

YEREMIA (OKASANA) STEBLYNA OSBM

THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF MONASTIC CHRONICLES
IN REFLECTING SOCIAL AND MONASTIC LIFE
IN UKRAINIAN LANDS IN THE BACKGROUND
OF THE CHRONICLE FROM THE PROTECTION
OF THE MOTHER OF GOD MONASTERY IN YAVORIV
IN THE YEARS 1897–1935

Abstract. The article presents the role and significance of monastic chronicles from Ukrainian lands as an important element of reflections on the historical processes of a given era. They were written in Ukrainian, which is very close to the people's spoken language. Keeping chronicles in monasteries was one of the main tasks of monks and nuns, who left behind a rich spiritual and historical heritage. The development of historical events in the Church and the state during those times is shown using one such chronicles, namely the chronicle of the monastery of the Protection of the Mother of God in Yavoriv in the years 1897–1935. The monastery of the Basilian Sisters in Yavoriv was the center of spiritual and cultural life for Ukrainians. The chronicle compiled there reflects not only the facts of the monastic life of the Basilian Sisters, but also events from the social, political and cultural life of the region at that time. It is a valuable source of research for both historians and linguists.

Keywords: chronicles; chronicle of the monastery of the Protection of the Mother of God in Yavoriv; Order of the Sisters of St. Basil the Great; Ukraine; Catholic Church

An exceptional historical and cultural phenomenon of the Kyivan Rus was keeping chronicles. These chronicles reflected the linguistic image of a given era. The centers of chronicle writing became monasteries, because the compilers and authors were often the monks living there. Therefore, monasteries became famous centers of writing.

S. mgr YEREMIA (OKASANA) STEBLYNA – The Immaculate Virgin Mary Institute of Theology in Grodek, Ukraine; e-mail: s.yeremiya@gmail.com; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-2191-1249>.

1. THE PHENOMENON OF CHRONICLE WRITING IN KIEVAN RUS

The tradition of chronicle writing began in Kiev in the 10th century, but later spread to almost all regions of Kyivan Rus. Slavic chronicles, equivalent to Western European chronicles, were written in Novgorod, Pereyaslavl, Volhynia, Halych, Vladimir-on-Klyazma and other fiefdoms; their authors were monks, abbots of court monasteries, representatives of the princely administration, and even princes. Almost all chronicles were based on the common Kiev chronicle known as the “Tale of Bygone Years,” which provides a wide range of information about general Russian phenomena and historical events.

In the middle of the 12th century, the single Slavic chronicle root spread into several chronicles, whose main content was local history.¹ Around the middle of the 11th century, the largest chronicle center became the Kiev Pechersky Monastery.² Chronicles were also kept in the Orthodox Church of the Tithes.³

The monastery in the city of Vydubychi, located near Kiev, was also a center of Kyivan literature. During the reign of Volodymyr Monomakh in Kiev (1113–1125), this monastery became one of the most important centers of literature, where the Kyivan chronicles were continued, books were copied, original literary works were created, and a large library existed. At the beginning of the 12th century, Abbot Sylvester of Vydubychi Monastery carefully edited the “Tale of Bygone Years,” emphasizing the activities of Vsevolod Monomakh. At the end of the 12th century, Moses became the abbot of the monastery, and was both the editor and author of the Kyivan Chronicle.⁴

The earliest Rus chronicles have not come down to us in their original form: they were preserved in later copies and changed. The oldest texts found are the *Lista Lawrencejusza* [Lawrence List], named after the monk who wrote them in 1377 for Prince Dmitry Konstantinovich of Suzdal, and the *Lista Ipatija* (Ipatija List), named after the Ipatija Monastery in Kostroma where it was found. These texts date from around the first quarter of the 15th century.

¹ Petro Tolochko, “Litopysannya,” *Istoriya ukrayins'koyi kul'tury*. Vol. 1, accessed November 20, 2024, <http://litopys.org.ua/istkult/ikult05.htm>.

² *Ibidem*.

³ Vasyl' Nimchuk, “Literaturni movy Kyyivs'koyi Rusi,” *Istoriya ukrayins'koyi kul'tury* (Kyiv, 2001). Vol 1, accessed November 20, 2024, <http://litopys.org.ua/istkult/ikult02.htm>.

