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THE REVIVAL OF THE FRANCISCAN MONASTERY IN NAMYSŁÓW IN THE XVII CENTURY IN VIEW OF THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE CONVENT'S CHRONICLE

Nach diesen wir in das Closter gangen, und weiters in die Kirchen, allwo Herr Ertz-Priester das Te Deum laudamus intoniert, welches hernach die Musicanten mit Trompeten und anderer music continuiret¹.

When on 8 October 1675, the sounds of praising hymns sung by the reformed brothers² filled the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, the ongoing two-decade dispute, about the reclaiming of the local Franciscan facilities, ended. The extensive ceremony of handing over the keys and all of the documentation confirming the community's property rights in the facilities, with the participation of local officials, religious authorities and local believers, as mentioned in the fragmentary account of one of the imperial commissioners quoted above, was preceded by numerous disputes and struggles conducted diplomatically, involving both municipal, religious and royal authorities. For in order to reclaim the facilities, to which claims were made, it was necessary to present an appropriate and full historical and legal argument, being the substantive basis for the final decision in the restitution process, before the majesty of the ruler. Thus, the brothers browsed through the provincial archives, religious and city chronicles, instruments or grants, so that after the information, adequately

¹ S. Wrbczansky, *Nucleus minoriticus : seu vera, & sincera relatio originis, & progressus Provinciae Bohemiae, Conventuum, et Residentiarum, Fratrum, & Sororum Sancti-Monalium, Ordin. Minor. S.P. Francisci Strict. Observ. Reform. in Provincia, sub patrocinio Sancti Wenceslai ducis, & martyris, per Bohemiam, Moraviam, & Silesiam existentium...*, Vetero-Pragae 1746, p. 307.

² The nomenclature is the issue, the selection of which will in some way make it easier to navigate the subject of the Silesian Franciscan. I refer to the Franciscans, of the so-called First subsidiary, as it is done in literature and sources, as **Minorites**. At the turn of the XV and XVI centuries, a new faction was formed, within the order, distinguished by the desire to follow the stricter observance. In 1517 the Franciscan Order (so far referred to as the Minorites) it was divided on this background, which resulted in two separate subsidiaries: **Friars Minor Conventual**, who constituted a form of the continuation of the faction of the Minorites, and **Friars Minor Observants** (also often referred to as the **Bernardines**). At the same time, in 1525 a separate Order of Friars Minor Capuchin was also established. However, from my point of view, the changes, also in the linguistic layer, which took place in the XVI and XVII centuries in the Order of Friars Minor Observants were important. As a result of the efforts to conduct a reform aimed at returning to the ideals of St Francis in terms of poverty, a community developed from this faction of the Order and was called the Friars Minor of Primitive Observance. Among them, several groups, differing in terms of names mainly on the geographical basis, for instance, recollects, discalced and reformers, performed their functions and developed. It was the latter who, through the adoption of the new reformed statutes in 1660 by the entire observant Czech province, came to Namysłów in 1675.

confirming the ownership title, has been put together, those could be submitted in a condensed form of *delegatum iudicium* as an argument in the procedural proceedings³.

The aim of the following dissertation, on the one hand is to outline the circumstances of the establishment of the convent of reformers in Namysłów in 1675, while on the other hand it is to draw attention to the way of conducting the historiographic narrative in reformed chronicle sources. I made the chronicle of the Namysłów Convent, the original of which is in the Wrocław State Archive Branch, a kind of a guide to the meanders of this fragment of history of the order as well as an example that is transparent to the phenomenon showing the history of the monastery. Its first chapter, entitled *Chronicon de origine conventus hujus ad S. Petrum de Alcantara*, contains the description of actions of the order undertaken in the aim of recovering the complex list as a result of the Reformation after the Thirty Years' War, citing, I suppose as arguments, the earlier history of the facility. Therefore, the facts chosen by the chronicler as well as the way of their presentation, make them possible to be read on a ground that is slightly wider than just factual. For they introduce crucial conflict areas in the recovery proceedings – from the disputes within the order dating back to the Middle Ages to the disputes with the magistrate well-established in the Reformation-related mental transformations of the community of Silesian cities or finally and seemingly most importantly the sensitive issues from the confessional point of view.

The choice of the source allowed for a slightly more precise specification of the caesura for the years of 1675-1678. For it is the year of the return of the reformers to the monastery in Namysłów and the year of the creation of B. Sannig's chronicle, being the result of a visit to the province which, as I will indicate below, is strongly related to the chronicle of the convent. Naturally, according to the retrospective nature of the chronicle record, the earliest events related to the history of the monastery date back to medieval times, however, I believe the key point to be the one from which the chronicle describes the past. Therefore, I think that such a chronological narrowing would make it possible to see the examined facility in the first phase of its reconstruction, both material and spiritual, in the form of the convent's revival and restoration in the cultural and social space of Namysłów.

Continuing to outline the context in which the key resource for this work was created, it is worth, clarifying all doubts, to turn to the community responsible for its creation. The Order of Reformed Friars Minor (OFM Ref)⁴, shaped from the second half of the XVI century, emerged from the observant reformed trend within the Order of Friars Minor Observants separated in 1517 from the Franciscan family. The pivotal point, around which the reform community was formed, was the idea of renewing the religious life in the spirit of stricter observance of the religious rule, return to the sources and the original Franciscan poverty. The practice of the reformed life came down in its general view to the attempt to connect the hermit and contemplated life in seclusion with the broadly understood apostolate.

At the same time it should also be emphasised that, in legal and administrative terms, the reformers did not constitute a separate order but, having established autonomy in the

³ K. Minarik, *Bernard Sannig, učelec, spisovatel a organizátor františkánské provincie (1637–1704)*, „Časopis katolíckeho duchovenstva“, 64 (89), 1923, 5, p. 24.

⁴ A. Wiśniowski, *Bracia Mniejsi Ściślejszej Obserwancji*, [in:] *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. V, Lublin 1989, pp. 486-488; R. Sbardella, *Bracia Mniejsi Reformaci w XVI- XVIII wieku*, [in:] *Zakony franciszkańskie w Polsce*, vol. II. *Franciszkanie w Polsce XVI- XVIII wieku*, part 1., ed. H Gapski, C. Napiórkowski, Niepokalanów 1998, p. 58-79.

XVII century, they were together with other reformed communities (discalced, recolects)⁵ a part of the common Order of Friars Minor Observants. It brought about the necessity to participate in the religious life through participating in general meetings of the church elders, recognition of general sovereignty or adoption of general statutes, which was connected with introducing particular differences at the regulatory level in the form of independent provincial statutes or their own network of provinces.

In the Czech observant province, practically from the beginning of the XVII century, more and more brothers were in favour of the intra-religious renewal and successive convents were gradually changing from observant to reformed ones. This process in 1660 led to the transformation of the former Czech observant province into a reformed province, under the patronage of St Wenceslas, which included the monasteries of the reformers located within the territory of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia⁶.

This process was correlated with the successive efforts of the authorities of the order to reclaim the monasteries and churches abandoned or taken away in the time of the Reformation. This was facilitated by the explicit protection of the Catholic Habsburg court which saw in the orders, renewed in the spirit of the provisions of the Council of Trent, a tool enabling the implementation of re-catholisation activities aimed at ultimately leading, through denominational unification, to the creation of a strong and stable state ruled by an arch-catholic ruler.

Therefore, referring to the royal instance, practically throughout the whole XVII century, the Friars Minor regained their former property in court, established new facilities and thus rebuilt the structures of the Czech province⁷. This process gained strength in a special way during the provincial office of Fr. Bernard Sannig in the years of 1675-1678 and 1684-1687⁸. During the first ministry of Sannig, a process culminated in the restitution of the monastery in Namysłów which was the 22nd facility in the province reactivated after the Reformation.

Source Characteristics

The source material, allowing for the exploration of modern history of the Franciscan Convent in Namysłów, seems to be satisfactorily abundant. It mainly constitutes the units, concerning

⁵ In order to distinguish them from the Observants (who were also referred to as the Bernardines), those communities were collectively referred to as the Brothers Minor of Primitive Observance.

