half of the 17th centuries was discussed by J. Dworzackowa (1997: 65–68, 137–141). However, general information about the location of Lithuanian congregations was included in the introduction to the *Act of Provincial Synods of the Lithuanian Unity 1611–1625* ('Akta Synodów...', 1915: VIII–XI). This issue was also point-

ed out by M. Kosman (1986: 24, 26, 40, 52–53). Individual information on the financial situation is also found in monographic articles of individual churches (Lepalczyk and Hajdrych, 2018: 34–35). Notwithstanding, the remark of W. Kriegseisen, the historian who has so far devoted the most space to the issues of finances of Evangelical religious communities, remains current:

The problems of the economic, above all financial, basis of the activities of the Evangelical Churches in the Crown and Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 18th century, and, especially, in the most difficult period of their history during the first half of this century, have not yet found their researcher. [This is because the difficulty in studying this issue stems from the fact that] religious institutions have financial peculiarities that are incomparable to secular ones – a significant part of their resources always escapes all control and is currently difficult to grasp for the historian condemned to the use of often enigmatic sources (Kriegseisen, 1996: 122).

At the same time, it should be emphasized that the materials on the economic situation of Protestant communities in the First Polish Republic, especially related to investments in worship facilities, provide valuable information on the well-being of residents of mixed-religion cities.

In Polish historiography, it is also difficult to find studies on the religious well-being of the Polish society in the early modern period. This is because the concept of well-being itself has a rather short metric in science. It appeared in the 1970s and originated in the field of psychology. It is also used by economic and social sciences, which mainly refer to describing contemporary phenomena, often aimed at defining human happiness, which is supposed to consist of such elements as wisdom, relationships, health or ecology (Czapiński, 2004: 199–203; Mirski, 2009: 170–172). Therefore, in this paper, when using the word well-being, I mean those elements of the world surrounding a person that allow him to develop, in the case under study, spiritually (cf. Borowik et al., 2010: 21). On the other hand, I will describe this phenomenon through the prism of the investment effort to maintain and protect temples in Skoki.

Skoki's Evangelical communities do not have a separate monograph. J. Łukaszewicz (1835: 343–346), H. Merczyng (1905: 39), J. Dworzackowa (1997: 136), W. Kriegseisen (1996: 84), B. Szady (2010: 133), P. Bajer (2012: 257–258) wrote about the confessors living in the city. In recent years, the history of Skoki has been more extensively discussed in the context of Evangelical necropolises by M. Krzepakowski (2020). The monograph of the city also provides a lot of information, especially the chapter on Skoki Protestants by I. Migasiewicz (2019).

I have based my research primarily on the surviving accounts, correspondence and privileges of Skoki's Reformed Evangelicals, found in the Bohemian Brethren's Records group as well as the Records of the City of Skoki stored in the State Archives in Poznań and supplemented by materials from the Raczyński Library.

Due to the selection of sources, the religious situation in the town will be discussed mainly from the perspective of the local Reformed Evangelicals. However, I will also mention the Augsburg Evangelicals, who, together with the Calvinists strove to protect their church. At this point, I will also point out that I understand the term "Reformed Evangelicals" to mean the Calvinist and Bohemian Brethren denominations, which were bound together since 1634 by a religious union, whereby both retained their autonomy with respect to each other (Dworzaczkowa, 1969: 547; 2005: 148; Bem, 2013; 2020: 80–81).

Greater Poland's bourgeois-Protestants were often religious immigrants from other parts of Europe, or their descendants. Indeed, successive waves of adherents of various confessions flowed into the province throughout almost the entire early modern period. They inhabited both royal and private towns, regardless of whether they were owned by the gentry of different faiths or by Catholics. They settled in the First Polish Republic for security, opportunities to improve their lives economically (Bajer, 2012: 47, 48–49), and, most importantly, the opportunity to live in accordance with their confession, which was guaranteed on its terms by the state or the landowner. The newcomers came, both, from the rural poor (Bajer, 2012: 47) as well as from among skilled craftsmen (Bajer, 2012: 47, 83–84; Kiec, 2015: 24). The bourgeois-heathens formed an important human capital for the region's economy considering their skills, often high ethos, and over time, as well as wealth. Faced with the economic crisis that followed the Third Northern War and the depopulation associated with the epidemic that took place in 1709, town owners eagerly sought to bring foreign settlers, including non-Catholics, to their estates in order to not only increase their population, but also the economic potential of the estates (Michalski, 1949; Kriegseisen, 1990: 164). Settler-Protestants were, therefore, an important investment in the development of the estates of the local nobility. However, in order to retain immigrants it was also necessary to take care of their welfare, which also consisted of spiritual needs, the fulfillment of which was facilitated by having temples and clergy. Due to the diversity of confessions of the residents of cities and towns, investment in a church was a necessity, and this meant: building it, keeping it in good repair, legal protection etc. Actions in this direction not only had a confes-

sional dimension and understood as individual spiritual development, but also allowed to maintain the well-being of residents as well as the internal social order, which translated into the economic development of a place.

