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The History of the Private Life of Maria (Lupu) Radziwiłł
Reflected in the Images of the Epoch

The history in images gives us a visual frame of the chronography of historical events, as seen by certain eminent personalities and figures. Undoubtedly, the images of the women of the time – the mural paintings (frescoes) and the portraits preserved in the foreign museums (in Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, etc.) or in the private collections give us the unique possibility of seeing the history as a whole, in all its nuances and colors, thus, filling in the gaps of the written descriptions that sometimes have a subjective character or are entirely missing. Also, the visual aspect used in the methodology of historical research allows the author to combine texts and images, and, thus, to augment the value of the material documents – narrative sources and art pieces, in order to create the profound, multi-aspect, detailed portrait of the epoch in general terms, as well as to give out the reflection of the daily life, spirituality and morals of the time.

The different images of Maria (Lupu) Radziwiłł – engravings and paintings from the 17th–18th centuries – are of particular interest.

The present work aims to present certain fragments of the private life of the Princess Maria (Lupu) Radziwiłł¹ and has been elaborated based on the analysis of the art pieces preserved in museum collections.

¹ Maria, the daughter of Vasile Lupu, was the second wife of the nobleman Janusz Radziwiłł. His first wife was Katarzyna Potocka, the daughter of Maria Movilă, born of her marriage to Ștefan Potocki and was the niece of Ieremia Movilă.

Maria was born of the first marriage of Vasile Lupu to Tudosca, the daughter of Steward Costea Bucioc (Băcioc)², and got married to the notorious magnate, Janusz Radziwiłł. The wedding took place on February 5, 1645, in Iași, the capital of the Principality of Moldavia. There are various records speaking about this wedding, that describe Maria's beauty³ and intelligence ("a learned girl")⁴.

In this context, we will attempt to chronologically follow the history of the portraits and images of Maria, preserved in various foreign museums and collections, as contemporary Moldova does not hold any art piece reflecting the image of the 17th-century lady, not to mention the portraits of other ladies and princesses of the time.

At present, there are a few effigies (effigy-images) of the votive painting of the Three Holy Hierarchs Church (Iași, Romania), and also portraits and engravings of Maria.

Figure 1

Fragments of the fresco of the Three Hierarchs Church (Iași)



Source: C. Nicolescu, *Istoria costumului de curte în țările române, secolele XIV–XVII*, București 1970, pl. CCIII.

² He was one of the most influent boyars of his time. He commanded the Moldavian army in the war against the Turks, after which he retired to Poland. See: N. Stoicescu, *Dicționar al marilor dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova. Secolele XIV–XVII*, Editura Enciclopedică Română, București 1971, pp. 347–348.

³ Eberhard Werner Happel (1647–1690) described the wedding of Janusz Radziwiłł to the daughter of Vasile Lupu, Maria, based on the mentions found in a Latin manuscript that he cites in his record and that seems to have been the work of an eye-witness. See: E.W. Happel, *Căsătoria principelui Radziwiłł cu o domniță din Moldova*, [in:] *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. V, ed. Maria Holban, M.M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru și Paul Cernovodeanu, Editura Științifică, București 1973, p. 643.

⁴ *Călătoria lui Paul de Alep*, [in:] *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. VI, Volum îngrijit de Maria Holban, M.M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru și Paul Cernovo-deanu, Editura științifică și Enciclopedică, București 1976, pp. 25–35.

The fragments of the fresco of the Holy Three Hierarchs Church (Iași) depict Maria at the back of her stepmother, Ecaterina the Circassian. Both ladies are represented having similar hats, garnished with fur, wearing earrings; their clothing pieces are made in a similar style (having stylistic similarities). The apparent resemblance between the two women incited some researchers to state that Ecaterina would have been the mother of Maria Lupu⁵.