⁶ Silesian reformed monasteries were part of the Czech reformed province of St Wenceslas with headquarters in Prague, which covered the area of practically the whole Czech Kingdom (Czech, Morawy, Silesia). It emerged in 1660, during the course of the adoption of reformed statutes by the previously observant province. Despite the Czech reformers in Silesia, two monasteries, belonging to the Polish reformed provinces were established on the Mountain of St Anna and in Gliwice. The Czech province of St Wenceslas included the monasteries in: Nysa (1620), Jawór (1638), Kłodzko (1639), Głogów (1640), Głubczyce (1666), Namysłów (1675), Wrocław (1678), Racibórz (1686), Legnica (1700) and Złotoryja (1704). In 1755, due to the political changes of 1741, the Silesian monasteries were separated from the Czech province, forming the Silesian province of St Jadwiga from that time until the secularisation in 1810. It again covered only the 10 aforementioned monasteries, besides the Mountain of St Anne and Gliwice. L. Teichmann, *Ordensprovinzen der Franziskaner in Schlesien*, „Archiv für schlesische Kirchengeschichte”, 43, 1985, pp. 263-274; Ch Reisch, *Die Franziskaner im heutigen Schlesien von Anfänge des 17. Jahrhunderts bis zur Säkularisation*, „Zeitschrift des Vereins f. Gesch. Schlesiens”, 47, 1913, pp. 276-300.

⁷ M. Elbel, *Česka františkanska province sv. Václava (1570 – 1790)*, „Acta Universitatis Palackianae Olomucensis. Facultas Philosophica. Historica”, 29, 2000, pp. 83-96.

⁸ K. Minarik, *Bernard Sannig, učenec, spisovatel a organizátor františkánské provincie (1637–1704)*, „Časopis katolického duchovenstva” R. LXI (LXXXVI) 1920 – R. LXXI (LXLVI) 1930.

the Namysłów facility in the complex of *Archiv české františkánské provincie*, stored in the Národní Archiv (State Archives). It covers nine folders with archives including, among others, library and church inventories, the history of the monastery taking into account the recovery proceedings, property disputes or alms and grants⁹. Moreover, a source directly connected with the monastery in Namysłów is the chronicle of the convent, and more specifically its copy made for the authorities of the province, covering the years of 1675-1755, i.e. the period when the convent in Namysłów operated within the Czech province of the Reformed Franciscans of St Wenceslas. It seems that the main chronicle of the convent is stored in the Wrocław State Archive Branch, in the complex of *Archival manuscripts*, entitled *Archivum Conventus Namslaviensis Ord. Min. S.P. Francisci Reform. Erectum Anno 1675/10*. It is a Latin-German code bound in leather with fittings, with the dimensions of 33.5 x 23 cm, in which, on 202 pages divided into chapters, the history of the reformed convent in Namysłów, from its establishment in 1675 until the end of the XVIII century, is recorded¹¹. Both in terms of the content layout as well as the type of information saved, it corresponds with the chronicles of the remaining monasteries of the Friars Minor in Silesia, which were maintained according to the obligation imposed by the reform conventions in compliance with the provincial statutes. Despite the events of the life of the convent, the history of the construction of the monastery and the church, or the annotations about donors, each with specific dates, the chronicle also includes the copies of documents, which are considered more important in the eyes of the authors, from the time when it was established and operated (imperial rescripts, foundation letters or transaction agreements with the city council).

It is hard to clearly indicate the author of the chronicle. Differences in the handwriting, allowing for the time of the code's creation to be divided into two parts at least, are visible. It seems symptomatic that the content of the first chapter of the work complies with a relevant passage, concerning Namysłów, in the chronicle of the Czech province, written around 1678 by the aforementioned Fr. B. Sannig¹². I initially assumed that it was the Namysłów chronicle which became the foundation of Sannig's work, and as a result of most of the later historical studies of the monastery in Namysłów¹³. I assumed that Sannig, while carrying out the visit, wrote the introducing chapters of chronicles on the history of the settlement of the reformers in particular cities, in the archives of individual monasteries¹⁴. This concept was perturbed by a

⁹ Description of the complex: M. Wójcik, *Sprawozdanie z kwerendy w Pradze w dniach 17-23 IX 2012 r.*, „Hereditas Monasteriorum”, 1, 2012, p. 468.

¹⁰ The Wrocław State Archives Branch (hereinafter referred to as: APWr), Collection of archival manuscripts (hereinafter referred to as: Rep. 135), D 227, mf T78753, *Archivum Conventus Namslaviensis Ord. Min. S.P. Francisci Reform. Erectum Anno 1675* (hereinafter referred to as: *Chronica*).

¹¹ The last entries come from 1798.

¹² Národní Archiv Praha (hereinafter referred to as: NA Praha), Archiv české františkánské provincie (hereinafter referred to as: RF), 409, code 17 (hereinafter referred to as: k. 17), Bernard Sannig, *Chronica de origine et constitutione Provinciae Bohemiae Ordinis Fratrum Minorum S. Francisci Reformatorem, eiusdemque conventuum. Ab Anno 1224 usque 1678*. A copy of the chronicle can also be found in Wrocław: APWr, Rep. 135, D 41a, mf T 78730, B. Sannig, *Chronica*.

¹³ Sannig's dissertation then became the basis for two XVIII-century works collecting information on all of the Franciscan Orders in German lands: S. Wrbczansky, op. Cit.; V. Greiderer, *Germania franciscana: seu chronicon geographo-historicum ordinis S.P. Francisci in Germania...*, Oeniponte 1777. Those works supplement Sannig's writings with an edition of chosen foundation or transaction documents and with lapidary descriptions of churches and monasteries, sometimes also correcting some of the information he provided (Greiderer).

¹⁴ A similar situation took place in the case of the chronicle of the convent of St Antoni.

note ending the fragment of the first chapter of the chronicle of Namysłów in a particular way in this study: *Composuit haec veridico calamo Fr. Bernardus Sannig pro tempore Minister Provincialis Anno 167815*. According to the above remarks, a similar passage appears in the provincial chronicle. Therefore it seems that either Sannig himself wrote the introduction to the Namysłów chronicle, or its author, having rewritten the Namysłów fragment from Sannig's chronicle, accordingly indicated its authorship. Analysing the handwriting of both sources, it is seen that they were not written with one hand. Moreover, some differences in the handwriting and the way of drawing selected letters may also be seen when comparing the Wrocław chronicle and its Prague copy. This allows to exclude the joint authorship, however it does not contribute much in the case of exact dating of the codes. However, while remaining within the ground of the authorship of the order's chronicle kept in Wrocław, in the Prague archival complex in the file *The history of the Monastery*, there is another analogical note, described by yet another archivist as *Descriptio Historica Conventus Namslaviensis S.R.P. Bernardus Sannig, cui audit Alid Chronicon urbis et Conventus*¹⁶. The title questions the order in which the particular manuscripts were written and thus the chronicles of the convents of Prague and Namysłów, the chronicles of Sannig and the last mentioned notes.

As I have mentioned before, I made the four-page fragment of the first chapter of the chronicle of the convent of the Reformed Franciscans in Namysłów, describing the history of the monastery in the XVII in a chronological order, the main pivotal point of the following dissertation. I chose an excerpt common for the chronicle of the convent and the province as well as the aforementioned note by Sannig.

This fragment can be divided into three main parts, the first one of which describes the course of both the efforts of the brothers to regain the monastery and the earlier history of the facility, from its establishment in 1321, through the changes in provincial affiliation and the Reformation, up until the infamous year of 1675. These are the events of that year, and the two that followed, that determine the second part. It consists of the descriptions of the ceremony of handing over the church and the monastery to the Franciscans, together with recalling the relevant documents confirming the rights of the friars to the facility in Namysłów. The last part is a concise one-page description of the facilities, completed during the period of the consecration of the temple, ending with the cited annotation about the authorship. Below I include the text in a "free" translation, appropriately supplementing it with reference to the Latin original.

According to the content of the record, the beginning of the Franciscan Convent in Namysłów was connected with the document, by virtue of which the brothers received land within the borders of the dual jurisdiction in the city where they could erect a monastery and a church, completed by the Silesian Prince Konrad, the Lord of Oleśnica and Namysłów. According to the chronicles, those facilities were built thanks to the sacrifices made by faithful townspeople. The instrument was put on display in Namysłów on the eve of the memory of the holy apostles Philip and James in 1321¹⁷.