SKOKI – CHARACTERISTICS OF A MULTI-RELIGIOUS TOWN

Skoki in early modern times was a private town, located in the Kalisz province in the Gniezno district, about 40 kilometers from Poznań (Węgiński, 1973: 117; Kiec, 2015: 39). It was owned successively by the Latański and Rej families, who converted from the Reformed faith to Catholicism in the middle of the 17th century. The town was then bought by Jerzy Unrug, a Lutheran *wojski* of Wschowa (Bieniaszewski, 1987: 191; Zwierzykowski, 2008: 19), not Krzysztof, as reported by Łukaszewicz (1835: 344). From 1698 until the middle of the eighteenth century it belonged to Andrzej Twardowski, a member of the Reformed Unity, judge of the hood courts and deputy to the election of Augustus III (Zwierzykowski, 2008: 417). After his death, the town was bought by the Catholic Rogaliński family and after them by the Raczyński family (Łukaszewicz, 1835: 343–344; 1858: 405). It was one of the major cloth-making centers in Greater Poland, in the so-called Notec Industrial District (Topolski, 1969: 829–833), which was mainly engaged in weaving, cloth-making, and woodcarving (Migasiewicz, 2019: 55). Lutherans, Calvinists and Jews made up a large part of the population. They flocked into the city throughout the 16th to 18th centuries. Protestants came mainly from Scotland (Bajer, 2012: 81–82, 257–258, 267), Bohemia and Germany (Łukaszewicz, 1835: 345–346; Dworzackowa, 1969: 567; 1997: 136; Migasiewicz, 2019: 54; Kiec, 2015: 24), Hungary (APP, ABCz, 2456: 7) and France. In addition, the town welcomed 120 families fleeing from demolished Leszno in 1656 (Krzepkowski, 2020: 47). Skoki was a significant local religious center for the Reformed burghers of Poznań since worship was forbidden to them in Poznań and its immediate environs from 1616 (Kiec, 2015: 32–34; BRacz, 343: 15). Protestant churches in Skoki operated continuously from the 1660s until 1945. Despite the earlier influx of populations in the early 18th century, the town faced a demographic crisis caused by the plague epidemic, as a result of which, in 1710 alone, as many as 170 people of the 200 living and communicating in the Reformed community died in the town (Bajer, 2012: 267; Migasiewicz, 2019: 56).

The Evangelical Reformed community was governed by a council of church elders whose composition we know from 1719. Its members included: the Mayor of the town, Samuel Offenhamer, Samuel Woyt, Tadeusz Bogusław Jakubowicz, Forbus Grumpalt, and those not known to have names, Frybis, Rožen, and Plorcznski. The "entire common people" also had a say in the council's decisions (APP, ABCz, 2456: 10). Twenty years later, a new member named Ludwig Dauphin was added to the council of the Reformed church. On the other hand, the pastors at the head of the Skoki Calvinist parish, during the period in question, were Jan Gerson Cassius in 1720 and Bogusław Dawid Cassius in 1740. We are also aware of an Augsburg pastor officiating in 1720, called Jan Koch, who lived in Rejowiec (APP, ABCz, 1946: 8–10).

The development of a multi-faith city depended on adequate care by the owner for all the resident confessions, who should also afford them the opportunity to worship. Enabling the fulfilment of the spiritual needs for each of the confessions residing in Skoki was one of the elements of welfare that influenced social life, retained residents, and attracted new ones.

The landlord's care for residents of different confessions could take the form of legal regulations or material support. The former was expressed in privileges, which normalized top-down relations between confessions and set limits on religious freedom. Such legal acts were issued several times by the owners of Skoki. This was first carried out in 1635 by the new owner of the town, the Libusza captain Andrzej Rey (Cynarski, 1969). According to its provisions, every new resident, regardless of his religion was given 4 years of freedom and equal access to the magistrate. At the same time, a penalty of 9 fines was introduced against those who persecuted their fellow residents based on religion (APP, ABCz, 2454; APP, AMS, I/1).

