

THE SARMATIAN REVIEW

Vol. XXXII, No. 2

April 2012

The Heritage of Polish Republicanism



The Cloth Hall, an architectural monument of Sarmatian (*eo ipso* Republican) Poland, erected in 1555. It is located in Kraków's Central Market, the site where in 1525 Albert I, Duke of Prussia, paid homage to King Sigismund I, accepting the Polish king's suzerainty. Here in 1531 nobleman Jan Tarnowski celebrated Polish victory in the Muscovite wars, while in 1683 Jan III Sobieski proclaimed his victory over the Ottoman Empire in the Battle of Vienna. The Central Market was also the site where in 1794 Thaddeus Kosciuszko proclaimed a general rising against the powers that partitioned Poland. Photo by Edwin Dyga (January 2012).

The Sarmatian Review (ISSN 1059-5872) is a triannual publication of the Polish Institute of Houston. The journal deals with Polish, Central, and Eastern European affairs, and it explores their implications for the United States. We specialize in the translation of documents. *Sarmatian Review* is indexed in the American Bibliography of Slavic and East European Studies, EBSCO, and P.A.I.S. International Database. Since September 1997, files in PDF format are available at the Central and Eastern European Online Library (www.cceol.com).

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Copy Editor: Cyndy Brown
Web Pages: Jane Zhao (Rice University).
Web Address: <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~sarmatia>.
Alternate Web Address: Central and East European Online Library (www.cceol.com), under Periodicals—United States—*Sarmatian Review*.
Archival Web Address:

<http://scholarship.rice.edu/handle/1911/21840>

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Thank You Note

We would like to thank the following individuals for their generous donations to the *Sarmatian Review* Publication Fund:

Ms. Roza Ekimov; Professor Marek Kimmel and Mrs. Barbara Kimmel; Mr. Chester H. Kurk and Mrs. Krystyna Kurk; Professor Michael J. Mikoś and Mrs. Susan G. Mikos; Mr. & Mrs. Richard C. and Alina Prusinski; Ms. Teresa Tyszewicz; Mr. Kenneth W. Walpuck.

Sarmatian Review Data

Polish demography in 2011

Population of Poland: 38,3 million (includes noncitizens and permanent residents).

Percentage of people with postsecondary education: 17.5 percent (increase of 7.6 percent since 2002 census).

Urban vs. rural population: 59.4 percent and 40.6 percent (increase of 2.4 percent in the rural population, mainly because of moves from cities to suburbs).

Source: 2011 Central Statistics Office census, as reported by <wpolityce.pl>, accessed 26 December 2011.

Ethnic unity in Poland the highest in the European Union

Percentage of Polish citizens born abroad: 0.1 percent, or the lowest in the European Union.

Increase in applications for work permits in Poland in the last two years: 100 percent, with Ukrainians the most frequent applicants.

Source: Joanna Bronowicka, "Poland announces amnesty for illegal immigrants," <Townhall.com>, 29 December 2011 (accessed 30 December 2011).

Size of bureaucracy in Poland under Prime Minister Donald Tusk

Number of people who worked in the government bureaucracy in 2011: over 450,000 persons, or one person per 80 citizens, working or nonworking, of any age.

Source: Krzysztof Rybiński, "Dziennik," <wpolityce.pl>, accessed 24 December 2011.

Crude oil pollution in Russia: Comparisons and figures

Estimated number of tons of crude oil leaked into soil or rivers of the Russian Federation every year: from 5 million tons (Greenpeace estimate) to 20 million tons (Russian Economic Development Ministry estimate).

Confirmed number of tons of oil spilled into northern Russian rivers every year, heading for the Arctic: 500,000 tons (National Resources Ministry report).

Russia's ranking among world polluters: Russia is the world's worst oil polluter.

Comparison: a leak of 5 million tons per year is equivalent to one Deepwater Horizon-scale leak every two months.

Source: Nataliya Vasilyeva, "Oil fields in Russia slowly ooze disaster" (Associated Press), reprinted in *Houston Chronicle*, 18 December 2012.

Penetration of Bulgarian Churches by Soviet intelligence—new discoveries

Number of members of the Bulgarian Orthodox Synod of Bishops who were agents of the secret services: 11 out of 15.

Number of communist agents in the Higher Muslim Council: five out of 29 members.

Number of Catholic bishops who were agents: one, out of an undisclosed total number.

How this was discovered: one bishop and several younger Orthodox priests called for vetting of the clergy, and the governing Synod (and presumably other denominations as well) finally agreed to conduct it.

Source: Polish Press Agency (PAP), as reported by <niezalezna.pl>, 18 January 2012, accessed on the same day.

Military draft and ethnic conflict in the Russian Federation in 2011

Number of Russian Federation men drafted in 2011: 135,800.

Of these, the number of draftees from Chechnya: none.

Last time the Russians attempted to draft men from Chechnya: before the first Russian-Chechen war of 1994–1996.

Draft in Dagestan: the military planned to draft 3,320 young men from Dagestan in the fall of 2011, but ended up drafting only 121 people of "predominantly Slavic ethnicity."

Reasons for abandoning draft in the Muslim areas of the Russian Federation: ethnic conflicts with Russians.

Comparison to Afghanistan: in relative terms, the "peaceful" North Caucasus suffered proportionally more casualties in 2011 than Afghanistan.

Source: Valery Dzutsev, "Rising security concerns force Moscow to reduce number of draftees from the North Caucasus," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, vol. 9, no. 22 (1 February 2012).

Sales of Polish weeklies in November 2011

Gość Niedzielny (Catholic), 145,421 copies; *Uwazam Rze* (center-right), 131,366 copies; *Polityka* (postcommunist left), 130,046 copies; *Newsweek Polska* (modeled on *Newsweek*), 100,732; *Wprost* (left wing), 97,964; *Tygodnik Powszechny* (postmodern leftist), 20, 777.

Source: Office for Control of Press Distribution, as reported by Lena Białkowska in *Donosy*, no. 5323 (6 February 2012).

The Heritage of Polish Republicanism

Krzysztof Koehler

Polish republican thought is virtually unknown in the intellectual world of Western Europe and America. One cannot find any information about Polish political thought, let alone the Polish practice of republicanism in the works of such thinkers as Quentin Skinner or John Pocock^[1]—perhaps because its foundational works were written either in Latin or in Old Polish and have never been translated into modern European languages. Political writers began to use Polish in the mid-sixteenth century; before that the vernacular was used only when dealing with minor or inferior matters in the kingdom. The first political treatises in the Polish languages were the works of Stanisław Orzechowski (1564) and Marcin Kromer (1551); earlier, Latin was the language in which the Polish gentry (*szlachta*) expressed their political and sometimes private sentiments. In the sixteenth century Poland was one of the few countries in Europe where Latin was routinely taught in schools so that graduates acquired enough proficiency to communicate with each other in that tongue.

The second reason why Polish republican thought has not been recognized in contemporary republican discourse is the fact that Poland was a Kingdom, i.e., it had a king, and this made contemporary thinkers view political discourse in fifteenth-, sixteenth-, and seventeenth-century Poland as monarchic and not republican. These researchers are wrong. In Polish political debates of half a millennium ago, monarchic ideas were always permeated with republicanism. In that period public discourse had civic virtue as its centerpiece. Even when the royal court and rich landlords tried to introduce monarchic values into the realm of politics, they had to use the language of republicanism owing to the republican sentiments of the Polish nobility. This process was particularly prominent in the seventeenth century, when oligarchic tendencies were manifested with great force. When new and rich magnate families began to appear in the *Res Publica* after the Union of Lublin in 1569 (the date of the political union between the Polish Kingdom and the Great Duchy of Lithuania), they gradually began replacing the old aristocratic families whose roots went

back to the Piast dynasty or the beginning of the Jagiellon dynasty in the early fifteenth century. In the process, they used and abused the language of republicanism to advance their personal goals. Thus while the language of republicanism never disappeared from Polish political discourse, it went unnoticed by outside observers who saw only the Polish monarchy on the one hand and selfish magnates on the other.

The long-lasting process of implementing the idea that kings should rule by the citizens' consensus shaped the most important political institutions of the Polish state.

The third reason why Polish republicanism has been neglected in past and present discussions of republicanism is the Polish historical experience, so radically different from that of Western Europe. During the times when the entire European continent from St. Petersburg to Paris worshipped the idea of the enlightened yet absolute monarchy, the Polish *Res Publica* was in a phase of political stagnation, even as its official discourse remained republican and not monarchistic. Later, when the ideas of the Enlightenment were being discussed in the salons of Prussia or France, Poles tried to implement reforms of their republican political system (The Great Assembly [*Sejm Wielki*] that culminated in the Third of May Constitution in 1791), but this process came to an abrupt halt due to the invasion of Poland by “enlightened” European rulers, an invasion that ended with the second partition (1793). The post-Enlightenment discourse condemned the Polish *Res Publica* and rhetorically classified it as a backward state (“Polish anarchy”), as a creature that was partly funny and partly scary. The Polish state was colonized by the three monarchies that took part in the third partition of Poland in 1795. Throughout Europe, scholars who specialized in the history of political thought treated the language of the imperial (colonial) powers as the authoritative descriptive language. However, as Edward Said has taught us, this kind of language is possessive rather than descriptive.^[2] Ignoring that fact has been a great mistake of European scholars with regard to Poland. In contemporary Poland, lengthy discussions highlight this mistake and the misunderstanding resulting from it.^[3]

To outline the nature of the Polish state I will start with the basic features of the political discourse in the Polish-Lithuania-Ukrainian Commonwealth. First I discuss the political institution of *Res Publica Polona*, and second, I try to shed some light on the most important terms that are characteristic of Polish politics.

THE FORMATION OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY IN OLD POLAND
 In the fifteenth century political self-consciousness of the Polish gentry had already inspired a description of the political organization of the state as “mixed rule.” This system had been proposed by the founders of the Western philosophy of politics, Plato and Aristotle, as the best possible system comprising the finest aspects of monarchy, aristocracy, and *politheia* (the latter should not be confused with democracy, or the regime of the mob, according to Aristotle).[4] Classical political thought recognized that in all these systems virtue is the most important value, and without virtue it is impossible to establish laws of the political community. In every successful system the supremacy of law over power (of money, birth, or number) is a value that ensures that the state will flourish.[5]

The political shape of the Polish Commonwealth began to form after the death of the last king of the Piast dynasty, Casimir the Great, in 1370. As contemporary historians have pointed out, the Jagiellonian kings who succeeded the Piasts ruled by consensus of the gentry (as opposed to the aristocracy) and its representatives. “The electivity of the Polish throne constituted the foundation of the post-Piast regime. It was the source of contract between the future ruler and his subjects who expressed consent (*consensus*) to the taking of power by pretender to the throne, who in turn bonded himself to obey the conditions of the social agreement reached in this way.”[6] The long-lasting process of implementing this basic idea that kings should rule by the citizens’ consensus shaped the most important political institutions of the Polish state.

Władysław Jagiełło (Jogaila), originally the Great Duke of Lithuania, was the first Polish king of the Jagiellonian dynasty. He acquired the Polish crown by marrying the granddaughter of King Casimir the Great, Jadwiga (Hedwig) of Anjou (canonized as a saint of the Roman Catholic Church in 1997). After her death in 1399 King Władysław raised the question of continuity of his rule with the Royal Council, and before his coronation was obliged to confirm the Law of the Kingdom as mandatory for maintenance of his power. According to Polish historians, this chain of events gave birth to the system of free election of kings.

Historians have described the act of confirmation of the Kingdom’s law that the ruler was obliged to observe as a “social contract” characteristic of the Polish system of government from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Each of Władysław Jagiełło’s successors had to perform this act of commitment, and therefore the

governance of the *Res Publica* required the ability to compromise. The history of the monarchy in Poland shows that there were periods when harmony between ruler and law was thus achieved; this balancing act determined the dynamics and quality of monarchical power in the Kingdom. Here are some examples.

The first goes back to the fifteenth century, when Władysław’s son was born. In 1425 the king began to make efforts to obtain the right of succession for the adolescent prince. This action provoked resistance from the Royal Council, but the resistance did not concern the person of the adolescent successor but had to do with the process of assuming power: the prince was underage and could not legally confirm the Rights of the Kingdom. The process ended with a compromise.

A second and similar conflict occurred almost one hundred years later, when the Italian wife of Sigismund I, Bona Sforza, forced the election *vivente rege* (during the life of his father) of her beloved but underage son Sigismund August. This attempt to violate the law provoked civil defiance that forced the monarch to proclaim two very important acts. The first asserted that as soon as he became fifteen years old, the king-to-be he would confirm his intention to obey the laws of the Kingdom, and if he did not do it his subjects would be free to disobey his authority in spite of the fact that he had been crowned king. The second act had to do with the guarantee that the law of free election would be obeyed in the future: such an election could take place only after the death of the ruling king.

The third example is of historical importance: in 1573, after the death of the last of the Jagiellons Sigismund (Zygmunt) August, who produced no heir, it became necessary to choose an entirely new monarch. The gentry then formulated the so-called *pacta conventa*, or Henry’s Articles (Henry de Valois was the first king elected in the post-Jagiellonian election). Only after the signing of the Articles could the aspirer to the throne be considered a candidate. The *pacta conventa* consisted of key political agreements between the gentry and the king. If the monarch broke even one of them, his subjects had the right to denounce his authority. Among these articles is a declaration of religious tolerance and *neminem captivabimus*, or the right to not be imprisoned without due legal process.

A popular anecdote exists about Henry de Valois. He was reluctant to sign the articles in the Notre Dame cathedral in Paris in 1573. Then he heard the following from one of the Polish noblemen present: “*Non regnabis, si non iurabis*” (You will not rule if you do not obey our laws). Thus at the very outset the future

ruler had to negotiate his competence with representatives of the Polish gentry, and this shaped the special atmosphere of Polish political life and the political system of the Commonwealth.