¹⁵ APWr, Rep. 135, D 227, mf T78753, *Chronica*, p. 7.

¹⁶ NA Praha, RF, 3047.

¹⁷ *Qvemadmodum vetustum docet instrumentum In Archivo Provinciae reconditum, quod incipi: "Noverint Universi tenorem praesentium, etc.:" datum Namslaviae, in vigilia SS. Apostolorum Philippi et Jacobi, Anno 1321. Fratres Minores anno memorato in Civitate Namslaviensi /: quae est sub Dioecesi Wratislaviensi ad confinia Poloniae sita /: a Conrado Duce Silesiae, Domino in Ôls, et Namslau, obtinuerunt fundum, ab Eodem Duce Ordini*

The Friars Minor, described as *Patres Conventuales* on the pages of the code, stayed in the monastery until 1510, when Władysław, the King of Bohemia and the Silesian Prince, submitted, to the magistrate of Namysłów, his decision to remove from the monastery the conventual friars belonging to the Saxon province, for the benefit of the Franciscan Observants from the Czech province who had to be additionally taken care of¹⁸. As the author noted, *quod et factum est*. The decision of the ruler was then to be confirmed by Pope Clement by means of the bull *Romani Pontificis Providentia* issued on 29 November 1523, as well as the Franciscan General Chapter of Burgos of the same year. Additionally, Władysław's successor, Ludwik issued another document, of a similar content, dedicated to the then district head of Silesia, Frederick, the Duke of Legnica and Brzeg, which was issued in Prague and began with the words of: *Cum Dilecti Fideles*.

The Observants were to stay in the Namysłów monastery till 1536 when due to the toxic activity of the Lutheran sect among the citizens of the city, the brothers were gradually losing their ability to live off declining sacrifices, which was associated with a decline in vocations. Thus, as a consequence, the complex was abandoned, while a hospital for the poor was established in the monastery building and operated until 1675, when the Czech province regained the buildings in Namysłów, restoring the activities of the Franciscan convent¹⁹.

In that year, Fr. Theophilus May came to Namysłów together with two other Franciscan clergymen, where for many months they stayed in the house of Laurentius Joannston, defined in the chronicle as *Admodum Reverendus Dominus Archi Presbiterus et Curatus Namslaviensis*, who provided the brothers with hospitable care and support. The reformers enjoyed the host's hospitality until Fr. B. Sannig, who at the time served as a provincial and general definitor, received the decision of emperor Leopold I presented in the resolution issued in Vienna on the day of 21 September 1675, beginning with the words *Wir gaben aus eurem gehorsamen Brieff etc.* On the basis of this document, the Czech province was re-granted the monastery in Namysłów. The restitution became a fact when on 8 October 1675, when the claims of the Conventual Fathers were rejected, at 9 a.m. Fr. Patritius Pallet, who was the delegate of Fr. Sannig, together with Fr. T. May (proto guardian) and four other companions, were solemnly welcomed at the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and the monastery (in honour of St Pater later appointed by the aforementioned provincial Fr. Sannig). The act of handing over the facilities was done by two imperial-royal commissioners, deputies of the Silesian Superior Office: the canon of the Wrocław cathedral Caspar Heinrich von Oberg and Andreas Friedrich, who were taken to the church cemetery, where the imperial

donatum, cui moles vasta Ecclesiae et Conventus competentis supraedificata fuit ex communibus Christi Fidelium eleemosynis; APWr, Rep. 135, D 227, mf T78753, *Chronica*, p. 4/1.

¹⁸ [...] *In quibus commorati sunt Patres Conventuales usque ad Annum 1510 qvo Serenissimus Rex Bohemiae, et Silesiae Dux Wladislaus transmisit Decretum mandatorium Magistratui Namslaviensi, ut Expedia Conventualibus Provinciae Saxoniae, Patres Observantes Provinciae Bohemiae In Regularem Ecclesiam, et Coenobium Franciscanum, Joveant Eosdem, protegantqve, quod et factum est*. APWr, Rep. 135, D 227, mf T78753, *Chronica*, p. 4/1.

¹⁹ *At modico tempore videlicet usque ad Annum 1536. ibidem substiter, quando toxicum lutheranae sectae Namslavienses Penates qvoaqe infecit, usquae adeo, ut fide cum Orthodoxa subtractis qvotidianis eleemosynis, sensim extingverentur incola Regulares, et nullis novis subsequenibus Domicilium hoc Religiosum tandem evacua-retur, atquae in Hospitale pauperum posthac conversum usquae ad Annum 1675 /: quo Provincia nostra Boemiae animum rursus adjecit locum hunc suum Regularem ressumendi :/ lugeret.*, APWr, Rep. 135, D 227, mf T78753, *Chronica*, p. 5.

restitution decree was read in the presence of Namysłów consul Caspar Schel, senator Johann Höckert and a mass of the townspeople²⁰.

L. Joannston who has been mentioned, previously serving as the vicar (*Curatus*) of the Franciscan church, returned the keys to canon von Oberg, who in turn passed them on to Fr. P. May, the delegate and prosecutor of the Czech province, as a sign of the full-fledged restitution of the urban properties of the Franciscan province for eternity, first in the interior of the church, then in the monastery. Therefore, everything, both the buildings and former property rights or land, with the exception of the part of the land opposite the Wrocław gate, for which the transaction was made, was subject to the restitution, the range of which was determined and governed by the instrument, issued in Wrocław on 8 January 1677, beginning with the words: *Der Römische Kayser auch zu Hungarn etc.* The original document was kept in the Provincial Archives, similarly to another decree, issued on 12 May 1676, concerning the disputed land referred to as *Burgplatz*, which used to also be a part of the monastery²¹.

Our church in Namysłów is 55 cubits long and 33 cubits wide.

It has two bells: the bigger one in the honour of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, the first smaller one on the side of the Gospel in the honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, next one of St Francis of Assisi, one on the side of the epistle in honour of St Anthony, while the fourth one is dedicated to St Peter of Alcantara.

There is a cemetery to the south. The Namysłów monastery is situated near the northern belt of the city walls, near the Wrocław gate, opposite the castle on the Jewish square, it is 82 cubits long from south to north and 53 cubits wide.

It is restored for an apartment for 12 clergymen, together with the choir of the church and others, at the common expense of the faithful to Christ, which (the cost) was incurred

²⁰ *Praementionato Anno Pater Theophilus May cum duobus Religiosis nostris Namslaviam ablegatus fuit; ubi interea in aedibus Admodum Reverendi Domini Laurentij Joannston Archi Presbyteri et Curati Namslaviensis hospitaliter receptus, et ab Eodem liberaliter sustentatus fuit per plures menses, quoadusque eodem Anno sub Admodum Reverendo Patre Bernardo Sannig Ministro Provinciali Provinciae Boemiae, et totius Ordinis Diffinitore Generali vigore clementissimae Resolutionis Caesareae Leopoldi I. qua incipit: Wier Gaben aus eurem gehorsamen Brieff etc. data Viennae Anno 1675. die 21. Septembris in praefatum Conventum nostrum Namslaviensem Ejusque Ecclesiam et terminos Provinciae Boemiae fuisset restituta; quae restituito executioni mandata fuit octavae Octobris ejusdem Anni, quo die rejectis Patrum Conventualium praetensionibus, hora nona matutina Pater Patritius Pallet, qva Commissarius ad hunc effectum Delegatus ab A.R.P. Bernardo Sannig Ministro Provinciali, cum P. Theophilo May Protho – Praesidente, et quatuor Socijs Religiosis solemniter fuit reintroductus in Ecclesiam Assumptionis Beatae Mariae Virginis, et Conventum /: ad S. Petrum deinceps intitulum a momorato P. Ministro Provinciali :/ per Caesareos Regiosqve Commissarios a Suprema Curia Silesiae legaliter Deputatos, videlicet Reverendissimum Dominum Casparum Henricum ab Oberg Cathedralis Ecclesiae Wratislaviensis Canonicum Seniore, et Perilustrem Dominum Andream Fridericum Majorum Supremae Curiae Secretarium, quibus Dominis Commissarijs ad coemeterium Ecclesiae nostrae Namslaviensis advenientibus, lecto prius Decreto Caesareo reintroductorio Ordinis nostri Namslaviam, praesente Nobili Domino Casparo Schele Consule Namslaviensi, et Joanne Höckert Senatore, maximaque multitudine populi; APWr, Rep. 135, D 227, mf T78753, Chronica, pp. 5-6/2.*

