

MARIA PIDŁYPCZAK-MAJEROWICZ, Krakow
m.pidlypczak@gmail.com

**Rev.: *THE LIBRARY INVENTORIES FROM THE PAULINE
CONVENT IN WIELEŃ (XVIII CENTURY),*
by TOMASZ STOLARCZYK**

The Library of the Wieluń Scientific Society, vol. 36, Wieluń 2021

In 2021, a rare study, even among the scientific research books, by Tomasz Stolarczyk entitled *The Library Inventories from the Pauline Convent in Wieluń (XVIII Century)* was published by the Wieluń Scientific Society in the series of The Library of the Wieluń Scientific Society vol. 36. This study contains a foreword by Stanisław Włodarczyk, an introduction, an outline of the history of the Pauline church and monastery of St Nicolas in Wieluń, the characteristics of the Pauline inventories, the rules referring to the publishing of the inventories and the presentation of fourteen library inventories (pp. 35-226). The study closes with a conclusion, a list of abbreviations, a bibliography of sources and literature and a personal index. “Library inventories” have been meticulously prepared by T. Stolarczyk, and are accompanied by numerous and necessary cross-references to the names presented in the inventories. The thorough publication of T. Stolarczyk’s “Library inventories” by the Wieluń Scientific Society testifies to the understanding of the need for the edition of such publications confirming the history and functioning of the monastic libraries, the documentation of the books by monks, as well as the library technology of the time, applied in the 16th-18th centuries, which causes a lot of problems for the contemporary researchers and requires great and painstaking work.

Royal Wieluń in the 18th century was abundant in male congregations. There were Augustinians, Paulines, Piarists and Franciscans in the town. There was also one female congregation – the Bernardine Sisters. In the Wieluń County there were also congregations of the Norbertine Sisters in Bolesławiec and the Pauline Sisters in Konopica. The activity of the Pauline Order in Wieluń lasted until 1819, the Franciscans and the Piarists were removed by the tsarist authorities in 1864 as part of the

repressions after the January Uprising. The Augustinians remained until the beginning of the 20th century, with only the Bernardine Sisters who remained and took over the buildings of the Wieluń Pauline Order.

Tomasz Stolarczyk, who for many years has been researching the history of religious congregations and their book collections, also in the Wieluń region, has undertaken a difficult and in-depth research of preparing the library catalogues of the Pauline Fathers of Wieluń of the 18th century found in the archives and arranged in a chronological order. T. Stolarczyk's work has a source and documentary character of considerable importance, since the inventories presented in his study remain the only witness of the existing library and of the contents of the former Pauline book collection, which was partly dispersed and partly transferred to the Pauline library at Jasna Góra in Częstochowa. The inventories of the Wieluń convent that remained, containing also the catalogues of books written down in different years, are currently kept in the Jasna Góra Archives in Częstochowa. The inventories of books made in 1716, 1717, 1721, 1729, 1739, 1742, 1747, 1749, 1750, 1752 and 1789 constitute the part of the inventory of the Wieluń convent, while the library inventories of 1711 and 1770 are independent units. The repetitiveness of catalogue entries in successive inventories prompted T. Stolarczyk to present in the first inventory of 1711 a detailed research apparatus contained in the footnotes. Differences between the inventories are seen in the names of the sections, according to which the books were listed, the number of books displaying the state of the book collection, donations to the convent library, mainly after the death of the monks, and insignificant purchases made by the convent. The subsequent book inventories show the repetitiveness of the titles, which may contribute to the stability of the Pauline book collection. In the chapter on the principles referring to the presentation of the inventories, T. Stolarczyk unified spelling, deciphered the abbreviations used by the Paulines in the records, and decided on the originality of the inventory record. Not all abbreviations could have been deciphered, but the technique of the description of the works possessed by the Pauline Fathers in Wieluń did not differ from the rules of "modest" documentation of the book collections applied in other orders. The attached personal index enables the user of the study by T. Stolarczyk to check in how many inventories books and their authors are repeated.

It appears to be legitimate to inquire for what purpose the preserved library inventories of the convents should be published and whether this is needed. In a number of works on the history of monastic orders and their institutions in the Polish lands up to the partitions of the Republic of Poland, there are still very few studies on the book collections, which served monks in various forms of pastoral, preaching and educational activities. Monastic constitutions defined very precisely the role of book collections and librarians in each monastery. The constitutional provisions were not always closely followed, which in the case of the collected books, was not particularly beneficial. However, the requirement to keep records of the possessed and supplemented library collections was fulfilled. The destiny of books and their inventories were dramatic at times. Books were dispersed, were stolen, destroyed, as were library catalogues, which were destroyed even more often. Hence the importance of documenting and organising of the preserved archives, including their modern processing and publication, is particularly significant. The publication of a greater number of the preserved manuscript catalogues and library inventories, even in one single order would allow us to see a more accurate and reliable picture of the state of education, teaching and writing of the monks at the time, as well as of the religious literature constituting the vast majority of the collected books. It would be possible to clarify many misconceptions about the poverty of the old religious literature of the past, to identify thematically important positions from among the lists of monastic books and to learn about the development of the monastic spirituality in the following centuries. The evidence in support for this view can be substantiated by bibliographies, which constitute the main source of information on the publishing production of the 15th-18th centuries.

The reviewed work of T. Stolarczyk fits into a demand for this type of research source studies which document not only religious literature. It also expresses an interest in this literature both among the clergy and the laity. It is also worth mentioning that the catalogues of the libraries of the Pauline convent in Wieluń reveal foreign religious literature, which may testify to broad contacts of the monks with the Europe of the time.

MARIA PIDŁYPCZAK-MAJEROWICZ – graduate of the library science at the University of Wrocław. She obtained her doctoral degree in book and library science in 1982 and her postdoctoral degree in 1996. She worked at the University Library in Wrocław (1969-1986), the Institute of Library and Information Science at the University of Wrocław (1987-2005) and the Institute of Information Science and Library Science at the Pedagogical University of Kraków (2004-2013). The author of numerous publications in the field of bibliology. She focuses primarily on the history of monastic libraries in the eastern lands of the Republic of Poland in the 17th and 18th centuries.