In the same church of Iași there has been preserved the portrait of the biological mother of Maria – Lady Tudosca, where we are able to observe the same clothing details – the fur-garnished hat, the earrings, a pearl necklace at her neck. The fact that this necklace appears in all of the later portraits of Maria is of special interest to us, and helps us make a supposition on its origin – it must have been inherited from her mother. Maria's devotion to her mother is thus captured by the portraits' authors.

We will further present two similar portraits of Maria (Lupu) Radziwiłł. The first portrait was executed by an unknown author based on the work of Matthäus Merian (junior) (1621–1687)⁶.

⁵ While describing Maria's wedding to Janusz Radziwiłł, Georg Kraus wrongly wrote that "Maria was born to a young Circassian woman", in G. Kraus, *Cronica Transilvaniei 1608–1665*, Translation and introductive study by Gh. Duzinchevici, E. Reus-Mirza, Editura Academiei R.P.R., București 1965, p. 122. We can find a similar, wrong conceit, that Ecaterina was the mother of the daughters of Vasile Lupu, in the description of a German anonymous author, who, in 1652, attended the wedding of Ruxandra to Timuș Hmelnițki: "after the wedding... when the hospodar was taking farewell of his son-in-law [Timuș – L.Z.], the young lady [Ruxandra – L.Z.] was embracing her mother and bitterly crying", in: L. Zabolotnaia, *Сведения современников о свадьбе Руксандры и Тимуша Хмельницкого. Нові дослідження на-м'яток козацької доби в Україні*, Матеріали XX Міжнародної конференції в центрі Пам'яткознавства в Києві 23–24 марта, том 2, Інститут Національної Історії України, Київ 2011, pp. 293–305. This information cannot be true out of the simple reason that, after 5 years of marriage to Vasile Lupu, Ecaterina could not have had an adult daughter. We may presume that all the wrong information put out by the contemporaries, stating that Ecaterina would have been the mother of Maria and Ruxandra, has a simple explanation. The relation between the stepmother and the daughters was apparently such a strong and close one, that it was not giving birth to any rumors. The historical litterature shares the wrong opinion on the origin of Maria up to the present time. The article by H. Widacka, *Mołdawska małżonka Janusza Radziwiłła*, http://www.wilanow-palac.pl/moldawska_malzonka_janusza_radziwilla.html, access 15 III 2015, serves as an example, and states that Maria was the daughter of Vasile Lupu (of Albanese origin) and of Lady Grillo of Venice – Vasile Lupo (of Armenian origin) and Venetian Grillo.

⁶ The answer we got from National Museum in Warsaw: Unknown author, around 1733–1737, based on the work of Matthäus Merian. Portrait of Maria (Lupu) Radziwiłł from the series of Radziwiłł portraits now called in "laurel wreath" painted on request of Anna Sanguszko, oil, canvas 106.5 x 71 cm, inv. no MP 4481.

Figure 2

Lady Tudosca, the first wife of Vasile Lupu (fresco of the Holy Three Hierarchs Church, Iași)



Source: C. Nicolescu, *op. cit.*, pl. CLXXIX.

Figure 3

Maria (Lupu) Radziwiłł. Unknown author, portrait based on the work of Matthäus Merian (junior)



Source: Visual Documentation and Digitalization Department, National Museum in Warsaw.

Figure 4

Unknown author



Source: <https://www.google.MariaRadziwill>, access 12 XII 2017.

This painting points out the following details: Maria (Lupu) Radziwiłł is depicted in a costume that was fashionable at the time, in a mixed style (presenting local traditional, but also European elements) (Spanish – sic!) and was fitted – emphasizing the elegance of her graceful figure. We can observe that Maria had beautifully rounded eyebrows and sensual lips, and her face shows up a charming smile. The massive, embroidered cross, hanging over her clothes, draws our attention – it is a detail that speaks of her religious identity and also of Maria's deep faith. She wears a white frilly veil, falling on her shoulders. This sort of head dress was giving women of the time a certain distinction, but was also pointing out their modesty, especially when the white color was complemented by a black dress and black hair.