The articles of the Polish *pacta conventa* (1573) consisted of key political agreements between gentry and King. If the monarch broke one of them, his subjects had the right to denounce his authority. Among these articles there is a declaration of religious tolerance and *neminem captivabimus*, or the right to not be imprisoned without due legal process.

These and other rights, also called privileges, were gradually introduced into the Polish political system throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They were confirmed in the process of negotiation between the monarch and his future subjects, and they were essential to the political order of the Kingdom. The so-called Czerwiński rights (granted to the gentry by King Władysław Jagiełło in 1422) forbade the seizure of citizens' property without a previous court sentence. The Jedlnia and Kraków rights (1430, 1433) stated that members of the gentry could not be imprisoned unless the court of law so ordered (this right is often referred to as *neminem captivabimus* and is similar to the English *Magna Carta* privileges issued in 1215). These citizens' rights established a real and formal suzerainty of law in the state that bonded every nobleman (*szlachcic*) as well as the monarch.

In 1422–23 the monarch also agreed to guarantee the independence of the local court (*sąd ziemski*) from the local administrative authority (*starosta*). This constitution started the long process of forming an independent jurisdiction in *Res Publica* which resulted in the foundation of the Royal Tribunal in 1578 as a supreme court for the majority of legal cases. The judges were deputies, i.e., representatives of the gentry elected by them and from among them.

A similar democratic process took place concerning religious tolerance in Poland. This was part of the articles signed by Henry de Valois and was voted into law by the Sejm. The so-called Warsaw Confederation (1573) guaranteed freedom of religious beliefs for Polish citizens, and obliged the monarch to obey this rule under the threat of disobedience to the ruler. This constitution was written by the noblemen of different religious denominations just before the first free election. At that time both Catholics and Protestants were aware of the disastrous effects of religious wars in Germany. While these religious wars raged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in several European

countries, the Polish *Res Publica* remained “a state without stakes” and accepted successive waves of religious fugitives, Jews (from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries), and Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century: Italian, French, German, and Czech.

The basic law concerning civil rights in Poland was proclaimed even earlier, in 1454, when the king conceded the principle that he would neither raise an army nor sign any new laws without the gentry of each province meeting at frequent intervals to conduct political and legislative business and to consider the king's proposals. This law gave noblemen a major influence on issues of war and peace, as well as the introduction of new laws. It also created problems: because of the size of the country and difficulties of communication before the electronic age, this kind of civic consultation was problematic. This gave a birth to the idea of the General Assembly known as the Sejm that began to meet regularly, beginning with 1493.

In 1505 the so-called *nihil novi*, one of the most important constitutions for the political order in the Kingdom, was proclaimed. It stated that new laws could be introduced only by the Sejm, and that three organs in the state had the privilege of legislative initiative: the monarch, the Senate, and the Sejm. The Senate was similar to the British House of Lords in that membership was determined by the privilege of titles, whereas members of the Sejm were elected from among free citizens, i.e., the gentry. Legislative power belonged to the Sejm but also to the *sejmiki* (local assemblies, or dietines). By the sixteenth century four types of sessions were held by the *sejmiki*: *sejmik poselski* (electing two envoys to transmit the instruction of the province's nobility to the Sejm); *sejmik deputacki* (electing two deputies to serve on the Crown Tribunal, or the judiciary); *sejmik relacyjny* (it met to consider reports and recommendations from the Sejm and to take appropriate action); and *sejmik gospodarski*, or an economic session (it met to administer trade and finance in the province, and to execute resolutions of the Sejm in relation to taxes, military service, and landholding).[7]

The gentry regarded themselves as the supreme authority in the state and considered the *sejmiki* to be the most important branch of the legislative apparatus. This decentralization of political power was typical of the Polish *Res Publica*. It influenced the political attitudes of the gentry, strengthening their sense of responsibility for the community but also fostering anarchistic tendencies in society. In this kind of society it was particularly important to emphasize the process

of creation and reinforcement of patriotic ideology and the republican language.

Let us now mention the most controversial of *Res Publica*'s political institutions: the privilege of *liberum veto*. According to many historians, this political privilege caused fatal weakening of the Polish state in the second half of seventeenth century and was a major reason for Poland's political failure.[8] This is a disputable opinion. While *liberum veto* allowed one voice of objection to torpedo the whole work of the Sejm, the necessity of unanimity promoted the rule of the so-called "grind of the votes:" insubordinate voices had to be subdued in order to accept the decisions of the majority. Such arm-twisting (and therefore cooperation) had already been practiced in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Also, with the use of *liberum veto* it was sometimes possible to oppose the magnates and the aristocracy who wanted laws that served their interests. *Liberum veto* created a unique dynamics of political life in the Commonwealth in which a crucial role was played by the political consciousness of the noblemen, their understanding of the tasks and goals of the political community, and their sense of social responsibility. In my opinion, *liberum veto* played an educational role from the fifteenth to the first half of seventeenth century. It stimulated members of the Sejm and confirmed **the classical republican doctrine about the dominance of virtue over power**. Toward the end of the seventeenth century, a political writer, Andrzej Maksymilian Fredro argued that thanks to *liberum veto* one wise man could stop a crowd of fools.

POLITICAL IDEALS OF THE *RES PUBLICA*

Bonum publicum, or the common good—this was the term used to define the state. It summarizes the concept of politics held in the "Republic of Nobles" that Poland was in those days. Such sixteenth-century political writers as Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski and Stanisław Orzechowski, as well as poets like Jan Kochanowski and others, articulated the tasks of the political community on the basis of classical tradition: giving up personal goals or ambitions and subordinating oneself to the will of the majority. This is one of the most important aspects of republicanism.[9] A literary example comes from Jan Kochanowski's drama *The Dismissal of Greek Envoys* (1578) in which a protagonist, Antenor, is a virtuous character fighting against the populist demands of his opponent Aleksander. While Aleksander's proposition wins (owing to its populist character), Antenor may be considered the first republican hero of European

literature because he relinquishes his political ambitions in the name of the common good.[10] Similarly, in Stanisław Orzechowski's treatise *Quincunx* (1563), one finds the definition of a state as a "community of common benefit" (*wspólnota pożytku*).

Virtus, or virtue, is the key term of the Polish system. In the language of the Commonwealth, virtue had a political value, just as it did in the thought of antiquity.[11] We know that *virtus* is accomplished in the sphere of day-to-day dialogue (*negotium*) and is related to the community's obligations.

Without the long tradition of Republicanism that had as its centerpiece freedom of the individual, Polish consciousness would have been different.

"Virtuous discourse" has three aspects. The first has to do with the political life of the State and the process of the participation of noblemen in political affairs—using Hans Baron's expression, this aspect of life is best described as "civic humanism." [12] The second aspect relates to the noblemen's private life. Here a special role is played by the stoic idea of *aurea mediocritas* (golden mean, or golden mediocrity) that marked a model existence in the gentry mansion, far from urban spaces and in accordance with nature and its rhythm, under the shield of "averageness" (*otium*). One can find hundreds of examples of this kind of life in the writings of Polish writers starting in the early sixteenth century and ending with Wacław Potocki at the end of the seventeenth. Rej's *Life of an honest man* (*Żywot człowieka poczciwego*, 1568) is typical of such descriptions of ideal life in a mansion where existence is inscribed into seasons of the year. This is an important aspect of Catholic Sarmatism: consent to remain average and refusal to reach for things that surpass man's natural abilities.

The third aspect of virtuous discourse binds virtue to the battlefield. The military strategy of the Commonwealth was part of the international politics of the Polish state, and it turned out to be extraordinarily stable. For example, it worked splendidly at the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth centuries, during the years of conflict with the Teutonic Order. It was presented at the Council of Constance (1414–18) in connection with scholastic differentiation between just and unjust wars. It was taken for granted that the nobleman's duty was to protect his fatherland; in this way, the virtue of *amor patriae* was put to practice. In the sixteenth century poet Jan Kochanowski added the aspect of religious salvation: "If a path to heaven is open to anyone, it is primarily to those who serve their

country.” Kochanowski thus alluded to *Somnium Scypionis* in Cicero’s dialogue *De republica*. In the seventeenth century the nobles of the *Res Publica* displayed pride in the fact that their state never conducted an offensive war—which was not quite true, some “offensive” episodes in Polish history did occur. This state of the noblemen’s consciousness generated the legend (some noblemen’s diaries and correspondence confirm this idea) that Poles have pacific inclinations. On the other hand, some historians have declared the Polish military (the *hussaria* cavalry in particular) to be among the top military forces in the seventeenth century.

There is also a fourth dimension in the discussion about virtue among Polish gentry writers. In the sixteenth century an interesting discourse developed (with counterparts in classical Renaissance texts about virtue) that tried to connect the idea of nobility with virtue, and virtue with the state. As Skinner put it: “The theorists of Republican liberty tend to think of virtue as that quality which enables a free people to maintain their freedom and enhance the greatness of their commonwealth. For [these] writers, the concept of virtue thus [denotes] those qualities which guarantee success in political life.”[13] The state is well constructed when it enables its citizens to cherish and maintain their virtues; in the virtue of citizens the real wealth and power of the state reside. Writers like Orzechowski or Modrzewski have opined that owing to its political construction, the Polish *Res Publica* is a state that makes the virtue of its citizens its organizational foundation. This way of reflecting on the state’s organization (those familiar with the classical tradition will recognize the influence of the Roman republican writings) influenced the self-consciousness of the Polish noblemen and helped shape their sense of political and moral obligations to the state. The moral and ethical formula of statecraft is a never-ending task for the citizens, and participation in the political institution of the entire “gentry nation” requires immense diligence in the practice of virtue from everyone. Any slackening of diligence brings severe consequences for the Commonwealth. This kind of moral self-understanding shaped the perspective from which Polish noblemen viewed other European political organizations.

In the political vocabulary of the Commonwealth an important place was occupied by the concept of equality (*equalitas*). It was treated as an obligatory value, because in the Commonwealth law was absolutely sovereign. The political institutions of the

Commonwealth provided noblemen with both passive and active elective rights. In other words, even an average active nobleman could aspire to all state offices, both local and “central.” The principle of equality worked in the royal election procedures, during meetings of the Sejm or sessions of the *sejmiks*. The law of *neminem captivabimus* likewise pertained to every nobleman. It led to an intensification of the sense of security and was therefore useful during the legislative process. Even an average nobleman could go to court against a magnate or even the king. By comparison, noblemen in Muscovy or Germany enjoyed incomparably less liberty, to the point where (in Muscovy) they were sometimes considered mere slaves of the autocrat. This gave the Polish noblemen a sense of uniqueness and quite a bit of satisfaction. They compared their Commonwealth to the Venetian Republic (Polish Renaissance scholars favored the University of Padua as a place for graduate study).[14] However, when we think about the political history of the second half of the seventeenth century, it is easy to notice that the idea of *equalitas* turned into a rhetorical and propagandistic tool in the hands of a new class of magnates.

Libertas was another basic idea of the Commonwealth. Its historical formation proceeded as follows. The anonymous eleventh-century historian who wrote a treatise on the history of Poland (usually referred to as Gallus Anonymus because there is some evidence that he was a French Benedictine) stressed the fact of Polish independence. He proclaimed that the Polish Kingdom had never been conquered by external enemies. Polish gentry lived in the shadow of the legend of Slavonic warriors who defeated Aleksander the Great during his war against Slavic tribes. The fact that the Romans with their legions never reached the Vistula River and did not impose their culture upon the adjacent lands was taken not as evidence of the relative backwardness of Poland (an argument used by German invaders up to and including the Second World War), but quite the contrary, as proof that no one ever imposed their will on the Poles. When Poles joined Western civilization in the tenth century (966), they did so in an act of free choice and not as a historical necessity.

Christianity came to the Slavic tribes in two ways: from Constantinople with the Greek alphabet and Eastern Orthodox rites (parts of southern Poland historically known as *Małopolska* were possibly initiated in those times into Orthodox rites), and from Rome that brought Western tradition and the Latin

language. Even in the middle of the sixteenth century some political thinkers (Orzechowski) reflected on the closeness between the Greek tradition and language, and the Slavonic ones. He was partly right. If a traveler from Kraków decided to make a pilgrimage to the capital and center of his Eastern rite denomination (Constantinople), he would travel through lands that used the languages of the Slavonic family until he reached territory of the Greek language. He would somewhat understand the inhabitants of Czechia, Slovakia, and the Balkan Peninsula. Upon crossing the Carpathian Mountains he would descend to Slavonic plains. Now imagine the same traveler heading toward Rome. Upon crossing the western border of Poland he would find himself in the realm of the German language, and if he wanted to reach Rome he would have to climb high mountain passes in the Alps and descend to plains where Italian was spoken.

Thus the dimensions of the Polish political system were considerable. There was freedom of speech and confession in the *Res Publica*. The state was multireligious from the very beginning, and this was the reason why the nobleman's identity did not focus on religious matters. The term *Polonus catholicus* was coined in the second half of the seventeenth century as a part of public relations in the Counter-Reformation. A story about King Sigismund (Zygmunt) August illustrates this. The king was asked by one of the European monarchs to order a certain author of "troublesome" texts to stop public distribution of his views. The king refused to take any action because of the freedom of speech. A famous saying by the same king illustrates this attitude: "I do not rule over the consciences of my subjects." These words were the Polish answer to the declaration of the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 which famously stated that *cuius regio eius religio* (the sovereign can lawfully decide which religion will be obligatory in his country). This contrasted sharply with the *aurea libertas*, or the golden freedom that Polish noblemen enjoyed and of which they were proud.

