

**Translation: “and named them in detail; these names are not recorded in this writ because they are defamatory.”<sup>1</sup>**

*feria s[ecunda] post do[min]icam Oculi. Anno 1561* [Monday after the third Sunday in Lent, i.e., March 10, 1561].

Wojciech of Poznań, son of Szymon<sup>2</sup> Skwarski. When he was called before the tribunal,<sup>3</sup> he confessed that he was a monk in Poznań<sup>4</sup> from Saint Michael’s to Lent [approx. 6 months],<sup>5</sup> and when he left the monastery, the Lords aldermen ordered him to be examined by women at the city hall in front of the men. And Lord Lipczyński, the mayor, was there on that occasion, and observed. Then the aldermen ordered the mother under the threat of death and infamy<sup>6</sup> to dress/present (*nosic*) him as a woman, and there, at the city hall, took the mother's overskirt and ordered him to be attired.<sup>7</sup> And the mother bought a maiden’s dress, brought it to the city hall and he was ordered to be clad in it, and thus he dressed in such clothes for ten years.

*Item* [also] he confessed that when he was going to enter the monastery, he took ten *złoty*<sup>8</sup> and two silver spoons from his mother and gave them to the elder monk.

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<sup>1</sup> For clarity, I inserted paragraph breaks at *Item*; the original is continuous.

<sup>2</sup> English: Simon.

<sup>3</sup> “When he was brought before the authorities.” *Urząd* in Old Polish can mean sentence, decree, will (God’s will, *urząd Boży*); duty; and collectively the persons who administer law or governance. All references to Old Polish are based on Antoni Krasnowolski and Stanisław Niedźwiedzki, *Michał Arct Słownik Staropolski: 2600 wyrazów i wyrażen używanych w dawnej mowie Polskiej* (Warsaw: Michał Arct, ca. 1920).

<sup>4</sup> German: Posen.

<sup>5</sup> September 29–February or March.

<sup>6</sup> *Nad gardłem I nad imieniem.*

<sup>7</sup> *Zapaśnica* is an exclusively feminine garment, an overskirt or apron that consists of an elongated, rectangular piece or long strip of cloth attached “at” (*za*) the waist (*pas*), whence the name (*zapaśnica*). The dress that the mother buys is, literally, described as a “young woman’s dress;” just as in English, neither a “dress” nor a “robe” is an exclusively gendered item of clothing in premodern Polish wardrobe, although English robe most often implies a man attired in formal robes.

<sup>8</sup> The circulating currency, the *złoty* (“golden”) was, in spite of its name, a silver coin, usually about 2-6 g of silver and an equivalent to standard gold coins, 3.5 g of gold. A silver *grzywna*, 197 g, was divided into 48 *groszy* or pennies, 4.1 g each. The red *złoty*, mentioned below, was gold currency including *floren* or *ducat*, 3.5 g of gold. The gold coins were mostly out

*Item* in Kraków, at the [house?] of Wojciech the carpenter he married Sebastyan [Sebastian] the brewer and he lived with him in Poznań for two years, and he allowed this Sebastyan to keep a woman, and he himself kept company with another one. Later, it so happened that in a quarrel over a woman whom Sebastyan had for his use, he hit that Sebastyan in the head with a brick and he was promptly healed, and then he died, but he doesn't know whether from that wound or not.

*Item* in Kazimierz, he married Wawrzyniec [Lawrence], farm worker,<sup>9</sup> and he said in front of him that he had fifteen hundred *złotych* payable in Poznań, and he [Lawrence] was tempted by it.

*Item* that little chain,<sup>10</sup> with which he was apprehended, he said that some landowner/nobleman gave it to him for the night's lodgings, and that Wojciech hid away with it, and then that landowner/nobleman departed.

*Item* he confessed that he also took money from other people for the night's lodgings, and hid [from them].

*Item* when he was marrying Wawrzyniec [Lawrence], he took two strings of beads<sup>11</sup> and two silver spoons that he had borrowed from people, and pawned them with

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of circulation and used to store capital; see Andrzej Jeziński and Cecylia Leszczyńska, *Historia gospodarcza Polski* (Warszawa: Key Text, 2003), 61-64.

<sup>9</sup> *Włoczek*, the person who leads the plow animal, the term that designated farm workers who may not have owned land. Wachholz translated that as "fisherman."

<sup>10</sup> Obviously, a precious metal chain necklace.

<sup>11</sup> *Pacierz* a string of beads, bead necklace, or rosary.

the Jew Jeleń [Hirsch]<sup>12</sup> for nine *złoty*ch and the decorative knife sheath [*nożenki*] for two red *złoty*ch.<sup>13</sup>

*Item* when he travelled from Opatow to Szydłow, to the guest house.<sup>14</sup> John the smith was drinking there, and there, with that smith, they were handfasted/shook hands<sup>15</sup> in front of good people and were married in church, and the next morning after that he left town with the Jews.

*Item* when he worked with pearls and gold, he kept the leftover materials and did not return them.

*Item* he took a silver ring from the lords of Górka.

*Item*, a silk summer dress,<sup>16</sup> [which] he said that his mother made it for him. But the damask [brocade] one he bought himself from a Jew in Poznań, he paid off half, but not the other half yet.

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<sup>12</sup> Hirsch is the German or Yiddish and Jeleń is Polish for “deer,” and both are the secular equivalents (*kinmūi*, expression of *kinah*) of Hebrew Zwi, the nickname of Naphtali son of Jacob and consequently the name of the Naphtali tribe. That is because Jacob compares Naphtali to a “swift deer” in his blessing. Hebrew names are used in the community and in sacred contexts, while secular names are used outside of the community.