On top of this head dress, there was a velvet bonnet, generously sprinkled with pearls, gemstones, and had an aigrette at the right side of the cap. The two-string necklace is particularly attractive, and so are the pearl beads, aligned in three rows, braided, completed by gemstones, diamonds and flower ornamented, diamond studded medallions. This superb jewelry embellishes and brings out the torso, down to the waist.

The second portrait was probably (? – L.Z.) made by the painter Abraham Westerfeld⁷. It visibly resembles the first (this portrait presents a certain affinity/similarity to the first one) – the lady's costume is just as splendid. Maria is depicted wearing an embroidered shirt, with flower ornaments, and wears a bonnet adorned with gemstones on her head, as well as a kerchief and a very elegant hairdo.

In both paintings, we may observe that not only Maria's clothes are almost identical – so is the jewelry worn on her neck, the three-row pearl strings and everything else. Nevertheless, the second portrait differs in that Maria is depicted as very young, extremely beautiful, and her femininity is emphasized by her gentle and delicate and, at the same time, a bit coquettish look.

We dare say that it is this portrait that was sent to the noble Janusz Radziwiłł when the engagement promise was made, through the emissaries of Vasile Lupu,

⁷ The mentioned picture from 1644, perhaps painted by Abraham Westerfeld (who is known to have painted Vasile Lupu) was lost but it was copied in chalcography technology in 1652 by a German graphic artist Matthäus Merian the Younger (1621–1687), and the engraving was reflected in the sixth volume of *Theatrum Europaeum*, published in Frankfurt am Main., in Z. Batoński, *Abraham van Westervelt, malarz holenderski i jego prace w Polsce*, „Przegląd Historii Sztuki”, 1990/31, t. 2, z. 3–4, pp. 115–129; T. Sulerzyska, *Galeria obrazów i „gabinety sztuki” Radziwiłłów w XVII w.*, „Biuletyn Historii Sztuki”, 1961, No. 2, Warszawa, pp. 87–95; A. Paliušytė, *Jonušo Radvilos mecenatystė*, „Lietuvos kultūros tyrinėjimai”, t. 1, p. 165; *Lietuvos dailininkų žodynas, t. 1: XVI–XVIII a.* (editor Aistė Paliušytė), Kultūros filosofijos ir meno institutas, Vilnius 2005, pp. 269–270.

in 1644. Eberhard Werner Happel mentions that: “after the emissaries sent in the name of their master, the prince, got the approval, and after the engagement has been made, according to the royal customs, they have brought back on their return the image or the portrait of the young bride, the princess”⁸.

Figure 5
Engraving by M. Berson



Source: The image has been offered by the Kedainiai Regional Museum Directorate. We express our heartfelt thanks on this occasion.

The third portrait is represented by an engraving made by the painter M. Berson. Maria is depicted in a Spanish-style (L.Z.), flower ornament dress. She wears on her head the same kerchief, covered by a velvet bonnet, sprinkled with pearls. As for the jewelry, we may notice the same double-row pearl necklace, as well as the three-row pearl strings, running over her chest, down to her waist. Maria's face denotes delicacy, but her look betrays a note of melancholy and a feeling of longing and solitude. The cross is again emphasized.

It is well known that, after her marriage to Janusz Radziwiłł⁹, who was an evangelist, Maria did not change her religion, and she remained a faithful Orthodox Christian and, till the end of her life, she offered financial support to the churches, from her belongings. We are tempted to presume that Maria had a preference for the black color – the color of elegance¹⁰. There has been pre-

⁸ E.W. Happel, *op. cit.*, p. 643.

⁹ Moreover, the marriage ceremony was performed by Metropolitan Petru Movilă according to the Orthodox Church canons.