²¹ *Admodum Rev. Dominus Laurentius Joannston hactenus Curatus Ecclesiae istius, claves ejus Reverendissimo Domino ab Oberg Canonico lubens resignavit, qvas Is Patri Patricio Delegato Commissario, et Provinciae Procuratori tradidit pro signo restituta plena legitimae possessionis civilis Provinciae nostrae in perpetuum in eandem Ecclesiam: postmodum Conventus quoqve, et omnes ejus metae ac jurisdictiones antiquae /: excepta qvadam parte terrae versus portam Wratislaviense, circa quam particularis facta est transactio :/ Ordini sunt restituta ab lisdem D.D. Commissarijs. Super ejusmodi reintroductione extat solemne Instrumentum attestatorum totius functionis, debite peractae, incipit: Der Römische Kayser, auch zu Hungarn etc. datum Wratislaviae Anno 1677 die 8. Januarij. Originale reperitur in Archivo Provinciae, uti et aliud Decretum authenticum, confectum Anno 1676. die 12. May, in puncto controversiae areae vulgo: Burgplatz olim ad Conventum spectantis; APWr, Rep. 135, D 227, mf T78753, Chronica, p. 6/2 – 7.*

by the province of Fr. Bernard Sannig, by means of carefully cooperating sacrifices in the years of 1676, 1677, 1678.

Since 1678 it has been inhabited by 12 brothers living simple lives, living off daily, on uncertain begging²². Eastward the monastery is enclosed by the monastery garden, the length of which that extends eastwards from the monastery is 72 cubits²³, while the width that extends southwards from the former church choir is 76 feet. The other part of the garden is 61 cubits long and 41 cubits wide. In the south of the monastery, there is a separate church; eastward we see our square with its fruit garden (orchard?), which is 82 cubits long from north to south and 41 cubits wide. In this square, in the northern part, there is the cleanest and healthiest source of water, not far from the city walls.

It was compiled in truthful writing by Fr. Bernard Sannig, the then Provincial Minister, 1678²⁴.

Conflicting grounds

On the textual level, from the above passage of the convent's chronicle describing the history of the Franciscans in Namysłów in the context of procedural proceedings, five pieces of essential information, which naturally are the centres of more complex networks of associations and cause-effect chains, can be determined. As I have indicated earlier, they have the nature of arguments confirming the property rights, of the Friars Minor of the Czech Reformed Province, in the monastery and church described. They are enclosed within the following formulas:

1. Establishment – the Friars Minor of the Saxon Province received the land for the construction of a church and a monastery in 1321 from Silesian Prince Konrad Oleśnicki
2. Change – from 1510, as a result of the decision of the Czech King, confirmed by the bull of Pope Clement VII and the decisions of the general meeting of the church elders, the Observants of the Czech province were put in place of Saxon Minorites.

²² *Ecclesia nostra Namslaviensis excurrit in longitudine ad ulnas 55. et mediam in luce, in latitudine ad 33. et mediam. Annotatio temporis Consecrationis Ejus injuria temporum escidit. Habet duas campanas, et altaria qvinqve” Majus Beatissimae Virginis Mariae Assumptae; primum minus ad Evangelium Beatae Virginis Mariae, alterum S.P. nostri Francisci, ad Epistolam, Divi Antonji, qvartum S. Petri de Alcantara. Ad meridiem sepitur Coemeterio nostrae Jurisdictionis. Conventus Namslaviensis plantatus est prope murum civitatis Septemtrionalem, non procul a porta Wratislaviensis versus Burgum in platea judica, continet in longitudine a meridie versus Septemtrionem metiendi 82. Ulnas; in latitudine 53. Restauratus est utcunqve pro habitatione 12 Religiosorum, una cum choro Ecclesiae, et alijs, et qvidem sumptibus communibus Christi fidelium. Sub Ministeriatu A.R.P. Bernardi Ministri Provincialis industrie Eleemosynis Anno 1676, 1677, 1678. Incolitur hoc Anno 1678 a 12 Fratribus sustentatis praecise qvotidiana dubia mendicatione; APWr, Rep. 135, D 227, mf T78753, Chronica, p. 6/2-7.*

²³ It says 12 cubits in the Prague copy.

²⁴ *A parte orientali sepitur horto Monastico, cujus longitudo excurrando a Conventu versus Orientem consistit in 72 ulnis; latitudo in 76 penes quem versus meridiem retro Chorom Ecclesiae excurrit, aliud fragmentum horti, longum versus meridiem 61. latum aute 41 ulnis; versus meridiem Monasterio aedificatur cernitur Ecclesia; ad Occidentem visitur quaedam nostra area cum suo pomario, longa a Septemtrione versus meridiem 82. ulnis, lata vero 41. ulnis; Fons limpidissimus et sanissimus effossus est in hac area versus Septemtrionem, non procul a muro Civitatis. Composuit haec veridico calamo Fr Bernardus Sannig pro tempore Minister Provincialis, 1678; APWr, Rep. 135, D 227, mf T78753, Chronica, p. 7.*

3. Abandonment – as a result of the progress of the Reformation in 1536, the brothers abandoned the monastery which from that moment on served as a hospital
4. Alms – the role of alms, which is characteristic of the Franciscan Order, was emphasised – on the one hand, in the process of erecting the buildings after 1321 or their subsequent reconstruction in the XVII century, and on the other hand in the impossibility of performing the functions of the Order during the Reformation due to the lack of a source of income and the lack of new vocations
5. Restitution – as a result of the procedural actions, the monastery and the church, by the decision of the emperor, were granted to the Czech Franciscan Province

Of course, the excerption of information treated as arguments in the recovery proceedings makes it necessary to define their recipients. Specifying individuals or groups of addressees also evokes the relations embedded in the historical and political context that linked them and connected them with the reforms. As a result of the data compilation, sometimes a rather extensive network of connotations and interactions is formed, in the centre of which is the convent of Namysłów reformers. Moreover, it seems that conclusions drawn in relation to this particular facility, are more extensive if not universal, for all of the Silesian reform monasteries of that time. Differences in some aspects – the recipients or relations with them, introduce elements distinguishing some foundations, however they do not make them cases that go beyond the limits of the observed phenomena²⁵.

It is also worth emphasising that the key messages outlined above, partly become a platform of reception for various addressees, depending on the context adopted. Such a situation is more visible in the first point, where the circumstances of the foundation concurrently activate the ruler, the city community and the Franciscan Order, or the last one, constituting a form of content climax.

Therefore, in the first place, on the one hand there are intra-religious disputes oscillating around the theological differences, and on the other hand political and administrative differences. The chronicle explicitly describes monastic opponents as *Patres Conventuales*. However, it seems that over the three centuries of the Franciscan ministry in Namysłów, this term describes at least three areas of conflict, which I will briefly describe below.

The next collective recipient is the urban community which, as a group observed through the prism of their relations with the Franciscans over the three centuries, provides three interpretation goals. On the one hand, as a magistrate, which was a decision-making centre, an office in the XVII century trial documentation, sometimes appearing as a party. On the other hand, the actions of the city councils in relation to the Franciscan church and monastery were determined in part by the mental and religious changes of the Reformation era, which allows to summarise at one point the sensitive issues of inter-confessional polemics with Protestants, towards whom the author of the chronicle does not hide his aversion, seeing in them the reason for the expiration of the convention, which also manifests itself in pejorative terms linking the Reformation with a toxic disease or sect. The third goal of deliberation begins with the concept of alms, to which the chronicler draws attention several times. It does not deny the fact that the ruler supports the order, but points out with equal force that

²⁵ By this I mean, for example, the various circumstances of abandoning the monasteries during the Reformation – from the classical "extinction" of the convent, through voluntary abandonment, to exile.

the actual source of livelihood for the community are the sacrifices made by the faithful, which are supposed to be an expression of social acceptance and support given.

The aforementioned ruler, treated here as an institution, does not constitute, in the chronicle description, a separate recipient but rather a party, the last instance which the brothers refer to, who can count on royal or imperial support.

