MONUMENTA POLONICA

THE FIRST FOUR CENTURIES OF POLISH POETRY

A BILINGUAL ANTHOLOGY

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MICHIGAN SLAVIC PUBLICATIONS
BOGURODZICA * MOTHER OF GOD
(14th century)

"Bogurodzica" is the oldest song written in Polish that has survived to the present. It has been preserved in several different manuscripts from the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth century. The oldest of them, the so-called Cracow Text I (Tekst krakowski I), dates from 1407, but the poem may have been composed two centuries earlier. The Cracow text (reproduced here both in the original and the modernised versions) consists of two stanzas, the first addressed to the Virgin Mary and the second to Jesus Christ. Both stanzas end with a refrain "Kyrie Eleison." The original text has been altered in other versions and enlarged by additional stanzas, manufactured for various occasions and only loosely connected to the first two. None of them have the formal compression of the original text.

The problem of the origin of "Bogurodzica" has been an object of controversy among scholars for almost a century. Critics drew attention to a convergence between "Bogurodzica" and Byzantine iconography on the one hand, and between its musical, metrical structure and Latin hymns on the other. Its language betrays the influence of Old Church Slavic and Czech as well as spoken Ruthenian. The controversy concerns also the date of its composition, and the different hypotheses range from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries.

According to Jan Długosz, a fifteenth century Polish historian, "Bogurodzica" was sung as a *carmen patrium* in 1410 at the battle of Grunwald. During the reign of the Jagellonian dynasty it had the function of a national anthem and was sung at important official events. After falling into oblivion in the second half of the sixteenth century, it reappeared in patriotic poetry from Juliusz Słowacki to Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński.
BOGURODZICA

_Tekst krakowski I_

Bogu rodzica dziewczęa bogem zjawena maria
U twego syna gośpodzina matko zwołena maria
Siłczęcí nam sprawiony nam Kyrieleison
Twego dzieła krzyczczela boszcze Uści z głosi
naplen milli człowiecze Siłię modlitwo yofz
nołimi A dacz raczy gegoł prołimi a najwecze
zboźni pobith polziwocze rasli przebith kyrieleison

_Modernised version_

Bogurodzica dziewczęa, Bogiem sławiona Maryja,
U twego syna Gospodzina matko zwołena, Maryja!
Zyszczy nam, spusci nam.
    Kyrieleison.

Twego dzieła Krzciela, bożycze,
Usłysz głosi, napeń myśli człowiecze.
Stysz modlitwe, jąż nosimy,
A dać raczy, jegoł prośmy:
A na świecie zbożny pobyt,
Po żywocie rasłyski przebity.
    Kyrieleison.

MOTHER OF GOD

_Translated by David Welsh_

O Mother of God, Virgin blessed by God, Maria!
With your son, our Lord, O mother chosen, Maria!
Intercede for us, send Him to us.
    Kyrie Eleison.

For the sake of thy Baptist, O Son of God,
Hear our voices, grant the wishes of men
Hear the prayer which we offer
And deign to give what we ask,
On earth a happy sojourn,
And after life to reside in paradise.
    Kyrie Eleison.
MIKOŁAJ REJ
(1505-1569)

Mikołaj Rej was born in Żórawno near Halicz; his family was of the small gentry. His formal education was modest—he studied at the Cracow Academy for one year only—and he was mostly a self-taught man. Although Rej lacked any systematic knowledge, he was widely read and knew how to make use of his eclectic reading in his own writings. Rej was both a political activist and militant Protestant. His works abound in political allusions and sharp forays against the Catholic Church.

Rej was a prolific writer and quite popular during his lifetime. One of his early works is a satire in the form of a dialogue, *A Short Conversation Between Three Persons, a Squire, a Bailiff, and a Parson* (*Krótska rozprawa między trzema osobami, Panem, Wójtem a Plebanem*, 1543). His other works include two plays, *The Merchant* (*Kupiec*, 1543) and *The Life of Joseph from a Jewish Tribe* (*Żywot Józefa z pokolenia żydowskiego*, 1545); an adaptation of David’s *Psalms* (*Psalterz Dawidów*, 1546); a lengthy work in verse entitled *A Faithful Image of an Honest Man* (*Wizerunek własny żywota człowieka poczciwego*, 1558), a collection of seven hundred epigrams under the title *Bestiary* (*Zwierznicy*, 1562), and a work in prose, *The Mirror* (*Zwierciadło*, 1568). Rej is also the author of short, jocular poems which he called *Filiki* (*Pranks*).

