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Women's texts of the 17th century as a field of interdisciplinary research[1]

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Textele feminine din secolul al XVII -lea ca domeniu de cercetare interdisciplinară. Cercetarea este consacrată studierii şi analizei unei scrisori, scrise personal de Anna Movilă (Mohylanka), la 4 martie 1664, din oraşul Lvov (Rzeczpospolita). Utilizarea metodelor interdisciplinare permite investigarea acestei surse preţioase ca izvor cu caracter istorico-literar, precum şi relevanţa caracteristicilor personale ale Annei Movilă (Mohylanka) în contextul complex al epocii studiate.

Cuvinte-cheie: Anna Movilă (Mohylanka), textele feminine din secolul al XVII -lea, scrisoarea, studii interdisciplinare.

In historical research, various written sources of the 17th century are primarily considered, as carriers of information about certain events, facts, phenomena, and so on. The informational and factual content of these sources is especially important when studying issues related to the private life of a historical figure, as well as when recreating the realities of a particular historical era. Our work focuses on an authentic private document, related to a branch of historical anthropology known as women's history. The main source for this study is a letter written personally by Anna Mohyła (Movilyanka) on March 4, 1664 in Lviv. Anna, the youngest and most famous daughter of Ieremia Movilă[2], married four times[3], and all her husbands came from Polish magnate families[4].

Based on the above, in this brief study we are faced with the following tasks: (1) study of the document as a historical and literary source that has survived to the present day; (2) analysis of factual information from the contents of the letter

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[2] Ieremia Movilă, the Voivode of Moldavia between August 1595 and May 1600, and again between September 1600 and July 10, 1606.

[3] 1. Maximilian Przerębski (1577-1639); 2. Jan Szedziwóy Czarnkowski (d. 1644); 3.Władysław Myszkowski (d. 1658); 4. Stanisław Rewera Potocki (1589-1667).

[4] Anna Movilyanka's biography is covered in a series of scientific publications by the author, so we do not consider it necessary to repeat ourselves. In particular, L. Zabolotnaia. Movilencele şi descendenţii. Pagini necunoscute. Unele contribuţii la genealogia descendenţilor lui Ieremia Movilă. În: *Tyragetia*, Serie nouă, 2008. Nr. 2, pp. 27-42; Ibidem. *Moldavian Women in History: Destinies, Politics, and Love*: *Collection of Articles*. Cetatea de Scaun: 2018.

and its correlation with known biographical data on the life and activities of Anna Mohyła (Mohylanka).

The use of interdisciplinary methods of historical anthropology in the study of one individual letter will allow us to investigate this source in the textual historical and literary plan, as well as to reveal the personal characteristics of the female character in the multifaceted contextuality of the studied era.

In addition, the letter, like no other historical source, can recreate an illustrative image of Anna Mohyła (Mohylanka), shed light on her social and legal status, the level of her personal culture, education and intelligence, as well as highlight the features of her personal, family life, the style of private and public life, etc. As the founders of historical anthropology wrote: "We need to study not just the past, but the person in it... the phenomenon of man in time"[5].

The letter was discovered during the author's research and documentary internships in recent years in archives, museums and manuscript departments of leading libraries in Poland (Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, Krasiński Library, The Warsaw National Museum) and, in particular, in the Kórnik Library (Polish: Biblioteka Kórnicka), in the manuscript collection "*Akta prawno-majątkowe Jana Tomickiego, miecznika sierazkiego, podsędka krakowskiego (1646-1677). XVII wiek*"[6].

It is interesting that in the Kórnik Library we found a whole series of letters from Anna Mohyła (Mohylanka)to no less famous historical figures of that time, such as, for example, Janusz Radziwiłł[7], son-in-law of Maria Mohyła[8], and then of Vasile Lupu[9], Francyszk Przerębski (Przerembski), a close male relative of Anna Mohyła's first husband, Maksymilian Przerębski (Przerembski) and others. However, in terms of character, form and content, this group of sources deserves a separate, more detailed, deep and comprehensive study. In the presented work, this is not the subject of research.

In this context, it should be initially emphasized that women's letters of the 17th century, as a historical and literary source of the era, are characterized by a number of exceptional features.