Verification and Explanation

Ultimately, there remains the need to confront the above-quoted fragment with other extant sources²⁶. Due to some information dispersion, I will analyse the credibility of the information recorded in the chronicle by subordinating it to individual recipients. Thus, Conventual Franciscans constitute the first of them and, as it seems, with the most abundant reasons.

There are three main stages of intra-religious Franciscan disputes that can be determined. Their chronological and subject specification is conditioned by the setting of specific situations taking place in and around the convent of Namysłów, in a broader context including the changes taking place both in the structure and form of the functions performed by the order as well as the community in which the brothers served. The earliest, XIII century dispute was the one between the Minorites of the Saxon and Czech-Polish provinces over the annexation of Złotoryja and Wrocław custodies, to which the Namysłów monastery also belonged. Despite some changes taking place during the dispute, the majority of custodies remained within the borders of the Saxon province²⁷. This was also the case in 1321, when, as the chronicle mentions, Konrad Oleśnicki issued a memorable foundation document, the reprint of which could be found, among others, in the study of V. Greiderer²⁸. According to its content, the brothers of the monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary near Namysłów (*apud nostram civitatem*) received a piece of land in the city, located opposite the Jewish square/street. In return for it, the prince received a piece of land located near the ducal malt house²⁹. Therefore, referring to the foundation document listed in the chronicle, in the face of the preservation of its content, one can speak of a reliable confirmation. However, going further, it is not the year of 1321 that is the date of the arrival of the brothers to the land of Namysłów. The oldest source mentioning the Franciscan convent in Namysłów comes from 1285, which allows to establish the probable time of the convent's establishment at around 1284.³⁰ Therefore, initially the monastery was presumably located outside of the city itself or in its suburban area, which is indicated by the quoted passage of the foundation document³¹. Thus, it seems interesting that the chronicler's attention was drawn only to *intra muros civitatis* locations, without referring to any earlier mentions. I assume that it may be

²⁶ Due to the lack of possibility of using the resources of the Prague archive, I am forced to base most of my work on studies – both those from the XVIII century as well as contemporary ones, which nevertheless refer to the target collection of documents.

²⁷ D. Karczewski, *Franciszkanie w monarchii Piastów i Jagiellonów w średniowieczu. Powstanie – rozwój – organizacja wewnętrzna*, Kraków 2012, pp. 43-71; J. Kłoczowski, op. Cit., pp. 36-43; J.B. Freed, *Dzieje saskiej prowincji franciszkanów w XIII wieku*, [in:] *Franciszkanie*, pp. 215-216.

²⁸ Reprinted in: V. Greiderer, op. Cit., pp. 832.

²⁹ *Namysłów. Z dziejów miasta i okolic*, ed. T. Wincewicz, Namysłów 2006, p. 41.

³⁰ D. Karczewski, op. Cit., p. 237. Here the author also lists the aforementioned sources.

³¹ G. Wąs, *Klasztory franciszkańskie w miastach śląskich i górnośląskich XIII-XVI wieku*, Wrocław 2000, „Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis” No 2222, Historia 142, p. 61.

justified by the circumstances of the process of writing the chronicle and the purpose that it was supposed to fulfil, thus the historical documentation of the property rights in the land and buildings built with the financial means of the faithful (*ex communibus Christi fidelium eleemosynis*). Therefore, the chronicle does not mention the conflict over the custody itself, without introducing any provincial distinctions to the description at this level.

However, those matters are raised by the further record which specifies the Saxon provincial affiliation of the Minorites. Although this information is provided in the context of the process of change. Consequently, the essence of the communication is not the initial province, but rather the one which took over the Namysłów facility. In other words, in the recovery proceedings, the key information is the takeover of the Namysłów monastery by the Czech Observants in 1510, as a result of the decision expressed in the letter from Władysław Jagiellończyk addressed at the magistrate. This decision was to be confirmed by a bull of Pope Clement VII issued on 29 November 1523³² and the resolutions of the general meeting of the church elders in Burgos³³, as well as the document issued by Ludwik Jagiellończyk addressed at Jakub the Bishop of Wrocław, Fryderyk the Duke of Legnica and Brzeg, Karol the Duke of Ziębice and a group of city councillors, townspeople, etc.³⁴. Therefore, despite the fact of taking over the facility of the Czech Observants, the author puts emphasis on the possibly clear articulation of the confirmation of its legal compliance – on the part of the ruler, pope and the order.

The aforementioned events fit into a broader political and social context, in which the changes taking place in the womb of the Franciscan Order, connected with the formation of the Observant Order, played an undeniably crucial role. For the second stage of the intra-religious conflict, focused on two grounds: an ideological and political one, is visible here. On the ideological ground, the conflict concerned the constantly debated issue of poverty and the demand for a general renewal of the order in the spirit of a closer return to the Franciscan origins and ideals. At the same time, new observant convents were formed and some conventual ones adopted the reformed statutes laid down by John of Capistrano and approved by Pope Martin V in 1430. However in Silesia, near the newly-established observant convents, merged over time into a separate Czech province, there were also reformed Saxon Martynian convents

The political ground, somewhat indicating the answer to the question about the reason for the support given to the Observants by the ruler, is a little more complex. For Władysław Jagiellończyk planned to reorganise the provincial structure of the Franciscan Order in such a way that its borders would coincide with the borders of the Crown. A single Czech province would be created then, excluding, for instance in Silesia, the possibility of an interference by foreign (Saxon) factors. Moreover, it would result in the stretching of mutual relations between the Franciscans and the ruler on the basis of a specific dependence, which, in the eyes of the ruler, would result in the development of the functions of the Franciscan monasteries by representing the royal policy in the cities³⁵. It brought about the possibility of the court

³² Reprint in: S. Wrbczansky, op. cit., pp. 24-26.

³³ Reprint in: Ibidem, pp. 21-23.

³⁴ Reprint in: Ibidem, pp. 20-21.

³⁵ G. Wąs, op. Cit., p. 126; eadem, *Kształtowanie się nowych form świadomości religijnej w drugiej połowie XV i pierwszym dwudziestolecu XVI wieku na przykładzie stosunków między radami miejskimi a klasztorami franciszkańskimi*, „Sobótka”, 2000, 1, pp. 14-15.

interfering with the internal affairs of the cities. Władysław tried to introduce his concept by means of diplomatic efforts, both with the authorities of the order as well as the Holy See³⁶. This policy was faithfully continued by his heir, Ludwik Jagiellończyk (1506-1526). He regularly repeated the demands of such a reorganisation in order for all of the Franciscan convents in Silesia to be under the authority of the Czech provincial. The Silesian cities, seeing a real interference in the internal affairs of their communities, especially in respect of the monasteries of the first formation, in the royal politics, clearly opposed such plans³⁷.

The situation was further complicated due to the division of the Franciscan Order in 1517 and the decision of the pope in order for all of the reformed communities to be merged into one new organisation. Thus, the Martynian and the Czech Observants convents were to be united into one order. This naturally resulted in regular conflicts involving both the brothers of both orders as well as the ruler and the municipalities. An example of a voice in the dispute, may be one of the many letters of Ludwik of 10 May 1520, sent to the bishop and all the cities with monasteries, in which the king demanded *in order for the Franciscans of those custodies* [Wrocław and Złotoryja – M.M.] *to submit to the Czech provincial. In case of resistance, he threatened to banish them from the country*³⁸.

This matter seems to be the second ground of the Minorites-Observants conflict. It resulted from the relation: Franciscans – king – city, in which each of the three parties interacted with one another. *The conflict between the Saxon Reformed Franciscans and the Czech Observant Franciscans did resolve on the ground of the dispute over the observation of the Franciscan rule, but it was a dispute between the secular authorities: the king and the city*³⁹.

