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From Senator's Daughter to Governess: Life and Work of Lucyna Mieroszevska (1817–1893)

Od córki senatora do guwernantki: Życie i działalność Lucyny Mieroszevskiej (1817–1893)

Abstract: Lucyna Mieroszevska, born in 1817 into a prosperous family of landowners, was one of the first Polish female authors of educational handbooks and early reader books for children. Raised among the elite of Kraków and destined for a life within the affluent landed gentry, she lost her social standing due to a combination of family, political, and economic circumstances. From the privileged position of a senator's daughter, she fell to the role of governess and companion to an unrelated family. Her support for the January Uprising of 1863 further constrained her ability to choose her place of residence. Despite these hardships, Mieroszevska adapted to her circumstances and made efforts to support herself. She became involved in raising her sisters' children as well as girls from Galician landowning families. Simultaneously, she pursued her literary and pedagogical interests and published original works and translations from foreign languages. This article seeks to verify key biographical details and fill in the gaps in her life story by drawing on previously unused handwritten sources.

Keywords: Lucyna Mieroszevska, education, governess, upbringing, Galicia, January Uprising.

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Lucyna Mieroszewska was an important figure among the women who dedicated their lives to the education and upbringing of children in the mid-19th century, as well as to publishing primers for young learners and pedagogical guides for mothers and teachers. Her progressive ideas on education, frequently cited by scholars in the field,¹ continue to be relevant to contemporary scholarly discussions. The purpose of this article is to revisit Mieroszewska's life through a study of original sources to expand and refine the information about her that has circulated in scholarly discourse. For many years, the biographical entry by Janina Bieniarzówna, published in the *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* [Polish Biographical Dictionary] in 1975, based largely on a posthumous memoir, remained the most comprehensive—albeit somewhat general—account of her life.²

In recent years, however, interest in Mieroszewska has surged, particularly among historians of education and regional studies specialists.³ The recently published memoirs of Emilia Skrzyńska, née Jabłonowska⁴ have filled long-standing gaps in her biography and sparked renewed curiosity about her legacy. These newly accessible sources, together with archival materials relating to the Mieroszewski family held in Polish libraries and archives, and an anal-

- 1 J. Falkowska, *Ambasadorki wychowania. Poglądy pedagogiczne polskich kobiet w II połowie XIX i początkach XX wieku*, Toruń 2018; eadem, *Wychowanie religijne w rodzinie. Dwugłos Lucyny Mieroszewskiej (1818–1893) i Stefanii Marciszewskiej–Posadzowej (1874–1855)*, in: *Religie a wychowanie do dialogu. Idee edukacyjne, filozoficzno-antropologiczne i teologiczne*, ed. M. S. Wierzbicki, Warszawa 2018, pp. 45–56; M. Stawiak-Ososińska, *Wychowanie domowe dziewcząt w świetle poglądów publicystów pierwszej połowy XIX wieku w Królestwie Polskim (rola i zadania matki w domowym wychowaniu córek)*, „*Studia Pedagogiczne. Problemy Społeczne, Edukacyjne i Artystyczne*”, 14 (2003) pp. 285–300; A. Bołdyrew, *Matka i dziecko w rodzinie polskiej. Ewolucja modelu życia rodzinnego w latach 1795–1918*, Warszawa 2008.
- 2 J. Bieniarzówna, *Mieroszewska (Mieroszowska) Lucyna, krypt. L.M.*, in: *Polski słownik biograficzny* (PSB), ed. E. Rostworowski, vol. 20, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1975, p. 815.
- 3 Marcin Szważyński published press and online articles on Lucyna Mieroszewska in *Internetowy Kurier Proszowicki: Zapomniana patriotka, pisarka i pedagog: Lucyna Mieroszewska herbu Ślepowron* (ur. 1818 – zm. 22.07.1893), http://www.24ikp.pl/skarby/ludzie/przyjaciele/mieroszewska_lucyna/art.php, accessed: 18.04.2023.
- 4 E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1855–1862*, eds. B. Lorens, J. Kuzicki, Rzeszów 2021; E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, eds. B. Lorens, J. Kuzicki, Rzeszów 2022.

ysis of Mieroszewska's correspondence with Seweryna Pruszkowa, preserved in the Polish Library in Paris, have considerably enriched our understanding of her life. They not only supplement her biography but also shed light on the key turning points that shaped her destiny.

Childhood and Youth in a Senatorial Family

Lucyna Mieroszewska, born on 12 June 1817 in Kraków at 369 Szczepańska Street, was the second daughter of Jacek Piotr Mieroszewski and Barbara Wilczek. Three days after her birth, she was baptised as Lucyna Tekla Katarzyna.⁵ Her elder sister, Antonina Maria Stanisława, was born on 13 June 1816,⁶ and her younger sister, Amalia Helena Józefa, known by her middle name, arrived on 1 March 1819.⁷ Earlier records have often misreported the order and dates of birth of Barbara and Jacek's children. Lucyna's birth year was often cited as 1818,⁸ and she was erroneously identified as the eldest daughter. Even Stanisław Mieroszewski, a relative, mistakenly referred to Lucyna as Jacek's eldest daughter in his writings.⁹ A similar error occurred during an investigation by the Russian authorities in 1862, when Lucyna's age was recorded as 42 instead of 45, while her older sister Antonina's age was listed as 40 instead of 46.¹⁰

5 National Archives in Kraków (Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie, ANK), z. 328, Akta Stanu Cywilnego Parafii Rzymskokatolickiej NMP w Krakowie, sign. 27, Akta urodzin, uznania i przysposobienia Parafii Panny Maryi na rok 1817, p. 55.

6 ANK, z. 328, sign. 26, Akta urodzin, uznania i przysposobienia Parafii Panny Maryi na rok 1816, p. 45.

7 ANK, z. 328, sign. 34, Akta urodzin, uznania i przysposobienia Stanu Cywilnego dla parafii Panny Maryi na rok 1819, p. 18. According to Irena Homola and Boleśław Łopuszański, Helena was born on 2 March, see; I. Homola, B. Łopuszański, *Wstęp*, in: *Kapitan i dwie panny. Krakowskie pamiętniki z XIX wieku*, eds. I. Homola, B. Łopuszański, Kraków 1980, p. 12.