The second form of the town owner's care for the various confessions living in the city was providing a suitable place of worship. In the case of eighteenth-century Skoki, it was necessary to provide a suitable building and financial support to as many as four confessions: Calvinist, Lutheran, Catholic and Jewish. Between 1560 and 1584, both Protestant confessions were given the St. Nicholas Church, which had been taken from the Catholics by the town owner Jerzy Latański, to hold services ('Skoki', 1889; Łukaszewicz, 1835: 343; Nowacki, 1964: 553; Sipalło, 1997: 463; Dworzaczkowa, 1997: 54; Krzepkowski, 2020: 50). However, in 1645, as a result of a lawsuit by the Canon priest of Płock, Jan Zadorski, the Chief Crown Tribunal issued a verdict ordering the temple to be returned to the Catholics (APP, ABCz, 2456: 7; Ignatus, 1754: 24; Łukaszewicz, 1835: 343; 'Skoki',

1889; Migasiewicz, 2019: 55). Accordingly, the owner at the time, Mikołaj Rey (d. 1672), granted evangelicals of both denominations access to a manor house outside the town on the so-called sands, in an effort to preserve the welfare of his subjects and fellow believers. However, due to the limited accommodation offered by the building shared with Lutherans, Skoki Calvinists thought of building a completely new temple. For this purpose, the patron – Mikołaj Rey (whom Łukaszewicz, 1858: 343 erroneously identified with his late father Andrzej Rey; Krzepkowski, 2020: 53) donated 500 zlotys. The community also raised several thousand zlotys in a local collection (BRacz, 343: 3; Łukaszewicz, 1958: 343). The collected sum was administered by Jan Komensky's son-in-law Piotr Figlus (BRacz, 343: 3), who, as he explained in one of his surviving letters, due to the ongoing war (perhaps referring to the war with Russia triggered by Bohdan Khmelnytsky's uprising) the church's council of elders refrained from starting construction until the situation in the country calmed down. For this reason, the patron ordered that from the unused donation, 400 thalers be given to a certain D. Kinner staying with Jan Komensky in Elbląg at the time), and the remaining 100 thalers be given to the hospital (a shelter for the poor) in Leszno, which was then struggling with debt. Another attempt to build a new church was made in 1652 (Łukaszewicz, 1835: 344). Construction of the temple began in the courtyard of the manor house. Nicholas Rey was supposed to have received the king's permission for such an endeavour, which protected his decision from lawsuits by disgruntled Catholic nobility (Migasiewicz, 2019: 55). The work was interrupted by the intervention of the bishop of Poznań, Wojciech Tolibowski, who, around 1657, ordered that the building be demolished and donated the wood from it to the newly built Franciscan Reformed church (Wiesiołowski et al., 2006: 13, 47; Krzepkowski, 2020: 53). As a result, Calvinists remained in their previous place of worship, that is, in the house on the sands. Negative consequences for Protestant residents were also brought about by the overt cooperation of Nicholas Rey and the residents of Skoki with the Swedes during the war 1655–1660. Repression by Stanisław Czarnecki's troops led to the execution of 65 townspeople and caused the pastor to flee, resulting in a three-year hiatus in services.

After the Swedish invasion, Władysław Rey, brother of Mikołaj and guardian of his sons, Karol and Jan, himself already a Catholic (Kłaczewski, 1988: 206), donated a new mansion called the "palace" first to the Reformed and then also to the Lutherans as a place of worship. The building itself was erected on the occasion of the baptism of Mikołaj's son, Karol, whose

godfather was King Charles X Gustav of Sweden. The church was located on a hill and surrounded by an Italian garden (Migasiewicz, 2019: 56; Krzepakowski, 2020: 53). However, it soon became apparent that site conditions and disputes between pastors of the Protestant denominations made it impossible for the two confessions to share one building (Thomas, 1750: 89–91). Therefore, the Calvinists and the Bohemian Brethren returned to the “courthouse” on the sands, although this had become too small to accommodate the faithful. As a result, in 1668, the voivode of Lublin, Władysław Rey, was said to have obtained a privilege from John III to expand the palace and courthouse and change its use for worship (‘Skoki’, 1889: 683; Kłaczewski, 1988: 209). However, it should be noted, at this point, that the wrong date of issuance of the privilege – 1768, given by J. Łukasiewicz – is repeated in the literature (Łukasiewicz, 1835: 344; Krzepakowski, 2020: 53). In 1677, in Sandomierz, Władysław Rej issued another privilege to the Skoki townsmen of both Evangelical denominations, in which he secured them a perpetual freedom of religion and yards for building “Chambers for the celebration of their Profession” by the building where the ministers of the confession had lived until then (BRacz, 343: 15). According to J. Dworzaczkowa (1997: 182, note 57), it was also to be confirmed by the king. This information is difficult to verify, since the version of the privilege referred to by the researcher is not found under her signature. According to the description made by a Skoki pastor, Aleksander Bajkowski, the decision to convert the palace into a church was not supposed to be made until the 1780s, after another wave of non-Catholic population arrived in the city (APP, ABCz, 1946: 7–8). He denied, however, that Skoki Protestants had a privilege from that period allowing them to do so (APP, ABCz, 2456: 7), but mentioned elsewhere that the townspeople themselves also referred to a privilege issued by King Augustus II for the town’s owner Jerzy Unrug (APP, ABCz, 2457: 5).