Just as the second of the dates mentioned in the chronicle can be undoubtedly considered to be certain because the text of the bull of Clement VII was actually preserved, and the decisions of the chapter in Burgos are known, which were then repeated at the chapter in Parma in 1529 which was not mentioned in the chronicle, the year 1510 mentioned in this way raises some doubts. For, in accordance with the content of the chronicle record, since that year the Czech Observants took over the Namysłów monastery in place of the Saxon convents. However, according to the best of my knowledge, sources confirming this fact are missing. Ferdinand Doelle followed by Gabriela Wąs rather suggest that it is the approximate date of the adoption of the Martinian constitutions by the Saxon Minorites⁴⁰. It was a rather common process in the Saxon Franciscan province, constituting a form of a reaction blocking the rapid increase in the number and popularity of the emerging, from the mid. XV century, observant faction. According to F. Doelle the adoption of the reformed statutes by the convent of Namysłów is indicated by the revival of the reform in several Silesian conventual monasteries after the general meeting of elders of the Wrocław custody of

³⁶ This matter has been described in detail by G. Wąs: G. Wąs, *Klasztory franciszkańskie*, pp. 125-140, eadem, *Kształtowanie*, pp. 1-27; eadem, *Franciszkanie-observanci na Śląsku w średniowieczu. Zarys historii*, in: *Bernardyni na Śląsku w późnym średniowieczu*, ed. J. Kostowski, Wrocław 2005, pp. 21-50.

³⁷ Eadem, *Kształtowanie*, p. 17.

³⁸ Eadem, *Klasztory franciszkańskie*, p. 133.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 140.

⁴⁰ Jan Kapistran was its author, the aim of whom when creating the constitution, was to reform the whole Franciscan Order in the spirit of returning to the sources and the original poverty, without maintaining and developing the already marked division of the order on this background. The Conventual Brothers, who accepted those statutes, were referred to as Martinians or Reformers. F. Doelle, *Die martinianische Reformbewegung in der sächsischen Franziskanerprovinz (Mittel- und Nordostdeutschland) im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*, Munster 1921, p. 68.

20 II 1508, during which the matters of its acquisition were discussed. Moreover, it indicates that it is very probable in the context of transferring the malt house and other gardens to the city on 15 III 1510 by the monastery upon the consent of Wrocław Custodian Benedict from Lwówek and the whole community⁴¹. Analogical actions took place in other monasteries of the Minorites, the reforms of which the representatives of municipal authorities participated in⁴². However, I do not know whether it was a practice that distinguished the Martinians or was not followed by the Observants in the sense of increased poverty.

V. Greiderer made a polemic about the date back in the XVIII century, pointing to the fact that it was too early and the described event corresponds more with the year of 1518. The author refers to the text of the bull of Clement VII, which, however, does not indicate such a date⁴³. Moreover, Greiderer indicates that around 1518, if not earlier, the monastery was attached to the Observant Province of St John the Baptist, which was a Saxon province⁴⁴. The decision, for this province to include the Martynian monasteries from the area of the Saxon province, was made during the general meeting of church elders in Lyon in 1518.⁴⁵

Some researchers⁴⁶ and sources⁴⁷ depart from similar deliberations and take the safe year of 1523 as the date of the establishment of the facility by the Observants, and thus the official confirmation of the replacement by virtue of the decisions of the general meeting of church elders in Burgos and the bull of Clement VII. Moreover, it is indicated that the change was supposed to be a kind of a reform conducted under the pressure of the bishop, caused by the indecency of the Minorites of Namysłów.

At this stage of the research, the question of explaining the reference in the chronicle of 1510 remains open. However, in the face of signalled circumstances and the interpretation implications, a question may be asked whether it is not a deliberate hypocrisy aimed at extending the stay of the Observants in Namysłów, which, as I believe, could have also had an impact on the court proceedings where the "last user" argument did not necessarily had to be sufficient.

Up to the moment of describing the circumstances of the exchange, the chronicle uses conventual terms of *Fratres Minores*, *Patres Conventuales* while emphasising, only in the act of conversion, their provincial affiliation (*Provinciae Saxoniae*), and not mentioning any dispute in the years of 1510/1523 – 1675. The Conventuals return only in the further part of the description, when mentioning the imperial rescripts of September and October of 1675, where the chronicler implies that the claims of the Conventual Fathers were rejected. It is only from this laconic sentence that it is possible to deduce any conflict between the Observants and the Conventuals about the Namysłów monastery in the XVII century. It does not seem to be a

⁴¹ Ibidem.

⁴² G. Waś, *Kształtowanie*, pp. 7-8.

⁴³ Reprint of the bull in: S. Wrbczansky, op cit., pp. 24-26.

⁴⁴ V. Greiderer, op. Cit., p. 832.

⁴⁵ G. Waś, *Franciszkanie – obserwanci*, p. 46.

⁴⁶ L. Teichmann, who in fact indicated the year of 1523, however emphasising that the change occurred after much effort, may serve as an example. L. Teichmann, *Die Franziskaner-Observanten in Schlesien vor der Reformation*, Breslau 1934, p. 41.

⁴⁷ *Repertorium Conventuum, Fundatorum, Capitulum, Commissariorum, Provincialium atque Postarum, in Alma et Magna Provincia Boemiae s. Wenceslai D. et M. Fratrum Minorum Reformatum...*, Brunnae 1734., b.pag.

trivial matter, therefore I presume a purposeful omission of a more extensive description of events which, as we know thanks to the documentation preserved in the Provincial archives being the basis for K. Minarik's analyses, took place over more than two decades.

K. Minarik mentions that the efforts to take over the Namysłów monastery were undertaken just after the Thirty Years' War by the Ireland Franciscans (*Provincia Hiberniae*), who had had their headquarters in Prague since 1630⁴⁸. However, it was without any success, as a result of making similar claims to Emperor Ferdinand III by the Czech Brothers Minors, on the favour of whom the emperor settled the conflict already in 1652⁴⁹.

This dispute was then to become an incentive to initiate restitution actions for the Czech Minorites in relation to the monasteries in Środa Śląska, Brzeg and in Namysłów. Presumably, the appearance of a new party in the restitution process was the reason for the emperor's decision of 1654 to, according to the practice described below, make the participants of the dispute prepare an appropriate set of documents constituting the legal basis for issuing a judgment⁵⁰. K. Minarik indicates that the conflict lasted until 1659, then it flared up again in the years of 1667-1668. An annotation in the chronicle of the city of Namysłów, informing that *on the day of 30 December 1667 a written appeal, to withdraw from the provincial of the Franciscan Order and to return the Polish church and order that belonged to this order before the Reformation, was issued by the Royal National Office in Wrocław and Antoni Kemmler*⁵¹, comes from this period of time. However, it is not known which province was supposed to receive those facilities.

The breakthrough in the proceedings came in 1674, when Czech Reformed Provincial Wilhelm Anton Brauczek (Brouček) asked Emperor Leopold I to grant him the Namysłów monastery, promising that he would build a new one at his own expense. This intent was supported by, Laurentius Joannston⁵², who was also mentioned by the chronicle and who additionally guaranteed the consent and support of the entire city in a letter to the emperor of 27 II 1675. However, as Minarik emphasises, it was not the whole truth since the city council did not support this idea⁵³. The emperor, by a letter of 6 September 1675, appointed a special commission who was to finally resolve the conflict, which was to become a fact during a common meeting in Wrocław on 8 April, when the Minorites were granted the monastery in Środa Śląska, while the Reformers – the one in Namysłów⁵⁴. Thanks to the intervention of another provincial Fr. B. Sannig, the emperor agreed to the faster settlement

⁴⁸ Greiderer places those efforts around 1650. V. Greiderer, op. cit., p. 832.

⁴⁹ K. Minarik, op. cit., p. 24. Here the author also cites a rich archival material.

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ W. Liebich, *Kronika miasta Namysłowa od jego założenia do czasów najnowszych opracowana przez W. Liebicha według kroniki znajdującej się w archiwum miejskim*, tłum. T. Harjasz, Namysłów (1862) 1995, p. 93.

⁵² According to Liebich's chronicle, Laurentius Ivansthon von Hohenstein coming from Koenigsberg, described as a very zealous and educated person, in 1655 was appointed the parish priest and archpriest of Namysłów by virtue of the order of the bishop of Wrocław and his imperial majesty. Ibidem, p. 87.

The function of the archpriest resulted from the post-Trident structure of the administration of the Catholic Church in Silesia, within which Namysłów belonged to the Wrocław diocese, the archdeaconry of Wrocław and the arch-presbytery of Namysłów. J. Mandziuk, *Historia Kościoła katolickiego na Śląsku*, t. II, Warszawa 1995, p. 170.