⁴ Tolochko, “Litopysannya.”

Both chronicles first describe the history of Kyivan Rus to 1110, then the *Lawrence List* chronicles events in the Vladimir-Suzdal lands to 1305, and the *Ipatija Chronicle* relates events in the Ukrainian lands to 1292. Thus, the *Lawrence List* is a chronicle in which only the first part is taken from the Ukrainian chronicle, while the *Ipatija Chronicle* is a Ukrainian chronicle from beginning to end.⁵

Petro Tolochko believes that

The chronicles of Kyivan Rus are one of the most significant historical and cultural phenomena of the Middle Ages. Unlike the chronicles of most European countries written in Latin, they are written in the native language, if not completely identical to the spoken language, then very close to it. This is the reason for the extraordinary popularity of the chronicle genre in Rus. The chronicles were the property of not only the Old Russian literary elite, but also the entire literate population. They were read and copied for several centuries, thanks to which they have survived to this day.⁶

In this way, Kyivan Rus was ahead of its neighbors, because Polish, Czech and Hungarian chroniclers did not yet write in their language. In general, it was established that the chronicles were a kind of literary archive, to which their compilers introduced, in the original and in corrections, various monuments of written sources, not caring about preserving the names of the authors just as they did not care about their names.

2. REGIONAL MONASTIC CHRONICLES OF THE 16-18TH CENTURIES

Local chronicles, also called regional chronicles, were created in different regions of Ukraine. They include the monasteries of Mcher, Plisneshko (Pidhorcia), Sataniv, Mezhyhirya, Gustynia and others. These chronicles sometimes also reflected national events, although the main focus of the anonymous authors was the history of their monasteries. Many small chronicles

⁵ Ivan Huriy, "Litopysy," in: *Radyans'ka entsyklopediya istoriyi Ukrayiny*. T. 3, red. Mykola Bazhan (Kyiv: Holov. red. URE, 1971), 240.

⁶ Tolochko, "Litopysannya."

were written in the 16th and 18th centuries, but many of them perished in frequent fires, military destruction, and even due to the negligence of the monks themselves.⁷

Among the Ukrainian chronicles of the 16th and early 17th centuries, the Gustynia Chronicle has a special scholarly value. It was compiled, according to researchers, in the monastery of Gustynia near Pryluky in the Chernihiv region, probably by Zacharia Kopystensky in 1623–1627, and was based on many ancient chronicles and Polish sources. However, this is a work with its interpretation of the facts, with original historical viewpoints. It is available in several copies, and the main one was copied in 1670 by the hieromonk of the Gustyń monastery, Mykhailo Loshitsky. The chronicle contains a comprehensive description of the history of Ukraine from the times of Kyivan Rus to the Union of Brest inclusive.⁸

The monastery chronicles also contain valuable information about various miraculous icons that are located in specific monasteries. For example, the first written mention of the miraculous icon of the Mother of God in the Basilian monastery in the village of Pohonia near Ivano-Frankivsk is recorded in the monastery chronicle and is dated the first half of the 17th century. The first mention of the miraculous icon of the Mother of God in Boroniava appears in the chronicles of 1785, which were also included in the chronicle of the monastery in the village of Boroniava in Transcarpathia.⁹ The chronicle of the monastery of St. Onuphrius in Lviv informs us that the monastery was rebuilt with the help of Prince Konstantin Ostrogski.¹⁰

Another historical monument is the chronicles of individual monasteries, such as the Monastery of St. Onuphrius in Lviv and the Pohoni and Boroniava monasteries. Their pages describe events not only related to the life of the monks, but also some information about the life of the nation, since Christian spirituality has been dear to Ukrainians since the baptism of Vladimir and is still inseparably linked with their lives.

⁷ Valeriy Shevchuk, “Mali ukrayins’ki litopysy, khroniky ta diariushi,” *Kyyivs’ka starovyna* 6 (1993): 18.

⁸ “Litopysy,” *Entsyklopediya ukrayinoznavstva*, accessed November 18, 2024, <http://izbornyk.org.ua/pvlyar/yar16.htm>.

⁹ “Chudotvorni ikony Bozhoyi Materi,” *Ivano-Frankivs’ka oblasna universal’na naukova biblioteka im. I. Franka*, accessed November 18, 2024, <http://lib.if.ua/exhib/1343293233.html>.

