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## **THE DOMINICANS OF OPOLE AS PROMOTERS OF ROSARY PRAYER (ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE BOOK OF THE ROSARY CONFRATERNITY OF KRAPKOWICE OF THE 18TH CENTURY)**

**Dominikanie opolscy jako promotorzy modlitwy różańcowej  
(na przykładzie Księgi Bractwa Różańcowego z Krapkowic z XVIII wieku)**

**Abstrakt**

Artykuł ma na celu pokazanie roli dominikanów opolskich w promocji modlitwy różańcowej w XVIII wieku. Podstawą rozważań jest Księga Bractwa Różańcowego z parafii pw. św. Mikołaja w Krapkowicach (obecne woj. opolskie). Nie była ona do tej pory przedmiotem zainteresowania badaczy. Bractwo zostało założone za sprawą dominikanów opolskich w 1728 roku i funkcjonowało do roku 1810 (1812). W tym okresie zapisało się do niego ponad 2800 osób z ponad stu pięćdziesięciu miejscowości leżących na terenie Śląska. Przyczyniło się do utrwalenia katolicyzmu wśród mieszkańców tej części Śląska.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Dominikanie, Śląsk, Opole, Krapkowice, Bractwo Różańcowe

**Abstract**

The article aims to show the role of the Dominicans of Opole in promoting of rosary prayer in the 18th century. The basis for considerations is the Book of the Rosary Confraternity from the parish of St. Saint Nicholas at Krapkowice (currently Opole voivodeship). It has not been the subject of interest to researchers so far. The confraternity was founded by the Dominicans of Opole in 1728 and functioned until 1810 (1812). During this period, over 2,800 people from over one hundred and fifty towns and villages in Silesia enrolled. It contributed to the consolidation of Catholicism among the inhabitants of this part of Silesia.

**Keywords:** Dominicans, Silesia, Opole, Krapkowice, Rosary Confraternity.

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Marian devotion is one of the characteristics of the Order of Preachers.<sup>2</sup> This resulted from the origins of the Order itself, which was created, a.o., as a counterweight to the views proclaimed by the Cathars.<sup>3</sup> They denied Mary's motherhood (and therefore Christ's humanity), considering Mary an angel.<sup>4</sup> From the 13th century onwards, Marian confraternities were established in many Dominican communities. Their members had the task of saying a certain number of prayers during the day or week, including the Our Father and the Hail Mary. Dominicans, in turn, preached sermons on Marian themes at monthly meetings of the confraternity members. Mary was often present in Dominican preaching as early as the Middle Ages. Suffice it to mention here the sermons of James of Voragine,<sup>5</sup> Peregryn of Opole,<sup>6</sup> or the preaching of Thomas Aquinas.<sup>7</sup>

Marian devotion was also present at the Dominicans of Opole. Although the original church was dedicated to St. Adalbert,<sup>8</sup> the Blessed Virgin Mary<sup>9</sup> became the main patron of the temple when the new brick church was consecrated in 1365.<sup>10</sup> Our Lady of Czestochowa enjoyed a special cult among the Opole Dominicans. This was also due to the fact that the donor of the miraculous painting for the Pauline monastery at Jasna Góra was Prince Władysław Opolczyk, who had his residence right next to the complex of the Opole preachers and was one of the community's benefactors. For this reason, the image of Our Lady of Czestochowa often found shelter in the Dominican church in Opole in case of danger, such as during the "Swedish Deluge." After the end of military operations, it was led in a ceremonial procession to Jasna Góra by the inhabitants of Opole.<sup>11</sup> Right next to the presbytery in the

<sup>2</sup> See especially *Teksty o Matce Bożej. Dominikanie średniowieczni*, ed. J. Salij, Niepokalanów 1992; B. Kochaniewicz, *Średniowieczni dominikanie o Matce Bożej*, Kraków 2007.

<sup>3</sup> The idea of establishing a new community came to Dominic Guzman during his mission to Germany and Denmark, during which he had the opportunity to come into direct contact with the views preached by the Cathars. The literature on St Dominic is extensive, see K. Kuźniak, *Dominik, właśc. Demenigo Guzman. 1. Życie i działalność*, in: *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, vol. 4, Lublin 1983, col. 60-62; M.-H. Vicaire, *Dominik i jego Bracia Kaznodzieje*, transl. and ed. A. Graboń, J.A. Spież, T. Skutnik, W. Unolt, Poznań 1985; J.A. Spież, *Święty Dominik*, Kraków 2004.

<sup>4</sup> More on this topic B. Kochaniewicz, *Średniowieczni dominikanie*, p. 220.

<sup>5</sup> James de Voragine, best known as the author of the 'Golden Legend', also had a number of Marian sermons, B. Kochaniewicz, *Medieval Dominicans*, p. 101-128.