⁵³ K. Minarik, op. cit., p. 25.

⁵⁴ Ibidem.

of the brothers in the monastery, which was expressed in the letter of 21 September 1675⁵⁵ and as the chronicle mentions, it allowed for a return to the monastery already on 8 October.

The third stage of the Franciscan conflicts revolving around the monastery in Namysłów described above, can again be referred to as a dispute between the Minorites and the Observants (Reformers). However, the key change which was made over the course of a few centuries of the development of the order, is the fact that the representatives of two Franciscan Orders, but of two provinces closed by the borders of one country, stood up to compete for the monastery. Therefore, the current motivations and disputes of a political nature, still alive in the XVI century, were subject to a serious change as a result, I suppose, of the incorporation of the Czech Crown into the Habsburg rule after 1526, as well as of the involvement in the policy of confessionalisation of all assemblies that could bring the expected socio-political effects.

The city in its broad meaning is the second of the addressees of the legal argumentation of the reformers. According to the comment previously made, at this point I will continue the discussion within three areas: the reformed city, restitution activities from the city's perspective and the city community as a source of livelihood for the convent.

A similar logic is suggested by the division into two main parts introduced in the chronicle – the first one, recalling the departure of the friars in 1536 in the context of the development of the Reformation, and the second one mentioning the year of 1675 which is in fact a starting point for a wider reporting of the current events, for the author, related to the recovery process. The only thing that is known about the history of the facility in the years of 1536-1675 (139 years!) in the light of the chronicle, is the fact that the monastery building was converted into a hospital for the poor. And just as in fact until the middle of the XVII century there was not anything very much worth noting, the events preceding the joyful *Te Deum* of October 1675 seem to be crucial for obtaining a fuller picture of the recovery process of Namysłów facilities. The main source describing the period of time in question is the chronicle of Namysłów by W. Liebich dating back to 1862, based on the city chronicle of Frobenius. However, before I look at the topic of the Habsburg recatholisation, I am going to come back to the aforementioned year of 1536.

In Namysłów, already in 1525, in the parish church of St Peter and Paul, evangelical services were held⁵⁶. Thus, the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, together with the monastery, were left to the brothers⁵⁷, *a part of whom abandoned it, while the other part died*. The last of Namysłów Franciscans, referred to as Lorenc, who, as late as in 1556, declared his will to stay in the former monastery converted into a hospital⁵⁸, died and was buried in Biestrzykowice⁵⁹. As Liebich continues, *after the friars died out, the monastery was turned into a hospital, while the church remained to be used for religious services*⁶⁰. From the memories of brother Lorenc, it may be deduced that the asylum was established during the lifetime of the last Observants, which is further indicated by another entry in Liebich's

⁵⁵ Reprint in: S. Wrbczansky, op cit., pp. 304-306.

⁵⁶ R. Zeller, *Reformation i GegenReformation im Kreise Namslau*, Breslau 1925.

⁵⁷ W. Liebich, op. cit., p. 63.

⁵⁸ Ibidem.

⁵⁹ Ibidem, p. 22.

⁶⁰ Ibidem, pp. 19-20.

chronicle, informing that in 1538 the city council allowed to build a castle brewery near the monastery or hospital (underlined by M.M.), from which the author deduced that before that time, the monastery had already been used as a hospital⁶¹. Mateusz Goliński additionally implies that the conversion of the monastery was completed after receiving the approval of the bishop the year before⁶². It is hard to clearly indicate the moment of the end of the work of the shelter, however it seems not too long, since the whole thing, together with the church⁶³, was soon turned into a warehouse⁶⁴.

The activities described above belong to the specific practices of dealing with monasteries abandoned by friars during the Reformation era in the Silesian cities. Often were they left with a sufficient number of rooms so that they could live in their monastery, often did brothers from nearby houses share one building, and the buildings obtained were turned into schools, hospitals or shelters. However, there were cases of forcibly getting rid of the friars by expelling them from the city, which took place, for example, in Wrocław or Legnica⁶⁵.

I have already mentioned the crucial events which took place just after the end of the Thirty Years' War and which had a decisive significance for the emergence and success of the phenomenon that could be described as the process of restitution of the Franciscan monasteries in Silesia.

The Thirty Years' War and the *pacis osnaburgensis* provisions ending it, constituted the turning point in the official beginning of activities of recatholisation in the territory of the Habsburg empire. They reminded of, among others, *cuius regio eius religio* rule formulated in 1555 which constituted a lawful background for the ruler's counter-reformatory actions in his hereditary areas. The objectives of the confessionalisation policy were finally set out after 1620. *This „imperial Catholicism” of the Habsburgs soon became a synonym of the counter-Reformation attitude from the point of view of the political national interest, while the religious orders were to help in the implementation of the plans of the superpowers; the latter became especially visible after 1620, when, after the victory over the Czech reformers and defenders of national freedoms, the Habsburgs carried out their counter-Reformation program without any resistance*⁶⁶. It included the reduction of temples conducted in the 1650s throughout the Habsburg empire⁶⁷. As I have indicated above, the emperor granted the Namysłów facility to the Observants already in 1652, however the official process of taking over the facilities was carried out in accordance with the imperial order of January 1653. According to it, in hereditary principalities, the appropriately appointed reduction commissions had the right to take away the churches taken during the Reformation and give them back to the Catholics. In Namysłów on 27 July, *all of the Evangelical priests, vicars as well as school staff had to appear in the town hall in Namysłów, in order to listen to the imperial order, according to which the whole area of Namysłów was forbidden to hold*

⁶¹ Ibidem, p. 49.

⁶² Namysłów, p. 137.

⁶³ *Die Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler des Kreises Namslau*, hrsg. K. Degen, Breslau 1939, p. 155.

⁶⁴ Namysłów, p. 137.

⁶⁵ G. Wąs, *Klasztory franciszkańskie*, p. 163.

⁶⁶ J. Kopiec, *Stosunki wyznaniowe na Śląsku za panowania Habsburgów*, in: *Śląsk za panowania Habsburgów*, edited y W. Lesiuk, M. Lis, Opole 2001, p. 89.

⁶⁷ O stanie diecezji w tym okresie: J. Kopiec, *Relacje biskupów wrocławskich “ad limina” z XVII i XVIII wieku*, „Nasza Przeszłość”, 68, 1987, Kraków, p. 93-132.

*masses under penalty, and after 6 weeks and 3 days they could leave the posts of parish priests. On July 12, the Duchy of Wroclaw ordered the Protestant clergy to leave the church keys and registers, under the threat of a penalty, when leaving their parishes. It seems that the intolerant order was not executed in Namysłów until the following year*⁶⁸. For already in 1654, the Catholic reduction commission, which included, among others, Canon Kaspar Heinrich von Oberg mentioned in the convention chronicle, took over the Namysłów temples, including the Franciscan church (also referred to as Polish), and, after re-dedication, placed under temporary administration to three Franciscan friars⁶⁹. However, it is not known what names those friars bore or where they came from. It is possible that they were the Brothers Minors of the Irish province mentioned in the previous passage, who were to make efforts to take over the convent in Namysłów in the 1950s⁷⁰.

Those actions made it possible for the Franciscan Order to apply for the re-capture of previously seized buildings which, as I have indicated above, the brothers persistently did. According to the annotation of Liebich, not only did the Franciscan friars show up in Namysłów earlier but also more often than the convention chronicle would suggest. Besides those aforementioned brothers, this time from the Nysa convent, thus reformers, were to come to Namysłów in 1670 *with the aim of reviewing the Polish church and monastery*. In respect of the year of 1671 Liebich noted: *Franciscan friars erected a monastery on the square where the Catholic church used to stand*. However, this information is totally unclear for me.