¹⁰ R. Guzevičiūtė, *Tarp Rytų ir Vakarų: XVI–XIX a. LDK bajorų kostiumo forma-vimosi aplinkybės ir pavidalai*, Versus aureus, Vilnius 2006, p. 234.

served a letter of Maria from 1651 in which she asks her tailor to bring her an expensive piece of fabric, by all means black¹¹. We presume she was the one to choose the black color.

Figure 6
Maria (Lupu) Radziwiłł



Source: the engraving of Hirsz Leybowicz, *Icones familiae ducalis Radivilliane* (1758).

The next picture (engraving) is made by the gifted engraver Hirsz Leybowicz, who, on 17 October 1747 signed, together with Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł “Рыбонькой”, the contract for founding the gallery of 90 portraits of the Radziwiłł family¹². This album was finished in 1756¹³. We may certainly presume that Leybowicz used, in his engraving, the portrait of Matteus Merian¹⁴. The face of the princess is somewhat distinct (quite original) – she is beautiful, elegant, gracious, she has an aristocratic (noble) appearance and a distinguished look, full of dignity.

¹¹ Lietuvos Valstybes Istorijos Archyvas (LVIA), F. 1280. Radivilos 1416–1939.

¹² H. Widacka, *Działalność Hirsza Leybowicza i innych rytowników na dworze Nieświeskim Michała Kazimierza Radziwiłła „Rybeński” w świetle badań archiwalnych*, „Biuletyn Historii Szutki”, 1977, no 1, pp. 62–72.

¹³ О. Баженова, *Город Мир и альбом фамильных портретов князей Радзивиллов 1758 года издания, Мирски замак і замкі Цэнтральнай і Усходняй Еўро-пы, Праблемы рэстаўрацыі і музеэфікацыі*, Минск 2006; В. Бажэнава, *Ляйбавіч Гірш, Вялікае Княства Літоўскае. Энцыклапедыя*, Беларуская Энцыклапедыя імя П. Броўкі, Том 3, Минск 2005, р. 235.

¹⁴ В. Бажэнава, *op. cit.*, р. 235; J. Kołaczkowski, *Słownik rytowników polskich*, Lwów 1874, р. 34; О. Баженова, *Город Мир и альбом фамильных портретов князей Радзивиллов 1758 года издания...*, *op. cit.*; idem, *Радзивилловский Несвиж*, Харвест, Минск 2010; В.Ф. Шматаў, *Беларуская кніжная гравюра XVI–XVIII стагоддзяў*, Минск 1984, pp. 170–175.

However, there is a certain difference to be noticed between the engraved representations and the original paintings. In the engravings, Maria is depicted having quite a big nose, even if the paintings and the engravings made to order were usually hiding the defects (especially the bodily defects – L.Z.).

Figure 7

The portrait of Maria (unknown author)



Source: <https://www.google.MariaRadziwill>, access 12 XII 2017.

The last portrait of Maria, made by an unknown author¹⁵, depicts Maria in the last years of her life, most probably taking into consideration the difference between the remarkable images belonging to the above-mentioned authors (Abraham Westerfeld, Matthäus Merian și M. Berson). Nevertheless (and in a surprising way), Maria is depicted wearing similar clothes (the same shirt as in the previous portraits and engravings), having the same jewels and the same hairdo, etc. However, the material affinity does not hide her different appearance: Maria is old and has a morbid, sick and saddened expression. This portrait has probably been made in the last years of her life. It is known that she was suffering from a pulmonary disease (atrophy/tuberculosis) that was incurable at the time and was also the cause of her death. Maria passed away in 1660 (on January 14),

¹⁵ There is a wrong opinion considering that this portrait belongs to Maria Vladimir Starițkaya, the sovereign (legitimate, titular) queen of Livonia, the widow of King Magnus of Livonia. The portrait was published as such in the work of С.П. Бартнев, *Московский кремль в старину и теперь* (в двух томах), Издание Министерства Императорскаго Двора, Синодальная типография, Москва 1912–1916, Т. II, р. 237 (fig. 257). At a certain time, the portrait was being kept in the Moscow Armory, <http://ermonn.livejournal.com/1458.html>

according to the medical attestation¹⁶. The physiological details are also strongly put out, particularly through Maria's hands, that seem obviously swollen. It is worth mentioning that the earlier portraits did not show the Lady's hands. In this portrait, her hands, especially the left hand in which Maria is holding a napkin, seem to be (slightly) curved. Maria is wearing a pendant on her left thumb. In the left hand, bent from the elbow, she is holding a napkin, and she has a massive ring on her finger.