Firstly, after more than three centuries, the number of these documents is extremely limited, as very few have survived to this day. Secondly, most often they are partially damaged (worn paper, faded ink, illegible text, etc.), and therefore fragmentary. Thirdly, it is equally important to emphasize that this group of sources is insufficiently covered in historical literature, especially in Romanian.

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5 A. Burguiere. Anthropologie historique. În: *Dictionnaire des sciences historiques.* Paris: PUF, 1986, p. 52.

6 Biblioteka Kórnicka sygnatura 11423, dokument 2, strona 6. Tytul „*Akta prawno-majątkowe Jana Tomickiego, miecznika sierazkiego, podsędka krakowskiego (1646-1677). XVII wiek*". Further in the text: BK, syg. 11423.

7 Prince Janusz Radziwiłł, also known as Janusz the Second or Janusz the Younger (Lithuanian: *Jonušas Radvila*, 2 December 1612 – 31 December 1655) was a noble and magnate in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. His first wife was Katarzyna Potocka, the daughter of Maria Potocka (Mohylanka), the sister of Anna Mohyła (Mohylanka) and the granddaughter of the Moldavian ruler Ieremie Movilă. His second wife was Maria Lupu-Radziwill, daughter of the Moldavian ruler Vasile Lupu (was the voievod of Moldova between 1634 and 1653. In 1648 he received the Polish indigenate).

8 L. Zabolotnaia. *Movilencele şi descendenţii*, pp. 27-42.

9 L. Zabolotnaia. *Maria (Lupu) Radziwiłł's private life in documents, letters, and images.* Chişinău: 2020, p.111.



Portrait of Anna Mohylanka, Francja. canvas, oil; 64×52.0 cm. From the collection of the Museum of King Jan III's Palace in Wilanów.



Portrait of Anna Mohylanka, Elżbieta Krasińska; 1868; canvas, oil; 74.6×59.6 cm. From the collections of the National Museum in Warsaw.

Documents containing information of a political, socio-economic and genealogical nature are still a priority. Documents of a private nature, in particular women's letters, unfortunately, either serve as a supplement to studies of global political events, or are ignored altogether.

Therefore, in this brief study we will limit ourselves to publishing and analyzing only one letter, which allows us to fully illuminate the issue raised. Our choice is explained by a number of factors. Firstly, the letter has been preserved in almost perfect condition: the text is legible, the paper is not damaged, there is an authentic signature of Anna and a clear imprint of her signet ring, the date of writing is indicated: March 4, 1664.

Secondly, the analysis of the writing technique, the individual graphological features of the handwriting indicate that the letter was written by Anna herself, and not by her secretary. This conclusion is supported by the elaborate handwriting in the letter and the level of writing technique, which is manifested in the ability to produce handwritten text with certain specific graphic elements.

Thirdly, with a general visual analysis of the handwriting, we can clearly see the main aspects that characterize the author, such as the shape and size of the letters, the slant of the handwriting, the intervals between letters and words, the pressure on the pen, the speed and style of writing. A detailed study of the shape of the letters also indicates certain personal characteristics. The letter is written according to grammatical and graphic rules of that time: even, clear letters, sentences are built in a strict logical sequence, horizontality, linearity and propor-

tional spacing are observed. The features of writing the capital letters A, P, D, and T are interesting. In our opinion, even a brief analysis of the letter characterizes Anna Mohyła (Mohylanka) as a highly educated, decisive and emotional woman. Character, as is known, is an important component of the psychological portrait of a person, so this letter plays a special role in recreating the image of Anna Mohyła (Mohylanka) in the context of the era.

Anna Mohyła's education and charisma are also evidenced by the reviews of her contemporaries. In particular, the Polish researcher Karolina Targosz in her monograph on educated women of the 17th century in Poland, mentioning Anna Mohyła (Mohylanka), cites very interesting documentary evidence from eyewitnesses: "The Frenchman Le Laboureur wrote about her many times, noting that she loved to attend balls and *was the best dancer, especially in Wallachian dances*. Anna Mohylanka -Myszkowska also had a special merit: she had the gift of very beautiful calligraphy"[10].

In addition to the above, this letter is also a unique historical source containing exceptional information about our heroine.