¹⁰ Petro Shkrab’yuk, *Krekhiv: dorohy zemni i nebesni* (L’viv: Instytut ukrayinoznavstva im. I. Kryp’yakevycha NAN Ukrayiny; Vydavnytstvo Ottsiv Vasyl’yan “Misioner,” 2002), 198.

3. THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGES
IN THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES IN UKRAINIAN LANDS
ON THE LIFE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE BASILIAN SISTERS
OF THE BYZANTINE-UKRAINIAN RITE BASED ON THE CHRONICLE
OF THE MONASTERY
OF THE PROTECTION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD IN YAVORIV

Over the centuries, Ukrainian monasteries have been important, even central, centers of socio-historical, cultural, and especially religious life in Ukraine. Founded at the beginning of the 17th century, the Monastery of the Intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Basilian Sisters in Yavoriv is one of the oldest monasteries in Przemyśl diocese.

From historical sources, we learn that the nuns who arrived in Yavoriv in 1621 settled near the mountain church. Later, Margarita Żugajewicz, a pious burgher of Yavoriv, gave the sisters a plot of land near the church, then donated her property and built a monastery, and after some time she took monastic vows under the name Makryna, becoming its superior.¹¹ We can read about this event in the chronicle:

In 1636, Margarita Zugajewiczówna, a burgher of Yavoriv, with her husband Dyszkiewicz, bequeathed her garden near the upper orthodox church. After entering the monastery, she became the prioress; then, either by inheritance or purchase, she enlarged the monastery settlement, which included eight gardens, and built a monastery on it. The purchased or funded gardens belonged to the Dyszkiewiczowa and the Zugajewicz families, the parish priests of Yavoriv. The land and the parish were granted to the Zugujewiczes in perpetual lease through the Polish King Władysław and extended from the river and the mill to the hives in the suburbs - on the other side of the city church, above the city along the street to the well. Four garden houses belonging to these lands stood in these gardens.¹²

The sisters actively kept a handwritten chronicle, in which they not only collected events about the sisters' lives, but also recorded many important moments that took place at that time in the history of Ukraine. The chronicle contains some printed inserts from which we can learn more about the life and activities of the Basilian monastery at that time. The task of writing the notes was probably done by three different people, as indicated by the handwriting.

¹¹ [Chronicle of the Monastery of the Protection of the Mother of God in Yavoriv 1897–1935] *Khronika Svyatopokrovs'koho Yavorivs'koho monastyrya 1897–1935 rr.*

¹² *Ibidem.*

The “Chronicle of the Monastery of the Protection of the Mother of God in Yavoriv 1897–1935” is also one of the sources for studying the state and development of the Ukrainian language in the western Ukrainian lands at that time.

In addition to monastic life, the chronicle presents historical events that took place in the country and the Church, namely the reforms by Franz Joseph, who reformed the Basilian Order, the assassination of Prince Ferdinand, the formation of the Ukrainian-Galician army, World Wars I and II, the election of the pope, and the pacification carried out by the Polish government in September-October 1930 on the orders of Józef Piłsudski.

Here are some examples:

The month of July was spent in diplomatic negotiations between Austria and Serbia (whose envoy assassinated Archduke Ferdinand), which did not lead to an agreement, and Austria declared war on Serbia. Later, other countries intervened, such as Russia, Germany, etc., and this began a terrible war, known in history as the “World War,” which claimed millions of victims, orphaned thousands of thousands of families and turned Europe into a giant cemetery!¹³

At that time, the first regiments of Ukrainian January Riflemen, commonly known as *Ususus*, began to be formed, which later became the force of the Ukrainian Galician Army. The ranks of the U.S.S. included Ukrainian youth, mostly intelligentsia, although there was no shortage of ideological peasants from the countryside.¹⁴

On June 28, 1914, on the 100th anniversary of the birth of the poet Taras Shevchenko, a majestic gathering of January Riflemen with Falcons took place in Lviv. From everywhere and from the farthest corners of Galicia, January Riflemen and Falcons hurried in rows to the “Falcon-Father” square to demonstrate to the world and show the strength, discipline and vitality of the Ukrainian nation.¹⁵

The orphaned Apostolic See was taken over by the Holy Father Benedict XV.¹⁶

The chronicle of the Yavoriv monastery is also a coherent record of all the facts of monastic and social life that took place at that time, including the biographies of individual sisters who entered the history of the Order as the first reformed nuns, or other nuns whose life events could enter the immortal

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ Ibidem.

treasury of the history of the Basilian sisters. The record of these testimonies was made by an eyewitness – one of the sisters to whom the prioress of the monastery entrusted this duty. This is evidenced by the words of the nun herself, Mother Emilia Langiewicz.