However, as time went on the invocations of freedom became a cover-up for the noblemen's unwillingness to concede even partial power to the executive, i.e., the king. In the political writings of this era *aurea libertas* appears to have been incessantly threatened by the *absolutum dominium* of the king. This suspicious discourse surrounded every political act of a monarch and became a rhetorical ruse to boycott any reforms in the state, but it cannot be denied that at the same time it stimulated political engagement among the noblemen.

I have recently edited and published a political text originally printed after the death of King Stefan Batory (1587), just before the next free election. This book waited almost half a millennium for republication. Its full title is *Krótkie zebranie rzeczy potrzebnych z strony wolności* (A Short Collection of Items Necessary [to maintain] the Perspective of Liberty).^[15] The text is a kind of *silva rerum*, or an anthology of speeches, juridical cases, legal documents with commentaries, and quotations from Polish historians, and was originally compiled by an anonymous author. The central subject is liberty, seen as the most important political asset of the Commonwealth. As far as I understand it, the book's goal was to stimulate interest in political affairs by providing information on how important and spectacular freedom in the *Res Publica* has been, how fragile it is, and how important it is to stay vigilant and protect it against all kinds of threats. This collection is typical of political writings in the Commonwealth, and it encourages noblemen to participate in public life. It argues that the success of the *Res Publica* depends on the vigorous political activity of its citizens and their high political consciousness.

Another important element of the noblemen's *Weltanschauung* was serving as the bulwark of Christendom (*antemurale Christianitatis*). It had a practical aspect: Poles espoused the geopolitics of a kingdom that lay on the outskirts of Latin-speaking Europe. Busily protecting what today is called Western Europe from the Eastern threat (the invasions of Turks, Tartars, and the schismatic Muscovy), the Kingdom did not participate in the Crusades and occasionally skipped contributions to the Roman pontiff. The political writings and literature often touched on these issues: with an awareness of the special position of virtue in political life and the centrality of freedom in Polish politics, the idea of the *antemurale* not only shaped the self-perception of the noble class but also influenced a sense of mission that the Commonwealth had to accomplish in the European family of nations.

An interesting example of this kind of reasoning is Mikołaj Hussowski's "Carmen de statura feritate ac venatione bisontis" (1523). The poem was written for Pope Leon X, a lover of hunting (the author later changed his dedication and offered the poem to the Polish queen Bona Sforza). In splendid classical Latin, Hussowski displays his erudition in both Latin and Italian literature while at the same time constructing an image of a strong opposition between north and south in Europe. He presents Poles as the people of the

north who are similar to the people of the south culturally and civilizationally, but at the same time are enriched by a special task: the defense of European heritage against dangers descending upon Europe from the East. So Poles are Europeans but a bit different, with special duties to carry. The bison hunt during which Polish warriors exercised their military skills is a symbol of the Eastern threat. In Hussowski's presentation, the Polish experience is more individualistic, vivid, and closer to historical truth than the southern one. Hussowski keeps repeating: "Maybe you, the People of the South, have read many books about the bison—I have also read them—but in contrast to you, I fought against the bison many times and I know the power of this dangerous beast."

CONCLUSION

Poland has sometimes been perceived as a country whose people love freedom and are eager warriors, yet they end up as romantic losers. In this context are viewed the Polish refusal to cooperate in any form with the Nazis in the Second World War (there was no chance that any kind of Vichy-style government would be set up in Poland), massive opposition to the German occupation, Rising '44, opposition to Soviet occupation after the war, and the labor movement *Solidarność*. There is no doubt that without the long tradition of republicanism that had freedom of the individual as its centerpiece, Polish consciousness would have been different and we could not have found the energy to fight "for your freedom and ours."

But there is also a tradition (conspicuously present in our internal political discourse) of perceiving Poles as a proud and quarrelsome people, full of complexes, prejudices, and xenophobia. From my perspective, the process of the colonization of Poland played a major role in shaping this second discourse. As we know, the process of colonization comes not only from the outside, but also from the inside: the creation and then manipulation of various complexes and acceptance of the thesis of Poland's cultural backwardness.

At the end of the eighteenth century *Res Publica* lost its independence; worse, it was divided between three neighboring states of which at least two represented fundamentally different political options: they were absolute monarchies. Poles entered the nineteenth century, or the formative period for contemporary European identity, without their own state or their own political representation. However, they preserved a strong desire for new forms of communal existence outside the confines of a political entity. At the same

time, they began to be subjected to cultural colonization by the states that had partitioned them and now administered them. These facts influenced not only the self-consciousness of Poles, but also the external perception of that nation.

The republican ideas withered, affected by the fall of the *Res Publica*. The idea of the enlightened monarchy and liberalism, nationalistic ideas, and democratic and free market philosophies moved the philosophy of the *Res Publica* to historical storage. Yet in recent years one observes a renaissance of the investigation of European republicanism. The Polish political system of yore needs to be placed close to the center of this investigation. ▲

This paper is based on a lecture delivered at the University of Genoa, Italy, in October 2011.

NOTES

1. Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1978), and *Visions of Politics*, vol. 2 (Renaissance Virtues) (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002); John Pocock, *The Machiavelian Moment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2003).
2. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Knopf, 1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1994).
3. Ewa Thompson, "Sarmatyzm i postkolonializm," *Dziennik* (Europa), 5 November 2006 (<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/wydarzenia/artykuly/193060,sarmatyzm-i-postkolonializm.html>).
4. Aristotle, *Politics* III, 5,5.
5. Jan Dzięgielewski, "Stan szlachecki w życiu publicznym Rzeczypospolitej w pierwszym stuleciu po Unii Lubelskiej," *Tradycje polityczne dawnej Polski*, edited by Anna Sucheni-Grabowska and Alicja Dybkowska (Warsaw: Editions Spotkania, 79); Teresa Bałuk–Ulewiczowa, *Goslicius' Ideal Senator and His Cultural Impact Over the Centuries: Shakespearean Reflections* (Kraków, 2009); Janusz Ekes, *Złota demokracja* (Kraków: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, 2010); *Dziedzictwo pierwszej Rzeczypospolitej w doświadczeniu politycznym Polski i Europy*, edited by Janusz Ekes (Nowy Sącz, 2005); Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, 33–34, 127–28 and Skinner, *Foundations*, 139–142.
6. Anna Sucheni-Grabowska, "Przeobrażenia ustrojowe od Kazimierza Wielkiego do Henryka Walezego," *Tradycje polityczne dawnej Polski*, 20.
7. More on the *sejmiki* in Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland* (The Origins to 1795) (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1982), 323–26.
8. Władysław Konopczyński, *Dzieje Polski* (Komorów: Wydawnictwo Antyk-reprint); Paweł Jasienica, *Polska anarchia* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1988); Zbigniew Ogonowski, *Filozofia polityczna w Polsce XVII w. i tradycje demokracji europejskiej*, 2d enlarged ed. (Warsaw: Polish Academy of Science, 1999). A defense of

liberum veto can be found in J. J. Rousseau's *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne* (1772).

9. Skinner, *Foundations*, 176. For the Polish reflection on this value the formative fragment of Cicero's *De officiis* should be recalled: "Anyone who looks after the interests of only one part of a citizen body while neglecting the rest, introduces into the government of a city the most pernicious element of all, namely sedition and discord." Quoted from Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, 24.

10. Jan Kochanowski, *Dismissal of Greek Envoys*, translated by Bill Johnston (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2007).

11. Skinner's *Vision of Politics*, vol. 2 is devoted to the question of virtues in the political reflection of Renaissance writers. The foundational work that describes the connection between political success and virtue is Cicero's *Tusculanae Disputationes* in which we read that "where is the passion for virtues, the attainment of glory will necessarily follow, even if it is not our objective." *Tusculanae Disputationes*, II: XVIII.43.

12. Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966).

13. Skinner, *Foundations*, 177.

14. Gaspare Contarini's *De Magistratus et Republica Venetorum* (1543) and Pier Paolo Vergerio's *De Republica Veneta* (1400) were popular in Poland.

15. Krzysztof Warszawicki and anonymous, *Uwagi o wolności szlacheckiej* (Kraków: Ignatianum, 2010).

Inne wyzwania. Poezja Bogdana Czaykowskiego i Andrzeja Buszy w perspektywie dwukulturowości

(Other challenges: Bogdan Czaykowski's and Andrzej Busza's poetry in bicultural perspective) **By Janusz Pasterski.** Rzeszów: Rzeszów University Press, 2011. 360 pages. Bibliography, Index of names, English summary. ISBN 978-83-7338-611-2. Paper. In Polish.

Bożena Karwowska

After initial vivid interest in émigré writing, more than twenty years after the end of communist control of Eastern Europe Polish literary critics and academics seldom explore émigré literature in their quest for new or previously overlooked themes. With only a few exceptions, Polish writers in exile have had limited impact on literary processes in today's Poland. Moreover, the idea of exile has undergone significant changes in recent years. The end of politically motivated emigration from the Soviet bloc coincided with changes in postmodern and modern societies, opening them up to multicultural settings. Cultural

hybridity has become accepted, at least nominally, and immigrants are hopefully seen as valuable members and contributors to the cultures of the countries in which they have settled.

Dispersed around the world, postwar Polish exiles contributed both to their new homelands and to their native Polish culture. Because of the tightly controlled publishing market in Soviet-occupied countries, many émigré writers were virtually unknown in their homelands outside of a small circle of specialists. Many of them deserve critical attention both for their works and their lives. This is the case of Bogdan Czaykowski and Andrzej Busza, the two poets discussed by Janusz Pasterski in his recent book. The choice of publisher seems rather obvious since, in their last years, both poets established close relations with the academic community of the University of Rzeszów and cooperated with the region's literary journal *Fraza* publishing a number of their works in it. They visited Rzeszów several times in recent years, thus affording Dr. Pasterski an opportunity to discuss issues with them.

By bringing Busza and Czaykowski to the attention of Polish readers and the scholarly community, the critic begins to fill the gap between the importance of both writers to the literary life of the so-called London émigré circles and their absence in Polish contemporary critical thought. Pasterski notes two distinct but not entirely separate areas of significance in Czaykowski's and Busza's literary activities. He divides his book accordingly, first discussing the phenomenon of young émigrés who consciously choose Polish literature as the literary context of their writing despite having only a dim memory (or rather postmemory in Busza's case) of their homeland, and despite growing up partly in the Polish Diaspora and partly in an English-speaking environment. Pasterski devotes the remainder of his book to Czaykowski's and Busza's poetry within the context of what he calls "biculturalism." The critic thus intuitively understands that the value of their oeuvres lies not in their literary texts alone, but also in their comparable biographies and similar fates.

In the 1950s Bogdan Czaykowski and Andrzej Busza, together with other young Poles who found themselves in the United Kingdom after the war, initiated a literary group called "Merkuriusz," later reorganized and renamed "Kontynenty." In the early 1960s the two moved to Vancouver, Canada, where they continued their literary careers as faculty members at the University of British Columbia. In terms of the consecutive countries in which they lived, they belong to what Ruben G. Rumbaut has called the "one-and-a-

half generation,” the generation of children who emigrated at a very young age and grew up in the country of immigration. However, instead of being equally at home in their Polish and English-speaking environments, they consciously chose Polish language and literature as their primary tradition. This placed them in opposition to both the Polish “London” exiles of their parents’ generation and to the sympathizers of the communist government in Poland. In spite of maintaining close ties with the Paris-based Instytut Literacki and *Kultura* circles, members of the Kontynenty group became intellectually isolated and had to serve each other as readers and critics. This turned out to be a lifelong task; though the group did not survive when its members left London, many of the friendships continued as private and professional alliances. The émigré poets who grew up outside Poland became writers and readers, or the interpretive community for both their own poetry and the writings of others. Those Poles who themselves experienced exile were their implied “other” readers. For Polish readers abroad it was the experience shared with the writers that was of primary importance; however, the poets themselves aimed at a wider audience in hopes of eventually reaching readers in their Polish homeland.

When Busza began to write his poems exclusively in English, he worked with Czaykowski on their Polish versions. After Czaykowski’s death Andrzej Busza has continued to translate and promote his older colleague’s poetry in English translation. Moreover, in absence of his lifetime poetic colleague, Busza chose an aspiring émigré writer living in Canada instead a professional translator to render his own poems into Polish. One may only speculate as to the extent this has served to fulfill the need to recreate the mutual roles Busza and Czaykowski played for each other during their long literary friendship.

Pasterski rightly discusses both poets together. The critic sees them primarily as intellectuals “positioned between two cultures” and by the same token “occupying a liminal space where two sets of values meet and often permeate each other” (358). The fact that they belonged to Polish and Canadian cultures becomes the main argument that allows Pasterski to adopt a “bicultural perspective.” However, a lack of a clear definition of biculturalism provokes several questions and undermines many of the arguments. Canada itself is a bicultural country with two official languages and heritage cultures. Its social policies are quite different from those in the United States, making many of Pasterski’s observations based on the situation

in the United States irrelevant to that of Czaykowski and Busza. Also, policies regarding minorities differ from province to province, allowing only limited generalizations. Moreover, contrary to Pasterski’s claims (93–94) Canada, and especially British Columbia where the two poets lived, did not abolish official policies of multiculturalism in the 1990s. Just the opposite; the last twenty years brought significant demographic changes to its population, resulting in Caucasians being a minority in today’s Vancouver. When Czaykowski and Busza came to Vancouver, Canada was a British dominion in all meanings of the term. In some ways, as newcomers from Great Britain both of them cherished a certain sense of superiority (for instance, they considered their British MAs superior to American PhDs). In their encounters with the rising Canadian multiculturalism, they initially saw themselves primarily as Europeans and only then as Poles. This attitude changed over the years.