Thanks to the Catholic priest of St. Nicholas parish, I also have a detailed description of the two buildings serving as Protestant temples. The Reformed community introduced a bench, pulpit and altar table into the court house on the sands (APP, ABCz, 2456: 8). In order to fend off possible accusations that they wanted to mislead the Catholic faithful with the appearance of the building, which may have resembled a church, they added a living room even before 1679, and a new entrance was created on the side of the vestibule, while bricking up the existing one (APP, ABCz, 1601; Dworzaczkowa, 1997: 183). In the 18th century, the roof and chimney were retained as in a common house. However, the palace that served

the Lutherans was to have two residential floors located under six transverse roofs, from which the chimneys were removed. The chamber and hall inside were joined together by the Lutherans to form a single room for worship, into which they introduced an altar, a baptismal font and a pulpit. As the Catholic clergy suggested after these changes, the roof of the building took the form of a temple (APP, ABCz, 2456: 8). As a result of the visitation of Catholic clergymen in 1709, the then-owner Andrzej Twardowski, in order to protect the place of worship, was forced to re-build the chimney and build a chamber too, which officially was to serve him as a bedroom, for the eventuality of his stay in the city at the same time giving the mansion the character of a residential building again.

A school also functioned at both churches, with varying fortunes, but we do not have much information about its activities. At first it was run by Reformed Evangelicals and later by Augsburg Evangelicals. After its activities were suspended in 1752, Calvinists once again began efforts to establish it (Migasiewicz, 2019: 56).

LAWSUIT FOR PRESERVATION OF CHURCHES

During the Third Northern War, in places where Swedish troops were stationed Protestants could count on their patronage. This was the case in Austrian Silesia, as well as in the Greater Poland province of the First Polish Republic of Poland. The support of Charles XII's army translated not only into physical care but also the creation of new places of worship, as was the case in Poznań (Kiec, 2015: 39–40). While as part of the Peace of Altstadt, the Swedes in the western provinces of the Habsburg monarchy succeeded in securing the possibility of building so-called churches of grace for the Evangelicals (Sedel-Grzesińska, 2011: 40, 42), Polish Lutherans and Calvinists could not count on similar support, since the Polish-Lithuanian state was not a party to the treaty. As soon as Charles XII's army left the border of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1709, Catholics began to revindicate places occupied by Protestants temples. These actions were supported the following year by the Sandomierz Confederation, which abolished, by its provisions, all changes that had occurred during the Swedish occupation viewed as a threat to the Catholic religion (Kriegseisen, 2019: 179).

The wave of repression also affected Skoki. As early as 1709, suffragan priest Hieronim Wierzbowski applied to the Gniezno curia for a search of the Lutheran and Calvinist churches located in the city (APP, ABCz, 1946: 8–10). Commissioners, unknown priests Celiński and Jankowski, were sent to check out the churches. However, they could not carry out their task due to the stiff resistance of the faithful (when they wanted to force their way into one of the temples, they were stripped of their gowns). The curia's efforts were interrupted, however, by a plague epidemic that broke out in 1709, as a result of which all the Catholic clergy involved, except for the parish priest of St. Nicholas Church in Skoki, Aleksander Bajkowski, died.

Rev. Aleksander Bajkowski also took action after the death of Calvinist minister Jan Jacobides (Kriegseisen, 1996: 81), a small measure aimed at preventing the appointment of a new clergyman (APP, ABCz, 2456: 9). To this end, he intervened with the then-owner of the town, Andrzej Twardowski, a Calvinist, who, despite the Catholic priest's objections, installed a new pastor in the parish. The support that the Skoki priest received from the bishop of Poznań, due to the resistance of the surrounding Calvinist nobility, also did not have the expected effect.

With the promulgation of the constitution of the Silent Sejm in 1717, the maintenance of temples by Protestants became much more difficult than ever (Ohryzka, 1860: 124). The ban on building new places of worship as well as repairing old ones (which was extended to all churches established after 1632) was the first step in restricting not only the ability of Protestants to worship freely but also the functioning of dissident communities as such.