At the recommendation of Venerable Mother Josaphata Teodorowicz, current superior of the Basilian Sisters in Yavoriv, I, Emilia Jelena Langiewicz, a nun from the same monastery, supplementing the chronicle written by Mother Emmanuela Połoszynowicz, OSBM, am rewriting it into a new book. I have been instructed to record in detail the activities of the monastery in Yavoriv since the wave of the Reform... For my work done in obedience, I will be generously rewarded if even a small part of my humble work serves someone in the future.

May Christ bless you!

Written in Yavoriv on March 14, 1911, the jubilee year of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, in memory of the martyr Eudocia.¹⁷

In addition, the chronicle contains numerous letters from metropolitans, bishops, priests, the Polish government (Kuratorium), and the Ministry of Education in Poland to the nuns. The sister who wrote also noted several interesting, and often even reflecting false information, articles from local newspapers, which concerned the lives of the nuns or their work in the girls' seminary:

Not only the Catholic press, but also "Diło" – the purely political body – placed the following mention in its columns in issue 8 from January 13, 1932:

"The General Council of the Basilian Sisters

On December 25-27 of last year, the General Council of the Basilian Sisters was held in Yavoriv, in which nuns from Galicia, Zakarpattia, Yugoslavia, and also from America participated.

An unknown collaborator under the pseudonym 'Oko' (probably from Yavoriv) placed an article in the social-radical magazine *Hromadski Głos* in the issue on January 13, 1932, the following information: «The arch-clerical newspaper 'Pravda' of Bishop Khomyshyn, in part 1 of January 3, 1932, informs us that it took place in the Basilian monastery in Yavoriv on December 25, 26 and 27, 1931. The General Council of the Basilian Sisters, which was attended by 36 representatives from all over the world, included Bishop Kociłowski and Father Peleh from Lavrov, the 'visitor' of the Basilian Sisters. The arch-clerical 'Pravda' does

¹⁷ Ibidem.

not mention what they were conferring about. It also does not mention how many bottles of beer were drunk on that occasion».”¹⁸

On the occasion of the monastery visitation, the guidelines are described in detail:

(legible signature)

Decree

I leave the attire and shape of the veil unchanged for the house sisters. Instead of a belt, they will wear fringes – the cross should be hung on a ribbon, placed under a white breastplate and hung on the chest so that it is visible.

This decree should be read during a meal and entered into the chronicle.

In Lviv, 4.X.1902.

Fr. Platonid, OSBM

Commissary Ordinariate of the Basilian Sisters.¹⁹

Regulation

on the occasion of the visitation of the Basilian Sisters' monastery in Yavoriv
(March 1-7, 1932)

1. Let all sisters remember that spiritual progress is impossible without maintaining silence and quiet.

2. All sisters are obliged to participate in common recreation and no one is allowed to talk outside the place designated for recreation at that time. For important reasons, the Mother Superior may in individual cases give exemption from common recreation, but not permanently...

Yavoriv, March 7, 1932

Fr. Modest Pelech OSBM
Яворів, дня 7. березня 1932. р.
о. Модест Пелех ЧсвВВ
Commissary Ordinariate²⁰

The chronicle contains several inserts and drawings that supplement the written information. In 1921, on the occasion of the celebration of the 300th

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ Ibidem.

anniversary of the foundation of the monastery, the chronicle included a full anniversary program, which was printed on a typewriter and distributed to the faithful to get the information. On a page of the chronicle from 1931, a detailed plan of the chapter meeting hall (a meeting of sisters led by the bishop, where decisions on specific matters were made or the superior of the monastery was elected) was drawn, and the seats where individual chapter delegates sat were signed.