Similarly, the *Kresy*, or eastern borderlands of Poland where Czaykowski spent his early childhood, were characterized by their multiculturalism. Additionally, both poets grew up among Polish exiles of different cultural backgrounds. In Czaykowski’s case the situation was further complicated by the fact that the political changes after the war removed his birthplace (Równe) from its location in Poland and shifted it first to the Soviet Union, and then to independent Ukraine. Thus Busza’s and Czaykowski’s connections with Polish culture are multilayered and conditioned by their unique position in their heritage culture. Unfortunately, Pasterski’s focus on the poets’ childhoods and its importance for their later poetic development proves too feeble a tool. It does not allow him to look at the complexity of Czaykowski’s and Busza’s positions as writers living in various multicultural settings; nor is it able to do justice to their lifelong struggle to find an audience (and critics) who could understand their poetic task. One can only hope that the critic will continue his interest in Busza’s and Czaykowski’s oeuvres and will eventually examine their works from the standpoint of those approaches that are characteristic of the English-speaking countries in which the two poets spend most of their lives. Δ

Scotland and Poland

Historical Encounters 1500-2010

Edited by Tom M. Devine and David Hesse. Edinburgh: John Donald Short Run Press, 2011. 244 pages. ISBN-13: 978-1906566272. Paper. \$58.86.

Marek Jan Chodakiewicz

This volume's thirteen contributors presented fourteen papers at an international conference on diaspora studies in Edinburgh in October 2009, then gathered them into a volume. The authors and editors offer a wealth of vignettes, some of them tantalizing, and a scholarly promise of future research on the relationship between Scotland and Poland over the past five hundred years. By and large, they made good on coauthor Robert I. Frost's aim that "we should not project too rose-tinted an image of Polish-Scottish interaction across the ages" (22). The book consists of two chronologically arranged parts on the interaction of Scots with Poland between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, and on Polish encounters with Scotland in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The overarching theme is migration and assimilation, or its lack, against the background of incomplete mutual knowledge.

The original wave of physical encounters occurred when the Scots arrived in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the early sixteenth century. Coauthor Waldemar Kowalski claims that they came for economic, political, and confessional reasons. It is uncertain how many came, but the high estimate of 30,000 should be discounted since this would have been "nearly ten percent of Scotland's population," according to Neal Acherson (8). Most prominent were high-profile merchants and mercenaries. The average immigrant seems to have been a single and impoverished young man with excellent recommendations from home. Their fellow Scots, already established in the Commonwealth, wanted to give them the gift of a better life in the flourishing Polish-Lithuanian realm, and thus vouched for them and facilitated their progress. David Worthington has established that many of the newcomers were from the penurious Highlands, although, until recently, scholars had erroneously assumed the eastern shores as their primary domicile (102). The first immigrants often engaged in trade, selling trinkets and small wares in the countryside. Only a few became bankers and powerful grain merchants, some of them ascending to the status of patricians, such as the Chalmers (Alexander "Czamer" was a lord mayor of Warsaw). There were also a few scholars and diplomats, most notably the anti-Ottoman crusader William Bruce described by coauthor Anna Kalinowska. Parallels have been drawn between the Jewish and Scottish

communities. In contrast, the early nineteenth-century Scottish emigrants to Russian-occupied Poland were mostly engineers and technical experts. Most of them left after the Russians thwarted Prince Drucki-Lubecki's modernization project of the 1820s; a remnant found employment at Count Zamoyski's estates.

According to Acherson, Poland's Scots were not interested in "political imperialism." They had a penchant for "high risk banking—hazardous lending at low interest." They tended "to reinvest profits locally," and usually did not send their savings back home (10). Like Jews, Wallachians, Armenians, and Tartars, the Scots enjoyed self-government in the Commonwealth. They organized themselves in "fraternities" along religious lines. A few Scots were Catholics; most were Protestants. Although they usually belonged to the Presbyterian and Calvinist confessions which also included Germans, French, Swedish, and English, the Scots maintained their distinct ethnocultural identities and institutional structures. For example, a Scottish confessional group existed in Kraków. The Scots tended to intermarry with other Scots.

The influx of Scottish immigrants dried up as the fortunes of the Commonwealth declined after the mid-seventeenth century and great opportunities opened up back home owing to the growth of the British empire. Meanwhile, assimilation followed and the Scots turned into Poles (even if, in the process, they "overwhelmingly sided with" the Swedish invader in 1655–1656) (81). Scots benefited from Poland's tolerance and the opportunities that the Commonwealth provided, yet they also experienced confessional prejudice and even, sporadically, physical violence. However, according to the preliminary conclusions of Peter P. Bajer (73) they refused to play the role of victims and usually gave back what they received from the attackers.

All this was largely unknown to their kith and kin back in Scotland. Transmission to the world of information regarding Scottish endeavors in the Commonwealth failed abysmally. The dearth of sources on Polish Scots in Scottish libraries attest to a lack of publications coming from Poland. Edinburgh and Glasgow remained ignorant of Warsaw and Kraków. Between 1500 and 2010 the level of awareness of Poles about Scots and Scotland was higher than the other way around. On the Polish side, the learned tended to address the slights, real and imagined. Published in 1648, Łukasz Opaliński's sneering rebuttal of John Barclay's vacuous musings on Poland is a case in point. On the Scottish side, the commentary on Poland tended

to reflect Scotland's domestic concerns using the alleged evils of the Commonwealth as an excuse to excoriate supposedly analogous ills of the Scots, the putatively reactionary Highlanders in particular. For example, David Hume and Adam Smith were woefully misinformed about the Commonwealth, its people, and its system, but this did not stop them from pontificating freely on the topic. This was true of other Scottish commentators during the Enlightenment. Their anti-Polish prejudices have colored the educated Scotland's (and the West's) perception of Poland ever since, yet "the great paladins of the Enlightenment were mistaken" (127–28). Hence one can appreciate the urgent poignancy of Robert I. Frost's observation that we should pay less attention to popular philosophers than to archives and case studies.

In his own study Frost compares the lot of Polish peasants and Scottish Highlanders. While doing so, Frost notes the influence of Marxist dogma and communist propaganda on the persistence of the "black legend" of the Polish village in the Commonwealth. The Marxist interpretation holds that the feudal and reactionary nobility introduced the so-called "second serfdom" (a term coined by Friedrich Engels) and exploited peasantry to the detriment of Poland's modernization project. This interpretation fails to account for market mechanisms that made peasant life easier, for basic fairness in the noble administration of justice, and for family division of labor that allowed most peasants to work their own land while delegating a few to the lord's demesne. Starting with the Enlightenment, scholars have routinely ignored the aforementioned factors. Poland's progressive intelligentsia swallowed it hook, line, and sinker because the prejudice originated in the West, which came to symbolize progress and democracy. Eventually this interpretation became standard and was reinforced through terror, censorship, and propaganda in Soviet-occupied Poland (1944–1991). Because Polish academia did not conduct a postcommunist vetting, some professors still teach it in Polish classrooms.

This book challenges these received ideas. One researcher remarks that "it seems that. . . the demands of the *polskie pany* [Polish lords] may have been rather less onerous to their serfs than those of the Highland chiefs on their supposed kin in the great family of the clan. . . . It is, perhaps, time. . . to reappraise the black and white legends, and to look anew at the rural economies of Poland-Lithuania and the Highlands from below, not above, with peasants as economic actors, rather than passive victims of oppression, or

romanticized figures in a mythical, timeless world" (127–28).

In Scotland the Enlightenment's excoriation of "feudalism" and "the reactionaries" of the Highlands enjoyed only a brief ride as a viable paradigm. It was rejected by the Scottish Romantics starting with Sir Walter Scott, and further questioned by native scholars. Scottish patriots lacked the parochial timidity of the "progressive" Polish intelligentsia and rejected misinterpretations of their past while promoting "the white legend." It is significant that neither Eric Hobsbawm nor Ernest Gellner or even Benedict Anderson are mentioned in *Scotland and Poland's* discourse of nationalism. Instead, the Scottish contributors to the volume celebrate Scottish nationhood. One of the contributors, a professor of archeology makes a bid for Polish support of Scottish membership in the European Union, "if the day comes" (16).

Such self-appreciation is lacking on the Polish side, with the exception of Peter Stachura. He discusses the postwar history of Poles in Scotland and the tenacious mission of the Polish Ex-Combatants' Association (SPK) with its "steadfast Catholicism, legitimate pride and unquenchable patriotism expressed in its inspirational motto, 'God, Honour and Fatherland'" (168). While Poland's elites were virtually wiped out in the Second World War, the sons and daughters of Polish immigrants to Scotland survived. They and their parents "became involved in the SPK as a way of sustaining the traditional values and heritage of their country" (163). The SPK facilitated assimilation that would not dismiss Polish roots: "Integration into indigenous society, however, had to be complemented by the maintenance of the Poles' own cherished national identity" (168). The SPK remained faithful to the ethos of the Second Republic by defying both Hitler and Stalin. Professor Stachura conveys the resilience of Polish wartime émigrés faced with increasing hostility in postwar Scotland. They were assaulted by both communists and ethnonationalist extremists, including the Protestant Action. The "Poles Go Home" campaign was unleashed to assault Polish "competition for jobs and housing" in the era of scarcity. The Poles were denounced as "foreign papists" and interlopers undermining the "Scottish way of life" (160). They had to "report weekly to the police station with details of their address and employment" (161).

Allen Carswell and Rachel Clements further confirm anti-Polish bigotry in Scotland and tie it to official British and Soviet propaganda, which operated uninterruptedly from the summer of 1941 until the onset

of the cold war. Yet, concentrating mainly on the period between 1939 and 1942, Carswell judges the Scottish attitude in the early days of the Second World War as “positive.” Initially, spontaneous effusion greeted the Polish fighters. Carswell commends the “educated young officers” on “their generally impeccable manners and behaviour, matched by their elegant appearance” (153). The Poles could also count on the Catholic Church and a few fellow Catholics in Scotland, as well as on all anticommunists. Poles remain grateful to Sir Patrick Dollan, Scotland’s staunchest supporter of the cause of Poland’s freedom.

Rachel Clement discusses the Scottish press between 1940–1946 and 2006–2009. Her conclusions about the first period concur with those of Stachura and Carswell. She details anti-Polish propaganda techniques in the press: “Including Poles in stories on crime and politics presented them as deviant and a threat to the status quo. Poles went from being portrayed as ‘gallant heroes’ . . . to increasingly dysfunctional” (178). The author states that initial reluctance of the press to report the size of the Polish community in Scotland yielded to the increasing use and abuse of statistics about the Polish exiles, in particular after 1945, which indicated “that Polish exiles began to lose favour in the press” (176). Her assumption is that inflating the numbers of foreigners engenders fear in the mainstream. She notes that “in 1946 . . . Polish exiles were presented as an alleged threat to the interests of a majority group, putting pressure on postwar resources, in this case jobs and housing. This technique is commonly used in the press to discredit minority groups, creating an implicit connotation that ‘we’ (the majority group) will get less (or worse) because of ‘them’ (the minority group)” (176). Her comments on Poland’s accession to the EU in 2004 are worth noting, Compared to the general British press, “the Scottish press were much less satirical, and received post-2004 Polish migration with great enthusiasm”. Clements detects “a wider nationalist agenda” (181): “Polish presence in Scotland was resoundingly celebrated for addressing two Scottish specific issues, population decline and skills shortage” (182). Yet this scholar fails to consider that Poles were also preferred over third-world immigrants. Why else would the press refer to Poles rather than Pakistanis as “the new Scots”? Not everything was lovely, of course. I recall reading in a Polish paper that the Protestant soccer hooligans of the Glasgow Rangers were invariably infuriated at Glasgow Celtic’s goalie, Polish and Catholic Artur Boruc, who routinely crossed himself during games. Clements mentions him but

not the hostility that the soccer player encountered (182).

The final paper reports on post-1989 Poland’s consular activities, and also contains a touching personal account of Scotland by art historian Grażyna Fermi that is very flattering to the SPK. ▲

Ruch ludowy przed, w czasie i po wojnie (Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej)

(The politics of peasant parties before, during, and after the Second World War. Bulletin of the Institute of National Remembrance, nos. 10–11 [105–106]). October–November 2009. Edited by Jan M. Ruman. Warsaw: Institute of National Remembrance. 156 pages + CD “*O prawo głosu*.” Paperback. ZŁ. 8. In Polish. Portions available at <http://www.ipn.gov.pl/portal/pl/24/10969/nr_10112009.html>.

Anna Gašienica-Byrcyn

This double issue of the INR *Bulletin* offers conversations and reminiscences of people who had been active in the Peasant Party of Poland (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*, or PSL), a party renamed by the communists as the United Peasant Party, and then renamed again as the Polish Peasant Party (even though, according to one of the conversationalists, in the 2000s the reins to the party were still held by those who controlled it in the communist period).

In the initial conversations Andrzej Kaczorowski, Franciszek Gryciuk, Antoni Kura, and Mateusz Szpytma reflect on different visions of Peoples’ Poland by the PSL and PPR (the name the communist party bore in the 1940s) in the area of land reform, forced collectivization, disintegration of Stalin’s economic and political system, the role of women who opposed collectivization of farms (which never succeeded in Poland), the function of activities of representatives of the Polish farmers’ movement abroad, and the communists’ efforts to divide and dysfunctionalize the Polish émigré milieu.