<sup>6</sup> Peregryn of Opole (Peregrinus de Opol) is one of the most popular preachers in medieval Europe. He was probably a native of Opole, associated first with the convent of Racibórz and later with Wrocław, twice provincial of the Dominicans, and the first Polish inquisitor. His sermons have recently been published both in Latin and Polish, see Peregrini de Opole, *Sermones de tempore et de sanctis*, ed. R. Tatarzyński, Warsaw 1997; Peregryn z Opola, *Kazania de tempore i de sanctis*, transl. J. Mrukówna, ed. Fr. J. Wolny, Kraków-Opole 2001; cf. also B. Kochaniewicz, *Średniowieczni dominikanie*, p. 129-152.

<sup>7</sup> Cited by B. Kochaniewicz, *Średniowieczni dominikanie*, p. 101-187.

<sup>8</sup> This is probably related to the origins of the Opole monastery – it was founded by Dominicans expelled from the monastery of St Adalbert in Wrocław during the well-known dispute between the Bishop of Wrocław, Thomas II, and Prince Henry IV the Faithful. See A. Pobóg-Lenartowicz, *Jeszcze o początkach klasztoru dominikanów w Opolu*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Opolskiego,” series Historia, 1998, vol. 35, p. 7-14; also, *Psy Pana, czyli rzecz o dominikanach z opolskiej Górki*, Opole 2020, p. 18-22.

<sup>9</sup> Another source gives the year 1361, cf., A. Pobóg-Lenartowicz, *Zaginiona średniowieczna kronika dominikanów opolskich*, „Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne Śląska Opolskiego”, 2011, vol. 31, p. 323-331.

<sup>10</sup> The church was consecrated on the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the main altar and the main nave were dedicated to Our Lady. The other co-patrons of the church were saints: Adalbert, George, Dominic, and Saint Anna, *ibid*.

<sup>11</sup> A. Pobóg-Lenartowicz, *Psy Pana*, p. 110.

church “on Górka” there was a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Czestochowa. Rajmund Mojecki, the prior of the Opole monastery, was a special worshipper of Our Lady. According to the account of the Jesuit Jan Słota (who stayed with the Opole Dominicans in 1682) – supposedly prayed so fervently to Our Lady that golden tongues (sparks) flowed out of his mouth.<sup>12</sup> From the end of the 18th century, the Dominicans of Opole became involved in promoting the cult of Our Lady of Piekary.<sup>13</sup>

From the secularisation protocol of 1810, we learn that there was a painting of Our Lady of the Rosary in the main altar of the Opole church. Unfortunately, we do not know how long it had been hanging there. It is known that the Dominicans were among the promoters of the rosary prayer.<sup>14</sup> The custom of praying the rosary originated in the aforementioned Marian confraternities, whose members recited the Psalter of Mary (*Psalterium Beate Mariae Virginis*). Alan de la Roche (Alanus de Rupe), a Dominican from Brittany, is considered to be the creator of the Rosary. In the monastery in Douai, after the apparitions he experienced in 1464, he began to promote the daily recitation of the Psalter of Mary. He divided the psalter into three fifties with meditations, corresponding to the three parts of the Rosary – joyful, sorrowful, and glorious. After the death of Alan de la Roche, rosary confraternities began to be established in Dominican communities in Europe. The first one was founded in Cologne in 1475. In 1478 Pope Sixtus IV confirmed the statutes of the Cologne confraternity and granted indulgences not only for the members of the Cologne confraternity, but also for all rosary confraternities to be founded in the future. In Silesia, the first rosary confraternity was established in 1481 at St Adalbert church in Wrocław. By the end of the 15th century confraternities of this type were established in this area at Grodków, Świdnica, and Brzeg.<sup>15</sup> Although most of the rosary confraternities in Silesia were founded already in modern times, in many cases we are not able to establish a specific date of their origin.<sup>16</sup> Such is the case of the Rosary Brotherhood at the Dominican church in Opole. The date of its establishment is not known, we only know that it existed.<sup>17</sup> Among the members of the Opole convent we find the so-called Promoters of the Holy Rosary. Their task was to preach sermons explaining the mysteries of the Rosary and to promoting this prayer. These sermons were held at around 1 p.m., followed by a rosary prayer. Hence, the Promoters of the Rosary were also called afternoon preachers (*concionator postmeridianus*). As in all Silesia, the Opole convent had

<sup>12</sup> Archive of the Polish Dominican Province in Krakow, ref. Op. 1. Rajmund Mojecki was a Bachelor of Theology and lecturer of this subject at convents in Przemyśl and Warsaw. He was also a member of the Dominican communities in Warsaw, Oświęcim, and Borek Stary. In the latter he held the office of prior. From 1680 to 1682 he held the position of prior of Opole. He died in Oświęcim in 1717, B. Brzuszek, *Rajmund Mojecki*, in: *Słownik Polskich Teologów Katolickich*, vol. 3, Warszawa 1982, p. 156-157.

<sup>13</sup> A. Pobóg-Lenartowicz, *Kult maryjny u jezuitów śląskich w czasach nowożytnych*, in: *Jezuici: nauka i nauczanie, sztuka, kultura, duchowość* (in print).

