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The architecture of the church and cloister of nuns of the Order of St. Clare in Stary Sącz in the light of written sources and literature of the subject

The issues of architecture of the cloister of nuns of the Order of St. Clare, in particular the ones referring to the Poor Ladies cloisters, which were endowed in the territory of Poland in the Middle Ages, have been discussed only marginally so far [11], [30], [40, p. 174–178], [41 col. LXXXIV–LXXXVI], [66], [73]. These issues have been considered by historians as well as by other researchers who represent various branches of science but in comparison with other research examinations on monastic communities, their achievements appear to be meager [3], [4], [19], [21], [22], [42], [43], [54], [69], [79], [81], [82]¹. The issues of architecture of the St. Clare cloister – definitely more often concerning churches than convents – were most often presented on the margin of research examinations concerning the architecture of époques, styles of buildings and finally monographs of towns in which cloisters of St. Clare nuns were situated (Zawichost, Wrocław, Skała, Stary Sącz, Gniezno, Strzelin, Głogów) [9], [10], [31], [45], [68], [77]. So far, the only authors who have covered the issues of architecture of Franciscan monasteries in Poland are M. Kutzner [38] and P. Pencakowski [51], [52]. M. Kutzner presented an outline of the state of research examinations on Polish and European Franciscan architecture in the Middle Ages putting emphasis on showing the peculiarity of the Polish model of Franciscan cloister architecture. The main goal of his research was a comparative analysis of Polish Franciscan churches but he marginally refers to the architecture of the female branch of the Franciscan monastery. P. Pencakowski presented stylistic features of the Mediaeval churches of St. Francis monasteries in Małopolska.

However, the subject of my interest is focused on the architecture of one of the cloisters – a convent complex of the nuns of the Order of St. Clare in Stary Sącz. The objective of this article is to present the existing written sources which allow – despite the fact that there are no archeological or architectural examinations of the object – to throw light on the stages of building the cloister and compare them with the current state of research investigations.

The convent of nuns of the Order of St. Clare in Stary Sącz – the third one in the history of cloisters in the territory of Poland (apart from those in Zawichost and Wrocław) was founded in 1280 by Princess Kinga's Foundation, the daughter of Bela IV the King of Hungary and the wife of Prince Bolesław Wstydlivy. Kinga, who took the habit several years before her death (Długosz mistakenly claims that she did so some days after her husband's death [25, p. 207]) and she took vows, was a benefactress of Sądecka Land. The Princess not only founded and financed the cloister but she also founded the town itself (between the years 1257 and 1273) [31, p. 45, 67, 68], [63, p. 34, 44, 122]. Kinga made foundations as a sovereign Lady of Sądecka Land which had been given to her by her husband as an expression of his thanks for her previous financial help. The Princess founded the Sądecka Community six months after her husband Prince Bolesław died and she issued a foundation document on July 6, 1280. It is probable that the decision about the foundation was still made during the life of the Prince who was a protector of the Order St. Francis (he founded Franciscan cloisters in Zawichost and Nowy Korczyn and he generously supported the convent in Cracow where he was buried) and together with his saintly wife took the vows of chastity. Princess Kinga handed over *civitatem Sandecz cum theloneo et omni questu et utilitate ipsius* [32, v. II 487] to the nuns of the Order of St. Clare and donated 28 villages, seven of which: Podolin, Łącko,

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¹ This is a list of the literature on the subject concerning the Cistercian Monastery in [47] and therefore, for the purposes of this article, I present only the key items which refer to different monasteries.

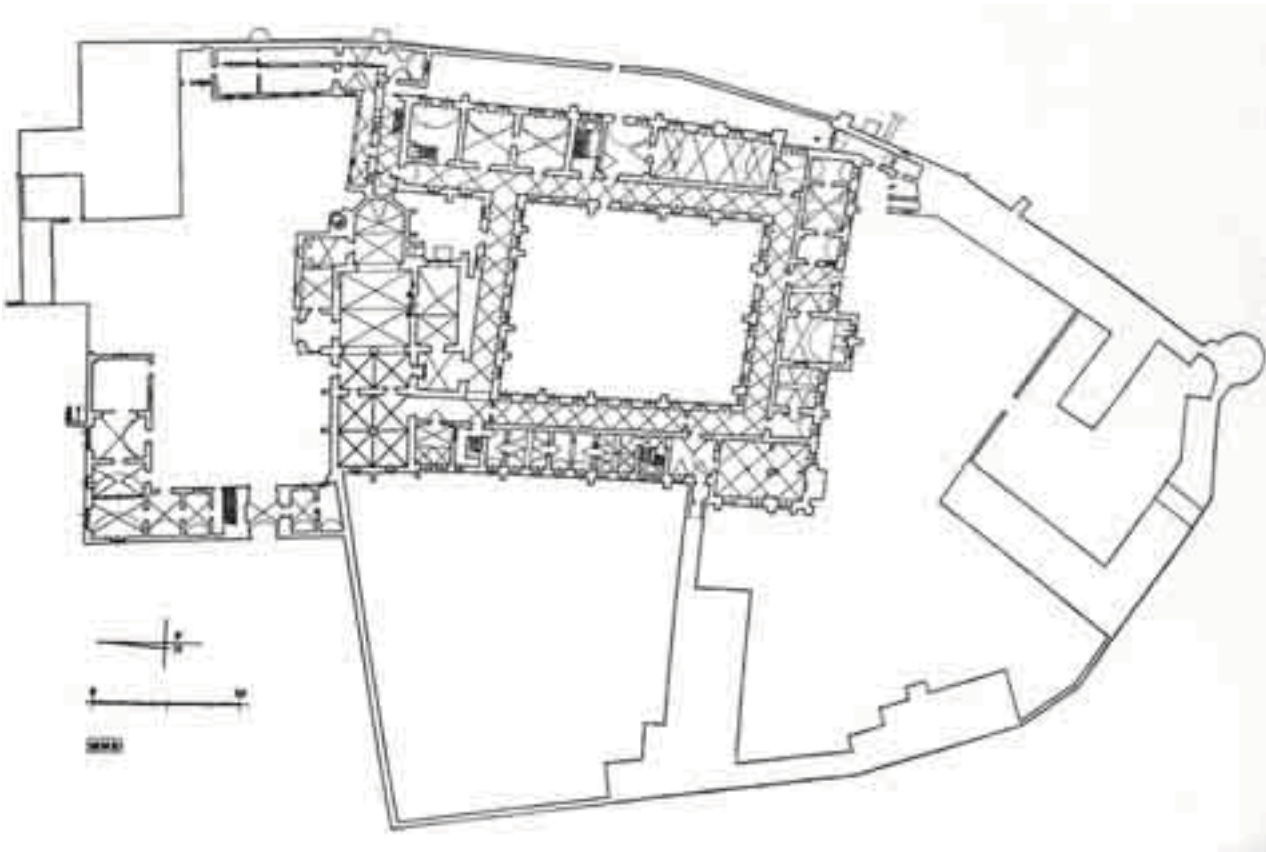


Fig. 1. Plan of the monastic ground floor by M. M. Kornecki, [12 fig. 4, p. 30]

Bieczycze, Ołbina, Podegrodzie, Moszczenica i Gołkowice were known from the previous documents of Małopolska princes, whereas 21 villages formed new centers on the map of Sądecka Land of the 13th century [63, p. 52]. The Stary Sącz Community received the greatest funds from among six Mediaeval convents of nuns of the Order of St. Clare founded in the Middle Ages in the territory of Poland and in Silesia which was the reason why this Community was in possession of the greatest funds in comparison with other convents (Zawichost, Wrocław, Gniezno, Strzelin and Głogów).

The area, which was donated to build a convent and a church on it, was situated in the north-east part of 'the chess arrangement' of a non-standard spacious arrangement (Beiersdorf and Krasnowolski see Hungarian and Czech analogies [10, p. 303–305], [12, p. 22–26]) of the foundation town [35, p. 180–188]² above the flooding scarp of Poprad.

The literature on the subject concerning the architecture of the complex in Stary Sącz in comparison with the studies referring to architectural issues of other temples of St. Clare convents is of considerable volume. In the former publications, unfortunately, the issue of the stages of building the church was not settled explicitly [11], [12, p. 28–36], [33], [34], [40], [41], [51], [52], [66], [73], and what is most important,

the problem of the stages of building the cloister was not clarified in details at all.