8 J. Bieniarzówna, *Mieroszewska*, p. 815. This date was also cited in the obituary published in the „Czas” newspaper, issue 169, July 27, 1893, p. 3.

9 S. & S. Mieroszewscy, *Wspomnienia lat ubiegłych*, eds. M. & H. Baryczowie, Kraków 1984, p. 194.

10 Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw (Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie, AGAD), z. 241, sign. 52, Permanent Military Investigative Commission established under the authority of the Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces in the Kingdom of Poland, pp.187, 192.

Lucyna's father, Jacek Piotr Mieroszewski of the Ślepowron coat of arms (1771–1850), came from a less affluent branch of the family compared to the line of the Mysłowice estate owners. He embarked on a career in public administration in the Free City of Kraków, rising from an assessor in the Kraków Prefecture to the position of General Secretary of the Senate of the Republic of Kraków. By 1834, he had been appointed senator for life, though his career ended abruptly in 1837 when the resident envoys of the partitioning powers demanded his dismissal and stripped him of his pension rights. Lucyna's mother, Barbara née Wilczek, came from a family with a strong military tradition. Her five brothers served in different armies during the Napoleonic Wars, and all of them perished in battle before Lucyna was born.¹¹ The Mieroszewski family owned the Dalewice estate in the Kingdom of Poland, a village named Kapelanka near Kraków, and a townhouse in Kraków, initially located on Kanonicza Street and later on Grodzka Street.¹²

Lucyna Mieroszevska grew up during the era of the Free City of Kraków, a semi-autonomous state established in 1815. Spanning roughly 1,150 km², the city remained under the joint control of the three partitioning powers until 1846, when Emperor Ferdinand I decreed its annexation into Austria. The Mieroszewski family was part of Kraków's aristocracy and held a prominent position within the city's social and political elite, which was dominated by the landed gentry and nobility.¹³ The daughters likely received their education at home and shared lessons due to their similar ages. Their days followed a structured rhythm: mornings reserved for study in their townhouse on Kanonicza Street and afternoons spent savouring the tranquillity of their

11 H. z Mieroszewskich Darowska, *Dwa lata moich wspomnień z życia krakowskiego 1836–1837*, in: *Kapitan i dwie panny*, p. 31, note 11; J. Bieniarzówna, *Mieroszewski Jacek Piotr h. Ślepowron*, in: *PSB*, vol. 20, pp. 816–818.

12 State Archives in Kielce (Archiwum Państwowe w Kielcach), z. 716, sign. 24, Akta hipoteczne dóbr ziemskich powiatu miechowskiego, Dokumenty do dóbr ziemskich Dalewice z powiatu miechowskiego [1684] 1825–1872, pp. 213–215. The estate in Dalewice was owned by Jacek Mieroszewski and his brother Jan Kazimierz Mieroszewski from 1801. In 1834, Mieroszewski's niece, Julia Wiktorowa from Gorzyce, ceded her rights to these estates to Barbara z Wilczków Mieroszevska.

13 S. Grodziski, *Rzeczpospolita Krakowska, jej lata i ludzie*, Kraków 2012, pp. 20, 84–101.

suburban estate, Kapelanka.¹⁴ Their upbringing was heavily impacted by their mother, Barbara née Wilczek Mieroszevska, a member of the esteemed group known as the 'Ephors' or Ladies of Supervision, who oversaw girls' schools in Kraków. Barbara often brought her daughters along to examinations at schools and convents,¹⁵ where young Lucyna keenly observed the other girls' academic struggles, which she would later recount as amusing anecdotes in family gatherings.¹⁶

Education in the Mieroszevski home was not confined to books. Family celebrations, particularly name days, provided occasions for theatrical performances, sometimes staged for wider audiences. In 1827, the sisters performed excerpts from Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz's *Powrót posła* [The Return of the Deputy] and Franciszek Wężyk's *Barbara Radziwiłłówna* before Kraków's luminaries: Bishop Jan Paweł Woronicz and Klementyna Hoffmanowa, a renowned writer. Lucyna played the roles of Zygmunt August and Szarmancki.¹⁷ The Mieroszevski daughters were introduced to Kraków's social life from an early age. As children, they joined their mother in performing a tableau depicting a fortune-telling Gypsy¹⁸ during a name-day celebration for Maria Potocka, née Ros-tworowska. Later, in 1837, they participated in a public charity ball organised by the Charity Ladies' Society, of which their mother was president. However, as Helena Darowska recalled, attending such events, often open to people from

14 H. z Mieroszevskich Darowska, *Dwa lata moich wspomnień z życia krakowskiego 1836–1837*, p. 73. The Kapelanka estate was leased in 1836 for six years by Edward and Klementyna Homolacs, née Sławińska.

15 H. z Mieroszevskich Darowska, *Uwagi i wspomnienia z życia towarzyskiego w Krakowie 1831–1837. Dodatek*, in: *Kapitan i dwie panny*, p. 144. Mieroszevska, whose first name is not mentioned, served as an ephor in the 1820s. R. Gąsior, T. Matula, *Szkoła Sióstr Prezentek w Krakowie w latach 1627–1918*, Lublin 1998, p. 334.

16 S. & S. Mieroszevscy, *Wspomnienia lat ubiegłych*, p. 194.

17 H. z Mieroszevskich Darowska, *Uwagi i wspomnienia z życia towarzyskiego w Krakowie 1831–1837*, pp. 138–139; *Pamiętnik R. 1830/31 i kronika pamiętnikowa (1787–1831) pułkownika Franciszka Salezego Gawrońskiego*, ed. J. Czubek, Kraków 1916, p. 462.