The portrait of the two wives of Janusz Radziwiłł (Katarzyna Potocka and Maria Voloska) has a peculiar historical and artistic value for the study of portraits and paintings in the visual area of historical research.

Figure 8

Katarzyna Potocka and Maria Radziwiłł (Johannes Shretter, 1646)



Source: Т.А. Карпович, *Портреты из Несвижа и Гродно в собрании Государственного художественного музея БССР*, [in:] *Музей 1, Художественные собрания СССР*, Минск 1980.

The work was done in 1646 (oil, size: 201 x 122) on the order of Janusz Radziwiłł by the baroque painter Johannes Shretter (?–1685) and was probably executed for the new castle of Vilnius¹⁷. At present, this renowned double-portrait is being preserved by the National Museum of History and Culture of Belarus¹⁸.

¹⁶ T. Wasilewski, *Radziwiłłowa z Lupulów Maria*, *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. XXX, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1987, pp. 399–401.

¹⁷ Т.А. Карпович, *Портреты из Несвижа и Гродно в собрании Государственного художественного музея БССР*, [in:] *Музей 1, Художественные собрания СССР*, Минск 1980, pp. 136–155; Idem, *Второе рождение портретов из Несвижа и Гродно*, Минск 1981; J.T. Petrus, Т.А. Карпович, *Portrety osobistości dawnej Rzeczypospolitej w zbiorach mińskich*, Kraków 1991; *Вяртанне. Нявіжскія зборы Радзівілаў*, Минск 2002; О. Баженова, *Радзивилловский Несвиж*, Минск 2007.

¹⁸ Н. Высоцкая, *Инventарь XVII в. коллекции Радзивилловских портретов*, опубликованный Т. Сулежицкой в 1962, *Нявіжскія зборы Радзівілаў іх фарміраванне, гістарычны*

When compared to Katarzyna, who is depicted as a graceful and feminine woman, Maria has a majestic look, prideful to a certain extent, speaking of her royal blood. She holds her head up high, and the prominent eyebrows make us recall the resemblance between her and her father (known for his ambition and tenacity) – Vasile Lupu, the ruler of Moldavia.

Her face does not put out any emotion. The black color of her dress gives her a sumptuous appearance. Johannes Shretter's portrait does not show her pearl necklace, and the hair is arranged in a cascade of rich curls, even though all the other portraits depict her wearing a bun, and having a bare forehead.

Figure 9

Vasile Lupu (fresco from the Three Hierarchs Church, Iași)



Source: C. Nicolescu, *op. cit.*, pl. CLXV.

We can clearly see here the resemblance between Maria and her father: the oval shape of her face, the nose, the big black eyes and the volitive look, the curved eyebrows, the hair color and the wide forehead.

It is remarkable that both wives (Katarzyna, who was deceased, and Maria, who was alive at the time) are wearing similar dresses, having the same shape and style – fitted at the waist and flared out at the bottom, also richly garnished with buttons and chenille and having white collars and cuffs. The colors chosen by the painter (or the fact that he had accepted someone's express request? – L.Z.) are also interesting. Katarzyna Potocka, the deceased, is wearing red, blazing colors, whilst Maria (Lupu) Radziwiłł, who was alive and healthy (and full of

лёс, цяперашняе месцязнаходжанне і шляхі выка-рыстання, Мінск 2002, p. 128; J.T. Petrus, T.A. Karpowicz, *op. cit.*

lust for living) is depicted wearing black (mourning colors), but also looks sober and elegant. This color discordance does not make the women antagonistic, but rather puts them in a complementary position: they both have the same hairdos, they are both wearing fans, the position of their hands is asymmetric, they are wearing bracelets on their hands and rings on their fingers. The only difference is that the deceased wife does not wear a necklace and has only one ring, whilst the actual wife, Maria, is wearing two.