There have been no historical sources about the architecture of the St. Clare nuns' Holy Trinity church, which was mentioned for the first time in 1285 in the document issued by the archbishop Jakub Świnka [32, v. III, no. 145]. The absence of any archeological research examinations makes it impossible to give an answer to the question whether the present arrangement of the church with two oldest rooms which constitute the part of the cloister – a convent choir on the upper storey and a chapter-house on the ground storey situated in the main part of the temple – comes from the first stage of designing and building the church – from the 13th century or from the second stage – a 14th century reconstruction [11]. W. Łuszczkiewicz [40, p. 174], [41, col. LXXXIV–LXXXVI]³ claimed that the original church which was used by nuns and friars (?)⁴ was wooden and 'provisional'. This view was rejected by the majority of researchers with the exception of P. Pencakowski [52, p. 85]. Łuszczkiewicz claims that the block of the presbytery was built in 1332, whereas the aisles, on the basis of the vault analysis, were built even at the end of the fifteenth century [40, p. 174–178].

² The author mistakenly claims that Kinga held the office of abbess, p. 184.

³ His information was also given in the *Catalogue* [26, p. 328], which was described in the following way: "probably wooden".

⁴ See information about his topic on p. 4.



Fig. 2. Bird's eye view of the monastery and interior viridarium in the enclosure building from clock tower (photo: O.M. Przybyłowicz)

In the above mentioned document of the archbishop Jakub Świnka from May 1285 we can find some information concerning the construction of a new temple and granting of 40 days of indulgence for the following people: [...] *qui ad opus ecclesiae de novo ibidem construendae, manum porrexerint adiutricem* [32, v. III, no. 145]. This information cannot only mean the continuation of the temple construction but it can also refer to a new investment – if we accept the existence of the original wooden building. The latter variant gives rise to a question about the place for the foundation of the wooden temple. A wooden church cannot have been built at the same place where the present stone-wall temple is situated. If it had been pulled down, nuns and friars – who lived in the north-west part of town – would not have had any possibility to celebrate a service and say prayers according to the observance which constituted the essence of the contemplative way of life, especially for nuns. The earliest history of St. Francis foundation in Stary Sącz has no source documentation and the facts as to the dates of origin of the Franciscan church as well as the monastic construction are not certain. Beiersdorf, B. Krasnowolski [12, p. 35] maintain that the Franciscan church already existed in 1287, while according to Pencakowski [52, p. 84], the church of St. Clare nuns was also used by friars in the 13th century because they did not have their own temple in Stary Sącz. The reason why there appeared interpretations in the literature of the subject recognizing the church of St. Clare nuns as a double temple – these interpretations are wrong in my opinion – is the mistaken interpretation of the document of the abbess Anna of nuns of the Order of St. Clare from 1310; in its dating formula we can find the following information: *Lecta est hec appellatio in Sandecz, in parochia, et ibidem* [i.e. in Sącz – O.M.P.] *apud fratres Minores et sorores in ipsarum ecclesie, item apud fratres eiusdem ordinis in Cammenicia* [32, v. II, No. 551].

The pronoun *ipsarum* indicates a female gender, which means that the temple belonged to the nuns of the Order of St. Clare; this fact does not certainly exclude the presence of Franciscans who took care of the nuns' spiritual needs, they were their confessors, lectors, witnesses of legal activities and moreover, they were their attorneys in court. One of the Franciscan friars about whom we know from the documents (1312–1317) is Florian who is also known as an attorney⁵.

There are no sources either as to any other location of St. Clare nuns' church than the location on the plot of land given by Kinga. What is more, at the end of the 13th century we still do not have any well documented situation of the parish church in Stary Sącz under the invocation of St. Elizabeth which was built as a result of foundation of the town, but after several years from the foundation the church was destroyed by fire (it is not known to what extent). The above quoted document of the abbess of nuns of the Order of St. Clare gives evidence that the parish church had been already used since 1310 [32, vol. II, no. 551]. A possible usage of the parish church by friars – at the moment of building a stone church near the cloister of St. Clare nuns – seems to be probable but problematic at the same time; but in the case of an enclosed order, nuns who are not allowed to leave their place of destiny – such usage is absolutely out of the question⁶.

⁵ In 1313 he was a plenipotentiary (proxy) in the dispute with Czarnota, in 1316 he demarcated the border between the property of the nuns and the estate of Marcin from Brzeźna [32, v. II, no. 556, no. 558, no. 564, no. 568, no. 630]. In document no. 558, other three Franciscan friars were defined in the document as the persons who were designated by the abbess to take part in mediations: *mediantibus suis legitimis procuratoribus*.

⁶ The present block of the parish church dates back to the middle of the 14th century [12, p. 50, 90], [65, p. 204–205].



Fig. 3. The old monastic chapter house of 13/14th c. with main column, cantilever and leading out of the ribs (photo: O.M. Przybyłowicz)

As far as I am concerned, the presented argumentation shows that the document of the archbishop Jakub Świnka refers to the continuation of the temple of St. Clare nuns, which was built of stone since the very beginning of the foundation. Controversies appear when it comes to dates of the stages of Holy Trinity church construction; this church originally had three invocations – as it is shown in the document of the bishop Grot of Cracow from 1332 [32, v. II, no. 606]: [...] *per nos ad honorem et laudem summe et individue Trinitatis et b. Marie genitricis Dei nec non eiusdem S. Clare consecracionis munere dedicatam...* W. Łuszczkiewicz [40, p. 714–178], [41] and the recently issued manuscripts by S. Tomkowicz [65, p. 219–222] did not describe the problem precisely but they only referred to the detailed description of the inner part of the temple. According to the interwar researcher T. Szydłowski [69, p. 153–171], the western part of the body was built at the end of the 13th century, while the eastern part of the body with the presbytery at the beginning of the 14th century. After-war examinations did not lead to any uniform interpretation. In Węclawowicz's opinion, which was presented in the monograph about the Gothic style of architecture in Poland, the many-sided presbytery with narrow lance-shaped windows and an extended room corpus indicates that the church of St. Clare nuns was built in the first tierce of the 14th century [5, part. 1, p. 65, 66]⁷. The scheme of the temple was supposed to be different

⁷ Franciscan church in Nowy Sącz and Dominican nuns' church in Sandomierz had a similar two-plane arrangement.

from traditional mendicant models of this period, while characteristic forms of stonework can indicate the influence of building workshops from the region of Lower Austria and Wawel's *fabrica ecclesiae* while building the cathedral [5, part. 1, p. 65–66]. Węclawowicz's concept constituted the continuation of the original view of K. Beiersdorf and B. Krasnowolski who thought that the presbytery with the Roman engravings was the older part in the years 1280–1285, whereas they dated back the building of the corpus to *ante* 1332 [10, p. 308–310], [12, p. 29–31]⁸. In the same publication where the concept of T. Węclawowicz was presented, A. Włodarek – in the second part of this publication – claimed that this is the aisle corpus that was the older part of the church and it was built in the years 1280–1287, whereas the presbytery was built before 1332 [5, part. 2, p. 215]. P. Pencakowski [51, p. 29, 30], [52, p. 84, 88, 89 and further] by carrying out a typological and stylistic analysis of similar cloister objects from the region of Lower Austria submitted a thesis that the church of the St. Clare nuns was built in the Gothic reduction style in the years 1310–1332 and constituted a uniform program and space concept which had no connections with building workshops of the third Wawel cathedral. In the latest article, B. Krasnowolski withdrew partially from his previous hypothesis and then he stated that *a general program of the church [...] would come from the period of foundation, whereas the forms and details of the Gothic style of architecture [...] were connected with the royal building workshop of Wawel Cathedral and its consecration in 1332* [35, p. 185].

These concepts which repeatedly exclude one another give rise to many questions and doubts in view of the practical side of the nuns' existence; first of all, the requirements of the St. Clare nuns' observance and the contemplative character of the order. The question arises whether it was possible that the nuns could be deprived of a separate gallery-oratory which would be inaccessible to both the laic and clergy (the western part of the aisle corpus), the place where they spent most of their days and nights saying their prayers for over half of a century since the moment of Kinga's foundation. The Stary Sącz foundation received the greatest funds among female cloisters of St. Clare nuns in the territory of Poland which undoubtedly had an influence on the level of quality of life in the cloister [within the range determined by the order], including impetus, appearance and the speed of building the church and cloister complex. The problem arises whether building the complex could take so much time, while other churches of St. Clare nuns, which had less generous founders and less money, for example in Zawichost, Wrocław and Głogów, were built much more quickly – within several years since the document of foundation was issued⁹.

⁸ Attention was paid to the thinner walls of the presbytery in comparison with the aisle and analogies with cloisters in Lower Austria.

⁹ The nuns came to Wrocław in April 1257 and they received a stone-wall consecrated church and some rooms in the cloister in June 1260 but they lived in a small wooden cloister during the previous three years. More information about Zawichost, see: [35, p. 170].

The bishop of Cracow Jan Grot consecrated the church in the third decade of the 14th century in 1332, many years after the death of Kinga [32, v. II, no. 606]¹⁰ and this date can be treated as the one in which the final construction works were finished, certainly in the church but possibly in the cloister as well.