<sup>13</sup> The Jewish population of Poland-Lithuania (inception, 1556) in the 1550s is estimated at 50,000. Its governing body and tribunal, The Council of Four Lands (Va’ad Arba’ Aratzot), met twice annually during the fairs in Lublin in Lesser Poland and Jarosław to the east. The Va’ad provided a continuous, autonomous tax and judicial governance from the 1520s-1764. Jewish communities are documented in the 1550s in nearly every town mentioned in the deposition. For example, there were 89 Jewish families in Poznań in 1549, and a first synagogue was built in Szydłow in 1534. Kazimierz, where Wojciech was deposed, was home to the most prominent Jewish community. Competing with the more traditional Jewish refugee destinations in North Africa (today’s Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt) and Italy, Poland became increasingly significant after the massacres of the Rhine valley (Worms, Mainz) during the first crusade of 1096 and subsequent crusades, as well as repeated expulsions of Jewish communities from England (ending in 1290), France (1182, 1306, 1322, 1394), Spain (the Great Conversion of 1391; 1492), Portugal and elsewhere. A royal decree of Bolesław the Pious (1264) prohibited blood libel. It was followed by subsequent royal legislation of 1531, 1556, 1564, 1576, 1633 and protections issued by local communities, but it is important to understand that, just as the royal grants and communal protections in other parts of Europe, these laws, intended to stem the tide of growing anti-Semitism, also document the rising persecutions. The rise of antisemitism in the premodern period is clearly mapped out in Halina Węgrzynek, “Blood Libel Accusations in Old Poland (mid-16<sup>th</sup>–mid-17<sup>th</sup> centuries),” *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies, Vol. Division B: History of the Jewish People* (1997): 121–7.

<sup>14</sup> Usually located on the Market Square, the Guest House provided lodgings for travelling merchants.

<sup>15</sup> *Dali ręce*, gave hands, which may mean either “were betrothed or wed” or “agreed to,” i.e., shook hands on a contract.

<sup>16</sup> *Letnik kitajski*, a “Chinese” (*kitajski*), i.e., silk summer garment (*letnik*).

*Item* he confessed that he bought a stolen silver cup from a boy, which boy stole the cup from a certain countess Ostrowska, who stayed with his mother,<sup>17</sup> and he bartered it for a belt, for which he paid extra four *talars*.<sup>18</sup>

*Item*, on the second day, that Wojciech freely confessed without any torture that when he was a monk in the monastery in Poznań, he had relations with a married woman, Rybitka [Fishwife?].<sup>19</sup>

*Item* in that monastery as well that Wojciech and the organist of that church would lie in the same bed with Clara the German and they both had sex with her.

*Item* when he left the monastery, then and there, in Poznań, learning embroidery, and already wearing women's clothing, he had sex with Anuchna, who was learning [apprenticed?] at the same place.<sup>20</sup>

*Item* he dressed as a maiden through the summer/for a year,<sup>21</sup> living at old Madam Spławska's in Poznań, where he was with the young girl, Annuchna, whom Madam Spławska was raising, who later married a tailor in Śrotka.

*Item*, when he lived at Madam Królikowska's two miles from Żnin, he courted a Maiden, and he had sex with a [female] gardener.

*Item*, when he lived in Poznań with Sebastian the brewer, whom he had married in Kraków, he allowed that Sebastian to keep a woman, and he himself had sex with another one, that first Clara.

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<sup>17</sup> The sentence allows for ambiguity. Either Ostrowska stayed with the boy's mother or with her own mother. The former is more likely.

<sup>18</sup> *Talars* are silver coins, 23–24g of silver, and one suspects the belt was silver, as well.

<sup>19</sup> *Rybitwa* is fisherman in Old Polish, so perhaps fisherwoman, or the fisherman's wife. One would so much want this to mean "mermaid." Nastulczyk and Oczko edit as "Rybicka." Following the basic standard of scientific publications at the time, Wachholz published two versions of his article including the translation and commentary on Wojciech's deposition in Polish and German (see note 1 above), and he translates Rybitka into German as a trade name, Fishwife.

<sup>20</sup> Wachholz's German translation reads: who served there.

<sup>21</sup> Polish has one word for summer and year.

*Item* in Poznań, after the death of that Sebastian, he sold beer, kept loose women, had sex with them himself, and allowed others to have sex with them.<sup>22</sup>

*Item*, in Kraków, in one place he had relations with a cook and he gave her white boots, so that she would not tell on him.

*Item*, in Środa, also in a woman's clothing, he had relations with a [female] cook. *Item*, in the little town of Dolsko in the same clothing he consorted with a [female] cook.

*Item* he did that a lot elsewhere.

*Item* he confessed that, in those women's clothes, he had his way with both unmarried and married women, and used his<sup>23</sup> bodily attributes [body] with them, and named them in detail; their names are not described in this writ because they are defamatory. Burned.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> As sex work historians show, the two trades, barkeep and pimp were frequently combined; see Mengel, "From Venice to Jerusalem," 2004.

<sup>23</sup> *Z niemi cielesności swej używał.* *Cielesny* is embodied, *ciało*, a body, and *cielesnik* (a person) is a voluptuary. In Polish, the possessive agrees with that which is possessed. *Cielesność* is feminine, as is the possessive *swej*.

<sup>24</sup> "I mianowicie ony powiedział, których imiona dla ich żelżywości tym listem nie są opisane."