<sup>14</sup> In the Middle Ages, the Carthusians and Cistercians were also promoters of this prayer, B. Kochaniewicz, *Średniowieczni dominikanie*, p. 219-220, 231-232.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, p. 232-235. According to W. Bochnak, a rosary confraternity was also established in 1499 in Strzegom (at the Church of the Order of St John), W. Bochnak, *Religijne stowarzyszenia i bractwa katolików świeckich w diecezji wrocławskiej od XVI wieku do 1810 r.*, Legnica 2000, p. 81.

<sup>16</sup> W. Bochnak, *Religijne stowarzyszenia*, tab. No. 3, p. 77-82. In total, the author lists 37 rosary confraternities functioning in Silesia up to 1810, of which 3 have a medieval origin (up to the end of the 15th century), 10 were founded in modern times, and for the remaining 24 their time of foundation is unknown.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, p. 80 (with reference to the Archdiocesan Archives in Wrocław, ref. I D 8 c).

two Rosary Promoters: one preached in Polish and the other in German. This was related to the bilingualism of the inhabitants of Silesia.<sup>18</sup>

The fact that the role of the Opole Dominicans in promoting rosary prayer was not limited to the borders of the city is evidenced by the preserved book of the Rosary Confraternity from the parish of St Nicholas in Krapkowice.<sup>19</sup> It is stored in the Diocesan Museum in Opole.<sup>20</sup> It has not been used by researchers to date.<sup>21</sup> The codex has 111 numbered pages. It contains information on the foundation of the confraternity and a list of its members from 1728 to 1812. Importantly, it is almost entirely (apart from small passages) written in Polish, which is rare for the area at that time. This applies not only to the founding document, but also to the list of the confraternity's members – their names, surnames, places of origin are written in Polish, as is the information about their deaths (given as “deceased.”) The way proper names were written did not actually change after the Prussian takeover of Silesia; German names of the places from which the members of the confraternity came occasionally appear, and the Polish word “deceased” is replaced by the Latin “obit”.

The book opens with information about the reasons for establishing the Confraternity and the people who contributed to its creation. The Confraternity was founded on September 26, 1728. Its founders were motivated by religious considerations: The Confraternity was established for the greater glory of God, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who “has always been a consoler in our privations.”<sup>22</sup> Since, as we read in the argumentation, “there was no beginning to such a Confraternity from anywhere,” its founders decided “with God’s help to seek good patrons.”<sup>23</sup> And so they turned to the Dominicans of Opole, who were apparently known for their promotion of the rosary prayer (the Rosary garland – as the document calls it).

The Opole convent was founded at the end of the 13th century. At the time of the Confraternity’s establishment, after religious wars, it was flourishing again. A new church in the Baroque style was opened; it has survived in this form to the present day. The monastery’s financial situation was stable, drawing regular income from donations by lay people, not only from the Opole area, but also from towns and villages near the city, mainly as part of so-called mass foundations.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that the inhabitants of Krapkowice<sup>25</sup> approached the Opole Dominicans with a request for help in establishing the Confraternity.

Let us look at the representatives of the Dominican community of Opole listed in the foundation document. They were: Rajmund Seiffert, Herman Mierzowski, and Wawrzyniec Winkler. Rajmund Seiffert was the prior of the Opole convent at the time. According to Dominican sources, he was of Silesian origin, probably born in Wrocław, at least there he

<sup>18</sup> K. Dola, *Dominikanie w Nysie 1749-1810*, Opole 2010, p. 60-61, writes about this in detail.

<sup>19</sup> Many thanks to Kamil Adamus, MA, for the information on this source and for making it available.

<sup>20</sup> Diocesan Museum in Opole, *Księga Bractwa Różańcowego Parafii pw. św. Mikołaja w Krapkowicach* (no reference).

<sup>21</sup> This article also does not aim to analyse the contents of the book in detail; this will be presented on another occasion. Here I want to focus only on the role of the Dominicans of Opole in popularising the rosary prayer.

<sup>22</sup> *Księga Bractwa*, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>24</sup> On the history of the convent, see A. Pobóg-Lenartowicz, *Psy Pana*,.