The church was built in the Gothic style of architecture with the usage of Beskidzki sandstone; it had one aisle with an extended five-span corpus and a narrower, shorter two-span (Krasnowolski [35, p. 186] mistakenly one-span) presbytery with a three-side arrangement. The three western spans of the aisle corpus (with similar escarpments as in the presbytery) were divided into two storeys. On the upper three-span storey there was – and there still is – the oratory, the nuns gallery-choir, while on the lower two-span storey there certainly was the original chapter-house which was called the Stone Sacristy [11, p. 133]. The oratory was built on the square projection and it is open from the eastern side by means of the ogival, divided into four parts open-work in the direction of the church. The room with one column situated in the central point – known in the Gothic architecture in the 13th and in the first half of the 14th century and defined as a structure or one-column room (one-pillar room) – has four spans with a cross and ribbed vault [46]. The greatest boom in the employment of rooms with one column which performed the function of the chapter-house in the monastic architecture (especially in Cistercian and Mendicant monastic orders) took place at the turn of the 13th century [46, p. 20–21, 25]¹¹. The original chapter-house of St. the Clare nuns may have probably performed the function of the gallery-choir until the process of building the oratory on the upper storey was completed.

In consideration of the building code concerning Franciscan temples – which forbade to use vaulting in case of the churches built after the Chapter in Narbonne in 1260 [16], [45, s. 98]¹², the corpus of the temple should be covered with a simple beam-framed ceiling. The theory, as it was proved by the observations of W. Łuszczkiewicz [40, p. 174–176], [41, table XXVII], [65, p. 222], [73, p. 293] in the case of Stary Sącz, was in accordance with the practice. The evidence which proves the theoretical assumptions of the church architecture is contained in the document of Jan Długosz – which was written almost 150 years after the moment of foundation – in which he described the state of conditions of the church and cloister complex in the middle of the 15th century. Długosz, who mistakenly attributed the building of the church and cloister to Princess Kinga's

husband – Bolesław Wstydlivy (the prince died in December 1279), claimed that the church, which was built of white stone, had a wooden-board ceiling [26, v. III, p. 337–339], [27, p. 244]. This comment of the chronicler is an indication of the original, wooden ceiling with no vault. The chronicler claimed that the temple with the chapel – where Kinga was buried – adjacent to the south aisle was in good conditions and no renovation works were necessary.

The engravings made in the plaster on the northern wall of the presbytery have the 14th or even 13th-century Roman certificate; the engravings consist of fabulous animal creatures, knight helmets and some plant motives [67, picture 714]. A stylistic analysis of the preserve vault allowed P. Pencakowski to express an opinion on the late-Gothic 14th-century vault over the fourth and fifth span of the aisle as well as on the 17th-century vault forms of the oratory itself [52, p. 86], which – because of no written sources or architectural and archeological research examinations – constitutes the only research hypothesis.

The chapel under the invocation of Our Lady (at present of St. Kinga) was built on the southern side adjacent to the eastern spans of the aisle as well as the so called Confessional which was situated next to the chapel on the western side. Architectural details of both rooms situated on the southern side of the church of St. Clare nuns show that they were built at the same time and they were connected with the first phase of building the temple [52, p. 87]. The confessional was supposed to be built on the place where Kinga had her cell. Such an arrangement of both the chapel and the cell of the founder has analogies with the solutions employed in Prague in the cloister of St. Clare nuns which was founded by the King's daughter Agnieszka (1231) who took vows in 1234. In Prague in the years 1238–1245 the chapel of Our Lady (three-span) was added to the northern wall of the presbytery of the St. Francis church; next to the chapel there was the cell-oratory of the Czech king's daughter [64, p. 87, 92, 94]. A solution which was similar to Prague and Sądecki ones was also used a little bit later in the cloister in Obuda, where the elements of the tomb chapel of the founder Elżbieta Łokietek were discovered [70, p. 23].

The stages of building the cloister and its architecture did not cause such controversies in the literature on the subject, mainly in view of the lack of particular interest in this issue by researchers. Written sources – used by the literature of the subject to a very small extent – give us, however, extraordinarily precious information.

¹⁰ [...] *ecclesiam in Antiqua civitate Sandecz in honorem sanctae Clarae fundatam ac demum per nos ad honorem et laudem summe et individue Trinitatis et beatae Mariae genitricis Dei nec non eiusdem sanctae Clarae consecrationis munere dedicatam...*

¹¹ The direct connection of the church with the chapter-house in the form of a one-column room was used, for example, in the church of St. Clare nuns in Judenburg in Austria; J. Goetz, *Zentralbau und Zentraltendenz in der gotischen Architektur*, Berlin 1968, p. 120 and the next pages.

¹² During the general Charter in Narbonne in paragraph eight of the

statutes it was stated that Franciscan churches cannot have vaults, excluding the part above the altar but exclusively with the consent of the general of the order, while in paragraph fifteen it was forbidden to decorate churches with pictures and stained-glass windows (excluding the window behind the altar) as well as to build detached belfries outside the church (paragraph sixteen). The papal edict from 1279 changed some ideas in the architecture and the original indications of St. Francis as well as the statutes from Narbonne were gradually forgotten and at the turn of the 13th century they were no longer used in practice.

The cloister of St. Clare nuns was mentioned for the first time in the foundation document of Princess Kinga issued on July 6, 1280 [32, v. II, no. 487]: *cenobium seu claustrum [...] in ipsa civitate Sandech fundandum statuimus et etiam construendum*. However, it was only the announcement of building the enclosure shelter for Poor Ladies. This is testified by the document which was indirectly addressed to Leszek Czarny the Prince of Małopolska in January 1281 by the bishop of Cracow Paweł from Przemanków. The bishop forbade anybody – including the Prince – to dissuade Kinga from her intention to build the cloister: *ut ipse predictam dominam Kunegundim [sic!] ab edificatione claustri pro sororibus ordinis s. Clare non attemptet impedire, quod videlicet claustrum eadem domina dotavit suo teloneo de Sandecz et triginta villis ibidem situatis...* [32, v. II, no. 491]. In the middle of the winter nobody carried out building works but the document paid attention to objective difficulties that accompanied the foundation and building of the cloister. The cloister was situated on the southern side of the church.

Were the cloister buildings, at least some of them, ready in 1238 since in the 1238 bulla Pope Martin IV confirmed the grants for the St. Clare nuns in Sącz *in qua vestrum monasterium situm est* [32, v. I, no. 102 and 18 v. I, no. 837]? It seems that it could have been a standard formula determining a foundation and not the real knowledge of the Pope about the condition of building the cloister, the more so as the bulla constituted the answer to the previous supplications sent by Kinga to Rome (*vestra petitio*). Taking into consideration the time which was needed for the exchange of correspondence, the above expression could not have probably referred to the actual condition of the cloister complex in 1238. Building works were carried out in the succeeding years and the cloister must still have been without ramparts if the nuns had to leave the cloister in 1287 and took shelter in a small castle in the Pieniny Mountains because of the invasion of Tatars [25, p. 247], [83, p. 78–79].

Building of the cloister also lasted after the death of the founder in 1292 and most probably it was still not completed at the end of the 13th century. This is confirmed by the idea of moving the nuns to a safer place – to a new town, Nowy Sącz which was founded in 1292. The Stary Sącz cloister may not have fulfilled the conditions of a safe abode for a female enclosure community and for that reason Jan, a middle-class man from Kamienica, i.e. a village situated in the area of Nowy Sącz which was founded by the Czech king Wacław II, declared building the cloister for the St. Clare nuns at that place *suis rebus et areis* [32, v. I, No 132]. According to the Franciscan order tradition [44, p. 245], Franciscan friars who settled in Nowy Sącz in the years 1292–1297 took over the area and buildings which were built for nuns.

In the light of the above comments, the opinions presented by priest Załęski [78, p. 36] and W. Łuszczkiewicz [41, col. LXXXIV] – the oldest researchers of the history of Stary Sącz – and concerning a quick, one-stage building of the church and cloister of the Poor Ladies by

Prince Bolesław Wstydlivy at the place where the old castle was situated and with the usage of its fortifications (this information was repeated later in the literature of the subject [73, p. 292 in 192], should be treated as the ones that did not fit the 13th-century reality.

The 14th and 15th-century source information with regard to the cloister architecture is still very scarce in comparison with the sources from the 16th and 17th centuries but they already give some particular information. The *The Life of Kinga* written by an unknown Franciscan friar [83], information collected by Jan Długosz [25], [26], [27] and other documents constitute the basic source.