These provisions also brought direct consequences for the town of Skoki. For as early as 1719, Catholic parish priest Aleksander Bajkowski sued the communities of Reformed and Augsburg Evangelicals to stop worshipping in their existing places. The parish priest of St. Nicholas received support for his actions from the visiting priest of his parish, priest Gluchowski, who, on the basis of the information he received, sent a request to the bishop of Poznań, Michał Tarło, even before 1716, to close the churches and negate the clerical authority of Evangelical ministers, that is, to *de facto* impose a ban on their worship services. However, the metropolitan, due to the uncertain internal situation of the First Polish Republic related to the ongoing The Sandomierz and Tarnogród Confederations, decided to postpone the matter until calmer times. With the ascension to the episcopal throne of Krzysztof Antoni Szembek, Aleksand-

er Bajkowski once again took action against the Skoki congregations, hoping to change the course of the new metropolitan's dissident policy. The main accusations made by the clergyman against the Reformed and Augsburg communities concerned the issue of ownership of illegal churches (APP, ABCz, 2461: 16–17), i.e. those built after 1632, and about concealing their existence by preserving living quarters in them, thus violating the practice of prejudication (Wajsblum, 1937–1948: 43, 45). The Catholic parish priest also complained about the activities of Lutheran pastors, who succeeded several times in thwarting the conversions of their believers to the Catholic faith (the case concerned the Skoki bourgeois woman Tokczkowa, and the writer from Rosicin, who was sentenced to death), as well as converting Catholics to the Augsburg confession (the son of the farmhand Sęk from Raszków). The clergyman was also disturbed by the raising of children from mixed marriages in Protestant denominations and sending them to Prussia for education. According to the Catholic clergyman, it was also a violation of his prerogatives as priest of the place for the pastors to withhold from him information about the deaths of believers in Protestant churches and to seize tithes for the needs of these churches (APP, ABCz, 1946: 10–11; APP, ABCz, 2456: 6, 10). The fact of renting flats to Jews also spoke against the Calvinists (APP, ABCz, 2456: 11). Aleksander Bajkowski also protested against the school run by Lutherans at the time, which was attended by children of all denominations, including Catholics.

The trial before the bishop's court initiated by Aleksander Bajkowski was a very costly affair for both Calvinists and Lutheran Scots, requiring appropriate financial investment. However, preserving the possibility of worship as an element of free development was of paramount importance. At the same time, based on the sources we have, we can conclude that the Reformed and Augsburg churches, despite their mutual goodwill, conducted their actions before the court separately (APP, ABCz, 330: 6).

The legal process of the reformed church was handled by Samuel Richtter and merchant Tomasz Forbes, members of the council of the older congregation, mainly Poznań dwellers, not known by the name of Ditter. Expenses related to it, however, were managed by Pastor Jan Gerson Cassius, with the help of the aforementioned Forbes, Richtter and Bogusław Jakubowicz. Activities around the case were conducted transparently. Collection receipts and expenses were written down and forwarded to those churches and their councils of elders that supported the Skoki church (APP, ABCz, 1946: 10–11).

The trial before the church court began in March 1720 and continued as late as February 1722 (APP, AMS, I/3: 354). A summary of expenditures, compiled at the behest of Jan Cassius, and correspondence provide us with information on financial outlays, however, only up to August 1720. Preparations for the trial began in May 1720 and were handled at the time by the Poznań resident Samuel Richtter, together with the noble patron and church actor of the Sochaczew ensign Krzysztof Kurnatowski (Żychliński, 1884: 220). They began by extracting from the books an unknown parish priest's receipt from Skoki issued to one of the Rey family (perhaps it was a verdict from the Piotrków tribunal of 1645), an activity that cost 18 tymfs (APP, ABCz, 1946: 7). Another 9.20 tymfs were spent in June to send summonses to witnesses, of which 6 tymfs were donated by Jan Cassius for this purpose (APP, ABCz, 1946: 8). Also included in the bill was the cost of wine that the patron consumed at the time, for the sum of 30.23 tymfs. The total costs amounted to 58.13 tymfs, which were covered by Samuel Richtter from his personal funds (APP, ABCz, 1946: 10).