<sup>25</sup> Krapkowice – a town in Opole Voivodeship, Krapkowice County, the seat of an urban-rural municipality. It was founded before 1294 by Prince Boleslaw I of Opole. See *Krapkowice*, ed. J. Zimnik, Katowice 1973.

joined the Order of the Preachers. He was to receive the tonsure on 6 March 1708, ordained subdeacon on 22 February 1709, and deacon on 24 October 1709. He was ordained priest on 20 September 1710<sup>26</sup> and appointed prior in Opole on 30 November 1727. This election was confirmed by the Provincial Chapter on 07 January 1728.<sup>27</sup> He held his office until March 1731 at the latest, when monastic sources already mention his successor, Bartholomew Naumohn (Nauhman),<sup>28</sup> MTh. He died on 18 March 1737<sup>29</sup> in Wrocław.<sup>30</sup>

The next Dominican father, Henrman Mierzowski (Mirzowski), came from Strzelce Opolskie. He was born on 22 March 1669. He entered the Order on 20 August 1690. His home convent was Opole.<sup>31</sup> He was associated with the communities in Cieszyn, Opole, and Racibórz. He held the title of general preacher. In the Opole and Cieszyn convents, he served as subprior for several terms, and in the spring of 1717 he was elected prior of the Opole convent, holding this office until the following April. In all the communities he also held the dignity of promoter of the Rosary and afternoon preacher.<sup>32</sup> In the letter informing about his death it was written: *30 annis ferme indefesse praedicasset viribus in senio suo destitutus*. This demonstrates his strong involvement in this activity. Herman Mierzowski died in Opole on 30 May 1738 between 3 and 4 a.m.<sup>33</sup>

At the time of the establishment of the Confraternity at Krapkowice, the rosary promoter at the Opole convent was Wawrzyniec (Laurentius) Winkler. It is somewhat difficult to determine the dates of his life, as the sources provide different information about him.<sup>34</sup> He was presumably born in 1701, as several sources state that he was 29 at the time of his death in 1730. He joined the Order in Opole. His novitiate, however, took place in Świdnica.<sup>35</sup> In 1720, the provincial chapter sent him to Opole to study philosophy. He did theological studies in Wrocław.<sup>36</sup> He received lower orders (tonsure and subdeaconate) on 20 August 1721, became deacon the following year (19 December 1722), and presbyter on 23 August 1724.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Katalog duchowieństwa diecezjalnego i zakonnego na podstawie ksiąg święceń biskupów wrocławskich 1650-1810/12*, ed. S. Jucezka, H. Gerlic, W. Könighaus, Wrocław 2014, No. 8324.

<sup>27</sup> National Archives in Prague, Archiv České provincie dominikánského řádu, ref. ŘD 10.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>29</sup> According to other sources, 21 March 1736. A. Pobóg-Lenartowicz writes on this subject in detail in *Non omnes moriamur. Dominiakanie śląscy w źródłach memoratywnych z XVIII i XIX wieku przechowywanych w archiwach czeskich i morawskich*, Opole 2023, p. 112.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>31</sup> University Library of Wrocław, Department of Manuscripts, ref. IV Q 194, k. 59.

<sup>32</sup> National Archives in Opava, Dominikani v Těšíně, ref. 8, k. 46; National Archives in Prague, ref. ŘD 2, ŘD 3, ŘD 10, ŘD14.

<sup>33</sup> Moravian National Archives in Brno, *Literae mortuorum fratrum et sororum ordinis nostri*, ref. 6 1, p. 12 v. Cf. A. Pobóg-Lenartowicz, *Non omnes moriamur*, Opole 2023, p. 132-133.

<sup>34</sup> Only the day date of death is certain – 12 March. As for the year of death, the sources give 1725, 1730, and 1731. There is an even greater discrepancy regarding the years of his life – some sources state that he lived for 29 years, others for 31, and still others that he lived as long as 62 (which is unlikely), see A. Pobóg-Lenartowicz, *Non omnes moriamur*, p. 110-111.

<sup>35</sup> From 1711 onwards, for reasons of economy, there were two novitiates in Silesia – in Ząbkowice Śląskie and Świdnica.

<sup>36</sup> National Archives in Prague, ref. ŘD 10, p. 570 and ŘD 13, p. 67.

<sup>37</sup> *Katalog duchowieństwa*, No. 8379.

The diocesan clergy was represented by Franciszek Jacek (Hyacinthus) Major, parish priest of the St Nicholas Church<sup>38</sup> at Krapkowice, and Andrzej Antoni Jan Nepomucen Noschke (Noske). Both were Silesians originating from Koźle. Fr. Major received his lower clerical ordination in 1711-1712 and his presbyteral ordination on 11 March 1713.<sup>39</sup> He became parish priest at Krapkowice in 1721. Previously, he was vicar at Głogówek.<sup>40</sup> There, he later received the dignity of custodian (in the collegiate church of St Bartholomew), and in 1738 was appointed archipresbyter of the newly created archipresbyterate at Krapkowice.<sup>41</sup> Franciszek Major died on 3 June 1748.<sup>42</sup>

The second priest mentioned in the foundation document, Andrew Anthony Nossek, was younger. He received his lower orders in 1721 and was ordained a priest on 30 May 1722.<sup>43</sup> In 1728 he was a chaplain at Krapkowice.<sup>44</sup>