It is clearly seen from the earliest source information that in the Middle Ages the cloister was deprived of the classic four-sided cloister garth, whereas the existing buildings did not constitute one coherent structure like, for example, in the case of the original Clare's cloister in San Damiano or in the Prague convent founded by the king's daughter Agnieszka [20, p. 114–116], [64, p. 102–121]. Długosz claimed that the cloister consisted of *singulos monasterii officinas* [27, p. 244] since the moment of its foundation till the moment of his visit in Stary Sącz, i.e. the middle of the 15th century. Was there no cloister garth in Stary Sącz at all – *the claustrum*, one of the most important and indispensable elements of the cloister buildings? However, a part of the buildings of the Stary Sącz cloister constituted – as it results from the sources – a certain coherent structure which was connected by means of corridors and stairs. This is testified by a dangerous accident of one of the young nuns who fell down from a certain height and was seriously injured [83, p. 168]¹³. Doubts resulting from laconic Stary Sącz information sources with regard to the cloister garth and the fact that in the St. Clare nuns' order nothing was mentioned about this part of the cloister – similarly as in the Franciscan order [16] – can only be cleared up by conducting archeological examinations in the territory of the complex. It is worth saying that the detailed instructions concerning the building of the cloister garth – which was treated as the heart of the cloister – can be found in books of architecture and building art *There should be a portico around the courtyard – the place of walks, rooms, a refectory, chapter-house and in suitable places all of this that is necessary according to the rules of open houses* [2, p. 127], [55, p. 488–491].

A private oratory – the cell of Kinga was the most often mentioned room of the cloister in *The Life of Kinga*. It was interchangeably defined by means of the word *caminata* (chamber). Such names suggest that this room had two functions: it was a place where the Princess said her private prayers and at the same time it was a place where Princess Kinga lived as a St. Clare nun. This chamber (apartment) was situated inside the enclosure but, in fact, it was inaccessible to other sisters [83, p. 148, 154, 158, 159, 160,

¹³ When sister Clare was young: [...] *casu de ambitu ceciderat et magno clavo per guttur transfixo inhereret...*

166, 169, 172]¹⁴. This laconic description does not tell us anything about the place where the cell was situated – the oratory of the Princess. From the written sources, we only know that Kinga often spent her time saying her prayers in the south aisle of the church. The above mentioned Chapel of Our Lady may have been built at the place where the founder was living. It can not have been the original cell of Kinga because it was built along with the church, which means that most probably the Chapel was built at the end of the founder's life or even after her death; only the iron bars which separated the chapel from the church were situated in a different place in previous centuries than nowadays¹⁵. W. Łuszczkiewicz [41, col. LXXXV] i S. Tomkowicz [65, p. 230] believed that the chapel came into being by adapting a part of the corridor otherwise called the cloister garth, but this assumption would have to accept the existence of the coherent structure of the cloister already at the end of the 13th century, which – as I proved earlier – is impossible. The ogival portal in the western wall from 1400 and the coats of arms of the 16th and 17th-century bishops of Cracow, the reformers of the convent – Jerzy Radziwiłł and Bernard Maciejowski [65, p. 230], which were painted on the keystones of the cross and ribbed vault give evidence to the mediaeval and modern reconstruction of this chapel.

After the Princess's death, her body lied – most likely on a bier – in the cell-oratory. This cell was so small that all the sisters as well as Franciscan friars who wanted to pray for the soul of their dead benefactress could not stay there at the same time. As it results from the report of the biographer, some of the St. Clare nuns stayed outside the oratory of Kinga while saying their prayers [83, p. 178]: *Altera quoque soror nomine Tomka per nimia fratrum et sororum multitudine, in qua felix domina iacebat, intrare non valens*.

Very few reports concerning the appearance of the oratory – the Princess' cell, allow us to state that candles were burning in it all the time: [...] *quinque candelas in honorem quinque vulnerum Christi semper in sua camerula cremabat* [83, p. 154, 167]. Kinga, who was

¹⁴ The sisters often heard 'strange voices' from the private oratory of the Princess; neither sisters nor her confessor Peter from the Czech Land were allowed to enter her private oratory. Friar Peter, a new confessor of Kinga, often walked near Kinga's oratory: *Et hiis dictis surgens in suum oratorium ivit et ibidem in modum crucis prostata ante imaginem crucifixi* and he could not resist to look inside of the oratory: [...] *per fenestram introspevit, volens videre...* When sister Paulina hurt sister Zofia's eye with a candle fire, other St. Clare nuns immediately took her to the apartment – the oratory of Kinga believing that Kinga's prayers would heal sister Zofia's eyes and she would be able to see again: [...] *statim ad oratorium felicitis domine est adducta*. The Princess herself helped the boy who suffered from eyes' illness: [...] *in oratione suus suscipiens...* When sister Wisława fell ill very seriously, terrified sisters ran to the oratory of Kinga: [...] *sorores alie ad oratorium felicitis domine concite accedunt eamque in oratione impediunt dicentes et bachantes*. Hosanna walked into Kinga's cell during her prayers by accident and the King told her never to do that again.

¹⁵ About 2–3 meters farther there was a smaller cell. Its original situation was discovered during preservation works of the chapel. Thanks to sister Salomea, the archivist, for all the explanations.



Fig. 4. Parlatorium of 17th c. before general preservation in the year 2008 (photo: O.M. Przybyłowicz)



Fig. 5. Parlatorium and east part of the church with the presbytery built in the 13/14th c., present state (photo: O.M. Przybyłowicz)

known from an ascetic character and way of life, spent her time mainly meditating, which was preceded by a short prayer in front of the picture of martyred Christ. There must have been a place to lie down in the oratory – perhaps a very simple bed made of planks on which the Princess lay during her long illness [83, p. 173] preceding her death in 1292. It is very unlikely that the sick Kinga lied directly on the stone (?) floor. We do not know what other pieces of furniture were in her cell. The information about the convent rooms come from contemporary inventories, chronicles, documents, which mention wooden tools, seats, chests and also stoves as the equipment of cells [17, p. 111].

We learn, much less about other cloister buildings from *The Life*. The biographer of the Princess mentioned common rooms which were called *stuba*e. Some of them were heated. In *The Life* we can read about an infirmary, kitchen and detached buildings whose purpose was not known [83, p. 157, 168, 169]. It is most probable that the infirmary was heated where not only sick sisters stayed but also various medical therapies were concluded, among others, a popular therapy in the Middle Ages – not only in cloisters – bleeding – *minutio* [48, p. 101–102], [17, p. 273]. In the St. Clare nuns' observance, the frequency of such therapies was specified:



Fig. 6. Outer arrangement of the north elevation of the monastic church, with a 2. half of 13th. c./1. half of 14th c. traciery and the new window of the 17th c. (photo: O.M. Przybyłowicz)

The abbess should not allow the collective sessions of nuns' bleeding to take place more frequently than three times a year unless there is a real necessity to do so more frequently... [61, p. 31].

Apart from the above mentioned chapter-house, infirmary and convent gallery-choir, the rooms which were evidenced both in the written sources and monuments of architecture, in Stary Sącz there was also a refectory where the nuns not only had their meals. In the documents from before the period of the general reconstruction of the cloister there is some information about the cloister dining-room. We must agree that this room already existed during Kinga's life because it was one of the most important rooms for each monastic order [17, p. 105–106], [48, p. 68–69]. The nuns gathered in the refectory to have common meals as well as to make decisions; the documents were also sealed there with the consent of the abbess and in the presence of the whole order. It happened so, for example, in 1578: [...] *presentibus venerabilibus patribus fratre Sebastiano... custode Cracoviensi et fratre Gabriele de Calis confessore, venerande moniales dicti monasterii in refectorio congregatae fuerunt contente...*[1, v. IV, no. 1]. This information gives rise to the question about the reason why the Stary Sącz St. Clare nuns gathered in the refectory and not in the chapter-house which was most often the place of conferences and making decisions. The contemporary refectory may have been reconstructed at that time or it may simply have been too small for all monastic superiors who came from Cracow. The one-column room – that contemporary refectory which was situated below the nuns' gallery-choir was rather small indeed – is shaped like a square with the following dimensions: 10.16 × 9.35 m [65, p. 221]. The refectory was not the only place where documents were issued in Stary Sącz. It was also done in the portico in front of the locutory with iron bars – [...] *in portico ante cratas* [32, v. III, no. 363, 364 and 80 v. V, No 1285].

In the inspection decree of the bishop, Jerzy Radziwiłł, from 1599 [57, card 9], there are some historical references to the old refectory which was situated at the end of the old western wing (?) which went from the chapter-house (the room supported by one column) to the south towards the Młynówka canal and the courtyard. It is difficult to make evaluations without archeological examinations whether that 16th-century refectory was situated in the same place where the mediaeval room was placed or if it was an original place where Princess Kinga had her meals with the first nuns who were brought here from the cloister in Skala.