Initially, the letter draws attention to how Anna Mohyła (Mohylanka) positions herself in society. In addition to listing her titles as the wife of a highly illustrious person, Stanisław Rewera Potocki[11], she first of all indicates her Moldavian princely origin from the Movilă dynasty: "*Anna Mohiłanka Potocka, Princess of Moldavia, Voievodess of Krakow, Hetmaness of the Great Crown, Grodecka, Mosciska, Melicka, Dolińska, Drahimska Starostess / Anna Mohilanka Potocka, Xiężna Mołdawska, Wojewodzina Krakowska, Hetmanowa Wielka Koronna, Grodecka, Mosciska, Melicka, Dolińska, Drahimska Starościna*"[12].

From the letter, we also learn about the orders of Anna Mohyła (Mohylanka) regarding the management of her estate, which she inherited from her cousin Moise Movila[13]: "…*once the hereditary property of His Majesty Moise Movilă of blessed memory, my cousin, belonging to me after his death by divine and natural law*"[14]. This formulation confirms the well-known fact that Anna Mohyła (Mohylanka) inherited from Moise Movila, who died in 1661 in Poland, real estate under a will: "…*the estates called Muchaidy, Wola Hodska and Opacice in Podlesie located near Sołomnicą / włości nazwanej Muchaidy, Woli Hodskiej i Opacic na Podlesiu pod Sołomnicą leżących*"[15].

With this legal formulation, Anna Mohyła (Mohylanka) clearly sets out the essence of her property and legal status as the owner of real estate, completely separate from the estates of her spouse, Stanisław Rewera Potocki. In other words,

[10] Karolina Targosz. *Sawantki w Polsce XVII w. Aspiracje intelektualne kobiet ze środowisk dworskich*, Polska Akademia Nauk, Warszawa: 1997, pp. 5, 46, 73.

[11] Stanisław Rewera Potocki (1589-1667), Polish Grand Hetman of the Crown from 1654, Field Hetman of the Crown from 1652, Voivode of Kraków from 1658, Voivode of Kiev from 1655, Voivode of Podolia from 1636, Voivode of Bracław from 1631, Castellan of Kamieniec from 1628, Chamberlain of Podolia from 1621, Starost of Galicia, Radom, Krasnystaw, Bar, Grodec, Kolomyia, Mościce, Starost of Drahim in 1660 etc.

[12] BK, syg. 11423.

[13] Moise Movilă (1596 - 1661), the Voivode (Prince) of Moldavia twice: between April 28, 1630 and November 1631, and between July 2, 1633 and April 1634.

[14] BK, syg. 11423.

[15] BK, syg. 11423.

in this interpretation, Anna Mohyła (Mohylanka) protects her property rights to these personal possessions, to which no one else can have any claims.

The letter states that Anna Mohyła (Mohylanka), in order to ensure full compliance with her instructions, is sending her friend the Master of the Hunt[16] Gabriel Silnicki and her estate manager Mr. Sołoninkę, who, having received the above-mentioned property, will manage the estates[17] on her behalf. In addition, in the letter, Anna Mohyła (Mohylanka) insistently orders that the manager be obeyed as herself: „*you must obey him and be faithful to him, as you would be faithful to me personally, I command him, giving him full power and authority to receive all the income and profit from these estates, to do with my property according to my will and to increase it, disposing of it in a reasonable and acceptable manner* (*pro rato et grato*)"[18].

As can be seen from the above text, Anna Mohyła (Mohylanka) not only had excellent calligraphic handwriting, but also had an excellent command of legal terms and formulations, both in Polish and Latin. In our opinion, this small excerpt from the letter characterizes her as a highly educated woman, with a broad intellectual outlook and an iron business acumen.

In conclusion of the letter, in order to secure all the powers conferred on the manager, Anna Mohyła (Mohylanka) signs with a full legal formulation, which gives the document legal force: "In confirmation of the powers given to him by me, I certify this (letter, document – L.Z.) with my own signature and the imprint of my seal. Given in Lvov on March 4, 1664. Anna Potocka the Voivodess, Krakow HWK[19]. The seal"[20].