18 *Pamiętnik R. 1830/31 i kronika pamiętnikowa (1787–1831)*, p. 452: 'Miss Mieroszevska Jackowa, the fortune-teller, along with her daughters, giving favorable omens from a hut.'

outside their social circle, felt more like a bothersome duty than a pleasure.¹⁹ As young women, the sisters became avid participants in Kraków's vibrant social scene. They attended dances, balls, and tea gatherings hosted by influential families such as the Dembińskis, Ankwiczs, Wodzickis, and Potockis.²⁰ They also corresponded with Colonel Franciszek Salezy Gawroński, a family friend who frequently visited the Mieroszewskis at Kapelanka.²¹

For the Mieroszewski family, summer meant escaping the city for their countryside estate in Dalewice, located in the Miechów district, east of Słomniki, within the Kingdom of Poland. Travelling to Dalewice required crossing the border, which entailed obtaining a passport, undergoing inspections, and submitting to searches at the checkpoint. While residing at Dalewice, the family often visited nearby estates, such as the Oebschelwitz property in Błogocice.²² Helena Mieroszevska, later known as Helena Darowska, fondly recalled the patriotic and politically engaged atmosphere in which she and her sisters were raised. Even as teenagers, they showed a keen interest in national and social issues and discussed these topics in social gatherings. This passion was encouraged by their father, who often brought his daughters to observe important events, such as the entry of troops of three partitioning powers into Kraków in 1836.²³ Their mother, on the other hand, ignited their charitable spirit by involving them in philanthropic activities. The Mieroszewski sisters were known for their lively sense of humour, courage, and a taste for adventure.²⁴ They also shared a family passion for writing and

19 F. S. Gawroński, *Latopismo rodzinne mego żywota... Wybór z lat 1832–1845*, eds. M. Buczek, B. Schnaydrowa, „Rocznik Biblioteki Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Krakowie”, 13 (1967) p. 220; H. z Mieroszewskich Darowska, *Dwa lata moich wspomnień z życia krakowskiego 1836–1837*, pp. 116–117.

20 H. z Mieroszewskich Darowska, *Dwa lata moich wspomnień z życia krakowskiego 1836–1837*, pp. 32–33, 70–71, 76, 87, 105, 112, 117, 119.

21 Library of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences in Kraków (Biblioteka Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności i Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Krakowie, BPAUiPAN), rkps 2164, vol. 4, Bruliony listów F. S. Gawrońskiego 1834–1838, pp. 44, 45v; rkps 2164; vol. 5, Bruliony listów F. S. Gawrońskiego 1840–1849, p. 21; *Pamiętnik R. 1830/31 i kronika pamiętnikowa (1787–1831)*, pp. 449, 455.

22 H. z Mieroszewskich Darowska, *Dwa lata moich wspomnień z życia krakowskiego 1836–1837*, pp. 29–30, 83, 98, 104, 107, 109.

23 Ibidem, pp. 65, 70, 94.

24 Ibidem, pp. 99–100.

composing poetry, often with a playful tone. In 1841, a young Lucyna showcased her wit with a humorous poem dedicated to Juliusz Florkiewicz.²⁵

Teacher and writer

Lucyna Mieroszewska's life as a teacher and writer intertwined with her responsibilities as a family caregiver. Her two sisters married and had families of their own. Helena, the youngest, married Józef Darowski in 1838, a man she met two years earlier and found greatly impressive. Darowski, an émigré, a veteran of the November Uprising and the owner of estates in Turza in the Jasło district and Sławkowice in the Wieliczka district, passed away unexpectedly at 37,²⁶ leaving Helena a widow with six children. Antonina, the eldest, married Sabin Nowosielski on 15 August 1844 but was also widowed early when Nowosielski tragically died from a fatal gunshot wound while loading his musket during a hunting trip on 22 February 1852.²⁷ By the mid-19th century, with both sisters widowed and raising children, Lucyna, who never married, became a cornerstone of support for her sisters and their families. Helena's family included six children: Bolesław Henryk Antoni (b. 1839), Romana Adam (b. 1842), Adam Jacek (b. 1846), Helena Sabina Barbara (b. 1840), Maria (b. 1845), and Barbara Łucja (b. 1847). Of these, only Bolesław and three daughters reached adulthood.²⁸

25 J. Brzózka, *Dzieje rodziny Florkiewiczów herbu Ozdoba z Młoszowej w XIX wieku*, Kraków 2006, pp. 166–167.

26 H. z Mieroszewskich Darowska, *Dwa lata moich wspomnień z życia krakowskiego 1836–1837*, pp. 68, 72; I. Homola, B. Łopuszański, *Wstęp*, in: *Kapitan i dwie panny*, p. 12; F. S. Gawroński, *Latopismo rodzinne mego żywota... Wybór z lat 1832–1845*, p. 220.

27 F. S. Gawroński, *Latopismo rodzinne mego żywota... Wybór z lat 1832–1845*, p. 235; Polish Library in Paris (Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu, BPP), rkps 458, *Papiery emigrantów. Litera „D”*, Letter from Lucyna Mieroszewska to Seweryna Pruszkowa, Szczecno, 7 May 1858, p. 751: 'My sister is a widow, having lost a husband she loved dearly. He tragically died after accidentally shooting himself while loading his rifle during a hunting expedition, succumbing to dreadful suffering after several days.'

28 ANK, z. 328, sign. 114, Akta urodzenia Parafii Panny Maryi w roku 1839, p. 7; sign. 128, Akta urodzenia Parafii Panny Maryi w roku 1843, p. 26; sygn. 140, Akta urodzonych w Parafii Panny Maryi z roku 1846, p. 9; sign. 144, Akta urodzonych w Parafii Panny Maryi w Krakowie 1847, p. 58; I. Homola, B. Łopuszański, *Wstęp*, in: *Kapitan i dwie panny*, p. 12.