After the long text of the entry from May 7, 1933, there is a drawing of the award worn by every young person who came to Lviv for the celebration of the "Ukrainian Youth for Christ," which coincided with the 1900th anniversary of the Redemption. Girls and boys from Yavoriv also took part in these celebrations.

At the same time, in 1933, a whole page was posted with a fragment of a visit to the Basilian Sisters' seminary in Yavoriv, where the school years were given, starting from 1906/1907 to 1932/1933, the number of students, the number of people taking the final exams and retaking them, as well as data from the same seminary in Przemyśl, information that was not publicly available. These statistics were undoubtedly intended for the Polish Ministry of Education, but, in order to preserve historical memory, the sister writing the chronicle included this card in it.

The last insert, the only photo in the chronicle, is a photo of the Venerable Mother Eustachia Kryżaniwska, superior of the monastery in Przemyśl, who died in 1935 at the age of 52. The photo is captioned: "Venerable Mother Eustachia Kryżaniwska at the age of 37."²¹

The dates in the chronicle should also be mentioned. It begins with a short introduction, given above, written in 1911. However, from the same introduction, we learn that the first chronicle is dated 1897, the year of the reform of the Basilian order, but here a mistake was made. Instead of this date, the year 1882 was entered. In 1911, the nun, on the orders of the Mother Superior, rewrote the chronicle only to correct the error, but she also added events starting from 1621, when the first mention of the monastery in Yavoriv was noted:

...this book was supposed to have the date of the reform of 1897, but, due to an error, the year 1882 was printed. From ancient times, I am only adding a handful of memories taken from monastery records: perhaps someone more responsible

²¹ Ibidem.

will one day take up the history of our order and this monastery, for the memory and knowledge of future generations.²²

The records up to 1897 include various documents typical of the chronicle, monastery deeds, monuments, and letters, many of which were written in Polish:

Most Reverend Lord and Our Most Special Benefactor! Being self-righteous about the great goodness and grace shown to those who flock to the Lord's Protection, therefore I too, wanting to be a participant in this, having fallen with the deepest humility to our Shepherd's Feet, Our Most Reverend Lord and Benefactor, I present my complaint before the face of Your Reverend Shepherd, that I have been wrongly slandered by His Excellency Father Szpakowski, Dean of Yavoriv, who, due to certain stubbornness, has not only not ceased to persecute me several times, but also persistently undermines my fame and good name earned in the Order of St. Strain.²³

Before the arrival of the Austrian authorities, the life of the sisters was based on the following basic principles of monasticism: prayer, asceticism, fasting and work. At the beginning of 1782, Emperor Joseph II issued a decree by which he liquidated monasteries that did not engage in social work, meaning those that did not run schools or hospitals. Therefore, under this decree, the sisters were forced to take up educational activities. Thus, in 1848, they opened a school for girls, later a teachers' seminary, and still later a boarding school.²⁴

The sisters in Yavoriv conducted educational activities: a school for girls, a teachers' seminary that founded a grammar school established in the 1930s, as well as a boarding school for female students. In these institutions, entire generations of young people were raised in a conscious Christian and patriotic spirit, and they were also taught various crafts and how to play musical instruments. This is confirmed by several notes from the journal "Diło," which mentions the activities of the teachers' seminary in Yavoriv:

²² Ibidem.

²³ Ibidem.

²⁴ Ibidem.

June 23, 1928:

In the private women's teachers' seminary of the Basilian Sisters with public rights in Yavoriv, entrance exams will be held on June 26, 27 and 28...

June 25, 1928:

The Convent of the Basilian Sisters in Yavoriv announces a competition for two teaching positions in the teachers' seminary: a) the position of a teacher of Ukrainian and German, and b) the position of a teacher of physics and geological sciences. Payment after fulfilling the requirement.

May 31, 1929:

The management of the private women's teachers' seminary of the Basilian Sisters, with full public rights, until further notice announces that, on June 25, 26 and 27 of this year, entrance exams for the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th years will be held.

The following must be attached to the applications:

- 1) birth certificate,
- 2) the last school report,
- 3) health certificate from a physicist, and
- 4) a short biography.