In the 16th-century *Kinga's Life* there is no information about a dormitory, a successive room which was unusually significant for the community character of each monastic order. In the St. Clare nuns observance [61, p. 19] there is the following statement: *All the nuns, both the abbess and others, dressed and wearing a monastic rope should sleep in a common sleeping-room, each nun should have her own bed which should be separated from other sisters' beds.* Jan Długosz also mentioned a common sleeping-room of Stary Sącz nuns in the *Life of Kinga*. The chronicler writes about one of the cloister wings adjacent to the church, i.e. the north wing, and that it was the most quickly built part of the cloister complex during Kinga's life. Inside this wing – where, during the chronicler's life, there was originally the oratory of Kinga herself – the oldest nuns lived [27, p. 337]. Consequently, was it the actual dormitory or was it only the room adapted for such needs? Jan Długosz added that other nuns lived in separate little houses situated in the territory of the enclosure within the area surrounded by the cloister walls. It is quite probable that these cells were the place where nuns meditated individually as well as worked there and they gathered together in the common dormitory for the night. It is difficult to say something certain about the inner appearance of common rooms as well as about small cell-houses because there are no written sources; besides, there were never-ending reconstructions in cloisters. This is proved by historical materials dating back to the last years of the 16th century [17, p. 101], which allow us to assume that alterations and corrections constituted an everyday element of the cloister life in the Middle Ages; at that time, cloister buildings – partly or entirely built of wood – were lit up by means of oil lamps and candles and in this way they were exposed to fire and quite often whole cloisters were burnt down completely.

The existence of the dormitory is certified by the inspection of Cardinal Jerzy Radziwiłł who, in a document, calls one of the inspected rooms in 1599 'the old dormitory' [57, card 9]. By studying the laconic historical sources we cannot specify where the dormitory was situated or if there were partitions and curtains in it as it was ordered in the observance and practiced in the Middle Ages [48, p. 107], or if it was one common room like in Assisi. It is certain that the cardinal, Jerzy Radziwiłł, [57, card 9] suggested that in the new dormitory partitions should be made.



Fig. 7. The south part of cloister walls (16/17th c.) with a tower under the modern plaster before preservation in 2008 (photo: O.M. Przybyłowicz)

The end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century was a breakthrough period, both for the architectural appearance of the cloister and mental and religious changes of female residents of the Sącz community – the changes which were initiated by resolutions and acts made during the conference of the council of Trent. The sources from this period – from the turn of the 16th century allow us to reconstruct the architectural scale of changes and the appearance of a new built cloister.

The Trent reform in the Cracow diocese was introduced unusually dynamically by the cardinal – the bishop of Cracow, Cardinal Jerzy Radziwiłł [8] – and he influenced a new architectural form which with its cosmetic changes is preserved until today.

The first type of historical sources in which we find the information about the cloister architecture is constituted by inspection decrees of bishops and their proxies, who visited the convent in Stary Sącz, by virtue of the Pope's decrees and resolutions of the council of Trent. Until the 1690s, the Małopolskie St. Clare nuns with the cloisters in Cracow and Stary Sącz belonged to – since the beginning of their foundation – the Czech and Polish province, then it belonged to the Franciscan province and they were inspected by monastic superiors. The presence of monastic inspectors is confirmed in the preserved documents, for example, the minister of the Czech and Polish province Jan Kmita [32, v. I, no. 363], [80, v. II, no. 438] stayed in the cloisters in Stary Sącz and Cracow in Małopolska during the 30s of the 15th century. However, these sources do not give – like inspections nowadays – the possibility to observe the reality of the mediaeval existence of St. Clare nuns.

The first after-Trent inspector and reformer of the Sądecka community was the bishop of Cracow, Jerzy Radziwiłł, and the last one – bishop Kajetan Sołtyk who left the after-inspection decree in 1763. The nuns keep

eleven decrees in the cloister records; the first of these decrees left by Radziwiłł in 1599 and his direct successor the bishop of Cracow Bernard Maciejowski (1601) as well as the decree left by the canon of Cracow Mikołaj Dobrocieski (1607) and the priest Hieronim Ręczajski – who continued to realize Radziwiłł's recommendations by virtue of proxies of the bishop Piotr Tylicki [58], [59], [60] – give us more information about building a new cloister.

The next source referring to the history of rebuilding and architecture of the cloister constitutes contracts – building contracts concluded with an Italian bricklayer and a sculptor Jan de Simonim. In the copies we can find building contracts for building the third – the eastern and the fourth – the northern wings of the cloister [Tomkowicz and Bazielich knew only one – 65, p. 215], [9, p. 180–181] and the house of the chaplain. All these contracts are in the 17th-century Inventory of the cloister possessions [24, card 152r–153r, 164r]. Unfortunately, we do not know the contents of the first contracts concluded with Simonim [Tomkowicz, 65, p. 215 and Szczebak, 66, p. 169 know only one contract] with the cardinal himself which described the details of the process and plan of building the first and second wings of the cloister which was to be built around a four-sided, square cloister garth.

The bishop, Jerzy Radziwiłł, ordered a complete reconstruction of the cloister but it started only after the bishop's death – he died in January 1600 in Rome [8, p. 247–253]¹⁶ and perhaps this is the reason why in the

¹⁶ Jerzy Radziwiłł suffered from ague, arthritis, bleeding tubers, nephrolithiasis. There was a period of great sadness after his death because people treated Radziwiłł as an apostle who – as the notary of the bishop curia wrote – *he never stopped visiting the area of his diocese [diocese – O.M.P.], he filled and shaped Christians with the word of God [...] in order to make [them] live in an immaculate way ...* [8, p. 251–252].



Fig. 8. The north part of the cloister walls' elevation with two medieval passages or parlatoriums and (wheel) (photo: O.M. Przybyłowicz)



Fig. 9. The west part of the cloister walls from bishop Radziwiłł's time with junction of walls, the so-called toothing, after the preservation in 2008 (photo: O.M. Przybyłowicz)

literature of the subject there is a mistaken belief that it was the cardinal's successor – the bishop Maciejowski who was the initiator of the cloister reconstruction [12, p. 53, 93], [11, p. 137].

Moreover, the bills which date back to 1602–1604 inform us about building works and expenditures connected with the building of the second wing of the cloister; *Percepta* 1602–1604 is the oldest book of receipts and expenses but it has not been known in the range of literature of the subject so far [53]¹⁷. The bills do not comprise expenditures for building the third part of the cloister adjacent to the eastern side of the church because the book ends in August 1604. Whereas on page 24r of *Percepta*, it is written (with faded ink) as follows: *The register of spending money on various craftsmen and construction works connected with the cloister during the office of the reverend Stary Sącz abbess, J. P. Katarzyna*

¹⁷ In fact, it is not only the book of receipts but first of all the book of expenses of St. Clare nuns' cloister in Stary Sącz which covered two years from August 1602 to August 1604. On the pages 1r–3v there is information about the income, i.e. the main *Perceptas* of the convent from August 1603 to August 1604. Page 4r opens the list of expenses.

Tuszowska, which begin on August 7, 1602. In this part of the manuscript we can find the expenses incurred within the period of 24 months for the work of a tile-stove maker, brick maker of stone blocks, miner, lime, carter who transported those stone blocks to the cloister, blacksmith, glazier, locksmith and carpenter. Expenses incurred for each of these persons were written down on separate pages according to the money spending plan in particular months and years; only the sums and the total amount were given on each page. Therefore, there is no information for what kinds of work were these persons paid for but detailed records certify the intensification and great size of the structure. The only exception, among the information concerning expenses connected with the reconstruction of the complex, constituted the amounts written down near the name of a blacksmith. In the case of this craftsman, all works done by him or the goods which were bought for the nuns' money as well as for the amount of money which was supposed to be paid as a salary and then delivered to the cloister were described in details.

Among cloister records referring to the above described issue, we should also mention the other two sources: the 18th-century chronicle of Barbara Domicellei Fox; its author uses documents which were dispersed in various places outside Stary Sącz after the decision of the cloister annulment [7]. Some information about the cloister architecture and equipment – starting from the end of the 16th century – include documents concerning mainly leasing contracts, which were published at the beginning of the 20th century by J. Sygański [6].

The last group of sources which contained information concerning the cloister architecture and building a new complex in the 17th century comprises works of a chronicle character written by Franciscan friars starting from *Speculum Minorum* by A. Biernacki from 1660 and ending with the 20th-century works by A. Karwacki [15], [28], [29], [44].

The above mentioned sources give us relatively little information about the walls around the cloister and its protections in the Middle Ages which preceded the reconstruction of the complex as well as in contemporary times. This was the reason why there are so many generalizations in the literature of the subject, for example, *the cloister complex [...] in fact, maintains its mediaeval arrangement* [66, p. 165].