One of the main conclusions of this brief study is that one of the letters written by Anna Mohyła (Mohylanka) in 1664 showed that she was an extraordinary woman, highly educated, with a broad intellectual horizon, socially active, even at a quite an old age[21], fluent in several languages (Romanian, Polish and Latin).

Summarizing the above, we also consider it necessary to note that, using the example of one single letter, we have demonstrated that women's letters of the 17th century represent a unique historical and literary source with a very consistent informational and factual content, which opens up a broad research field in the personal history, women's education, the art of writing, family and inheritance law, the history of culture and education of women in those times, etc.

The letters represent an exceptional, genuine and truthful source of information about the smallest details of the backstage of a private life completely unknown to us, about the history of family and interpersonal relationships, about the way of everyday life, about the diversity of activities and occupations of famous female characters in the era under study.

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16 Master of the hunt was an organizer of hunts for the great dukes, princes, kings, and queens of the medieval European states of France, Poland, Lithuania.

17 BK, syg. 11423.

18 BK, syg. 11423.

19 Hetmaness of the Great Crown.

20 BK, syg. 11423.

21 Her year of birth is unknown, but judging by the information about her first marriage and the birth of two children in this marriage, she was about 60 years old.

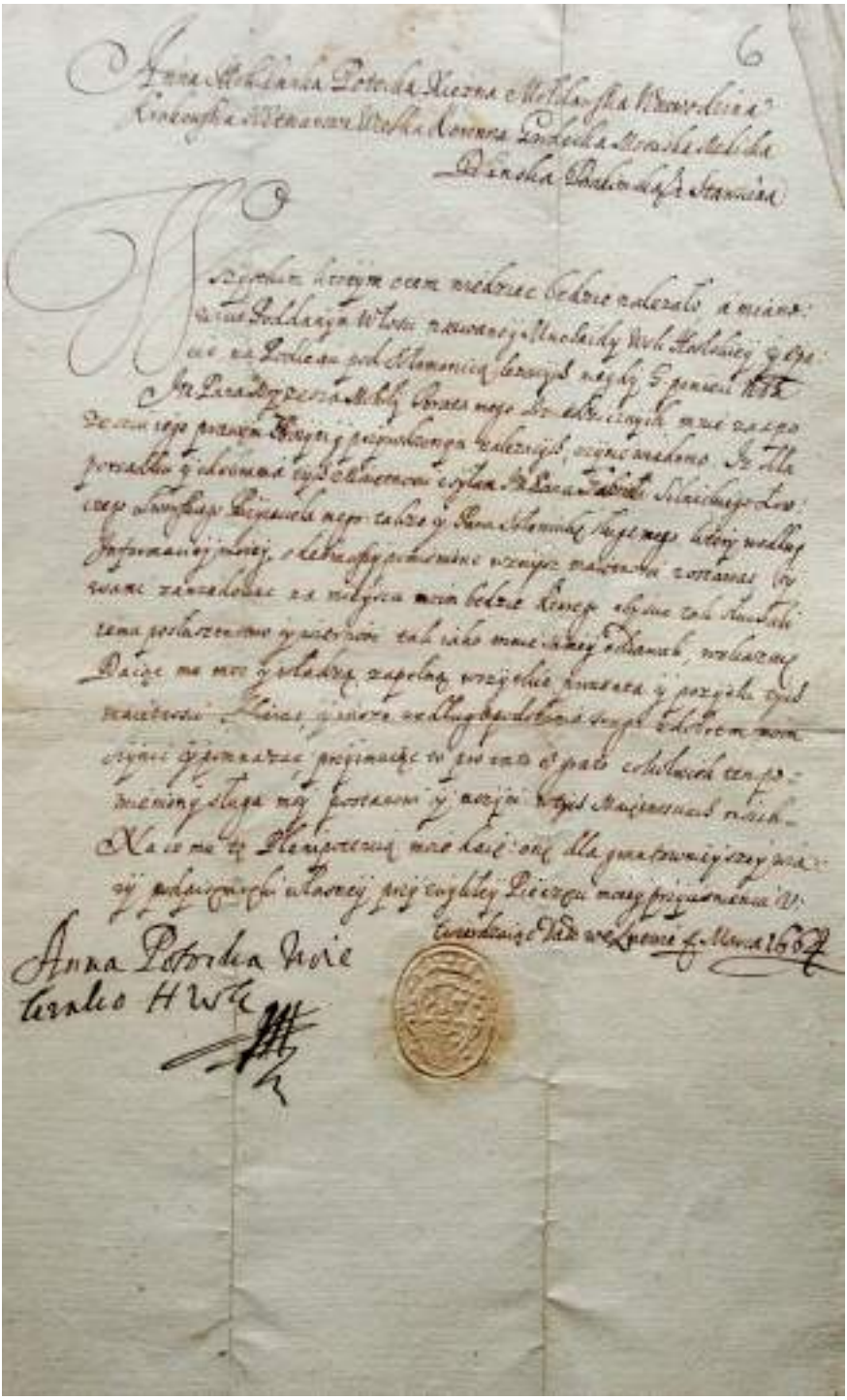


Appendix No. 1. Letter of Anna Mohyła Potocka, March 4, 1664, Lviv

Anna Mohiłanka Potocka, Princess of Moldavia, Voievodess of Krakow, Hetmaness of the Great Crown, Grodecka, Mosciska, Melicka, Dolińska, Drahimska Starostess

To all who should know about this, namely the subjects of the estates called Muchaidy, Wola Hodska and Opacice in Podlesie located near Sołomnicą, once the hereditary property of HM Moise Movilă of blessed memory, my cousin, belonging to me after his death by divine and natural law, let it be known that for the sake of order and for the taking of these estates I am sending HM Gabriel Silnicki, my friend the Master of Hunt[22] Silnicki, and also Mr. Sołoninkę, my