Antonina had five children: three sons—Wojciech Jacek Sabin (b. 1845), Stanisław (b. 1847), and Antoni Wojciech Sabin (b. 1851)—and two daughters, Laura Marianna (b. 1848) and Marianna Symforoza (b. 1849). Among them, two sons, Wojciech and Antoni, and one daughter, Marianna, survived into adulthood.²⁹

Despite these responsibilities, Lucyna continued to commit much of her energy to patriotic causes. After her mother died in 1845, she stayed at the Dalewice estate to care for her father³⁰ and became involved in Kraków's political and social movements. Raised in a patriotic atmosphere, she participated in events surrounding the Kraków Uprising of 1846 and the Springtime of Nations in 1848 in Kraków. She raised funds for a monument commemorating the victims of the Pogórze procession (together with Helena Żuchowska, she collected 310 złotych and 29 groszy in early April 1848³¹) and organised support for political prisoners and Poles released from Austrian prisons (raising 1,520 złotych and 16 groszy alongside her sister Helena³²). She also helped collect donations during theatrical performances in Kraków, with the proceeds designated for political prisoners.³³

Mieroszewska's time at the Dalewice estate revolved around her family. Her sisters often visited with their children, and Lucyna looked after her nieces and nephews. While life in the countryside, far from the social whirl of Kraków, was not her preference, this experience in childcare helped Lucyna find her passion for teaching. Her sister, Helena Darowska, wrote about this period in the late 1840s, likely already widowed, in a letter to her late husband's cousin, Mieczysław Darowski.

My father and Lucia are alone in the countryside, poor souls; neither of them enjoys managing the estate, and they both yearn for human inter-

29 Geneteka, <https://geneteka.genealodzy.pl>, accessed: 19.04.2023.

30 'On the 8th, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our dear friend, Mrs Mieroszewska, née Wilczek—affectionately called Basia—passed away at her home in Dalowice. Her husband and daughters remain in mourning'; F. S. Gawroński, *Latopismo rodzinne mego żywota... Wybór z lat 1832–1845*, p. 238.

31 „Jutrzenka”, issue 19, April 12, 1848, p. 73.

32 „Jutrzenka”, issue 5, March 27, 1848, p. 20; issue 11, April 3, 1848, p. 44.

33 „Jutrzenka”, issue 9, March 31, 1848, p. 36.

action and some tranquillity. I left Boluś with them because Lucia, ever so kind, has taken on his education for as long as she can manage. I believe the boy will benefit greatly from it.³⁴

At the time, Helena's eldest son, Bolesław, was likely about ten years old. Between caring for her parents and later her sisters' children, Lucyna still found time to visit nearby manor houses and maintain her friendships with Kraków families such as the Potockis.³⁵ This quiet chapter of Lucyna's life ended with the death of her father, Jacek Mieroszewski, on 2 September 1850.³⁶ It was around this time, or perhaps slightly earlier, that the sisters decided to lease the estate and relocate to Szczecno near Kielce, where their eldest sibling Antonina Nowosielska resided.³⁷ By the first half of 1854, they had sold Dalewice to Antonina's sister-in-law and childhood friend, Maria Nowosielska, née Oebschelwitz, from Błogocice.³⁸

In the 1850s, Lucyna Mieroszewska lived with her sisters in Szczecno, where she devoted herself to educating her nieces and nephews. During the night, her time was divided between writing on pedagogy, religion, literature, and art, and translating books from French and English. Life at the Szczecno manor was far

- 34 Library of the Ossoliński National Institute in Wrocław (Biblioteka Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich we Wrocławiu), rkps 6788/II, Korespondencja Mieczysława Darowskiego ojca i Mieczysława Darowskiego syna, vol. 1: Lata 1834–1898. Litery A–R, p. 18.
- 35 AGAD, z. 353, sign. B 1123, Manuscript collection from the Przeździecki Library, Przeździecki Family Correspondence Collection, List Lucyny Mieroszewskiej do dra Franciszka Bulikowskiego, Dalewice, 3 sierpnia 1842.
- 36 Jacek Piotr Mieroszewski died in 1850 at Gorzyce, on the estate of his niece, Julia née Mieroszewska Wiktorowa. *Jacek Piotr Mieroszewski*, http://www.24ikp.pl/skarby/ludzie/przyjaciele/mieroszewski_jacek/tekst600.php, accessed: 19.04.2023.
- 37 BPP, rkps 458, List Lucyny Mieroszewskiej do Seweryny Pruszkowej, Szczecno, 7 maja 1858, p. 751: 'Since the death of my brother-in-law, we have both been staying with our sister Nowosielska, finding no greater comfort on this earth than living together as the three of us.'
- 38 APK, z. 716, sign. 24, pp. 447, 452–453. In the early 1850s, the Dalewice estate was leased by Maksymilian Lenczowski from Wronin.; K. Girtler, *Opowiadania. Pamiątniki z lat 1801–1831*, preface and selections Z. Jabłoński, eds. Z. Jabłoński, J. Staszek, vol. 1, Kraków 1971, p. 338.

from easy; she would often give up her room to accommodate long-term visitors. After the departure of a French governess, she assumed full responsibility for the children's care.³⁹ Although she appreciated the quiet and industrious life in Szczecno, Mieroszevska longed for intellectually stimulating social interactions. She missed Warsaw, where she built connections with local writers and educators,⁴⁰ and often travelled to Kielce, where she became acquainted with members of the local clergy, including Canon Ignacy Domagalski. She also visited Kraków to maintain ties with extended family. In August 1858, she joined her sister Antonina and niece Helena on a visit to the Szczawnica health resort. Their time in the Pieniny and Tatra Mountains inspired Mieroszevska to write about the region and publish her travel impressions.⁴¹

In the second half of the 1850s, Mieroszevska collaborated with Seweryna née Żmichowska Pruszkowa, Duchńska (1816–1905), editor of the journal *Rozrywki dla Młodocianego Wieku* [Entertainment for Young Age], who had hosted a social and literary salon in Warsaw since the autumn of 1847.⁴² Although the two women never met in person, they established a correspondence and worked together to have Mieroszevska's literary works (novels, short stories, and travelogues) published in Pruszkowa's magazine. This partnership resulted in the publication of Mieroszevska's novel *Dwie dole* [Two Faiths] in 1858, an outcome that caused the author some unease, as her full name appeared in print below the text.⁴³ Around this time, Mieroszevska sent Pruszkowa an account of her travels in the Pieniny and Tatra Mountains, which she had discussed in letters but insisted on revising before publication. She consented to its publication under Pruszkowa's name. This piece appeared in 1863