We do not know whether the original wall separating nuns from the outer world was wooden or whether it was built of stone and brick. Z. Beiersdorf and B. Krasnowolski [12, p. 52–53] distinguished three stages of building the cloister ramparts assuming *a priori* that there was an original stone wall. They connected the first stage of building the ramparts around the St. Clare nuns' cloister complex with the foundation period, i.e. the 13th century; however, they placed the chronology of town fortification – the cloister wall constituted an element of it – in the late Middle Ages or even in the early modern times. This inconsistency makes us treat this thesis with some caution. According to the authors, the first circumference

was supposed to be built from the west (?) to the line limited by the present gate; the second stage of building was to be connected with a *bend of the circumference on the southern side of the cloister entrance, which would give a possibility to introduce a bay-like protection system*. The third stage – Jerzy Radziwiłł ordered to raise the ramparts shaped in this way. However, this concept when confronted with written sources raises some doubts. In Franciscan *Liber inventariorum Conventus Minorum Veteris Sandecensis* we can read: *The prince bishop [Jerzy Radziwiłł – O.M.P.] having jurisdiction built a high wall around the nuns' cloister which previously had only a fence...* [29, p. 140]. Cardinal Radziwiłł himself ordered additionally *No other structure should be built next to the wall* [57, card 9].

We can also find information about the walls' reconstruction in St. Clare nuns' chronicles *The church and the cloister as well as the adjacent buildings in front of the gate were surrounded by the lower wall since the beginning of the foundation; there were three twice as high round mural towers but only one remained. After the reformation in 1599 by order of the cardinal, Jerzy Radziwiłł, a total reconstruction and rebuilding in the church and in the cloister took place and higher walls were built in order to ensure more security and defense...*[6, p. 86]. The 18th-century chronicler of the Franciscan order Bonawentura Makowski added that the

nuns *in vim refusionis expensarum pro eodem muro villam Swiniarsko eidem Episcopo [to Radziwiłł – O.M.P.] et successoribus eius resignarunt* [44, p. 52]. Since the reconstruction of walls required the costs balanced by selling one of the villages, we cannot only deal with increasing the circumference but also with some more serious works. It is probable that in some places the wall was still wooden since a similar type of construction remained in Stary Sącz, which attracted Z. Beiersdorf's and B. Krasnowolski's attention [12, p. 52]. It is not possible to answer the question without archeological examinations whether the remaining openings in the western part of the walls were the original way of communication with the outer world – the gate, circle and the farm gate. There are still marks in the wall left after the openings were later bricked up (photo).

On the basis of written sources from the turn of the 16th century it is also difficult to evaluate which buildings were originally situated on the north-eastern side of the church. The northern courtyard, where there was not only the chaplain's house but also the cloister gate, was built as a result of the reconstruction ordered by Cardinal Radziwiłł.

A significant proof of the existence of some form of the walls – a structure on the northern side of the church – is a gatehouse which dates back to the Middle Ages. The 16th-century painting which is in the Loreto



Fig. 10. Monastic church interior – chapel of St. Kinga (former name Virgin Mary) with decorated grille of the 2. half of 17th c. (photo: O.M. Przybyłowicz)



Fig. 11. West elevation of the clock tower, part of monastery walls and west façade of the monastery church after the preservation in 2008 (photo: O.M. Przybyłowicz)

chapel, showing St. Clare with the cloister founder, presents Kinga who is holding a church model with a clearly seen gatehouse having Gothic shapes [30], [33, p. 467], [66, p. 170]. Its actual date of erecting can only be ascertained by archeological examinations. The only thing we know is the fact that the gatehouse was in bad conditions at the beginning of the 17th century and it was actually built from the start at the beginning of the 17th century: *Item turris magna et alta in qua est horologium sonans et campanile, ac porta maior areae claustralis, pariter a fundamentis erecta est Anno 1613, quae deinde Anno 1733 fuit restaurata* [44, p. 52].

The report of the Franciscan general commissar Bonaventura Maresio from 1579 convinces us that still there were no suitable or necessary rooms in the cloister, among others, an infirmary, library, rooms for novices – students [28, p. 156], whereas there was a refectory and separate small cell-houses. Nuns as well as female residents could live in those small cell-houses – they were most often elderly persons who lived near the cloister and co-financed the community in exchange for the possibility to take part in prayers as well as in the everyday life of the nuns. The cardinal forbade to employ any secular servants or girls to help in the cloister; he agreed that only sick or very old nuns could have such maids *with the consent of the older* [abbess – O.M.P.] *in the given chapter who* [maids – O.M.P.] *should stay in the cloister like nuns* [57, card 22].

Jerzy Radziwiłł mentioned the necessity to prepare a separate room for novice nuns and he even defined the place of preparing such a room in details: *Noviciatus or school is supposed to be in the late Czekanowska's room where the sisters – after fulfilling their duties connected with prayers – should spend their time learning or working in the presence of the Lady Mistress; all the younger professed nuns, then novice sisters and those who want to learn in order to become nuns* [57, card. 21]. Apart from the novitiate the St. Clare nuns also fos-



Fig. 12. Interior, north viridarium with the chapelain's house of the 1. half of 17th c. on the left side and part of the monastic church with the sacristy on the right (photo: O.M. Przybyłowicz)

tered little girls which is confirmed by the note in Jury Court files in Nowy Sącz from 1592; Catherine – a miller from Chełmiec, the St. Clare nuns' village – after her father's death took her niece Anna to the cloister *a little girl to be educated in a better way [...] and in order to serve God, live in godliness and learn good manners ...* [6, p. 89].

It is not possible to specify the percentage of wooden buildings which were situated within the limits of the cloister. In the majority of cloisters which were built until the end of the 16th century or even at the beginning of the 17th century, wood constituted the basic building material [36, p. XVII], [17, p. 99], [37, p. 410]. Bonawentura Makowski, who collected information for his work, stated with surprise that the Sącz cloister *...ac si ante 1600. totum monasterium ligneum fuerit* [44, p. 52]. It is probable that in Stary Sącz – like in the Małopolski Cistercian cloister in Szczyrzyc – the foundations were made of stone, whereas 'the upper parts' were made of wood, which made Cistercian inspector Edmund á Cruce (1580) conclude that the cloister in Szczyrzyc was made of wood [43, p. 25, 27, 29]. Another argument which can prove that the cloister buildings in Stary Sącz were originally mostly made of wood constitutes a note in the cloister chronicle of Barbara Fox: *... uniquely, on lower ambits not all elements were built of stones. According to the custom existing in Poland at that time, oak wood along with bricks and stones were used* [7, p. 91]. However, some of the elements of the original buildings were included in the new plan of the cloister land development during the reconstruction ordered by the bishop of Cracow. This, in turn, is an indication of the existence of buildings in the territory of the enclosure which were totally or partly made of stones.

One of the wings which was included in the new construction was the northern arm of the new cloister adjacent to the church from the southern side. According to the tradition, the cell of Kinga was supposed to be there

as well as a dormitory for the oldest nuns, which was mentioned by Długosz. On the basis of the cloister sources and tradition as well as oral historical sources of the oldest mothers concerning the northern wing, the chronicler Barbara Domicella Fox wrote: [...] *near the church St. Mother Kunegunda herself sanctified those accommodations. During her life the cell was called a common dwelling but after her happy death – such a great saint, mother, abbess and benefactress – all nuns, who were her spiritual daughters, tried to make others treat this place with respect and preserve it for posterity* [6, p. 92–93].

In the most southern part of the cloister courtyard next to the circuit wall (nowadays, behind the southern wing of the cloister) there was at least one well. Nearby there was a stream which, according to the tradition, 'was brought' to the territory of the enclosure by Kinga [27, p. 273], [44, p. 53]. The document from 1358 mentioned for the first time the water-course in the territory of the cloister: [...] *quod aqua inter gades domini Pelcze transeat libere et secure super molendinum sororum de Antiqua Sandecz...* [32, v. III, no. 725]. However, the cloister already had its own water-course much earlier – since the moment of foundation. This is proved by the down-stream of the brook Młynówka. The appearance of water in this part of the town was connected with marking the urban arrangement of Sary Sącz, the so-called Owalnica, in the 13th century – several years before the cloister foundation made by Kinga [12, p. 37], [11, p. 138]. The wife of Bolesław Wstydlivy also contributed to the foundation of Sary Sącz, therefore the associations of the down-stream within the territory of the enclosure by the cloister tradition can be easily explained. The Młynówka canal, which flowed across the convent courtyard (in the 19th century it was harnessed into an underground canal) and then across the gallery in the town scarp, fell down on the mill-wheel of St. Clare nuns' grange in Majerz which was described by Długosz [26, p. 339]. The water from the Młynówka was most probably used in the cloister baths which should be situated within the territory of the enclosure. As Barbara Domicella Fox already wrote in her chronicle, in the contemporary cloister's farmyard *apart from two wells, a pond, a canal and stone baths there were no other buildings but one common wood-shed; therefore, the wide open courtyard had a good influence on the nuns' health* [7, p. 91].