In “Peoples’ Movement during World War II,” Tomasz Skrzyński emphasizes that the *Stronnictwo Ludowe* (Peasant Party) was a major political power with over 150,000 members before 1939. After the invasion of Poland by Germans and Soviets, many SL leaders were arrested either by the Gestapo or NKVD. Nonetheless, the party continued to operate integrating young people from the countryside *Wici* movement and eventually developing into the largest political party in occupied Poland, while also creating structures known as *SL Roch* in Paris and London. The party’s main goal was to liberate Poland. The military units of *SL Roch* operated mainly in

the countryside warning against German roundups, rescuing people from transports to prisons and concentration camps, destroying German places of work in provincial towns, sabotaging military deliveries, and collecting intelligence. Additionally, SL delivered food to impoverished workers' wives and children, to Jews, and to members of the Polish elites including writer Maria Dąbrowska and philosopher Tadeusz Kotarbiński.

In "The Struggle for Democracy: PSL 1945–1947," Marzena Grosicka discusses the problem of land reform. The PSL program envisioned effective and profitable family farms making Poland into a strong agricultural and industrial country rising quickly from the ashes of war. The PSL also proposed reforms in education and health emphasizing advance in learning and hygiene among country dwellers. In 1945–47 the party struggled to gain wide peasant support and confronted the PPR in an unequal battle, and finally suffered repressions by the Soviet-controlled government.

Franciszek Dąbrowski's article offers little-known information about PSL leader Stanisław Mikołajczyk's secret departure abroad. Mikołajczyk decided to leave Poland in mid-October 1947, and asked the American Embassy for help in arranging a secret departure. He traveled to Gdynia in a car carrying American diplomatic mail to the British Embassy, then embarked on the ship *Baltavia* to Great Britain. Only a few people knew about Mikołajczyk's departure and his absence was not noticed for several days. The enraged communist authorities and the political police (UB) ordered the entire leadership of PSL to be replaced.

Grzegorz Łeszczyński discusses the persecutions and murders of members of the Polish Home Army (AK) by the NKVD, Red Army, and UB. Soviet atrocities against AK members began during the Second World War. After the war a special liquidation group "eliminated" members of the AK, PPS, and PSL. Łeszczyński gives an account of one such murder: five people were to be "liquidated" in the town of Grójec. One of them, Józef Sikorski, pretended to be dead but was only wounded. He managed to escape from the place of execution and thanks to a friend, made it to Warsaw and informed PSL authorities about the UB capture and execution. Łeszczyński retells in great detail the complex story of this communist crime and reports that in 1992 a monument dedicated to the victims was erected in Grójec.

Bogusław Wójcik concentrates on PSL history in the area of Rzeszów in 1945–49. The PSL had sixteen chapters in this region composed of seventeen counties.

The Rzeszów area population was strongly pro-PSL. Prewar PSL leader Wincenty Witos came from this area; other PSL leaders from Rzeszów include Stanisław Mikołajczyk, Józef Nieko (second vice-president), Władysław Kiernik (third vice-president), Stanisław Wójcik (secretary), Jan Witaszek (deputy secretary), and Wincenty Bryja (treasurer). The strong PSL presence in the area of Rzeszów alarmed the PPR activists who devoted their local Central Committee meeting in July 1945 to devising methods of manipulation and intimidation of local farmers to prevent noncommunist farmers from being elected to positions of importance. Despite massive arrests of PSL members, the party continued to grow and even generated a women's section that organized conferences and meetings in twelve counties.

Mateusz Szpytma offers explanatory insights on the genesis and history of the communist-created United Peasant Party (ZSL). Toward the end of 1947 communist politics required quick liquidation of the PSL. This was accomplished by absorbing into a new organization the weaker structures of the PSL and a few members of the SL. Nonetheless, the process of liquidating the PSL dragged on. Between 1947–49 the "unification" of the upper strata of the SL and PSL into the ZSL took place. The ZSL was centralized and its activities were directed against the interests of the peasants who were taken advantage of and forced into collective farm arrangements against their wishes. The only positive aspect of the ZSL's activities was its encouragement of literacy in the countryside.

In "On the Paths of Treason" Witold Bagieński presents the personage of Bolesław Zachariawicz/żeleński aka "Kmicic" and his activities in the AK underground during the war, his subsequent activities in the PSL, and then his betrayal and involvement with the communist police and the criminal Ministry of Internal Affairs controlled by Moscow. Similarly, Krzysztof Tarka portrays Adam Gaś who was active in the Polish underground during the war, experienced Auschwitz and Mauthausen, and moved to Great Britain after the war. In London Gaś taught the Polish language and literature in Polish Saturday schools and was active in Polish organizations, especially SL *Wolność* under the leadership of Jerzy Kuncewicz. At the end of the 1950s Gaś was approached by a certain Jan Kuczawski (aka "Orkan") who interviewed him about the Polish Saturday schools system in Great Britain and the Polish émigré milieu in London. Gaś became a part of the communist intelligence. He

gathered information on PSL activities abroad, for which he was well rewarded.

Grzegorz Łeszczyński writes about *Jest*, a film by Krzysztof Krauze based on Pope John Paul's pilgrimage to Poland, June 16–23, 1983. The Pope's visit helped rebuild the self-confidence of the Polish nation. *Jest* deals with the inhabitants of Zbrosza Duża who were led by Father Sadłowski on a pilgrimage to Częstochowa to see the Pope and reminisce about their struggles to build a church and parish house in their village. The scenes were filmed in the picturesque meadows and orchards of the Polish countryside. The film took two years to produce and five years to obtain communist officials' permission for screening. It received a number of awards.

Lastly, Andrzej Kaczorowski discusses the Solidarity movement in the Polish countryside in 1980. He points out that the movement was supported by local parishes and bishops, and in many instances churches served as meeting places. Even PAX and the Clubs of Catholic Intelligentsia supported Solidarity. Needless to say, the authorities tried to prevent cooperation between rural and urban Solidarity groups.

This collection of essays belongs to a vital area of historical scholarship. It offers previously unavailable information about activities of Polish farmers under communism. No study of Soviet dealings in East Central Europe can ignore the information it provides. **Δ**

They Came to See a Poet

Selected Poems

By Tadeusz Różewicz. London: Anvil Press Poetry, 2011. 3rd ed. revised and enlarged, 283 pages. **Translated and introduced by Adam Czerniawski.** ISBN: 978-0-85646-436-2. Softcover.

James E. Reid

In 1941, when Tadeusz Różewicz was twenty years old, he joined the Polish Home Army and fought the communist occupation of Poland. As the Second World War ended, he also lived through the horrifying revelations about conditions in the Nazi concentration camps in German-occupied Poland, and then saw Stalin's apparatchiks take over Poland. These experiences would be enough to silence lesser writers. In 1973 he wrote about the effect of these experiences when he was a young man: "I felt that something had forever ended for me and for mankind, something that neither religion nor science

nor art had succeeded in protecting" ("Do źródła," *Proza*, Wrocław, 1973, p. 493).

In spite of and because of the effects of what he had seen and heard, Różewicz began to write, eventually publishing over twenty books of poetry. *Anxiety*, his first volume, was published in 1947. It is permeated with the bleakness of someone who has seen his country live through hell on earth, and has returned to write about it. One of his best known poems, "The Survivor" concludes with these blunt lines: *I am twenty-four / led to slaughter / I survived*. The enduring resonance of his poetry is strong enough that almost thirty years later one of Poland's fine poets, Anna Kamieńska, restated his lines: *We were all twenty-four . . . we all survived being led to the slaughter*.

The critical reception of a poet's work often changes over the years. In "*The Survivor*" and *Other Poems*, a bilingual selection of Różewicz's poetry from 1976, translators Magnus J. Krynski and Robert A. Maguire describe him as "the most influential Polish poet of the entire postwar period" (ix). This is high praise for a poet from a country that is renowned for the esteem in which many of its poets, such as Nobel laureates Czesław Miłosz and Wisława Szymborska, are held in the world.

Szymborska and Różewicz are contemporaries, born two years apart. They approach similar concerns in very different ways. Różewicz wrote about a near-death experience and arbitrary survival in "The Survivor" perhaps several years after it happened. The poem presents the bleak, hard, and almost complete hopelessness of what he witnessed. The narrator in Szymborska's "There But for the Grace" also looks back at Poland under German occupation, and at the utterly arbitrary survival of someone the poem's narrator loves. God is absent in both poems, but the poem suggests an intimate hope: *Listen / how fast your heart beats in me*. Some might argue that Szymborska's is a stronger poem, but each poem will touch the reader in a different way, depending on what the reader brings to each poem.

In his introduction to Różewicz's poems in his *Anthology of Postwar Polish Poetry* (1965 and later editions), Czesław Miłosz is hard on the long-lived Różewicz: "His scorn for 'art' is quite programmatic, with all the contradictions such an attitude involves. He is a nihilistic humanitarian, constantly searching for a way out of his negation" (85), an argument Miłosz extends in 1983 in his *Witness of Poetry* (82–83). The reader may tend to agree with Miłosz after reading a poem such as Różewicz's gritty "Fight with an Angel."

There is no wrestling here with the divine for the blessings of a new name for Jacob, and for the legacy of a nation in the wilderness. What there is takes place in a rubbish dump, and the fight is brutal and messy with blood, saliva and shit. The reader's hopes for uplift may also be dashed after encountering "Dante's Tomb at Ravenna" which opens with no sense of the scale of Dante's accomplishment but with the dismissal: "*Dante / There's nothing here / Look it's empty here*" before the poem continues, and concludes in the same vein. As Różewicz declared in 1965, "I consciously gave up the privileges that accrue to poetry . . . I returned to my rubbish heap" ("Do źródła," 496). This may often be true, but sometimes he puts the trash out and takes another look around.

Różewicz presents a lighter and much less characteristically dark view in his "Tale of Old Women." The poem holds out gentle hope and affection: "*old women / are indestructible / they smile indulgently.*" He also takes up the cause of rehabilitating maligned mothers-in-law with deep appreciation and affection in "Dithyramb in Honor of a Mother-In-Law." I am fortunate to have a kind and thoughtful mother-in-law, and enjoyed this poem. One of his early postwar poems, "But whoever sees . . ." takes a clear-eyed and difficult look at the condition of his own mother who had been broken and devastated by the war and its aftermath. He concludes this moving poem with these tender lines: "oh I would like to bear her upon my heart / and nourish her with sweetness."

As for Miłosz's criticisms, his own translation of Różewicz's "In the Middle of Life" is more sensitive to nuance in English than the Czerniawski or Krynski and Maguire translations. Two of the last poems in Miłosz's recent collection, *New and Collected Poems 1931–2001*, concern Różewicz. "*Unde Mallum*" or "Where does evil come from?" answers Różewicz's question after opening with the address, "*Alas, dear Tadeusz,*" and closing with "*of course, dear Tadeusz.*"

Like many poets, Różewicz is not a writer of rigid consistency in style and content. Even with a number of common themes, his style and concerns changed repeatedly over the decades. As for his own concerns about consistency and his legacy, this prolific poet concludes "The Feeding of Pegasus" with a line that conceals more than it reveals: "poetry is suicide." He acted on his fear of the artistic suicide that sometimes awaits successful writers who are lionized and become the center of the whirl of awards and laurels. He moved

to Gliwice, an industrial town in Silesia, to write far from applause and ceremony.

Poetry may provide clarity of experience and description, while not providing clarity for its interpretation—the latter tension is often central to its power. Is Różewicz "the most influential Polish poet of the entire postwar period"? He is certainly important and influential in a country where there is fierce competition for such words of praise. Whatever his stature when the last laurels are awarded, let us remember, "in 1941, when Tadeusz Różewicz was twenty years old, he joined the Polish Home Army, and fought the Communist occupation of Poland." The mere courage to return from his early experiences and publish poetry about them and then to continue writing, now mostly prose and drama into the twenty-first century, assures him of a place in the crowded pantheon of Polish poets. It is no wonder that readers and poets came to see and read this poet, and will continue to do so. *They Came to See a Poet* is a thoughtful translation of a representative selection from more than twenty books of Tadeusz Różewicz's long and productive career. ▲

MORE BOOKS AND PERIODICALS

Myśl polityczna I Rzeczypospolitej (Political Thought in the First Republic), by **Włodzimierz Bernacki**. Kraków: Arcana (www.arcana.pl), 2011. 430 pages. Bibliography, index of names. ISBN 978-83-60940-10-5. Hardcover. Available from the publisher or from <Merlin.pl>.

A comprehensive critical survey of Polish political writings from Gallus Anonymus (twelfth century) to Józef Wybicki and Seweryn Rzewuski (eighteenth century). The author has done an excellent job placing first- and second-rank writers in dialogue with each other. Apart from the well-known names of Stanisław ze Skarbimierza, Paweł Włodkowic, Jan Ostroróg, Wawrzyniec Goślicki, Wolan, Krzysztof Warszewicki, Andrzej Frycz-Modrzewski, Łukasz Górnicki, Piotr Skarga, Szymon Starowolski, Hugo Kołłątaj, and Stanisław Staszic Bernacki introduces to us the lesser names of Stanisław Zaborowski, Filip Kallimach, Jakub Przyłuski, Samuel Przypkowski, Krzysztof Opaliński, Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski, Stanisław Dunin Karwiczki, and others. He shows how the *Res Publica* functioned (the Polish political system comprised elements of the republican and monarchic

systems, but it eventually deteriorated into an oligarchical one), how it went into decline trying to preserve the privileges of free citizenry while neighboring countries opted for absolute rule, how its writers kept making the distinction between liberty (*wolność*) and anarchy (*swawola*), and how “clientelism” weakened the republic and made it a victim of “cannibalism” by its neighbors. The book is not concerned with economic matters or with the Crown’s inability to persuade Polish nobles to occupy themselves with finance, trade, and manufacturing. This continuous omission (Bernacki is not the only culprit) makes all writings about the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth incomplete. The problem of nationality was likewise disregarded in the election of kings: some Polish political writers insisted that candidates should be of Polish nationality whereas others frowned at such restrictions, and the second group won with predictable results. Bernacki rightly concludes that while the Polish political system regarded the common good as the greatest treasure and placed it in the center of attention, kings and politicians of neighboring countries viewed politics in a Machiavellian way, i.e., as means to an end, subscribing to the rule that the end justifies the means. Thus contrary to denouncers of the Polish system, the Republic fell not because its citizens failed to be virtuous but because its neighbors exercised the rights of the strong. Now if we only had a translation of this book into English . . .