39 BPP, rkps 458, List Lucyny Mieroszevskiej do Seweryny Pruszkowej, Szczecno, 18 marca 1859, p. 729–733.

40 BPP, rkps 458, List Lucyny Mieroszevskiej do Seweryny Pruszkowej, b.m. i d., p. 746.

41 BPP, rkps 458, List Lucyny Mieroszevskiej do Seweryny Pruszkowej, Szczecno, 13 października 1858, p. 722.

42 P. Wilkońska, *Moje wspomnienia o życiu towarzyskiem w Warszawie*, preface Z. Dębicki, vol. 2, Warszawa 1907, pp. 6, 11–12.

43 BPP, rkps 458, List Lucyny Mieroszevskiej do Seweryny Pruszkowej, Szczecno, 7 maja 1858, p. 749; L. Mieroszevska, *Dwie dole*, „Rozrywki dla Młodocianego Wieku”, 2 (1858) pp. 49–104, 212–263, 310–375. A brief review of the novel and the entire volume of the journal was published in „Biblioteka Warszawska”, 3 (1859) pp. 655–656.

but was unsigned and bore no indication of Mieroszewska's authorship.⁴⁴ Other stories mentioned in their correspondence seem to have been either unpublished or appeared under different titles and without credit to Mieroszewska, as they cannot be found in the pages of *Rozrywki dla Młodocianego Wieku*.⁴⁵

While living in Dalewice and Szczecin, Lucyna Mieroszewska began writing about the education and upbringing of young children. The 1850s saw the release of her several notable works, including: *Mała książeczka dla małych dzieci* [A Little Book for Little Children], Kraków, 1851 (second edition: Kraków, 1887); *Marynia czyli przygotowanie dzieci do pierwszej Komunii, z angielskiego dziełko matkom poświęcone* [Marynia, or Preparing Children for Their First Communion: A Little Work for Mothers, Adapted from English], Warsaw, 1854; *Rady praktyczne o początkowym wychowaniu dzieci. Epoka od 1 do 5 roku przez L.M.* [Practical Advice on the Early Upbringing of Children: The Period from Ages 1 to 5, by L.M.], Warsaw, 1856; and *Nauka czytania ułatwiona. Nowy elementarz dla szkół i ochron polskich przez L. Mieroszewską* [Reading Instruction Made Easy: A New Primer for Polish Schools and Shelters, by L. Mieroszewska], second edition, Warsaw 1863. In the preface to one of these books, she offered the following reflection:

Living in a large family, surrounded by children of all ages and temperaments, whom I love as my own, and observing closely how immensely parental care influences both the health and the character of a child, I have also witnessed the harmful consequences of neglecting their physical and moral growth during early childhood. With this in mind, I take the liberty of offering mothers these practical recommendations for early childhood education, as a collection of the finest insights from leading authors on this important subject – as well as the fruit of my own observations, gained through my own firsthand experiences.⁴⁶

44 BPP, rkps 458, List Lucyny Mieroszewskiej do Seweryny Pruszkowej, b.m. d., pp. 730–732; *Beskidy, Pieniny i Tatry (wyjątek z „Dziennika podróży”), „Rozrywki dla Młodocianego Wieku”, 4 (1863) pp. 1–61.*

45 BPP, rkps 458, List Lucyny Mieroszewskiej do Seweryny Pruszkowej, Szczecno, 8 maja 1857, pp. 713–717; List Lucyny Mieroszewskiej do Seweryny Pruszkowej, b.m. i d., pp. 743–744.

46 L.M., *Rady praktyczne o początkowym wychowaniu dzieci. Epoka od 1 do 5 roku*, Warszawa 1856, pp. XVI–XVII.

By the mid-1850s, Mieroszevska may have spent time in Paris or connected with the Polish émigré community there. This is suggested by her translation of the French work *Le Catholicisme ou la Barbarie: Coup d'Oeil sur l'Etat de l'Europe à l'Occasion de la Guerre d'Orient* [Either Catholicism or Pagan Barbarity: A Glance at the State of Europe on the Occasion of the Eastern War] (Paris, 1854). Her version, published under the title *Albo katolicyzm albo dzicz pogańska. Rzut oka na stan Europy z powodu wojny* [Either Catholicism or Pagan Savagery: A Glance at the State of Europe Due to the War], appeared amidst the backdrop of the Crimean War and examined the condition of Christianity and the history of Russia under the reign of Tsar Nicholas I.⁴⁷

According to Janina Bieniarzówna, who cited a posthumous remembrance published in the Kraków periodical *Czas*, Mieroszevska directed an educational establishment in Warsaw during the 1850s.⁴⁸ Though later publications have reiterated this claim, they offer no further details about the institution in question. It seems plausible to infer that it was a private finishing school for young ladies. Yet, detailed research into private secondary schools in the Kingdom of Poland during the inter-uprising period has failed to uncover any direct evidence of Mieroszevska's involvement in this field.⁴⁹ Her letters hint that any engagement she may have had with a Warsaw educational institution could only have occurred between September 1850 and February 1852, a brief interlude between the death of her father and the passing of her brother-in-law, Nowosielski. In a letter written towards the end of the 1850s to Seweryna Pruszkowa, she expressed her aspirations:

47 *Albo katolicyzm albo dzicz pogańska. Rzut oka na stan Europy z powodu wojny wschodniej*, trans., Paris 1855. The book was published at L. Martinet's printing house in Paris, which printed numerous works in Polish and collaborated with Polish émigré publishers.; J. Kuzicki, *Karol Królikowski (1806–1871) – paryski księgarz i wydawca Wielkiej Emigracji*, „*Studia Migracyjne – Przegląd Polonijny*”, 48 (2022) issue 1 (183), p. 262, DOI: 10.4467/25444972SMPP.21.026.13852.