Although the excerpt of the foundation document quoted above cited only religious motives accompanying the establishment of the Confraternity, Fr. Johannes Chrząszcz, author of the first monograph of Krapkowice, believes that the main reason for its foundation was the great fire that struck the town in 1722. At that time the entire centre of Krapkowice burned down, including the church of St. Nicholas with its bell tower, presbytery, and school. The aforementioned parish priest Major tried to find funds wherever he could to rebuild the church. As a result of his efforts, the church was rebuilt, with two new altars: of St Anthony and the Holy Rosary.<sup>45</sup> The latter was placed in a chapel now bearing stained glass windows depicting in the centre, Our Lady of the Rosary; to her right, St Dominic; and to her left, St Henry.<sup>46</sup> Particularly noteworthy here is the figure of St Dominic, pointing to the Dominicans as promoters of the Confraternity and the Rosary Chapel. The figure of the saint is also referred to in the foundation document, in which he is identified as the founder and patron of the Holy Rosary.<sup>47</sup> It is worth quoting this passage from the source: *Poniewadz nasza zawsze wszystkich wiernych chrześcijanow powinność jest Boską zawsze rozszerzać Chwałę y gorzką Zbawiciela naszego rozmyślać mękę żebych my tym snadniej Dusznego dostąpili zbawienia krom inszych zbawiennych Spusobow Ojciec Patriarcha Dominik S. Fundator Zakonu pleno titulo Oycow Dominikanow znalazł U Boga wszechmocnego przez prziczenę Panny Przenayświętszy Spusob takowy w którym się męka zbawiciela naszego y iego wszystkie Rany rozmyślają które rany dla pokolienia ludzkiego Ucierpiał przy męce*

<sup>38</sup> St Nicholas Church at Krapkowice was first mentioned in 1330.

<sup>39</sup> *Katalog duchowieństwa*, No. 2533.

<sup>40</sup> J. Chrząszcz, *Geschichte der Stadt Krappitz in Oberschlesien A.D. 1914*, Breslau 1932, p. 47.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 40. Only 6 parishes belonged to this archipresbyterate: Krapkowice, Otmęt, Brozec, Walce, Komorniki, and Polskie Raclawiczki. Cf. *Schematismen des Fürstbistums Breslau 1724 und 1738*, ed. J. Pater, Köln–Wien 1994, p. 277.

<sup>42</sup> J. Chrząszcz, *Geschichte der Stadt Krappitz*, p. 55.

<sup>43</sup> *Katalog duchowieństwa*, No. 2953.

<sup>44</sup> *Księga Bractwa*, p. 14.

<sup>45</sup> J. Chrząszcz, *Geschichte der Stadt Krappitz*, p. 48.

<sup>46</sup> This chapel, together with the altar of Our Lady of the Rosary and stained-glass windows, functions to this day, but the current stained-glass windows come from the 19th century (there is no information about the chapel's earlier decoration, it is possible that from the beginning there were images of both saints, and at least St Dominic – for obvious reasons).

<sup>47</sup> *Księga Bractwa*, p. 1.

*swojej*.<sup>48</sup> The purpose of establishing the brotherhood is also included in the proclamation opening the lists of its members: *Ad majorem Dei semper que Virginis Mariae Nec non S. Patriarchae Dominici et S. Nicolai Honorem*.<sup>49</sup>

The idea of establishing the Confraternity must have actually appeared earlier than in 1728. This is evidenced by the letter of the General Chapter of the Dominican Order issued in Rome on 20 May 1727, in which permission was given for the construction of a chapel and altar to Our Lady of the Rosary with fifteen mysteries of the Passion of Our Saviour and the foundation of the Confraternity.<sup>50</sup> On this occasion, all the indulgences that the Dominican Order received from the Holy See for similar confraternities created at Dominican churches are recalled, namely granted by Pope Paul Vand subsequently confirmed by Innocent XI on 3 July 1679.<sup>51</sup> All indications are that the Krapkowice confraternity had the character of an archconfraternity and was thus incorporated into the network of other rosary confraternities run by the Dominicans.<sup>52</sup> This was in accordance with the rules for the founding religious confraternities established in 1602 by Pope Clement VIII.<sup>53</sup> Without fulfilling the general conditions for the establishment of a confraternity, its members could not benefit from the indulgences ascribed to it.<sup>54</sup> In addition, according to a provision in the Book of Confraternity, in order to obtain the above-mentioned indulgences, the members of the brotherhood should pray 15 decades of the Rosary each day, and whoever would not be able to do so, "he can divide it into three or more times, so that he can pray the whole beads or fifteen decades of the Rosary each week."<sup>55</sup> In addition, by virtue of earlier decrees,<sup>56</sup> members of the Rosary confraternities could benefit from "all future Holy Masses, prayers and sermons, fasts, vigils, works and good deeds done for all time by members of the Order."<sup>57</sup>

Moreover, as we read in the Book of the Confraternity, the prior of the Dominican monastery in Opole, Rajmund Seiffert, renounced his powers concerning the management of the confraternity and the confession of its members to Father Franciszek Major, the parish priest of Krapkowice. In this case, he referred (in addition to the authority of St Dominic and St Hyacinth and the then General of the Order, Thomas Rippol) to earlier decisions of the Popes: Gregory XIII, Leo X, Paul V, Adrian VI, Clement VII, Innocent XI and XII.<sup>58</sup>

In accordance with the regulations, when the confraternity was founded, its board was also established. Franciszek Antoni de Schwabenheim,<sup>59</sup> prelate and dean of the St Bartholomew's

<sup>48</sup> Ibidem, p. 5.