servant, who, according to my information, having taken the above-mentioned possessions, will remain and govern you in my place, and you must obey him and be faithful to him, as you would be faithful to me personally, I command him, giving him full power and authority to receive all the income and profit from these estates, to do with my property according to my will and to increase it *pro rato et grato*, whatever this

[22] Master of the hunt was an organizer of hunting for the grand dukes, princes, tsars, kings in medieval European states, including the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.



aforesaid servant of mine decides and about what in these my possessions. In confirmation of the powers given to him by me, I certify this (letter, document – L.Z.) with my own signature and with my seal.

Given in Lvov on March 4, 1664
Anna Potocka the Voivodess
Krakow HWK[23] The seal"[24].

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,,Anna Mohylanka Potocka Xieżna Mołdawska Wojewodzina Krakowska Hetmanowa Wielka Koronna, Grodecka, Mosciska, Melicka, Dolińska, Drahimska Starościna.

Wszytkim, ktorym o tem wiedziec będzie należało, a mianowicie poddanym włości nazwanej Muchaidy, Woli Hodskiej i Opacic na Podlesiu pod Sołomnicą leżących, niegdy S. pamięci Nba JM Pana Mojżesza Mohiły Brata mego dziedzicznych, mnie zaś po ześciu jego prawem Bożym i przyrodzonym należących czynić wiadomo iż dla porządku i odebrania tych maiętności zsyłam JM Pana Gabriela Silnickiego łowczego silnickiego przyjaciela mego, także i Pana Sołoninkę sługę mego, ktory według informacyjej mojej odebrawszy pomienione w zwyż majętności zostawać i wami zawiadować na miejscu moim będzie, którego abyście tak słuchali jemu posłuszeństwo i wierność tak jako i mnie samej oddawali, rozkazuję dając mu moc i władzę zupełną wszystkie proventa i pożytki tych majętności odbierać i wisze według upodobania swego z dobrem moim czynić i pomnażać przyjmując *to pro rato et grato* cokolwiek ten pomieniony sługa moj postanowi i o czym w tych majętnościach moich. Na co mu tę plenipotencyją mnie daje one dla gruntowniejszej wiary podpisem ręki własnej przy zwykłej pieczęci mojej przyciśnieniu utwierdzając.

Dan we Lwowie 4 marca 1664.
Anna Potocka Woie[wodzina]
Krako[wska] HWK pieczęć"[25].

[23] Hetmaness of the Great Crown.
[24] BK, syg. 11423.
[25] BK, syg. 11423.