The first stage of the bishop's court's work was the visitation of a commission to inspect the churches. The reception of its members by the parish generated numerous costs. The largest was the purchase of wine (10 florins), with which the church actor Krzysztof Kurnatowski treated the commissioners, who "entertained themselves with a glass [...] for an hour" (APP, ABCz, 2457: 12). At the conclusion of its work, the commission falsely accused the Skoki dissidents of assault. In order to prevent another trial based on this, it was decided to bribe its members. This was done by Poznań merchants Tomasz Forbes, who was also the "president" of Skoki, along with Bogusław Jakubowicz. Forbes donated "two **postaws**¹ of beautiful cloth" to its members, while together with Jakubowicz, 'they contributed half 600 zlotys to this case [puł 6. sta złotych na tę sprawę łożyli] (APP, ABCz, 2457: 13). In August, a court hearing began in Ostrów Tumski in Poznań, and the district jurist, a lawyer who was to represent Jednota Wielkopolska in Poznań, had to be paid, the sum of 1 ducat (APP, ABCz, 1946: 8). Those who participated during the trial also received a corresponding payment (6 florins each). In addition, for actions before the bishop's court, money was received by: Tomasz Forbes – 3 florins (perhaps spent on consultations with a court scribe named Orzechowski – APP, ABCz, 2457: 29) and Diettrichi – 1 ducat. After the trial, money was paid back to Andrzej Twardowski for expenses

¹ One "postaw" of cloth is about 32 ells.

incurred to tune of 20 ducats. Added to the outlay also were the fees for couriers sent in connection with the case to Łopienno and to the closer unknown Harptell.

The costs associated with the trial were paid by the community. From the financial statements of expenses, we know who financially supported the conduct of the trial. One of the benefactors of the Skoki congregation was the castellan of Krzywiń, Mikołaj Skoroszewski (Bieniaszewski, 1987: 95), a Catholic who donated 100 zlotys to the cause (I also found information about a donation for the sum of 6.20 florins – APP, ABCz, 1946: 10–11). Part of this sum, about 10 zlotys, was used to pay the Catholic priest Stanisław Kierski, who supported the community with legal advice (APP, ABCz, 2457: 1–2). Outlays for the successful resolution of the case were also made by Krzysztof Kurnatowski, the unknown Fabian and Malcom, Jaroszewicz mentioned together with Cizewski (the latter donated, as much as 63.10 florins), and a certain priest Walenti. In addition, an unknown Offenhammer financed travel and rest for those involved in the case for a total of 5 florins. The total assistance amounted to 83.72 florins (APP, ABCz, 1946: 10–11).

In order to raise sufficient funds before the second half of May 1720, a collection of money was also made at local churches. The churches in Góra, Wieluń, Oborniki, Łopienno, Środa and the Evangelicals in Poznań offered their help, thanks to which the amount of 19.6 florins was collected.

For additional financial resources, support was also sought through a collection proclaimed at a synod in Gdańsk in 1718 and in Kiejdany in 1719 covering the four provinces of the First Polish Republic, which was to initiate a general fund for the Reformed Church in the First Polish Republic (APP, ABCz, 330: 6; APP, ABCz, 1542: 7; APP, ABCz, 1545: 5). Taking a loan was also considered. There were also hopes, and for more support from the Protestant nobility of Greater Poland, which was expected to meet in a larger group on the occasion of the upcoming sejmik. It was also hoped that, abundant in cash just after the harvest, they would be more willing to support the Skoki people financially. These hopes turned out to be vain, as the nobles focused first on settling their own obligations, as the church's actor Krzysztof Kurnatowski directly reported. However, the noble-born faithful cannot be denied their personal commitment, as they showed up in large numbers in March 1720 for the inspection of the churches by the aforementioned commission (APP, ABCz, 2457: 12).

All the measures taken did not bring the Skoki Reformed evangelicals a victory in court. They lost the case, as their representatives failed to appear at the last of the hearings. Eventually a default judgment was passed, ordering the church's demolition (Łukaszewicz, 1835: 345; 'Skoki', 1889: 685). Due to its radical nature, it was not enforced, although people were appointed to carry it out. However, it was forbidden to perform singing during services (Krzepkowski, 2020: 53). Although the financial expenditures made did not result in a court victory, they certainly ensured the continued operation of the churches in the palace and the house on the sands.

REFORMED CHURCH FIRE

Twenty years later, a town fire occurred, damaging the Reformed Evangelicals' church and outbuildings. At that time, once again, the preservation of the temple, freedom of worship, and social order based on religious principles required additional financial outlays from the Skoki Reformed Evangelicals.

The fire in Skoki broke out on the night of September 17, 1740 (APP, ABCz, 2460: 5) and destroyed a total of 45 houses and damaged the Calvinist parsonage building. However, it is difficult to assess how serious the damage to the building was, since its repair was considered as early as 1738 (APP, ABCz, 1712: 2). Certainly, however, taking such an action on one's own initiative was forbidden under the 1717 constitution, as it required the permission of the relevant bishop, but we have no information that the Calvinists received one. What we do know, however, is that a three-member committee of parishioners was appointed to repair the parsonage roof (APP, ABCz, 1302: 19). It consisted of parishioners Jan Figulus (related to senior citizen Daniel Ernest Jabłoński), Tomasz Forbes and Ludwig Dauphin (APP, ABCz, 2458: 6). Their activities were also supported by Pastor Dawid Cassius and Samuel Osst as well as Samuel Sotnicki (APP, ABCz, 1302: 12). These same individuals also participated in the preparation of the plan for rebuilding the city. Their direct participation in this work was no accident, as the renewal of the city was to be based on the principles of the Christian religion.