<sup>49</sup> Ibidem, p. 12.

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem, p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>52</sup> This can be proven by the information on page 12 of the Book: *Alma Archi Confraternitas SS Rosarji Introducta*. Also, see W. Bochnak, *Religijne stowarzyszenia*, p. 136-137.

<sup>53</sup> W. Bochnak, *Religijne stowarzyszenia*, p. 120-127.

<sup>54</sup> Ibidem, p. 124.

<sup>55</sup> "może na trzy razy rozdzielić i więcy żeby tylko przez każdy tydzień całe paciorki albo Różaniec piętnaście dziesiątków odprawić." *Księga Bractwa*, p. 6.

<sup>56</sup> This refers to a decree of the General of the Dominican Order, Lenaert van Florens, from the end of the 14th century, cited by W. Bochnak, *Religious associations*, p. 139.

<sup>57</sup> Ibidem, „ze wszystkich przyszłych mszy św., modlitw i kazań, postów, czuwań, prac i dobrych uczynków dokonanych po wsze czasy przez członków zakonu.”

<sup>58</sup> *Księga Bractwa*, p. 7-8.

<sup>59</sup> See W. Bochnak, *Stowarzyszenia religijne*, p. 140-141.

collegiate church at Głogówek,<sup>60</sup> became the rector, i.e., the person overseeing the zeal of the brotherhood's members, observance of the statutes, and conditions for obtaining indulgences.<sup>61</sup> His assistants were Fr. Kacper M.B. Raczek,<sup>62</sup> parish priest at Brożec (as first assistant) and Fr. Kacper Franciszek Bimer,<sup>63</sup> parish priest at Walce (as second assistant). Furthermore, Fr. Jan Ferdinand Reschke,<sup>64</sup> parish priest of Biedrzychowice (Friedrichsdorf), was appointed secretary of the brotherhood. Fr. Franciszek Major,<sup>65</sup> the parish priest of Krapkowice, already mentioned, was appointed president and administrator of the confraternity. Among the seniors of the brotherhood are *nobiles and generosi* themselves: Jan (*Joannes*) Machon, *Crappicensis capitaneus*, Godefridus Paritius,<sup>66</sup> councillor of Krapkowice, Jerzy (*Georgius*) Olik, imperial bailiff (*cesareus telonarius*) and Jakub (*Jacobus*) Hanussek. Thirteen board members (*consultores*) and nine guardians/visitors (*conservatores*) were also elected. The treasurers of the brotherhood became: Jakub (*Jacobus*) Michalski and Krzysztof (*Christophorus*) Langer. A deputy secretary, two cantors, two vice-cantors, two standard-bearers, and one scribe were also elected. Ignacy Franciszek Szczepanek was elected scribe, and it is probably to him that we owe such beautifully drawn up entries about the first years of the Confraternity's existence.<sup>67</sup> Members of the brotherhood, at least initially, were entered by first name in alphabetical order. On the day of the founding of the Confraternity (26 September 1728), as many as 326 members were entered in the book, of whom 188 were women and 138 men.<sup>68</sup> This was the largest number of members to join the Confraternity during its entire period of existence. This also proves that preparations for the founding of the Confraternity and its promotion had already been underway for some time, both at Krapkowice and in the surrounding villages. Slightly more than half of the original members of the Confraternity were Krapkowice residents (176 people).<sup>69</sup> This is quite a significant number, considering the fact that from the 1530s onwards, supporters of the Reformation predominated at Krapkowice.<sup>70</sup> This situation worsened after 1582, when the von Redern family, whose representatives were Protestants, became owners of the town.<sup>71</sup> Despite the restoration of Catholicism in 1629 (by imperial decision), the majority of Krapkowice inhabitants were

<sup>60</sup> Ibidem, p. 141.

<sup>61</sup> Actually, Franciszek Antoni de Schwabenheim Graiffenberg, a native of Cieszyn, dean of the collegiate church at Głogówek from 1722 to 1737. My thanks to Kamil Adamus, MA, for access to this information.

<sup>62</sup> Kacper Raczek (Ratzek) came from Opole. It is possible that he somehow participated in the talks related to the founding of the Confraternity. He was ordained a priest on December 21, 1686, *Katalog duchowieństwa*, No. 3361.

<sup>63</sup> He was a Silesian, from Leśnica. He was ordained a priest on 6 June 1705 (*Katalog duchowieństwa*, No. 294). After his ordination he was an assistant priest in Opole. In 1710 he became parish priest of St Nicholas at Krapkowice, but, as J. Chrząszcz writes, he made many enemies by building a new parish church, and for this reason was transferred to Walec, J. Chrząszcz, *Geschichte der Stadt Krappitz*, p. 45.