48 „*Czas*”, issue 169, July 27, 1893, p. 3: ‘For a time, she also headed an educational institution in Warsaw’; J. Bieniarzówna, *Mieroszevska*, p. 815.

49 M. Czapska, *Prywatne szkoły średnie w Królestwie Polskim w latach 1831–1862*, Kielce 2002, pp. 357–358.

Perhaps one day we might find ourselves working side by side in an institute for young ladies! How great my joy would be to teach in person in a national institution! Although I am not one of Mrs. Hofman's stature, I would nonetheless serve my fellow countrywomen with no less enthusiasm. The drive and yearning to spread pure morality, to offer guidance and enlightenment, grows ever stronger within me. Often, the desire to work burns within me like a flame, yet my efforts are too often bound by familial duties—caring for my sisters' children and tending to the necessary affairs of the household.⁵⁰

If Mieroszevska did indeed formally take up teaching in Warsaw, it would likely have been a brief episode in her biography.

Faced with the difficulties of managing an estate while raising children in need of proper schooling, the sisters began to contemplate a move to a larger city. By the late 1850s, Lucyna Mieroszevska confided:

My sister is indeed inclined to rid herself of the estate, which has become too burdensome for her. The sale is being negotiated and should be settled within a week, though I doubt we will move to Warsaw – it seems more likely we will head towards Kraków. My sister intends, should Szczecno be sold, to purchase a small property on the border for fresh air and pantry supplies, but spend winters in Kraków. Education there is easier and more thorough in the schools. That is a great advantage for the boys.⁵¹

Lucyna herself, however, leaned more towards settling in Warsaw, drawn by the social and intellectual connections she had established with the city's literary circles. She was friends with Stanisław Jachowicz and his wife, Antonina née Ośmiałowska,⁵² admired the work of publisher Kazimierz Władysław

50 BPP, rkps 458, List Lucyny Mieroszevskiej do Seweryny Pruszkowej, b.m. i d., pp. 741–742. The planned sale of Szczecno was ultimately completed only in 1875.

51 BPP, rkps 458, List Lucyny Mieroszevskiej do Seweryny Pruszkowej, Szczecno, 7 maja 1858, p. 764.

52 Tamże; *Pochwała Stanisława Jachowicza przez Lucynę Mieroszevską*, w: S. Jachowicz, *Powiatki i bajki z ilustracjami*, ed. L. Posadzy, Poznań–Warszawa–Wilno–Lublin [1934], pp. v–vii.

Wóycicki and maintained an acquaintance with him. Her circle of acquaintances also included Eleonora Ziemięcka, a philosopher who wrote on the education of women, as well as Józefa Śmigielska, later Dobieszewska, whose editorial work on *Zabawy Przyjemne i Pożyteczne* between 1856 and 1857 she greatly respected.⁵³ Though her posthumous tribute would later declare her ‘a Krakovian by birth, upbringing, and tradition,’⁵⁴ it was Warsaw, with its vibrant political and literary culture, that held a strong allure for her. In one of her letters to Seweryna Pruszkowa, she expressed this sentiment: ‘How marvellous it would be to live in Warsaw for a longer time and to share in its intellectual currents, which invigorate the entire nation.’⁵⁵

Sadly, this aspiration was never fulfilled, thwarted by the events leading up to the outbreak of the January Uprising. This period heralded a watershed in Mieroszevska’s life, which irrevocably shaped her future path. In September 1862, Lucyna Mieroszevska and her sister, Antonina Nowosielska, were staying in a tenement on Marszałkowska Street in Warsaw when they became entangled in a Tsarist investigation into Warsaw students and pupils. One of the accused at the time, Teodor Pachucki, a twenty-year-old student at the School of Painting within the Faculty of Architecture in Warsaw, originally from Olkusz, had spent the summer tutoring Nowosielska’s son, Antoni, a pupil at Jan Nepomucen Leszczyński’s prestigious private school. From mid-June to early September 1862, Pachucki stayed at Nowosielska’s estate in Szczecno.⁵⁶

Upon his return to Warsaw, searches uncovered two letters written by Lucyna Mieroszevska – one addressed to Canon Ignacy Domagalski of the Warsaw Cathedral (dated 4 September), and the other to Judge Józef Zaremba (dated 9 September), which contained remarks critical of the Tsarist authorities and included details regarding preparations for the upris-

53 BPP, rkps 458, List Lucyny Mieroszevskiej do Seweryny Pruszkowej, Szczecno, 7 maja 1858, pp. 764, 767; M. Berkan-Jabłońska, *Kobiecość w ujęciu Józefy ze Śmigielskich Dobieszewskiej – kilka zbliżeń*, in: *Przemiany dyskursu emancypacyjnego kobiet*, serie I: *Perspektywa środkowoeuropejska*, eds. A. Janicka, C. Fournier-Kiss, M. Bracka, Białystok 2019, pp. 483–500.

54 „Czas”, issue 167, July 25, 1893, p. 3.

55 BPP, rkps 458, List Lucyny Mieroszevskiej do Seweryny Pruszkowej, b.m. i d., p. 746.

56 AGAD, z. 241, sign. 52, pp. 62–64, 187–188.

ing. Though entrusted to Pachucki for delivery, these letters fell instead into the hands of the Tsarist police. The sisters, along with their servants – valet Jakub Jabłoński and coachman Wincenty Gidner – were also interrogated due to their connections with Baron Emil Rayski of Szaniec, a member of the Agricultural Society who had supported the 1861 Warsaw demonstrations.⁵⁷ It was likely this incident that made Mieroszevska, with her pro-Polish stance, a persona non grata to the Tsarist authorities in the Kingdom of Poland. A posthumous tribute recorded: 'In 1863, her involvement in transporting sensitive papers for the Polish Church across the border so compromised her in the eyes of the Russian authorities that she was permanently barred from the Kingdom of Poland, with which she had many ties.'⁵⁸ Nevertheless, it is believed that by 1866, Mieroszevska either lived with her sisters in Szczecno or was visiting them there.⁵⁹

A Governess and Resident in the Galician Provinces

By the early 1870s, Lucyna Mieroszevska had become closely connected with the family of Emilia and Ksawery Skrzyński, who resided in Krościenko Wyżne near Krosno. The exact timing and purpose of her arrival at the Krościenko manor remain uncertain, though it is reasonable to surmise she was brought in to assist with the education and companionship of the Skrzyńskis' youngest daughter. The bond between Mieroszevska and the Skrzyński family likely originated within Kraków's tight-knit social circles, where they mingled with distantly related families such as the Badenis, Walewskis, Dembińskis, and Skrzyneckis.