The city's fire was supposed to be God's punishment for the residents and their owners for the way Skoki people lived, and who were accused

of breaking the first two commandments of the Ten Commandments (APP, ABCz, 1302: 12; cf. Karpiński, 2021: 114–118, cf. Bem, 2021). This conviction also influenced the project to rebuild the city. A new socio-moral system based on religious principles was to prevail in the rebuilt Skoki. For the proper sanctification of Sunday, the date of the fair was moved to Mondays (see Migasiewicz, 2019: 57), which was to be communicated to the residents of the area by an appropriate announcement. It was also assumed that Sunday “dances, drunkenness and schmoozing” were to be banned, which should be obeyed with a “strict” edict (APP, ABCz, 2460: 5). On the other hand, to respect God’s name, oaths to God were to be discontinued (except when necessary), especially by those judged untrustworthy.

The city’s reconstruction project also included practical solutions to improve safety. The first of these were fire precautions. The second concerned the establishment of a well at the market square, the purchase of a fire engine along with other “vehicles.” It also assumed the establishment of a permanent fund and contributions to maintain order (cleanliness) in the city and protection from fire. Moral order, on the other hand, understood as getting rid of “superfluities and unnecessary noises” from the town, was to be guarded by an instigator, who was to report improper behavior by residents to the court, “so that those who do not want to be ruled by their own conscience would be ruled by real fear and sermons” (APP, ABCz, 2460: 6).

The draft also included a point on the need to confirm existing municipal rights, information about which was also to be announced in the surrounding towns. This action was intended to attract new settlers to Skoki. The information about convenient rules for settling all Christian denominations in the town undoubtedly served to advertise the town’s locality, since a certain number of residents may have left as a result of the fire.

The plan for the city’s reconstruction also included specific instructions on how to obtain adequate funding for this purpose. As a first step, it was intended to seek assistance from Saxony. (APP, ABCz, 2460: 5–6). An appropriate collection was to be made in the electorate’s territories. However, consent to its implementation had to be given by its prince and at the same time, king of the First Polish Republic, August III. They wanted to seek it through Primate Krzysztof Szembek and Chancellor Henryk Brühl. However, because Polish Protestants often conducted collections in Saxony, the collection for Skoki needed to be announced by the monarch before others. After receiving approval, the information to con-

duct it was to be forwarded to the Lutheran superintendent general in Dresden, Valentin Löscher (Ingetraut, 2024), by delegated persons. The collection for the reconstruction of the city was also decided to be carried out in Silesia (among the faithful gathered at the Churches of Peace and Grace), for which the permission of Emperor Charles VI was needed. The request for it was intended to be made through the imperial delegate in the First Polish Republic. In October 1740, a letter was also written to the Reformed senior of the Jednota Wielkopolska, pastor superintendent of Leszno, Krystian Sitkowius, for permission to conduct the collection locally and in Brandenburg Prussia (APP, ABCz, 1302: 12).

During the intensive efforts to find enough money to rebuild the city and repair the parsonage of the Evangelical Reformed Church, a separate collection was also made to help the fire victims. During the St. Martin's Day service, collections were made for: Jerzy Berdyszek and Paweł Kałuski, so that they could rebuild and remain in the city (APP, ABCz, 1302: 20; Karpiński, 2021: 251–253).

We do not have information on whether and to what extent the planned collections in Saxony and Silesia for the rebuilding of the city succeeded, but certainly the local collection for the repair of the rectory had a positive, though insufficient, result. Among the funders were the names of the Reformed nobility of Greater Poland as well as the townspeople (APP, ABCz, 2458: 8). Some of them contributed money, while others volunteered to help with building material. The first group included nobles Adam Rozbicki, Krzysztof Kurnatowski, Bogusław Żychliński, Michał and Adam Wierzbaczewski and Jerzy Watta Kosicki, and townsmen Aleksander Piotr Figulus, Samuel Marszel, Maciej and Michał Jelonek, Jan Szulc and Jan Cień. Money was offered in various denominations from the Polish zloty, through the denarius to the tymfs. A total of 352.18 florins were collected. Material support was provided by residents of Skoki: Jan Figlus and Tomasz Forbes, who pledged to provide three pieces of treated oak lumber each. On the other hand, Samuel Sotnicki and Ludwig Dauphin were to donate 6 and 8 lumber each. Separately, it was decided to seek help from Poznań parishioners as well, primarily in legal matters, including obtaining the required permits from the Ordinary Bishop.