Wartości a przemoc. Zarys socjologicznej problematyki Oświęcimia [1974] (Values and Violence in Auschwitz: A Sociological Analysis), by **Anna Pawełczyńska**. Warsaw-Lublin: Test Publishers (test.bn@wp.pl), 2004. Notes, bibliography, translation into Polish of introduction (by Jochen August) to the German edition. 247 pages. ISBN 83-7038-090-5. Paper. In Polish.

The author was an Auschwitz prisoner who escaped while being transported from Auschwitz to the Flossenbürg concentration camp. Her reflections (translated into English in 1980 and still available on Amazon) are truly must reading for those who are serious students of Hitler’s death camps. The book is dedicated to “mothers.” The last chapter deals with Auschwitz children of preschool age who were still alive when the Germans fled the scenes of crimes they committed during the Second World War.

Głowa hydry. O przewrotności współczesnego zła, 1st ed. (The Dragon’s Head: On the Perversity of Contemporary Evil), by **Anna Pawełczyńska**.

Warsaw-Lublin: Test (test.bn@wp.pl), 2004. Notes. 280 pages. ISBN 83-7038—098-0. Paper. In Polish.

A study of contemporary totalitarianisms and the sources of contemporary European malaise.

Złote serca czy złote żniwa? Studia nad wojennymi losami Polaków i Żydów (Hearts of gold or harvest of gold? Studies on the fates of Poles and Jews in the Second World War), edited by **Marek J. Chodakiewicz and Wojciech Jerzy Muszyński**. Warsaw: The Facto (thefacto.pl), 2011. 391 pages. Index. ISBN 978-83-61808-05-3. In Polish.

A collection of articles and essays arguing against the treatment (common in U.S. academia) of social pathologies in war conditions as representative of Polish society in the Second World War. The essays also argue that the not-infrequent cases of heroism in defense of others were likewise exceptional rather than constituting a norm. The thesis that the essays defend is that under conditions of danger to life, possibility of torture or imprisonment, and in other cases of extreme stress human beings become primarily concerned with personal survival or the survival of close family members; helping others takes a back seat. Under extreme stress communities dissolve and atomization of society occurs. The book argues against those American historians who, from the depth of their padded armchairs, ignore these sociological facts and condemn Polish Catholics for concentrating on their own suffering rather than sacrificing themselves wholesale in defense of Jews systematically persecuted by the occupying German army and administration. An essay by John Radzilowski poses the question of influence of the neo-Stalinist mentality on studies of Poland in the United States. Radzilowski accuses such historians as John Connelly, Piotr Wrobel, Joanna Michlic, and Padraic Kenney of using neo-Stalinist methods in their articles and reviews concerning Poland. By “neo-Stalinist method” Radzilowski seems to have in mind the kind of writing that does not answer the adversary’s objections or arguments and instead uses the anti-Semitic label. Notably, John Radzilowski teaches at the Ketchikian branch of the University of Alaska, while the historians whom he accuses of anti-Catholic and anti-Polish bias occupy positions at such prominent institutions of higher learning as the University of Michigan or the University of Toronto. (JB)

**GIVE WHERE IT REALLY COUNTS
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Pan Tadeusz

by

Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855)

Book Eight

The Foray

Argument:

The Chief Steward's astronomy. The Chamberlain's views on comets. A mysterious scene in the Judge's room. Tadeusz's skillful attempts at self-extrication land him in hot water. The foray. The last protest of the Sergeant-at-Arms. The Count takes Soplica Manor. Storm and butchery. Gerwazy as cellarer. The feast.

Translated by Christopher A. Zakrzewski

There is a moment of brooding calm before the storm when the advancing thundercloud draws up overhead and checks the breath of the winds with a louring look. With flashing eyes it sweeps the earth in silence, marking out the places where shortly it will discharge its volley of bolts. Just such a calm brooded over the Manor. It was as if a foreboding of unearthly events had sealed the lips of its inmates and borne their spirits into the realm of dreams.

After supper the Judge and his guests went outdoors to take the evening air. Seating themselves on the turf bench in front of the house, the entire party gazed up at the heavens in an attitude of gloomy silence. The sky seemed to be sinking, contracting, pressing ever closer to the earth, until, like a pair of lovers draped in darkness, earth and sky began their intimate colloquy, confiding their feelings through stifled sighs, murmurs, whispers, and half-uttered words; all this comprised the peculiar music of the evening.

The screech owl, moaning from the gable, launched the concert. Bats rustled their delicate wings, flitting about by the house where the casement panes and peoples' faces shone. Closer still, drawn in great numbers by the ladies' white dresses, whirred the bats' tiny sisters, the moths. They picked on Sophy in the worst way, beating upon her face and sparkling eyes, which they took for a pair of candles. A dancing swarm of insects hummed in the air, as if chiming notes on a glass harmonica. Among these myriad sounds Sophy made out the midges' harmonies, the gnats' jarring semitones.

Meanwhile, in the field, the evening concert had scarcely begun. The musicians had just finished tuning their instruments. Already the corncrake, first fiddle of the meadow, had rasped three times. From the swamp

ground yonder the bittern's booming bass replied. Snipe rose whirling in the air, repeating their drum-like cadences. At last, picking up the hum of the insects and the din of the birds, two ponds broke forth in a two-part chorus like the enchanted lakes of the high Caucasus—mute by day and melodious at night. One pond had clear blue waters verged with sand; from deep within its bosom issued a soft and solemn moan. The other pond, with its miry bed and mud-choked waters, echoed back with a cry both sad and passionate. In both ponds warbled frogs without number. Each choir was tuned to a mighty chord. One boomed *fortissimo*, the other hummed—*sotto voce*. One seemed to complain mournfully, the other merely sighed. So, like a pair of Aeolian harps playing by turns, the ponds conversed across the fields.

The shades of twilight deepened; only the eyes of wolves flashed like lighted tapers from the thickets and the osier-beds bordering the brook. Yonder, on the diminishing horizon, glimmered the shepherds' campfires. At length, kindling her silver lamp, the moon swung clear of the forest and lit up both earth and sky. Side by side like a happy couple they slept, partly uncovered by the moonlight, the sky's chaste arms enfolding the silvery bosom of the earth. Opposite the moon a star winked out, then another, then a thousand, then a million—chief among them Castor and his brother Pollux, whom the ancient Slavs called Lele and Polele. In the people's zodiac these stars have now been renamed; the former is called Lithuania, the latter, the Polish Crown.

Farther off gleamed the two pans of the celestial Scales. Upon these dishes, on the day of Creation (the old folk say), God weighed the earth and all the planets in turn; then, fixing these bodies in the abysses of space, he suspended the golden scales from the firmament to serve as a prototype for man's own scales and balances. To the north shone the circle of the starry Sieve. God is said to have used it to sift the grains of rye before scattering them from on high for the benefit of our father Adam, whom he had cast out of the Garden of Delights for his sin.

Still higher in the heavens, bereft of its charger, stood *David's Chariot*, its long shaft pointing to the North Star. The old Lithuanians know better. They insist the populace errs in calling it David's, for it is the Angel's car. Lucifer rode it eons ago, when he threw down the gauntlet before God. He was careering along the Milky Way toward Heaven's gates, when Michael struck him down and drove the chariot off the road. There among the stars the car lies ruined; no one may repair it, for the Archangel Michael has laid a ban on it.

The old Lithuanians also know (this from the rabbis no doubt) that the huge *Dragon* of the zodiac, which

winds its starry coils around the heavens, is not a serpent as astronomers mistakenly say, but a fish—*Leviathan* by name. For eons it inhabited the deeps, but after the Great Flood it perished for want of water. The angels then hung the remains from heaven's rafters as both a curiosity and a reminder to the world. Even so did the parish priest of Mir garnish the walls of his church with the excavated ribs and thighbones of giants.

With such stories, all culled from books or passed down by oral tradition, the Chief Steward entertained the guests. Although the old Steward's sight was feeble by night and he could make nothing out in the skies even with the aid of spectacles, yet he knew the name and shape of every constellation by heart. With his finger he pointed them out, along with the trajectories they described.

This evening the guests paid him little attention. No one took the slightest interest in the Sieve, or the Dragon, or the Scales. Today, all eyes and thoughts stood riveted on the new guest that had recently risen to their ken—a comet of great size and power. It had appeared in the west and was bearing northward. With blood-shot eye, it looked askance at the chariot, as if bent on taking Lucifer's place. Trailing its tail like a dragnet, it swept a third of the heavens, gathering up a vast multitude of stars; meanwhile, its head bore higher to the northward, straight for the polar star.

Every night, with a sense of nameless foreboding, the Lithuanian folk gazed up at the heavenly prodigy and read dark meanings into it. But there were other signs as well. Not seldom were ill-omened birds seen gathering in huge flocks in the bare fields. Cawing balefully, they sharpened their bills, as if relishing the prospect of human carrion. Not seldom were dogs seen scratching at the ground, howling in terror, as if they had caught a scent of death, famine, or war. The forest rangers claimed to have seen the Maid of Plagues stalking the churchyard. Towering above the tallest trees she strode, waving a blood-drenched kerchief in her left hand.

The overseer drew all manner of inferences from these signs; he had come to report on the day's labors and was now standing by the fence, quietly holding forth with the accountant. But the Chamberlain, who was sitting on the turf bench, cut short the general talk. All knew he was about to speak, for his large snuffbox flashed out in the moonlight. (The article was wrought of pure gold and inlaid with diamonds; a glass-covered miniature of King Stanislas adorned the lid.) After drumming his fingers on it, he helped himself to a pinch, and spoke: "My dear Steward, all your talk about the stars is but an echo of what you learned at school. When it comes to portents I should rather listen to our common folk. I

also studied the stars—for two years, in Wilno, where the rich and learned lady, Madame Puzynina, endowed a village of two hundred souls for the purchase of various lenses and telescopes. Our famous Father Poczobut, then rector of the Academy, was a watcher of the skies; eventually, he gave up his chair and telescopes and retired to an abbey where he died an exemplary death. I also knew Sniadecki, a very learned man, though a layman. Now as I see it, our astronomers observe planets and comets even as our townfolk observe the movement of conveyances. They can tell you if someone is driving up to the Royal Castle or departing abroad through the city turnpike. But who rides inside and why, what the ambassador discussed with the King, and if His Majesty replied with a declaration of peace or war—this they never ask. I recall the time Branicki left for Jassy in his carriage. The vile car had a whole host of Targowica partisans in tow, like a comet's tail. The common folk, who took no part in the public deliberations, surmised right away the tail boded treachery! I hear they called the comet a broom that would end up sweeping millions away."

"It is true, Your Excellency," replied the Steward with a bow. "I remember well what I heard as a child. Though I was not yet ten, I recall the time our late-lamented Sapieha was staying at our house. He was still a lieutenant in the dragoons at the time; later he became Marshal of the Royal Court and died Grand Chancellor of Lithuania at the ripe old age of a four score and thirty. He served under Hetman Jablonowski's banner when Sobieski raised the siege of Vienna. The Chancellor described the moment when King Jan mounted his horse for the great battle. The papal nuncio had just blessed him, and the Austrian ambassador (Count Wilczek) was kissing his foot and passing him the stirrup, when the King exclaimed, 'See what goes on in the heavens!' Looking up, they saw a comet streaking westward across the sky like Mohammed's host. Later, Father Bartochowski would write a panegyric under the title *Orientis Fulmen* for the triumphal march through Cracow. He made much of that comet. I have also read about it in a work titled *The Janina*, which describes the late King's entire campaign. The book contains engravings of Mohammed's mighty standard, and just such a comet as we see today."

"Amen to that!" replied the Judge. "I take your omen to foretell the advent of another Jan the Third! Today we have a new great hero in the west. God willing, the comet bears him hither to us!"

The Steward nodded his head gloomily. "Aye, comets augur wars," he said, "but sometimes they bode mere quarrels! It is an ill omen that it should appear directly over the Manor. Perhaps it portends some local

misfortune. Yesterday we had wrangling and disputes enough during the hunt and banquet. In the morning the Notary squabbled with the Assessor, and Tadeusz challenged the Count in the evening—over the bearskin, it would seem. If the Judge had not stopped me, I might have reconciled the parties at the table, for I meant to tell them about a curious hunting incident not unlike the one that occurred yesterday. It happened to the finest pair of shooters of my day: the Honorable Deputy Tadeusz Reytan and the Prince de Nassau. And it happened like this:

“The General Starosta of Podolia, Prince Czartoryski, was traveling up from Volhynia to visit his estates in Poland, or, if I remember rightly, to attend Parliament in Warsaw. On his way, he called on the nobility—partly for amusement, and partly to drum up support. He dropped in on the late Tadeusz Reytan, who became our deputy from Nowogrodek. (I had the honor of growing up in his house.) To honor the Prince’s visit, Reytan arranged a reception. A great number of the nobility came out. They staged a play (the Prince loves the theater). Kaszyc (the one who lives in Jatra) supplied the fireworks. Tyzenhaus sent down a troupe of dancers. Oginski and Soltan (the one from Zdzieciol) provided the orchestra. In a word, the entertainment of the house was lavish beyond measure; and in the forest they held a splendid hunt. Now it is well known to you gentlemen that almost all the Czartoryskis in living memory, though they trace their origins to the Jagiellos, have never been very keen on hunting, not because they are lazy of course, but because of the foreign tastes they have acquired. The Prince would sooner glance into a book than a kennel, and sooner into a lady’s bower than a forest thicket.