Continuing the description of the re-capture by the Franciscans, made from the perspective of the city, Liebich noted that on *11 February 1675 two friars of the Minorites, Besalus and Nirbertus, came to the rectory and carried out the final emptying of the monastery, which from 1536 was used as a shelter, and ordered the stables built for the hospital cattle to be dismantled, the cloisters built to be partially demolished and partly to be cleaned. After that, the town hall built another shelter for the poor next to the jail*⁷¹. The information provided partially coincides with the sources, for Fr. Theophilus May, Fr. Basilius and Fr. Nirbertus together with two lay brothers actually came to Namysłów in 1675⁷². The term "Minorites" and the omission of Fr. Theophilus is wrong. Moreover, it is not known whether it was in February, however being faithful to the chronicle of the convent, the friars were to stay at L. Joannston's for the many months that passed until they moved to the convent in October. It is only puzzling that at that time the reformers were to carry out cleaning works in the monastery in which they had not yet officially received the property rights guaranteed by the imperial resolution of 21 September.

A specific continuation of the "urban" theme is the reference to the description of the grand ceremony of official handing over of the buildings to the Franciscans, presented in the convent's chronicle. The chronicle description corresponds with the account prepared by the imperial commissioner, in respect of the date of 17 October 1675, signed by Kaspar Heinrich von Oberg and Friedrich Magirus von Logau⁷³. Liebich in turn is limited to the note:

⁶⁸ W. Liebich, op. cit., p. 88.

⁶⁹ Ibidem, p. 89.

⁷⁰ V. Greiderer, op. cit., p. 832.

⁷¹ W. Liebich, op. cit., p. 93.

⁷² S. Wrbczansky, op. cit., p. 305.

⁷³ Reprinted in: S. Wrbczansky, op. cit., pp. 306-307.

*19 October, the existing monastery dedicated to St Virgin, was dedicated to the veneration of St Peter of Alicante*⁷⁴.

Judging by the fragment of the reformed code and the cited account of the imperial commissar, the handing over of the keys and ownership documents was extremely solemn and engaging, as I have mentioned at the beginning, both members of the new convent, religious authorities, municipal authorities, clergy and the faithful participated in it. Constituting the matter of the restitution process lasting several years, it had to receive the appropriate setting and publicity, the echoes of which remained on the pages of the chronicle. Even in purely technical and proportional terms, the descriptions of the events from 1675 occupies almost two of the four pages of the paragraph. It naturally results from the importance that the author of the chronicle attached to this part of the history of the convent, which constitutes both the culmination of the recovery procedure and the justification of the retrospective use of all the previously published facts. Thus, not only does the description serve as an explanation through embedding the recipient in the events of 1675 as a starting point, but also in the context of the whole history of the period from 1321 until 1675, it constitutes its logical justification.

The description of the events of 8 September 1675 is ended by referring to the normative regulations enforcing the rules of coexistence of the reformers with the magistrate of Namysłów but also as a result of the efforts to recover a part of the land from the former ducal juridic, which was owned in the years 1533-1703 by the city council of Wrocław⁷⁵ and the magistrate of Wrocław. Thus, both the reintroduction instrument of 8 January 1676⁷⁶ as well as the decree of 12 May 1676⁷⁷, governing the land ownership issues of the piece of land referred to as: *Burgplatz*, can be found in the form of excerpts in further parts of the first chapter of the chronicle.

The issue of alms is the last signalled aspect of the relation between the convent and the city. It appears three times in the quoted passage. The location of those markings does not seem to be accidental. For each time this information constitutes a permanent element of the message formulated on the basis of a clever rhetorical procedure which, notifying about a new stage of the institution's operations, combines the key role of the ruler as a decision-making centre, with the alms given as if for the sake of balance. Substantially, it is the ruler who gives, restores and provides legal protection but, in accordance with the religious charism of the order, the sacrifices of the faithful constitute the basis of the existence of the convent. Hence, the chronicler mentions both the construction and reconstruction of the buildings with the contribution from the faithful as well as, in the context of the Reformation, he writes about abandoning the monastery due to the lack of means of subsistence and new vocations.

In the reality of the XVII-century restitution of the monastery, the argument of alms returns juxtaposed again with the protective role of the emperor. It is interesting that the word *quidam* used in the text can be translated both as "however" as well as "without doubt" and "exactly". Depending on the versos adopted, the intention and marking of the phrase may be read in a different way which, as a reminder, reads: *Restauratus est [conventus Namslaviensis – M.M.] utcunqve pro habitatione 12 Religiosorum, una cum choro Ecclesiae*

⁷⁴ W. Liebich, op. cit., p. 93.

⁷⁵ *Namysłów*, p. 142.

⁷⁶ Reprinted in: S. Wrbczansky, op. cit., pp. 307-308.

⁷⁷ Reprinted in: *ibidem*, pp. 309-311.

*et alijs, et quidem sumptibus communibus Christi fidelium*⁷⁸. Moreover, the chronicle clearly emphasises that the monastery was built from the social contributions of the monasteries from the entire province with the special commitment and help of Fr. B. Sannig. It seems that it was an action repeated for the purpose of successive rebuilding of the monasteries in the provinces⁷⁹.

Works on the restoration and reconstruction of the church and the monastery in Namysłów were pre-conditioned, on the one hand by the promise made by Provincial Benkowicz, and on the other hand by the actual necessity. According to the information obtained from the inspection documents of 1666, the church was practically completely destroyed, including the vaults, and only one altar of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary dating back to the time before the Reformation survived⁸⁰. The warehouse and hospital functions did not help to maintain the good condition of the medieval buildings. The last part of the passage evaluated by me is the description of the Franciscan buildings in Namysłów dating back to around 1678. It is a valuable source because already in 1682 and then at least once again during the XVIII century, the whole complex was on fire, therefore the picture captured by the chronicler's pen is the only trace of the first stage of modernisation of the buildings in the Baroque style. It is complemented by further annotations made by Wrbczanski or Greiderer, and finally by a graphic B.B. Wehrner. Therefore, it is known that after the reconstruction after the fire, the monastery was 82 cubits long and 53 wide. According to the needs of the reformed existence, the monastery had one dormitory, 24 cells, a hospital, an infirmary, three repositories and a library. A garden was located in the eastern part (72 × 76 cubits)⁸¹. The church, re-consecrated in 1716, was complemented not by five, but eight altars, in the creation of which, among others, famous Silesian Baroque painter Johann Jacob Eybelwieser took part⁸².

However, those are the matters which, similarly to the circle of donors or the forms in which the Reformed joined the life of the Namysłów community, constitute a separate chapter in the history of the Franciscan Order.

Summing up, the presented part of the chronicle of the Reformed Order in Namysłów is an interesting source that allows to study and construct a vision of the bygone reality not only through the provided factual data but also through the interpretation of the form and content of the message in a specific context. The process of restitution of the Franciscan buildings in Namysłów in the second half of the XVII century constitutes the contextual background, which is both a starting point as well as the midway of culmination of the section of history that has been described. The adoption of such a clearly defined basis of the situation has allowed to make an attempt to interpret the cited facts from the history of the Franciscans in Namysłów, bearing in mind the possibility of using them in the recovery proceedings.

However, the selection of facts may have not been determined by the desire to emphasise the legal basis of the property owned by the reformers. It cannot be ruled out that it is only the

⁷⁸ APWr, Rep. 135, D 227, mf T78753, *Chronica*, p. 7.

⁷⁹ In the Wrocław convention chronicle, the annotations, concerning the amount of the donations made by respective monasteries, constitute around 1/3 of analogical entries. NA Praha, RF, 456, code 64, *Archivum Conventus Wratislaviensis noviter descriptum Anno MDCCL*, pp. 73-83.

⁸⁰ *Die Bau- und Kunstdenkmale*, p. 155.

⁸¹ S. Wrbczanski, op. cit., pp. 307-308; V. Greiderer, op. cit., p. 833.

⁸² NA Praha, RF, 453, code 60, *Chronica*, b.p.

result of a query that has not brought any results other than those that have been witnessed, and therefore the chronicler, whether it was Provincial B. Sannig himself or any other conventional historian, arranged them in a chronological order not giving them a greater historical role. This may have been the uncomplicated course of the creative process of the chronicle of the Namysłów reformers. However, I quietly hope that the real motivations of the creators went far beyond historical correctness. For as a result of the always subjective choice of sources or the form of compilation of information and here additionally targeted in a way imposing a specific interpretation, not only does the chronicle source become a classic carrier of factual content, but also an image of the mentality of the community responsible for its creation. What is more, it allows us to pose the question of the purpose of constructing this particular image of the past – both at the level of the historical awareness of the XVII and XVIII recipient as well as the contemporary one.