About the original appearance of the cloister courtyard and its contemporary reconstruction we can read only in the later historical materials of the chronicler Barbara Fox: *In the middle of the cloister there was a courtyard paved with stones for a very long time; it was later changed into a herb garden. [...] In about 1604 all the walls leading to the garden were pulled down and walled up and a new ambit with windows was built from bricks and stones...* [7, p. 90].

In the inspection document entitled *About the Cloister* in chapter II which was in fact totally devoted to the issues of reconstruction, Radziwiłł also recommended St. Clare nuns the following: *Each cloister should be*

coherent in its ambit because cells in different places may become the reason of many bad things: we insist that all young ladies should live in the closed ambit and none of them can live in a dwelling outside the ambit. There can be no accommodation outside the ambit but a covered granary near the gate. The house of the deceased P. Wronowska should be removed from the cloister [6, p. 92], [57, card 9].

The first contract – not preserved until today – which was concluded between Cardinal Radziwiłł and the bricklayer Jan de Simonim is certified by the information which was written during the inspection: *We made a decision with the bricklayer Jan de Simon, the Italian, that in order to have a good cloister in the ambit in the next year of 1600 one part of the cloister should be built on the western side starting from the church corner in the direction of the river and till the end of the refectory; it should be built according to its project and then, upon my word, the second and the third part will be built* [57, card 9]. The fact that the above mentioned project of the cloister was to be made by Simoni draws our attention. Was an Italian bricklayer and sculptor – *magister artificii* (he was called so in Cracow craft files since 1588 [56, p. 524 and 72]), then the older craftsman (since 1595) who worked previously in the castle in Dębno – the only responsible person for making a technical project as it was suggested in the information written down during the inspection? Simoni may have had some influence on the concept of the cloister reconstruction as one of the distinguished representatives of Cracow craft. It is worth emphasizing that since the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, the bricklayer's craft examinations included, among others, a master's exam consisting in preparing a drawing on the basis of a pattern or model and then making this model of wood or a plaster cast [23, p. 253]. Simoni made figure decorations using the technique of sgraffiti which were situated in recesses at the top of the building and presented Christ, blessed Salomea, Kinga the founder as well as Francis and Clare.



Fig. 13. Portal of the old monastic chapter house to the enclosure building (photo: O.M. Przybyłowicz)



Fig. 14. Bird's eye view from west to east interior of the monastic church (photo: O.M. Przybyłowicz)

The project of the cloister reconstruction, which in the 16th century became an indispensable element to start building works [2, p. 44–45], was ordered, most probably in Cracow, by the cardinal, Jerzy Radziwiłł himself. The author of the project is anonymous. It is not known who, apart from Simoni, took part in building the cloister. Jan de Simoni stayed with his family in Stary Sącz but there are no sources which would tell us whether he came there with his own group of bricklayers or whether he hired – for the nuns' money – workers and craftsmen from Stary Sącz and the surroundings (for example, from Czorsztyn). The basic building materials such as sand, lime and stones were brought from the surroundings of Stary Sącz and first of all from Czorsztyn [53, card 5r, 7r, 7v, 9r, 9v, 12r, 12v, 14v, 16v]; the abess along with the convent were obliged – according to the contract – to deliver necessary materials such as stones, lime, sand, bricks, iron and wood to the workshop run by the Italian Simoni. For the works done in the cloister Simoni was supposed to receive 1800 zł and some additional appanage – he held on a lease one of the granges which belonged to the cloister (at Murany) [24, card 152]. The remuneration of the Italian bricklayer was unusual because not everyone who was employed received any money. Liege subjects were obliged to take part in building works of the cloister as it is stated in the lease document of four villages in 1606: *Millers are obliged to take part in building works of the cloister* [6, p. 28]. However, Simoni was supposed to *look after building works himself or through another worker of the same profession in order to watch building works if stones are broken diligently and properly, if bricks are boiled and the floor in the brick-field and lime should be collected on the ground floor as well as on the upper floors* [24, p. 152].

According to the recommendations of the cardinal Jerzy Radziwiłł, during the building works of the clois-

ter, nuns should: *live in two parts of the cloister and in this way they will be separated sedately. They should pull down the old dormitory and build a high dark wall from the church to the corner of the cellar wall; then, they will build the second high wall on the other side from the cellar wall till the cloister wall; there will be a gate in this high wall so that P. Portulana and the Abbess or P. Vicaria can leave and close the main cloister gate when all the workers leave* [57, card 9]. Those recommendations were also repeated by Radziwiłł's successor Bernard Maciejowski in 1606, who signed the second contract with Simoni: *A high and strong wall will be built from the new ambit wall through the cloister garden to the old cloister wall. Afterwards, a high wall will be built on the second side from the corner of the refectory wall to the old cloister wall near the small house where the building stone is dressed; in this high wall there will be a gate so that P. Portulana and the Abbess or P. Vicaria can leave and close the main cloister gate when all the workers leave* [58, p. 37–38].

The cloister – in the face of researchers' examinations – [33, p. 466], [66, p. 169] – was storied and the west wing which was built as the first one was situated *from the corner of the church to the end of the old refectory in the direction of the river*. A new chapter-house was built in the west wing above the inner sacristy adjacent to the original chapter-house; the door led from the chapter-house to the gallery-choir – the oratory. We can still see the difference in the level of those two rooms – you can go down from the gallery-choir to the chapter-house by five stairs (photo). A room with one column was built in this wing or it was rearranged from the old existing one; this room had a vault which was supported by two Renaissance columns with Ionic capitals, whereas in the upper floor dormitories – nuns' cells were situated. According to the concept of Radziwiłł, a new bakery and



Fig. 15. The view of the north elevation of the monastery's church of Holy Trinity (photo: O.M. Przybyłowicz)

kitchen were supposed to be built in the western wing after the completion of building works [56, card 9]. According to the inspection notes of Maciejowski, those rooms were situated in the southern wing which was parallel to the church as well as in the eastern wing (pantry) [58, p. 37–38].

In August 1601, i.e. almost a year after the inspection of Radziwiłł, the first western wing was built – the contents of the decree of his successor Bernard Maciejowski constitute the evidence of this fact: *With God's help, according to the recommendations of our famous predecessor* [Jerzy Radziwiłł – O.M.P.]

[58, p. 37–38] the first part of the cloister was already built. Maciejowski concluded a contract for the next building works with Simoni [Jan de Simoni – O.M.P.] which was going to be connected with [...] *building the second part in the direction of the south and the third part in the direction of the east – which is quite a difficult undertaking – in a stable and good way...* [58, p. 37–38]. In the southern wing, which was to be built as the second one, just next to the refectory – which, according to the plans, was to be situated in the eastern wing – there was a bakery; behind the bakery there was a building with a new kitchen inside a part of which was situated outside the cloister walls; the next buildings were supposed to serve as farm buildings.

During building works the bishop, Maciejowski, ordered the nuns to live in *a wooden dwelling which was still there [...]*. *The nuns can also prepare one or two old rooms in the cloister ambit for the Lady Abbess and the novice school* [58, p. 37–38].

Building a new refectory as well as dormitory along with cells in the eastern wing – which was going to be built as the third one – must have prolonged till the end of 1604 or even later till 1605 because the third contract with the Italian Simoni was already concluded in March 1604, whereas the fourth one was concluded in November. We can read about this refectory in the cloister chronicle: *A large common refectory indicates a great number of nuns' [...]* [6, p. 89].

According to the March contract, this part of the cloister was supposed to be built which: *is in the direction of the east towards the gate (and was completed last year) along the line of the first walls* [24, card



Fig. 16. The view of monastery and church from the east side (photo: O.M. Przybyłowicz)

152r]¹⁸. By studying the detailed instructions concerning the width and the way of laying down the foundations it comes to our knowledge that not only the entrance to the refectory was not completed but – this was included in the first contract – the whole accommodation as well: *There was a ground stove in the refectory next to the wall towards the west and an underground vaulted entrance from the outside of the cloister walls; there will be a 16-ell high vestibule and there will be an entrance to the cellar, to the upper floor and to such an attic as was built in the first part [...]. The walls must be built on the foundations but not on the embrasures and the soil from both the cellar and foundations must be taken outside the cloister walls* [24, card 152r]. The next ‘11-ell high’ rooms in these wings were to be designed for laic ladies; the second room with the same dimensions and ‘with the door to the ambit’ had no specified function and finally a granary; under all those three rooms deep cellars were going to be built; *there will be entrances to two rooms from the ambit just near the granary, whereas the door to the vestibule should be situated in front of the refectory*. A bricklayer was also supposed to vault the rooms in front of iron bars ‘from the new walls to the corner of the church, which is near the great altar’ [24, card 152r]. According to the contract, Jan de Simoni was also supposed to build a portico in front of the gate, whereas a locutory was to be built next to the church *and it should be closed from the cloister and from the outside’, then the third dormitory was to be built ‘as the first two parts the are already built of stone* [24, card 152r].