“Accompanying him was the German Prince, de Nassau, of whom it was said that while visiting the Libyan lands he had gone on a hunting expedition with the Moorish kings. The Prince was much given to boasting about it. On this occasion we were hunting wild boar. Reytan brought down a huge sow at great risk to his life, for he had fired at close range. All of us were amazed and commended him warmly for his feat of marksmanship. Only de Nassau seemed unimpressed. He strutted about, murmuring all the time under his breath that a good aim proved but a bold eye, while cold steel proved a bold arm. And he began to hold forth again on his Libyan hunting expedition, his Moorish kings, and the tiger he had speared. Reytan listened to him sullenly. Always a hot-tempered fellow, he slapped his sword and cried out, ‘Your Highness! Who looks boldly fights boldly! A boar is as good as a tiger; a sword as good as a spear!’ There followed a heated exchange. Fortunately, Czartoryski intervened and put an end to their dispute in French.

What he said I have no idea, but it was like heaping ashes on smoldering embers, for Reytan had been stung to the quick. He bided his time, swearing to play a trick on the German. That trick nearly cost him his life; and he played it the very next day. Just how, I shall tell you in a moment.”

Here the Steward paused, raised his right hand, and beckoned for the Chamberlain’s snuffbox. He took the snuff slowly, with an air of indifference, as if to keep his listeners in a heightened state of anticipation. At last he resumed, but once again his anecdote, which compelled such rapt attention, was broken off. A servant came out to inform the Judge that a caller had arrived on a matter of urgent business. The Judge bade them goodnight; the company dispersed, some to the house, others to the hayloft. The Judge retired to confer with the caller.

While the rest of the household slept, Tadeusz wandered about the hallway, pacing like a watchman near his uncle’s door. He wished to consult with him on an important matter, and it had to be now, before going to bed. He dared not knock, for the Judge had locked the door. A private conference was in progress. Tadeusz waited in the hall, listening intently.

He heard sobbing inside. Careful not to touch the doorknob, he peered through the keyhole. A strange sight greeted his eye. The Judge and Robak were on their knees, in a tight embrace. Both were weeping and shedding tender tears. Robak was kissing the Judge’s hand, while the Judge, sobbing, clung to the Bernardine’s neck. For a full quarter of an hour they remained silent. At last Robak said softly:

“My brother! Lord knows how well I have kept these secrets to which I bound myself in the confessional out of sorrow for my sins. Lord knows how, having devoted myself entirely to Him and my country, and renounced pride and earthly glory, I have lived until now and wished to die a Bernardine monk—aye, and conceal my name not only from the world, but also from you and my own son! But now my Provincial has given me leave *in articulo mortis* to disclose it. Who knows if I shall return alive. Who knows what goes on in Dobrzyn! O my brother! What an awful, awful bungle! The French are still nowhere near. We must wait until the winter is over; but it seems there is no restraining our nobility. I fear I have been overzealous in arousing them. They mistook my meaning. The Warden has snarled everything up. And now that crazy Count, I hear, has gone to Dobrzyn. I did not dare head him off, and this for a very good reason. Old Matthias knows who I am. If he were to give me away, I should have to forfeit my head to Pocketknife. Nothing will hold the Warden back! My neck is of no account, but the discovery could scupper our plans.

“Still, I must go and see what passes there, even if it should cost me my life. Without me the nobility is sure to run amok. Keep well, dear brother, keep well, I must hurry. If I die, you alone will heave a sigh for my soul. If war breaks out, the whole secret being known to you, finish what I started; above all, remember that you are a Soplica!”

Here the priest wiped away his tears, straightened his habit, pulled up his cowl, and, opening the shutter quietly at the rear of the study, leapt out into the garden. The Judge remained in his chair, and wept.

Tadeusz waited a moment before rattling the doorknob. The Judge admitted him. Entering quietly, he made a low bow.

“Dear Uncle,” he said. “I have been here but a few short days and barely had time to enjoy my stay with you. But I must take my leave this very evening—tomorrow at the latest. As you know, we demanded satisfaction from the Count. Fighting him is my affair and I have issued my challenge. Since dueling is forbidden in Lithuania, I intend to cross the border to the Duchy of Warsaw. The Count is a braggart, I know, but he does not lack courage. I have no doubt he will show up at the appointed place. We shall have it out. God willing, I shall chastise him and then swim the

Lososna to join the ranks of my fellows who stand waiting on the other side. I understand my father’s testament provides for my going for a soldier. Who gainsaid it, I have no idea.”

“My dear Tadeusz!” replied his uncle. “Has someone scalded you with boiling water, or are you dodging like a hunted fox who waves his brush one way and goes another! True, we have called out the Count and cannot back down. But to leave now! What has got into you? It is customary to dispatch a second before a duel, and set terms. The Count may yet offer an apology and retract his insult. Wait a while; there is plenty of time. Or perhaps there is some other burr under your saddle, eh? Come tell me plainly. What is this about? I am your uncle. I may be getting on in years, but I know what goes on in a young man’s heart.” (Here Soplica chucked his nephew’s chin). “I have been a father to you. A little bird tells me you have been intriguing with the ladies. By George, our youth waste no time in taking to the fairer sex! Come, Tadeusz, be honest with me; speak plainly.”

“Yes, you are right, dear Uncle,” mumbled Tadeusz. “There are other reasons, and perhaps I am to blame! A mistake! What can I say? A misfortune! Hard to remedy! No, Uncle, I cannot stay any longer. A youthful error! Please, ask me no more questions. I must leave the Manor without delay.”

“There I knew it!” exclaimed his uncle. “A lover’s quarrel! Last night I noticed you biting your lip and frowning at a certain young lady. I saw the sour look on her face too. I know all about these trifles. When a pair of children falls in love, there is no end to these little mishaps: happy one minute, sad and fretful the next. Now they snap at each other over God knows what, now they sulk silently in the corner. Sometimes they even bolt for the fields! If such a fit has taken hold of you, be patient. There is a remedy. I will undertake to reconcile you shortly. I know all about these trifles. After all, I too was young once. Now tell me all, for I have something to say as well. This way we will take each other into mutual confidence.”

“Uncle!” said Tadeusz, kissing his hand and blushing. “I will tell you the truth. I have grown very fond of the young lady, Sophy, your ward, though I have seen her but on two occasions. They tell me you plan to wed me to the daughter of the Chamberlain, a beautiful girl—a rich man’s daughter. But I could never marry Mistress Rose, for I love Sophy. A man’s heart is hard to change; and it would be dishonest to marry while loving another. Perhaps time will heal the wound. I am leaving, and for a good long while.”

“Tadeusz, my boy!” his uncle broke in. “It strikes me as a strange way of loving. Fleeing the object of your love! I am glad you are frank with me. But do you not see how silly it would be, if you left? What would you say if I myself arranged to wed you to Sophy? Eh? What? Not jumping for joy?”

“Your kindness astonishes me, sir!” replied Tadeusz after a pause. “But it is useless. Your favor would come to naught. Alas! A fool’s hope! Mistress Telimena will never allow it!”

“We shall ask her,” said the Judge.

“She will never agree,” countered Tadeusz abruptly. “No, Uncle, I cannot wait. I must leave soon, at sunrise; only please give me your blessing. I have everything in readiness. I ride for the Kingdom without delay.”

The Judge curled his whiskers and glowered angrily at the boy. “You call this plain speaking?” he said. “Is this how you confide in me: first the duel, and now this romantic attachment and this departure of yours? Oh, some intrigue is afoot, I’ll warrant. People have talked. I have had you followed! You, sir, are a philanderer and a scapegrace. You, sir, tell lies. And what were you up to the other night, sniffing about the house like a bird dog? Oh Tadeusz! Could it be that you have seduced Sophy and now you mean to fly the coop? Well, young cock, you shall not wriggle out of it so easily. Love or no love, you shall marry Sophy, or bear the lash! Tomorrow you

shall stand at the altar! And he talks of feelings and a constant heart! You, sir, are a lying scoundrel. Faugh! I shall look into this, Tadeusz. I'll make your ears smart yet! I have had trouble enough today—till my head positively aches with it! And now he would deny me a good night's rest! Off to bed with you, sir!"

With that he flung open the door and summoned the Sergeant-at-Arms to help him disrobe.

Tadeusz left quietly, hanging his head, the bitter interview very much on his mind. Never in his life had he been so harshly scolded. He sensed the justice of his uncle's charges and blushed at his conduct. What now? What if Sophy should find out? Should he ask for her hand? But what would Telimena say? No, he could stay no longer. Lost in his thoughts, he had hardly taken a few steps when something swept into his path. Looking up, he saw a ghostly white figure advancing toward him. Tall and thin and haggard it glided along, the tremulous moonlight glancing off its gown.

"You ingrate!" it groaned, stopping before him. "You sought out my glances and now you shun them. You sought out my words and now stop up your ears as if my words and glances were poison! It serves me right. Now I see what you are. A man! Not given to coquetry, I was loath to torment you. I sought to make you happy. And this is how you repay me! Triumph over my tender heart has hardened yours. Having won my heart too quickly, you are as quick to scorn it. Oh, serves me right! But believe me, this cruel lesson has taught me to despise myself with even greater scorn than yours!"

"Telimena!" he replied. "Honest to God, it is not that I am unfeeling; nor do I shun you out of scorn. But consider the matter yourself. People have been watching and spying on us. Can we go on like this, in the open? What will people say? Why, it isn't proper! My God, it is a sin!"

"A sin!" she replied with a bitter smile. "O babe in the woods! You lambkin! If I, a woman in love, could not care less if the whole world should find out about me and blacken my name, why should you, a man, who can blithely own to having a dozen lovers! Tell me the truth. You mean to desert me."

And she burst into tears.

"Telimena!" said the youth. "What would people say on seeing an able-bodied man of my age settling down in the country for a life of love when so many young men, so many husbands are leaving their wives and children and crossing the frontier to group and march under Poland's colors? Even if I cared to stay, does it depend on me? My father declared in his will that I should be a soldier in the Polish army. Now my uncle has repeated

the command. I leave tomorrow. I have made my decision and, by God, I will not go back on it."

"Far be it from me to stand in the way of your fame and happiness," replied Telimena. "You are a man. You will find a lover worthier of your heart, richer and fairer! Only before we part, grant me this one solace. Tell me your affections sprang from the heart, that this was not an idle dalliance, a wanton fling, but true love. Tell me my darling Tadeusz loves me! Let me hear once more from his own lips the words, 'I love you.' Let me carve them deep in my heart, imprint them in my mind, so that, knowing how you loved me once, I may the more readily forgive you."

Once again she burst into sobs. Seeing her weep and entreat him so tenderly for a mere trifle, Tadeusz felt an anguish of pity. Honest compassion welled up within him. Had he then searched the recesses of his heart, he would have been at pains to tell if he loved her or not.

"Telimena!" he said with feeling. "Heaven strike me if it should be untrue that I was fond of—aye, even loved—you. Our moments together were brief, but they passed so sweetly and tenderly that they shall long remain in my heart. Honest to God, I will never forget you!"

Telimena leapt up and flung her arms around his neck.

"I knew it!" she said. "You do love me. So I live again! Today I was on the point of taking my life. But now that you love me, my darling, can you really think of leaving me? My heart and all I own are yours. I will follow you wherever you go. With you, every nook in this earth shall be dear to me. Believe me, our love shall turn the most barren wasteland into a garden of delights."

"What!" exclaimed Tadeusz, tearing himself free from her embrace "Have you taken leave of your senses? Where? What for? Follow me, a simple soldier? You a camp follower?"

"Then we shall be married!" she said.

"No! Never!" cried Tadeusz. "I have no intention of marrying at this time. Nor will I be anyone's lover. Trifles! Enough of this! I beg you, my sweet, come to your senses! Compose yourself! I am grateful to you, but marriage is out of the question. Let us love each other, but at a distance. I cannot stay any longer. No, no, I must go. Keep well, my Telimena. I leave tomorrow."

With that, he put on his hat and turned to leave. But, like Medusa's head, Telimena's eyes and face froze him in his tracks. Against his will he remained, staring in terror at the pale figure standing motionless, breathless, lifeless before him. Stretching forth her hand like a sword poised for the thrust, she pointed her finger straight at his eyes, and cried:

“Hah! Just what I wanted to hear, worm’s tongue! Lizard’s heart! That on account of you I should scorn the addresses of the Count, the Notary, and the Assessor; that you should seduce me, then cast me off like an orphan—that is of no account; after all, you are a man, and I know your knavery! That you, like others of your sex, should break faith with me is no surprise, but I had no idea you could lie so basely! I listened in at your uncle’s door! So it is the child, Sophy, is it? Fond of her, eh? Treacherous designs! No sooner do you beguile one hapless soul than under her very nose you seek out a fresh victim! Flee if you like, but my curse shall hound you; or else remain here, and I shall tell the world of your perfidy. No more shall your arts deceive others as they deceived me! Out of my sight! I scorn you, sir! You are a liar, a base scoundrel!”

Tadeusz flinched under the force of her invective. These were mortal insults to a nobleman’s ear; no *Soplica* had ever been so rebuked. His face turned pale as a corpse. He stamped his foot, bit his lip, and muttered, “Stupid fool!”