The contribution carried out, however, proved insufficient. This is because the commissioned carpenter valued his work for the restoration of the parsonage, referred to as the "Poznan House," and the pigsty at 500 florins, 7 barrels of beer and cloth for clothing. The conditions were accepted by the council of elders. At the same time, looking for savings,

they decided to use the material that remained from the old building. In the end, however, it turned out that the costs exceeded their finances; the repair amounted to 1891 zlotys, whereas the community had 1680 zlotys at its disposal. In addition, there was a delay in issuing the promised barrels of beer (APP, ABCz, 1302: 19–20). However, covering the parsonage roof before winter was a necessary procedure. Therefore, townsman Jan Figlus applied to senior citizen Krystian Sitkowski for a loan of 600 florins. Its repayment was to be made after a year from the so-called Swiss sum, which was held by a certain Rytowy. The completion of the investment was also vouched for by the Poznań citizens from their own estates.

We do not know how the repairs were completed, but it seems that they were successful, since during the 1752 visitation, there is no mention of the house on the sands not working properly (APP, ABCz, 1712: 5–14). The survival of the churches in Skoki was certainly largely due to the financial effort of the community, but it should also be borne in mind that the crisis of the legal institutions was no less important, and perhaps luck, as the trial for the church in Orzeszkowo which was underway at the same time, hindered the reconstruction of the destroyed temple (Lepalczyk and Hajdrych, 2018: 26–32).

CONCLUSION

Having temples for Protestant communities in the First Polish Republic in the first half of the 18th century was of great importance. This is because the possibility of fulfilling the spiritual needs of the residents of religiously diverse localities translated into their development. As the example of Skoki shows, it was one of the elements that ensured the well-being of the residents, encouraged them to settle, and allowed to maintain a balance between the adherents of the many confessions living in the town, and this translated into its development, both socially and economically. The protection and maintenance of the place of worship, therefore, was a matter of desire not only for the residents themselves but also for the owners of private estates of both Catholics and Evangelicals in which the dissenters lived. Consequently, the care and maintenance of churches became a supra-state interest. In view of the legal restrictions that the parliamentary constitutions of the first half of the 18th century imposed on the possibility of non-Catholic worship, maintaining a church was a necessary

investment. These consisted of legal processes and the cost of maintaining the buildings themselves. In order to raise sufficient funds, collections were announced in local churches and abroad. Support was provided by pastors, landlords, patrons, townspeople and parishioners, through monetary assistance as well as in-kind.

The example of the Skoki church shows that in times of crisis, the entire community of believers associated with the Skoki church participated in the search for adequate financial resources and legal means, including both the local residents and the wealthy bourgeoisie of Poznań, as well as the nobility. However, such funds were managed by the council of elders of the Reformed parish church. The authorities of the Unity of the Brethren in Leszno, the nobility's patron, and even the Catholic bishops were involved in assistance. They were not afraid to seek the patronage of the monarch. Cases were handled by those most versed in legal matters, familiar with decision-makers and influential people, with personal assets that allowed quick actions; these were mainly Poznań burghers acting with the support of the town owner and the church actor. On the other hand, they were held responsible for their activities and contributions publicly within the community, for which the pastor himself was directly responsible. At the same time, it should be noted that the evangelical residents of Skoki also assisted other churches. They supported Leszno after the fire in 1708 (APP, ABCz, 1543: 8) and participated in contributions for its reconstruction (APP, ABCz, 1543: 8). It is also worth noting also that while there was often a lack of money to keep the pastor at an adequate level (APP, ABCz, 1565: 6), in moments of crisis no money was spared to preserve the temple, which was treated as an asset to be enjoyed by all.

The financial outlay did not always bring the expected immediate effect, as in the case of the lost lawsuit over the Evangelical Reformed church in Skoki. However, the investment was not meaningless, as it put the place of worship in perspective and saved it. On the other hand, the efforts of the faithful after the fire in the city made it possible, although not without difficulties, not only to restore the burned temple but also to rebuild the city morally, introducing new principles of social order and modernizing it.

The building of the church, its maintenance and protection were an investment in which the whole community belonging to the Evangelical Reformed Church of Skoki participated, because it was an element in building the well-being of all states. Concern for its maintenance was expressed in reasonable privileges of the owners, as well as financial or material assistance. The cooperation of the nobility and burghers allowed, despite the

economic and legal crisis of the Polish-Lithuanian state, also manifested in the anti-dissenting laws, the “wonderful development of the town” (Migasiewicz, 2019: 54) in social and economic terms.

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