The Skrzyńskis' eldest daughter, Cecylia, born in 1847, married Stanisław Badeni in 1866 and left the family home. Their younger daughter, Maria, born in 1853, suffered a debilitating illness during her adolescence, which left her confined

57 Ibidem, pp. 192–198, 242–243. Stefan Kieniewicz referenced a fragment of Mieroszevska's letter to Father Domagalski in the context of describing the 'forest insurgents' who carried out agitation among the peasants; S. Kieniewicz, *Powstanie styczniowe*, Warszawa 1972, p. 751.

58 „Czas”, issue 169, July 27, 1893, p. 3.

59 BPAUIPAN, rkps 2160, Pamiętniki Franciszka Salezego Gawrońskiego 1787–1869, p. 538.

to her bed. Mioszewska bore witness to Maria's remarkable recovery in May 1871—an event hailed as miraculous and credited to the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes. It is from Lucyna Mioszewska's letter that the details of this event are known.⁶⁰ It is believed that Mioszewska arrived at Krościenko between October 1862 and May 1871,⁶¹ though gaps in Emilia Skrzyńska's journals make it impossible to pinpoint an exact date. Cecylia's wedding in 1866 and her departure from the family home to live with her husband at his estate that summer may well have prompted the decision to bring Mioszewska into the household to help continue Maria's education and offer care during her parents' absences. The tone of Mioszewska's letter from May 1871 suggests a degree of intimacy with the family and a personal connection with her young charge.⁶²

Mioszewska remained close to the Skrzyński family for over two decades, until her death. Details of her life during the years 1877–1891 can be gleaned from the diary of Emilia Skrzyńska. During this time, Lucyna accompanied Emilia and Marynia on an extended journey through Italy and France from October 1876 to May 1877. Back home, immersed in the family's daily life, she attended gatherings, celebrations, and local events near Krosno, including the coronation of the miraculous image of Our Lady in Stara Wieś in September 1877. Beyond these, she travelled with Marynia and acted as a trusted intermediary in family affairs.⁶³ Lucyna's natural optimism and good humour offered much-needed solace in Emilia Skrzyńska's often troubled life. Whenever Mioszewska was away travelling or confined by illness, the household sank deeper into a sombre mood.⁶⁴

60 Kórnik Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Biblioteka Kórnicka PAN, BK), rkps 7492, Majątek kórnicki. Materiały różne dotyczące spraw kościelnych 1829–1882, List Lucyny Mioszewskiej do Katarzyny Dąbskiej pisany z Krościenka Wyźnego, 31 maja 1871, pp. 88–89v.

61 E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1855–1862*, passim. The diary entries kept until 16 October 1862 contain no mention of Lucyna Mioszewska's acquaintance with or arrival at the Skrzyński household.

62 BK, rkps 7492, p. 88: 'Our gentlemen were in Vienna, and in their absence, I slept next to Marynia because she was troubled by some sort of nervous disturbances at night. As a result, I was unable to write during that solitary nightly moment I usually reserved for myself.'

63 E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, pp. 246, 249, 260, 265–266.

64 Ibidem, p. 271.

Mieroszewska continued to live with the Skrzyńskis even after Marynia married Kazimierz Orpiszewski in July 1883. She formed a close friendship with the Orpiszewski family, particularly with Kazimierz's mother, Anna née Plater-Zyberk Orpiszewska, as evidenced by a letter dated 2 July 1893, expressing gratitude for name-day wishes and a gift.⁶⁵ Mieroszewska also cared for Marynia's daughter, Maria Immaculata (Imcia), born in 1885, and often looked after her during the absence of her parents and grandparents.⁶⁶ Lucyna's long stay with the Skrzyński family led to close bonds of affection and friendship, which Emilia Skrzyńska fondly remembered in her letters: 'How wonderful it is to see her [Mieroszewska] after being apart for a month and a half,' she wrote. 'We miss her [Mieroszewska], for she brought so much life to our small circle. Everyone, from Imcia to the rest of us, feels her absence.'⁶⁷

Although Mieroszewska was seven years older than Skrzyńska, she always showed respect towards her hostess. In turn, Emilia consistently referred to her formally as 'Miss Mieroszewska' in writing and never used her first name. Their time together was often spent with Lucyna reading aloud—whether it was novels—such as Henryk Sienkiewicz's *The Deluge*, religious texts (including sermons by the Jesuit Father Henryk Jackowski), or newspapers.⁶⁸ They shared a deep religious devotion, similarly understood and expressed, which led them to attend daily services at the local parish church together.⁶⁹ On 12th June 1874, Mieroszewska joined the Temperance Brotherhood in Krościenko Wyżne.⁷⁰ She also became a member of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Brotherhood, which

65 Archive of the Provincial Curia of the Congregation of the Resurrection in Kraków (Archiwum Kurii Prowincjalnej Zgromadzenia Zmartwychwstańców w Krakowie, AKPZZ), Pudło O. Orpiszewski, Listy różnych osób do Anny Orpiszewskiej, List Lucyny Mieroszewskiej z 2 lipca 1893 r.: 'I apologise for only thanking you today for your letter and the wishes it contained, for the beautiful book on the Passion of Christ, and for your kindness and benevolence, which are always so dear to me. I am undeserving of such goodness, but I know how to be grateful for it. Since I can offer nothing in return, I ask God to bless you and repay you on my behalf.'