From our point of view, this compositional portrait is rendered unique by a striking deep meaning, having a particular balance and subtle visual outlines. Janusz Radziwiłł ordered this portrait immediately after his wedding to Maria Lupu, after a year – in 1646 that is. The portrait is certainly exceptional and inimitable, a combination of correctness and harmony. It is obvious that Janusz Radziwiłł tried to express, through this painting, his devotion to his first wife, by immortalizing her memory in his heart. At the same time, he wanted to show his respect towards his second wife. The painting speaks in a remarkable way of his loyalty towards tradition and family. The double portrait is, additionally, a simple illustration of the directory principles and values of life: remember your dead; cherish, protect and respect the living; it represents the antinomic euphemism of life: life and death, continuity, eternity and immortality of love.

The painting is significant from an artistic as well as from a historical point of view, as it “mirrors” the aspects of daily life, the ethical and spiritual values of the society of the epoch. It is indisputable that the portrait is incomparable and exceptional through its style, being a work of art as well as a unique historical source.

This study is an attempt to edify the preserved images of the epoch from different points of view: as works of art, as painting techniques of the time or of the historical patrimony in general, in order to frame, in a particular way, the importance of moral values. According to our own point of view, it is this sort of historical sources that allows the discovery and the study of certain research areas that have been neglected by the specialists: people's behavior and way of thinking, snippets of the private daily life of families, regarded as a whole, the spirituality and manners of the epoch and, particularly, of women.

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Summary: In this study, the author presents some of the fragments of the private life of Princess Maria (Lupu) Radziwiłł on the basis of illustrative material. Of particular interest in this respect are various images of Maria (Lupu) Radziwiłł on frescos, engravings, and paintings of the 17th–18th centuries, which are preserved in the museums and churches of Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, Romania, and Russia. For the first time in historical literature, the author attempted to chronologically follow the history of portraits and images of Maria. The use of the illustrative aspect in historical research methodology allows the author to combine the letter and the image, raising the value of material documents – narrative sources and artworks – to create a deep and multifaceted portrait of the era in general and the image of daily private life, spirituality and the morals of the era.

Keywords: Maria (Lupu) Radziwiłł, art, private life, illustrative aspect, engraving, portrait

Historia życia osobistego Marii (Lupu) Radziwiłł ukazane w obrazach epoki

Streszczenie: W artykule zostały przybliżone niektóre fragmenty z życia osobistego księżniczki Marii (Lupu) Radziwiłł. W tym celu wykorzystano materiał ilustracyjny. Na szczególne zainteresowanie zasługują różne wizerunki Marii przedstawione w formie fresków, rycin i obrazów pochodzących z XVII–XVIII wieku, które zachowały się w muzeach i kościołach Polski, Litwy, Białorusi, Rumunii i Rosji. Po raz pierwszy w literaturze historycznej podjęto próbę chronologicznego odtworzenia historii portretów i obrazów przedstawiających Marię. Zastosowanie aspektu ilustracyjnego w metodologii badań historycznych pozwala autorowi połączyć słowo i obraz, podnosząc wartość dokumentów rzeczowych – źródeł narracyjnych i dzieł sztuki – w celu stworzenia głębokiego i wielopłaszczyznowego obrazu epoki a także odwzorowania życia codziennego, kwestii duchowości i moralności tamtego okresu.

Słowa kluczowe: Maria (Lupu) Radziwiłł, sztuka, życie osobiste, aspekt ilustracyjny, rycina, portret