Management.²⁵

School inspectors noted high standards of the educational work of the above-mentioned school in the inspection reports of these institutions. Indeed, the inspector who visited the school in Yavoriv stated that this institution meets the requirements and level of public schools of the same category. The work of Mother Salomia Cioroch gives us a look into the history and educational activity of the Basilian nuns stemming from the monastery chronicle. It shows that the monastery in Yavoriv was the second cradle of the Basilian order in Ukraine after the Słowicie monastery. It was not just a cradle, but the root and trunk of a mighty tree, whose branches grew and spread all over the world.²⁶

The school and monastery operated until 1945. With the onslaught of Soviet power, the nuns were forced to close their educational institutions and

²⁵ Ibidem.

²⁶ Serafyma Salo, *Provintsyiya Presvyatoyi Troyci Sester Chynu Svyatoho Vasyliya Velykoho: narysy z istoriyi*. Tom 1 (Zhovkva: "Misioner," 2012), 73.

were later expelled from the monastery.²⁷ The invaders burned the large monastery library in the cemetery, but also plundered and destroyed the monastery property. The chronicle of the monastery of the Protection of the Mother of God in Yavoriv preserves the sisters' memories and records only until 1935. The sisters managed to take with them only the miraculous icon of the Mother of God and the handwritten monastery monument analyzed in this study, which was taken to Przemyśl. The chronicle also tells us that, after 1934, there were 26 sisters in Yavoriv. The superior of the monastery was Mother Emilia Tymoczko. After the arrival of the German authorities, a military hospital was established in the monastery building in Yavoriv. Later, the Germans left the monastery and allowed the sisters to return to it.

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The Monastery of the Protection of the Mother of God, located in Yavoriv in the Lviv region, is one of the spiritual and educational centers of the Ukrainian nation. In order to preserve its historical memory, the Basilian sisters successively recorded events from the life of the monastery, including the events of the Ukrainian lands and Europe at that time. It can be said that the chronicle of the Monastery of the Protection of the Mother of God in Yavoriv in the years 1897-1935 is another unread page of the history of Ukraine, and especially of the western Ukrainian lands. For a long time, they belonged to various states and empires, but played a significant role in the development and formation of the Ukrainian language and culture. Therefore, it can be said that the chronicle has a certain historical permanence, since similar literary monuments have their place in the history of Ukraine since the 11th century. A thorough study of the monastery's chronicle in Yavoriv can be valuable both for historians and linguists due to the historical and linguistic situation of the late 19th and early 20th centuries reflected in it.

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²⁷ Solomiya Ts'orokh, *Pohlyad na istoriyu ta vykhovnu diyal'nist' monakhyn' vasyliyanok*. Druhe vydannya (Rum: Biblioteka naukovykh i populyarnykh tvoriv monakhyn'-vasyliyanok, 1964), 165.

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ROLA I ZNACZENIE KRONIK MONASTYCZNYCH W ODZWIERCIEDLENIU SPOŁECZNEGO I MONASTYCZNEGO ŻYCIA NA ZIEMIACH UKRAIŃSKICH NA TLE KRONIKI KLASZTORU OPIEKI MATKI BOŻEJ W JAWOROWIE W LATACH 1897–1935

Streszczenie

Artykuł ukazuje rolę i znaczenie kronik monastycznych na ziemiach ukraińskich jako ważnego elementu odzwierciedlenia procesów historycznych danej epoki. Napisane bowiem zostały w języku ukraińskim, bardzo zbliżonym do języka mówionego. Prowadzenie kronik w klasztorach było jednym z głównych zadań mnichów i mniszek, którzy pozostawili po sobie bogate dziedzictwo

duchowe i historyczne. Rozwój wydarzeń historycznych w Kościele i stan tamtych czasów ukazany został w artykule na przykładzie kroniki klasztoru Opieki Matki Bożej w Jaworowie w latach 1897-1935. Klasztor sióstr bazyliank w Jaworowie był ośrodkiem życia duchowego i kulturalnego Ukraińców. Sporządzona w nim kronika odzwierciedla nie tylko fakty z życia monastycznego sióstr bazyliank, lecz także wydarzenia z życia społecznego, politycznego i kulturalnego regionu tego okresu. Jest to cenne źródło badawcze zarówno dla historyków, jak i językoznawców.

Słowa kluczowe: kroniki; kronika klasztoru Opieki Matki Bożej w Jaworowie; Zakon Sióstr św. Bazylego Wielkiego; Ukraina; Kościół katolicki