<sup>64</sup> He came from Głogówek and was ordained a priest on 19 September 1705, *Katalog duchowieństwa*, No. 3421.

<sup>65</sup> *Księga Bractwa*, p. 13.

<sup>66</sup> Presumably identical with Godfried Panitius, serving as mayor of Krapkowice in 1722, see J. Chrząszcz, *Geschichte der Stadt Krappitz*, p. 47.

<sup>67</sup> *Księga Bractwa*, p. 13.

<sup>68</sup> Ibidem, p. 14-19. All figures quoted in the article come from my own calculations based on entries in *Księga Bractwa*.

<sup>69</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>70</sup> J. Chrząszcz, *Geschichte der Stadt Krappitz*, p. 26-28.

<sup>71</sup> Ibidem, p. 32-34.



Protestants.<sup>72</sup> This is evidenced, for example, by the information contained in the bishop's visitation of St. Nicholas church at Krapkowice. And so, in 1679, the inspector noted that the priest preached in Polish in the church, but most of the townspeople were Protestant Germans, who preached in German in their homes. We further read that under the then pastor Adalbert (Wojciech) Servatius, the number of Lutherans not only did not decrease, but even increased, thanks to the Protestant owners of the town.

Ten years later, the situation had not changed much.<sup>73</sup> The visitation report states that there are only about 30 Catholics in the town, the rest are Protestants, and the entire town council is of this denomination. The situation is different in the nearby villages, where Catholics predominate, and Protestants are in the minority.<sup>74</sup> In this situation, the very fact of establishing a Catholic brotherhood, as well as the numerous participations of the citizens of Krapkowice in it, may be surprising. However, we must remember that at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries there was a significant re-Catholicisation of Silesia, especially in the cities, so far regarded as the mainstay of Protestantism. Much of the credit goes to the Jesuits, but also to the Dominicans. Both orders focused on promoting Marian devotion.<sup>75</sup> These circumstances, combined with the aforementioned town fire in 1722, may have contributed to the fact that inhabitants of Krapkowice decided in such large numbers to entrust their fate and the town's existence to the Mother of God. Also in the following year, quite a large number of people joined the Confraternity – 112.<sup>76</sup> In the following years the number of new Confraternity members ranged from 3 (in 1812), 7 (in 1781), 8 (1755) to 96 (in 1796) and 92 (in 1810<sup>77</sup>). On average, several dozen people joined the Brotherhood every year – from 20 to 40. There is a gap in the membership registers for the years 1761-1765, 1770, 1803-1806. The year 1812 contains entries of only three members.<sup>78</sup> Perturbations in the Confraternity's activities may have resulted from the ongoing wars – first the so-called Silesian wars and then the Napoleonic wars. On the other hand, during the so-called First Silesian War, between 1740 and 1742, a total of 85 people enrolled in the association, during the Second Silesian War (years 1744-1745) – 41 people, and during the first stage of the Third Silesian War (1756-1760) – 91 people.

It should be stated that the vast majority of the Confraternity's members were women, especially in later years. At that time, the number of men did not exceed 10 per year, but there was no a year in which at least 1 man did not join the Confraternity. During the 84 years of the brotherhood's existence, 2860 people became members,<sup>79</sup> of whom 1885 were women and 975 men.<sup>80</sup> A summary of the social composition of the members of the Krapkowice

<sup>72</sup> Ibidem, p. 37.

<sup>73</sup> *Visitationsberichte der Diözese Breslau*, vol. 2: *Archidiakonat Oppeln*, part 1, ed. J. Jungnitz, Breslau 1904, p. 188; W. Urban, *Z dziejów duszpasterstwa katolickiego w archidiakonacie opolskim i głogowskim w czasach nowożytnych*, part one: *Archidiakonat opolski*, Warszawa 1975, p. 67.

<sup>74</sup> *Visitationsberichte*, p. 527; W. Urban, *Z dziejów duszpasterstwa katolickiego*, p. 175.

<sup>75</sup> In this part of Silesia, the cult of Our Lady of Piekary played an important role. See footnote 12.

<sup>76</sup> *Księga Bractwa*, p. 19-21.

<sup>77</sup> Although, in this case, it is possible that these are members who joined the Confraternity in 1810 and 1811, as the next entry is for 1812.

<sup>78</sup> Formally, the Confraternity ceased to exist in 1810 with the issuance of the secularisation edict.

<sup>79</sup> This is according to the entry on the last page of the book, *ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>80</sup> This appears to be a comparable number to other such brotherhoods functioning in similar localities in Silesia at the time, see W. Bochnak, *Religijne stowarzyszenia*, p. 199-204.