He stalked off; but the word “scoundrel” resonated within his heart. The youth cringed inside; he knew he had brought it all on himself. He had done *Telimena* a great wrong; his conscience told him her rebuke was just. Yet her reproaches made him despise her all the more. O *Sophy*! But he dared not think of her for shame. So his uncle had meant to wed them all along! Dear, sweet *Sophy*! She might have been his wife. But Satan had so ensnared him in web upon web of sin and lies and now with a sneer left him rebuked and despised by all! A few brief days and his prospects lay in ashes! And he felt the justice of his requital.

Suddenly the thought of the duel flashed like an anchor of repose in the turmoil of his brain. “Murder the Count! The scoundrel!” he cried out in anger. “Avenge myself or die!” But what exactly for, he did not know. The rage subsided as swiftly as it arose. Once more he was seized by an anguish of sorrow. What if he was right and the Count and *Sophy* had an understanding between them? Well, what of it? Perhaps the Count was truly in love with her. Perhaps she loved him in return and would take him for her spouse! What right had he to break up this attachment? Who was he, hapless one, to ruin other people’s happiness?”

He fell into a desperate funk. He saw no way out for him except in immediate flight. Where? To his grave, no doubt! And with his fist pressed to his heavy brow, he made for the two ponds at the bottom of the fields. Stopping by the miry pool, he plunged his gaze into the greenish depths and drew the muddy scent luxuriously into his lungs. Like every wild extravagance, self-slaughter

has its fanciful aspect. In the mad turmoil of his thoughts, *Tadeusz* felt an inexpressible urge to drown himself in those turbid waters.

But *Telimena*, surmising the youth’s despair from his wild demeanor and seeing him make for the ponds, took fright on his account. Though burning still with righteous anger, she was at heart a caring soul. True, it pained her that *Tadeusz* had dared love another, and for this she had meant to punish him; but never did she wish to see him dead. With outstretched arms she bolted after him, crying, “Stop! No matter! Love, wed, leave, as you please, but for God’s sake, stop!” But he had forged on ahead at a run and was now standing on the bank.

Now, by a strange quirk of fate, the Count was at this very moment riding at the head of his troop of jockeys along that very bank. Entranced by the serenity of the night and the marvelous music of the aquatic orchestra (those very same choirs that sang like Aeolian harps; no creatures sing as sweetly as our Polish frogs!), he drew rein. Forgetting all about the raid, he turned his ear to the pond and listened intently. His eye swept the fields and the immensity of the sky; clearly, he was composing a nocturnal landscape in his mind.

It was indeed a picturesque spot. The two bodies of water leaned into each other like a pair of lovers. The water of the pond to the right stood smooth and unruffled like a maiden’s cheek. The pond on the left was darker; like the swarthy face of a youth sprouting a manly down. The first pool was verged all round with golden sand as with locks of flaxen hair, while the brow of the other bristled with osiers and tufts of willow. Both pools stood draped in garments of herbage.

Two rills flowed from each of the ponds. Like two arms they met and merged into a single stream. Farther down, the stream tumbled into a gloomy ravine and fled away, though you could see it still, for its waves bore the light of the moon along. The water cascaded in sheets; each sheet sparkled with bouquets of moonbeams. Inside the ravine, the light broke into shivers only to be gathered up and borne away by the stream. Meanwhile, from above, fresh bouquets of moonbeams cascaded down. You fancied the *Naiad* of *Switez* were sitting by the pond: with one hand she decants a bottomless pitcher, while dipping into her apron pocket with the other, she playfully bestrews the brook with fistfuls of enchanted gold.

Once through the ravine, the brook flowed out on a level plain. There, slowing to a leisurely meander, it fell silent; yet still you could see it move, for the moonbeams continued to glint along the shimmering surface of the stream. So moves the lovely snake of *Zmudz*, the one the Lithuanian folk call *givojtos*. [15] Though he seems to

slumber in the heather, yet he moves all the time, for his skin, ever changeful, turns now gold, now silver, until he vanishes from sight among the ferns and mosses. So too the meandering brook hid among the alders whose feathery forms loomed up on the edge of the horizon like spirits half seen and half wreathed in mist.

A watermill stood hidden in the ravine between the two ponds. Like an old guardian eavesdropping on his lovesick charges, it grumbled angrily, swaying back and forth, tossing its head and arms and muttering threats. So, coming suddenly to life, it shook its mossy brow and set its many-fingered fist in whirling motion with a loud clatter. No sooner did it begin to grate its sharp-toothed jaws, than it drowned out the love-talk of the ponds and roused the Count from his reverie.

Astonished to see Tadeusz standing so close to his armed party, he cried out, "To arms! Seize him!" The jockeys leapt from their horses; and before Tadeusz could take stock of what was happening, they had taken him captive. Then, galloping on to the manor, they quickly overran the courtyard. The house awoke. The dogs yammered. The watchmen cried alarm. The Judge ran out, half-dressed. At first he took the armed troop for brigands, but then he recognized the Count.

"What is the meaning of this?" he cried. The Count flashed his sword over him, but when he saw he was unarmed, he stayed his ardor.

"Soplica!" he said. "Ancestral foe of my clan! This day I punish you for all your offenses, both ancient and new. This day, before I avenge the insult to my honor, you shall render me an account for the seizure of my fortune!"

"In the name of the Father and the Son!" exclaimed the Judge, crossing himself. "Faugh! Are you a brigand, sir? Upon my word, does this befit a man of your birth, your rank in the world—your breeding? I will brook no harm done here!"

Meanwhile, the Judge's servants had run up, some bearing cudgels, others muskets. The Chief Steward stood some distance off, eyes fixed on the Count, a knife up his sleeve.

They would have set to on the spot, if the Judge had not stopped them. Defense was futile; even now a new enemy was approaching. A light flashed among the alders, followed instantly by the discharge of a harquebus. Even now a troop of horsemen came thundering across the bridge. "Harrow! Hang Soplica!" roared a thousand voices. The Judge recognized Gerwazy's battle cry and shuddered.

"This is nothing!" cried the Count. "There will be more of us yet. Judge, lay down your arms! These are my allies."

But then the Assessor ran up.

"I arrest you in the name of His Imperial Highness!" he cried. "Surrender your sword, sir, or I shall call out the army! You know the penalty for mounting a raid at night. Ukase Twelve Hundred stipulates that—"

The Count struck him in the face with the flat of his blade. The Assessor went down without a sound and crept away among the nettles. All thought him wounded or dead.

"So there *is* banditry afoot!" cried the Judge.

A collective groan went up, overtopped by Sophy's shriek. Flinging her arms around the Judge, she began to squeal like a child undergoing a ritual bloodletting. Meanwhile, Telimena leapt in among the horses. With joined hands stretched out toward the Count, her head thrown back, hair spread wildly across her shoulders, she cried out in terror:

"Upon your honor! By all that is holy, we beg you upon our knees! Do you dare refuse us, Count? Harsh man! You must slay us women first!"

She went off in a dead faint.

Surprised and not a little unnerved by this scene, the Count leapt to her aid.

"Mistress Sophy!" he cried. "Mistress Telimena! Never will I imbrue this sword in the blood of defenseless souls. People of Soplica Manor! You are my prisoners. This is how I did it once in Italy near the crag the Sicilians call Birbante Rocca. There I took a robber's camp. Those bearing arms I slew; those without weapons I seized and bound. They walked behind my horsemen, a splendid train adorning my triumphal march. Later we hanged them at Etna's foot."

It was a singular stroke of good luck for the Soplicas that the Count had swifter horses than the nobility. In his zeal to be the first to engage the enemy, he and his jockeys had outstripped the main body of horsemen by at least a mile. Well-disciplined and orderly, his men comprised a regular army of sorts, unlike the rest of the nobility, who, as is often the case with insurgents, were unruly and all too eager to string up their foes.

Now that his ardor and rage had cooled, the Count considered how he might end the raid without bloodshed. He bade his men lock the Soplicas in the house as prisoners of war, and stationed guards at the doors.

Then with a "Harrow! Hang Soplica!" the nobility rushed on in a body, encircled the grounds, and took them by storm; all the more easily as their captain had already been taken and his garrison had fled the field. Still, the victors' blood was up; they sought out the foe. Barred from the house, they ran to the farmyard and burst into the kitchen. The sight of the pots and pans and the hearth not yet grown cold, the smell of recent cooking,

and the sound of dogs crunching on the scraps of the evening meal—all this went straight to their hearts and set their thoughts on a different course. While cooling their wrath, it inflamed their desire for food. Worn out by their

ride and the whole day spent in deliberations, they thrice roared in unison, “Meat! Meat!” “Drink! Drink!” came the refrain. The nobility broke up into two choirs, one calling for meat, the other for drink. The cries went echoing through the Manor, and wherever they were heard, mouths watered, bellies growled. And so, at a signal from the kitchen, the entire army dispersed to forage for victuals.

Meanwhile, Gerwazy, repulsed from the Judge’s rooms, was forced to defer to the Count’s guards. Unable to avenge himself on his enemy, he turned his mind to his second main objective. Being practiced and skilled in the law, he was eager to establish the Count’s legal title to his new inheritance. He set out in search of the Sergeant-at-Arms. After a lengthy search, he found him skulking behind the stove. Seizing him by the collar, he dragged him out into the yard.

“Mr. Sergeant-at-Arms!” he said, prodding his breast with Pocketknife. “The Count makes bold to bid Your Honor proclaim before our gentry brethren his lordship’s formal *intrmissio* of the castle, the Soplica manor, the village, fields, both sowed and fallow; in a word, *cum grovibus, forestis, et borderibus, peasantibus, scultetis et omnibus rebus; et quibusdam aliis*. You know how it goes. So out with it; let’s hear you bark! And leave nothing out!”

“Now hold on a moment, Mr. Warden!” said Protazy, uncowed, thrusting his hands under his belt. “I am quite ready to do the bidding of any party, but I warn you, a decree proclaimed under duress and in the dark of night carries no weight.”

“Duress? What duress?” replied the Warden. “There is no violence here. Why, I am asking you nicely, sir! If you find it dark, old Pocketknife here shall oblige and strike you a light so bright that seven churches couldn’t hold a candle to it!”

“Come now, dear Gerwazy!” Protazy replied. “Why so testy? I am but a court usher. It is not up to me to examine the merits of a lawsuit. The party merely summons the usher, tells him what to say, and he proclaims it. An usher is an emissary of the law, and one does not punish emissaries; so I cannot imagine why you are keeping me under guard. I will pen a writ at once. Bid someone fetch me a lamp; meanwhile, I shall make the announcement. Brothers! Come to order!”

So as to be better heard, he climbed a large pile of logs that lay seasoning by the garden fence. Directly he reached

the top he vanished from sight as if swept away by the wind. They heard him land with a thump in the cabbage patch below, then saw his white confederate cap streak like a dove through the dark hemp. Watering Can took a potshot at it and missed. There was a rustle of stalks. Protazy had reached the hop thicket. “I protest!” he yelled. By now he was sure of his escape; behind him were the osier-bed and the brook’s miry ground.

Protazy’s protest was like the final cannon shot upon the taking of a rampart; all resistance ceased at Soplica Manor. The ravenous nobility fell to looting and pillaging at will. Baptist set up post in the cowshed. There he felled an ox and two calves with blows to the head. Razor slit their throats with his slender blade. With no less skill did Bodkin stick the sucklings and porkers between the shoulder blades. Now it was the poultry’s turn to face slaughter. The watchful geese, ancient Rome’s preservers, honked in vain for help: no Manlius stood by to repel the treacherous Gaul. Matthias Watering Can broke into the pen. He wrung the necks of some, others he took alive, lashing them to his belt by their necks. The geese gurgled and writhed; the ganders hissed and nipped at their assailant—all in vain. Covered in sparks of goose down and borne on by the wheel-like flapping motion of their wings, Matthias made straight for the kitchen. You would have sworn he was *Chochlik*—the winged evil sprite.

But the most appalling, if quietest, butchery took place in the chicken coop. Young Sadsack burst inside. Using a halter for a noose, he yanked the ruffled hens and cockerels from their roosts. One after another he wrung their necks and piled them on the floor. Beautiful birds! Fattened on pearls of barley. Foolish Sadsack! What fit of madness took you? Now you shall never appease Sophy’s wrath!

Recalling the old days, Gerwazy appealed to the nobility for their belts. Lowering them into the Soplica cellars, they hoisted up puncheons of silvery vodka, oak-seasoned mead, and ale. Some of the casks they broached at once. The rest they seized lustily and, like a swarm of ants, rolled them to the castle where the entire host was gathering to spend the night; it was there that the Count had established his headquarters.

Laying a hundred bonfires, they began to boil, broil, and grill. Tables groaned with meat. Rivers of spirits flowed. The nobility meant to eat, drink, and sing the night out. Gradually, they began to drowse and yawn. Eye after eye drooped shut. Heads began to nod. Every man dropped off where he sat, one over his bowl, another over his tankard, still another over his joint of beef. Sleep, death’s brother, had finally vanquished the victors. ▲

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<WWW.LRC.UWM.EDU/TOUR/>.**THE LAST WORD***BY TEOFIL LENARTOWICZ (1822-93)*ON A FRAIL BOAT ACROSS THE ROUGH SEAS
AN EXHAUSTED SAILOR HEADS FOR THE PORT.
OH, WHERE IS THE REFINED IMAGINATION NOW,
ONCE MY PAGAN GOD AND MY LORD?DRESSED IN A FADED ROBE OF GREY
I STAND BEFORE THE FACE OF TRUTH ETERNAL
AND FAME THAT WAS ONCE SO TEMPTING,
WHAT HAS IT BECOME? VANITY AND EMPTINESS!A CREASED FACE BENDS TO THE GROUND,
THE MAGIC OF WORLDLY BEAUTY WITHERS,
O LORD! I FALL INTO THY ARMS
AND I SEE NOTHING, NOTHING—BUT THE CROSS.*TRANSLATED BY BARBARA WITAK*