New dormitories – the nuns’ cells were built on the floors of the western, eastern and southern wings and they were situated along both sides of the corridor in the middle of each wing. The dormitories – although we do not have any direct sources – consisted of many rooms; Cardinal Radziwiłł gave his permission for this earlier and it was in accordance with the Trent council decrees approved by Pope Clemens VIII: *Free cells should be allocated according to seniority and a superior cannot issue another decision* [57, card 28], [61, p. 19]. Barbara Domicella Fox wrote about dormitories in her chronicle: *There are 63 cells in the dormitories upstairs, the floors were made of bricks and painted with different colours... There were no stoves in the cells but only very old fireplaces [?] [7, p. 87]*.

According to the third and fourth contract, all the windows and doors should be dressed with *good, strong, thick and grey stone; there should be immediately installed in them the following elements: iron bars, hooks for hinges, door handles, lock bolts and hooks for membrane’*. *Floors in the cellars should be made of large stones, whereas in the dormitory the downstairs and upstairs floor should be made of burnt bricks* [24, card 152r].

When the old dormitory was pulled down, the northern wing (originally the oldest part of the cloister) – which was to be built as the fourth one, [not the eastern wing as W. Szczebak mistakenly defines it, 66, p. 169] – was also reconstructed and became a communication centre on the ground floor connected with the new cloister’s eastern and western arms through cloister garths. In the November decree referring to the reconstruction of the part *which begins at the eastern ambit, along the chapel, and ends at the western ambit, we can read that the completed buildings should be stable, strong and in good conditions, according to the earlier design* [24, card 152v]. Further information proves that the wing was unquestionably northern: *The front part of the chapel will be vaulted with bricks and there will be a door there; the confessionale will be situated at the place where there is a window with thick iron bars; there should be an embrasure in the cloister like in the chapel and the chapel should be built in the form of a square [...]. The third window in the gallery-choir should also have iron bars. Under the gallery-choir there should be a round window like it is done in the sacristy* [24, k. 153r]. The windows of this part of the cloister overlooked the garden; it was also possible to enter into the new dormitory from that wing, i.e. to the cells of nuns. In 1607 the canon Mikołaj Dobrocieski wrote in the inspection document the following information about that part of the cloister: *The confessionale should be corrected by a bricklayer as he was told: there must be a bigger door in the iron bars and a linen cloth must be hung on the bars* [59, card 12].

On the ground floor of the northern wing there was going to be built *a infirmary with a chimney to the stove and with a door from the chapter-house; there will be two stone windows overlooking the south. [...]. The floor upstairs will be made of well burnt tiles*. The chronicler Domicella Fox wrote about the room for sick nuns: *There was a large infirmary which was healthy and comfortable for the sick; there are two adjacent small rooms called dispensaries... [7, p. 89]*. Above the infirmary, some cells were built, however, the contract does not say anything about them; the cloister chronicler wrote that while building the fourth dormitory called the new dormitory, *one or two cells were destroyed near the church and on the other eastern side in the old dormitory, which was easy to prove* [7, p. 92].

Simoni was additionally obliged to make corrections in the walls and repair those defects which were not corrected earlier as it was stated in the previous contracts: *[...] and there should made a 1.5-ell ditch along the new walls on both sides in order to dry the walls [...]. make corrections in the walls if there are cracks or the wall is damaged [...]. Next to the wall, a mortuary should be built of stone; all other things should be repaired which had been included in the first contracts but they still have not been repaired and finally, a gable must be made on top of the pantry wall and then covered with dressed stone*. The abbess decided to pay for those repairs after they had been completed, i.e. eight hundred zlotys of the Polish coins; *each zloty at 30 grosz according to the work*

¹⁸ Fragments of contracts were quoted by Z. Beiersdorf and B. Krasnowolski [12, p. 53–54] but with numerous mistakes and quite strange omissions, for example, in the title of the abbess the following words were missing: the Lady in God. I directly use the records.

done as well as overdue payments from the first contracts. Additionally, the Abbess should also give fifty bushels of rye [24, card 153v].

According to S. Tomkowicz measurements were made at the end of the 19th century, the width of corridors in three habitable wings was about four and a half meters, whereas the length of wings was thirty two and a half – thirty six meters [65, p. 229].

The last contract that was concluded with the Italian bricklayer concerned the building of a house for the priests in the place which was opposite the cloister to the north, which was to be forty two-ell long and twenty two-ell wide [24, card 164r]. The building works must have been prolonged because there is some information about these works in the next inspection documents from the years 1607 and 1609. According to Canon Hieronim Reczajski, in 1609 the building works were slow and unsatisfactory; in the instruction left in the cloister he stated that *building the house for priests, then the porch and gate in accordance with the contract concluded with the bricklayer should be completed as soon as possible...* [60, card 10].

According to the orders of the next inspector – the Canon of Cracow Mikołaj Dobrocieski who stayed in Stary Sącz in 1607 – *the cloister square should be cleaned. There must be pavements along the walls. It is not allowed to pour liquids outside the walls. It is not allowed to nail or fasten things to the walls nor to put furniture in the ambit* [59, card 12]. This inspector ordered the abbess to *prepare a garden with good soil and then plant apple and pear trees* [59, card 12]. It is most probable that it was the garden which was adjacent to the western wing of the convent and ended near the stream just behind the building for novice nuns. Moreover, St. Clare nuns had their own herb garden which was mentioned by Barbara Domicela Fox [7, p. 90 and 91]: *In the middle of the cloister there was a courtyard since long ago paved with stones which was later changed into a herb garden*¹⁹.

The last significant change in the cloister arrangement was made as a result of the foundation of the abbess, Zofia Boczkowska – not Anna Lipska as some researchers claim [11, p. 137]. It was the so-called Calvary which was made in the years 1616–1620 in the mid-

dle of a small garden (it does not exist any more): with the consent of the superior, Zofia Boczkowska, stone stairs were made in the middle garden in a form of a small chapel. This abbess acquired Jerusalem indulgences for these stairs' [6, p. 90]. The same abbess concluded a contract with the painter Wawrzyniec Cieszyński – the apprentice of famous Dolabello – to make polychromy in the church and also interior decorations: *the church must be painted well and there must be a tent above the great altar, which must be long to the floor and decorated and must look glorious. There must be the Holy Trinity with Angels around on this tent [...]. There will be Christ's face in the frame above the Crucifix and on both sides of His face there will be signs or instruments of tortures held by Angels. Below there will be St. Peter and St. Paul opposite each other. In empty places there will be upholstery below paintings both in the small and big gallery-choir* [24, card 231r]. At that time the church had Medieval polychromy – probably from the 14th century. Cieszyński's work of art has not survived to the present (nowadays we can only see uncovered fragments); it is now covered with polychromy which was made at the end of the 17th century by Baltazar Fontana [11, p. 136] and then by Feliks Deryssarz in 1779 [11, p. 136], [30], [65, p. 173].

During the next centuries – until today – there have been no other significant changes in the architecture of the cloister; only the kitchen was reconstructed in the middle of the 18th century [12, p. 93]. There were also some inconsiderable changes in the church construction – in the middle of the 17th century a one-storied addition to the building was built on the northern side of the presbytery which was to serve as gallery-choir with organs, whereas one hundred years later this additional building was extended and changed into the sacristy [12, p. 55]. On the southern side of the church over the so-called confessional a Loreto chapel was built in the first half of the 17th century, where the painting in the altar was supposed to be founded by the bishop of Cracow Andrzej Lipski who was an uncle of the abbess Anna Lipska (he died in 1631) [6, p. 92]. Preservation works inside the church – a part of which was the above mentioned polychromy by Deryssarz – were carried out after a fire in 1764. The fire destroyed the roofs of the church and partly of the cloister and the falling chimneys made holes in the vaults; the Loreto chapel was also largely damaged [6, p. 103]. The repairs started during the reigns of the abbess Katarzyna Leńczowska (she died in 1767) – she brought bricklayers and carpenters from Hungary [6, p. 103–106] – and were continued by her successor Katarzyna Pskurska (she reigned in the years 1767–1781) and then by Katarzyna Skrzyńska (1781–1784).

Translated by Bogusław Setkowicz

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¹⁹ It was only after the annulment decree in 1782 and after the liquidation of the Majerz grange when some buildings situated in the courtyard were transformed into farm buildings where live-stock was kept. The present big garden, which is at the eastern part of the church and cloister courtyard and which is shaped in the form of terraces to the railway, was created at the turn of the 19th century. There is also a small garden between the walls and the western wing. Thanks to sister Salomea, the archivist, for all the information.

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