

Stanisław “the Devil” Stadnicki, one of the most colourful figures of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 16th and 17th c., had a very negative opinion among historiographers. Various works repeated the findings of 19th-century historians (especially the Lviv historian Władysław Łoziński, author of *Prawem i lewem. Obyczaje na Czerwonej Rusi w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku* [*Right and Wrong. The Customs of Red Ruthenia in the First Half of the 17th Century*] (1913), and so far no one has embarked on a comprehensive analysis of this unconventional character. Perhaps this has been caused by the need to carry out extensive queries in numerous archives and libraries in Poland and abroad, and to debunk many myths which surround Stadnicki.

Stanisław Stadnicki (ca. 1551-1610), starost of Zygwold, nicknamed “the Devil of Łańcut” by his contemporaries, was a distinctive figure in the Commonwealth at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, and a product of his times. He was the subject of many myths and a “black legend”. In my preparation of his political and private biography, I will analyse this figure on several levels: as a parliamentary activist; a deputy to many general assemblies; an ardent religious dissenter involved in the fight for maintaining religious tolerance in the Polish-Lithuanian state; a soldier and a military commander (he showed great courage and bravado during military campaigns); and as a nobleman activist who used the Commonwealth’s imperfect legal system for his own purposes. The objectives of my project are to investigate archive and library collections in Poland and abroad in terms of their usefulness for preparing a monograph on Stanisław Stadnicki and to establish his role during the most important events at the turn of the 16th and 17th c. I will focus on analysing Stadnicki’s actions during the war with Moscow and the so-called Zborowski family episode during the reign of Stephen Báthory. Then, I will examine his activity in support of the Habsburg election in 1587 and the following years; his activity in the opposition movement against Sigismund III Vasa; his religious activity as a dissenter, both in his private life and during appearances on the national forum; and finally, his activity as a deputy to the parliament, who actively participated in *sejmik* (local parliament) assemblies of the Ruthenian voivodeship and in general *sejm* (national parliament) sessions. Stadnicki participated in thirteen *sejms*, which makes him a record holder. A hugely important episode in the life of Stadnicki was the *rokosz* (rebellion) of Zebrzydowski; therefore, an analysis of the events that occurred during this internal conflict and the starost’s participation in it will be an important part of the project. An interesting issue which I intend to examine are Stadnicki’s foreign contacts, especially those maintained with the Habsburgs, the Elector of Brandenburg, and Gabriel Báthory, Prince of Transylvania.

During my extensive archive and library queries, I will most likely find materials concerning the private and public activity of Stanisław Stadnicki, which will be key for presenting him both as a local politician and a figure known nationally. Investigations in foreign archives and libraries (including in Lviv, Stockholm, Berlin) will be immensely interesting and pioneering, since these collections are rarely used in studies on the history of the Commonwealth in the 16th-17th c. They will allow me to verify many, in my opinion rash, opinions about Stanisław Stadnicki’s role on the Polish political stage of that period.