Confraternity is a task for another time. However, it can be concluded that most of them were inhabitants of the surrounding villages, followed by the townspeople of Krapkowice. There are only a few clergymen: the above-mentioned priests: Nossek, Bimer, Olik, Major,<sup>81</sup> one priest of Wrocław,<sup>82</sup> one monk of the Reformed Franciscan Order,<sup>83</sup> a few chaplains of Krapkowice,<sup>84</sup> and a parish priest of Otmęt.<sup>85</sup>

Between 1777 and 1783, the writer also gave a daily date for joining the Confraternity.<sup>86</sup> In most cases, these dates are linked to the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary (7 October), usually the Sunday preceding that feast. This was the case, for example, in 1777, when 19 new members were admitted on 5 October; in 1778 – 26 members were admitted on Sunday 4 October; in 1779 – 16 members were admitted on 3 October; in 1780 – 11 people were admitted on 1 October.<sup>87</sup> Other dates of admission to the Confraternity are also often linked to Marian festivals. This is the case, for example, of 2 February<sup>88</sup> or 8 December.<sup>89</sup> Individual members were also admitted in January (18), March (9, 11), April (3, 13), May (2, 4, 11), July (13, 17), August (1) or November (1, 5, 8).<sup>90</sup>

It would be extremely interesting to look at the names and surnames of the Confraternity members. This will give us both a picture of the cult of saints practised in Silesia in the 18th century and certain trends associated related to names in that period. However, this is an issue beyond the scope of this article.<sup>91</sup>

It must be acknowledged that the Confraternity's range of influence was quite considerable. The Book presents more than 150 places from which members of the brotherhood came. We cannot identify all of them. Initially, most members came from Krapkowice. This applies not only to 1728. From the second half of the 18th century onwards, the number of Krapkowice townspeople joining the Confraternity decreased significantly. This was presumably influenced by the Prussian takeover of Silesia, which resulted in supporting Protestantism. And Protestants settled mainly in the town.<sup>92</sup> Without going into detailed considerations about the territorial origin of the Confraternity members, it can be said that the second largest number of registrations belong to the inhabitants of Żywocice, a village about 1.5 km away from Krapkowice, belonging to the parish of St. Nicholas at Krapkowice until 1985. The inhabitants of Strzelecзки, Głogówek, Obrowiec, Kórnice, Komorniki, Żuzela, Ławkowice, Pietnia, Grocholubia or Brożec also signed up to the Confraternity

<sup>81</sup> They belonged to the Confraternity's board.

<sup>82</sup> *Księga Bractwa*, p. 23.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 19.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 31, 40, 46, 50.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 32.

<sup>86</sup> *Księga Bractwa*, p. 71-74.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>88</sup> On this day, several members were admitted in 1779, 1780 and 1783, *ibidem*, p. 73-74.

<sup>89</sup> In 1779, *ibidem*, p. 73.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 71-74.

<sup>91</sup> It is worth mentioning here that the most popular female names at that time included Anna, Katarzyna, Jadwiga, Marianna, and Zuzanna; and among male names, the leading ones were Andrzej, Jan, Józef, and Jerzy. In the second half of the 18th century, the name Kandyd gained popularity.

<sup>92</sup> Fr. J. Chrzyszcz writes about it in *Geschichte der Stadt Krappitz*, p. 55-63.

in large numbers. There were situations when in a given year mainly residents of only one place joined the Confraternity.<sup>93</sup>

Statistically speaking, the largest number of brotherhood members came from places 10 to 20 km from Krapkowice (33 towns or villages), followed by 20 to 30 km (20 towns or villages), 5 to 10 km (18 towns or villages) and up to 5 km from the Krapkowice parish (9 towns or villages). But we also have members from distant parts of Silesia – Skoczów (125 km from Krapkowice), Cieszyn (114 km from Krapkowice), Wrocław (about 110 km), Tarnowskie Góry (about 80 km), Rudy Raciborskie (70 km), Toszek (50 km). It must be admitted, however, that these were individual people. Despite this, it can be seen that the influence of the Krapkowice Confraternity was quite significant.

The Rosary Confraternity of Krapkowice operated until the secularisation ordered by Prussia in 1810. The entries of the last three members were placed in the book in 1812. However, it is evident that someone (presumably a scribe) monitored the fate of the confraternity's members until 1829, as the record of the death of one of the members dates from that year.<sup>94</sup> As part of the same secularisation edicts, monasteries in Silesia were liquidated, including the Dominican convent in Opole. Thus, we can see that the fate of the Confraternity both at the beginning and at the end of its functioning was linked to the history of the Dominicans in Silesia. There is no doubt that without the Dominicans of Opole and their promotion of Marian cult, especially the rosary prayer, the establishment of the Krapkowice Confraternity would not have been possible. However, its many years of active work is already thanks to the people living at Krapkowice and the nearby towns and villages in the 18th century.

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<sup>93</sup> This was the case in 1777, when most of the new members of the Confraternity came from Rogów, *Księga Bractwa*, p. 77.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 109.

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