66 E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, p. 349.

67 Ibidem, pp. 322, 384.

68 Ibidem, pp. 322, 323–324, 326, 436.

69 Ibidem, pp. 323–330.

70 Archiwum Parafialne w Krościenku Wyżnym, *Księga trzeźwości 1874–1920*, b.p.

had been active in the area since 1873.⁷¹ Alongside her sister, Helena Darowska, she joined the Society of St. Salomea in Kraków, although the society's activities were later suspended in 1885.⁷² For most of her life, Mieroszewska was a member of the Third Order of St. Francis as a tertiary.⁷³ She was of great help to Emilia during the illness of Ksawery Skrzyński from the spring of 1891, relieving Emilia of the solitary vigil at her husband's bedside.⁷⁴

During her time in Krościenko, Mieroszewska frequently travelled to visit her sisters, Helena Darowska and Antonina Nowosielska, in Kraków, and to Branice, where Cecylia Badenich (née Skrzyńska) lived with her husband, Stanisław Badeni. From around 1882 onwards, her beloved niece, Helena Darowska, resided in Branice as a companion to Emilia, the eldest daughter of the Badeni family.⁷⁵ Emilia Skrzyńska made no mention of Lucyna Mieroszewska's literary activities in her writings, but this omission may result from gaps in the surviving diaries. Similarly, there is no record of the financial terms under which Mieroszewska stayed with the Skrzyński family, though it is presumed that she lived as a resident, sustaining herself with her personal funds.

Lucyna Mieroszewska died on 22 July 1893, aged 76, in Kraków, at the residence of her sister, Helena Darowska, at 33 Świętego Tomasza Street. Her death followed a brief yet intense, illness that progressed rapidly. On 2 July, just weeks before her death, she wrote to Anna Orpiszewska, describing her condition with optimism for recovery:

It seems to have been God's will that I should fall ill here. I arrived in Kraków nearly healthy, but within days, my swelling became so severe that returning to Krościenko was no longer possible.⁷⁶

71 E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, p. 94.

72 „Czas”, issue 265, November 19, 1885, p. 2.

73 „Czas”, issue 167, July 25, 1893, p. 3.

74 E. z Jabłonowskich Skrzyńska, *Dzienniki z lat 1877–1891*, pp. 406, 409–416, 419–420, 424–426, 434.

75 Ibidem, pp. 246, 249, 292, 294, 310, 384.

76 AKPZZ, Pudło O. Orpiszewski, *Listy różnych osób do Anny Orpiszewskiej*, List Lucyny Mieroszewskiej z 2 lipca 1893 r.

She was grateful to her sister and nieces for their care. Helena Darowska, in a letter to Anna Orpiszewska, recounted the final days of her sister's life.

It broke my heart to watch Lucyna's life slipping away day by day. The battle against her illness was as poignant as it was unyielding: her body fought valiantly against the advancing disease, even as dropsy gradually took hold. Yet, despite her suffering and sorrow at leaving us, she was prepared to accept God's will. She confided in me more than once, saying, 'It is a great sacrifice to leave you all.'⁷⁷

Her funeral was held on 24 July 1893, followed by a memorial service on 27 July at the Reformatory Church in Kraków.⁷⁸ She was laid to rest in the family grave at the Rakowicki Cemetery. News of her death reached not only Kraków's *Czas* but also Warsaw's *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, which paid tribute to her work as a writer of children's literature.⁷⁹

Born into a noble family and raised to enjoy the privileges of an affluent landed gentry lifestyle, Mieroszewska's fortunes were overturned by a combination of familial, political, and economic circumstances. The daughter of a senator, she descended to the role of governess and resident dependent on others. Her patriotic convictions only added to the constraints on her life, curtailing her freedom of residence. Despite these adversities, she embraced the changes in her life and sustained herself financially while pursuing her interests in literature and pedagogy and publishing original works and translations. She also zealously supported insurgents and exiles. A committed member of religious brotherhoods and societies, she dedicated her final months to what had always been at the heart of her life and work: caring for children and attending to the everyday needs of her loved ones.

77 Ibidem, Pudło O. Orpiszewski. Listy różnych osób do Anny Orpiszewskiej, List Heleny Darowskiej z 27 lipca 1893 r.

78 Jagiellonian Library in Kraków (Biblioteka Jagiellońska w Krakowie), rkps 224649 v – Mie – Mitt 515, An obituary announcing the death of Lucyna Mieroszewska

79 „Tygodnik Ilustrowany”, issue 189, August 12, 1893, p. 111.

Streszczenie: Lucyna Mieroszewska, urodzona w 1817 r. w zamożnej rodzinie ziemiańskiej, to jedna z pierwszych polskich autorek poradników pedagogicznych oraz książek do nauki czytania dla dzieci. Wychowana w kręgu elity Krakowa i przygotowana do życia w sferach zamożnego ziemiaństwa na skutek okoliczności rodzinnych, politycznych i gospodarczych utraciła podstawy swej egzystencji. Z pozycji córki senatora zesłała do roli guwernantki i osoby towarzyszącej obcej rodzinie. Wskutek swego poparcia dla powstania styczniowego w 1863 r. straciła możliwość wyboru miejsca zamieszkania. Zaakceptowała jednak zmiany w życiu i podjęła aktywne działania w zakresie własnego utrzymania. Zajmowała się wychowaniem dzieci swych siostr oraz dziewcząt z galicyjskich rodzin ziemiańskich. Rozwijala przy tym własne zainteresowania literackie i pedagogiczne, publikując prace własne i tłumaczenia z języków obcych. Artykuł ma na celu zweryfikowanie podstawowych informacji biograficznych oraz uzupełnienie luk w biografii na podstawie niewykorzystanych do tej pory źródeł rękopiśmiennych.

Słowa kluczowe: Lucyna Mieroszewska, edukacja, guwernantka, wychowanie, Galicja, powstanie styczniowe.

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