Rej’s style is distinctly his own. He uses colloquial language, and though it might lack sophistication and refinement, it is nevertheless robust, colorful, solidly rooted in everyday reality, and full of concrete details. Many of his works are in the form of a dialogue, and they teem with proverbs and plays on words as well as amusing, vividly drawn scenes from the Polish life of the time. It is Rej’s humor and his keen gift of observation that counterbalance
the didactic, moralistic aspect of his poetry, and that continue
to delight his readers.
NA NIEPEWNE JEDNANIE

Powiedali na kura, iż wleciał na gruszkę,
Widząc w polu biegać liszku, panią duszkę.
Przyszedł lis. — «Panie kurze, nie wiesz, co się zastoło?
Wszytko się pojednało, co się siebie bało.»
Kur sie wspina ku górze mówiąc, iż: — «Chart bieży!»
A lis skoczy do lasa, sierść się na nim jeży.
Kur zawołał: — «Poczekaj, wszak mamy jednanie!»
Lis rzekł: — «Nie wiem, wie li chart o tym, miły panie!»

CO SIE NIE CHCIAŁ SPOWIEDAĆ,
IŻ SIE ŻONA SPOWIED[AŁA]

Jeden, co miał złą żonę, spowiedą się przyszedł,
Mnich do niego z postawą, z zakrystyjej wyszedł.
Rzekł mu, iż: — «Wasza pani teraz też tu była,
A na świętej spowiedzi wszystko wyliczyła.»
Ten rzekł: — «Już sie mnie, księżę, spowiedą nie trzeba.
Wszytko ta wywołała pewnie, jako trzeba,
Na mię i na sąsiady, i — by co wiedziała —
I na Boga, to mi wierzę, żeć by powiedziała.»

ON THE PRECARIOUS AGREEMENT

They say that the rooster rushed into a pear-tree
When he saw the fox, Old Soul, coming through the barley.
The fox ran up. “Mr. Rooster, you know of course
A trace for all the animals is now in force.”
The rooster climbed higher, shouting: “A hound runs here!”
The fox darted for the forest bristling with fear.
The rooster called, “Wait—there has been an agreement.”
The fox: “I don’t know, sir, if the hound gave his consent.”

THE MAN WHO DID NOT WANT TO CONFESS BECAUSE HIS WIFE HAD CONFESSIONED

A man who had a bad wife went to confession.
The priest came from the vestry with stern expression,
Told him: “A moment ago your wife was speaking
With me in confession, and revealed everything.”
The man said: “I have no need to confess, father.
She has complained about everything I gather,
Me, the others we know, and also our neighbor—
If she could then God himself she would belabor.”
A SONG (ANONYMOUS)
(Second half of the XVI century)

Very likely this folk song was composed on the occasion of the formation of a peasant infantry division in 1578 by King Stefan Batory; it was called piechota wybraniecka (selective infantry). The soldiers for the division were drawn from the peasants of the Crown estates. The song, known in many different variants, gained popularity in the nineteenth century when it began to be associated with the tradition of the Polish legions created during the Napoleonic wars in Italy. It also found its way into literature: Adam Mickiewicz introduced it into his Pan Tadeusz, and Stefan Żeromski included it into several of his stories and novels. Its popularity continues until the present day.
[JEDZIE ŻOŁNIERZ BOREM, LASEM]

Jedzie żołnierz borem, lasem
Przymierając głodu czasem;
Chleba, soli nie żałować,
A żołniera poratować.
Suknia na nim nie blakuje,
Dziurami wiatr wylatuje.
Chciać żołnierz obszarpany,
Jednak idzie między pany,
W kotły, bebny uderzono,
Na wojnę rozkazano.
«I ja też bym pojechał,
Gdyby mi kto konia dał.»
Starsza siostra konia dala
I sama go osiodła.
W prawę rękę szablę dala,
Sobie rzewnie zaplakała.
«Nie płacz, siostro, nie płacz brata,
Wróci ci się za trzy lata.»
Nie wyszło roku półtora,
Jużci wojsko ciągnie z pola.
«Kłaniam wam, mości panowie,
Daleko tam brat na wojnie?»
«A leży on w szczerym polu,
Trzyma głowę na kamieniu,
Prawą nóżkę we strzemieniu,
A koń jego wedle niego,
Grzebie nóżką, żaluje go.»
«Kiedy ja miał swego pana,
Jadałem ja gołe ziarna,
Teraz nie mam sieczki, słomy,
Objadły mnie kręki, wrony.»
Lepiej w domu cepem buchać,
Nóż na wojnie kuli słuchać,

[A SOLDIER GOES RIDING THROUGH WOODS]

A soldier goes riding through woods
And through forests, pained by hunger.
Do not hold back your bread, your salt,
Help the soldier and save his life.
His clothes do not have time to fade,
The wind is blowing through their holes;
But even though in tattered rags
The soldier still can walk with lords!
Now they beat on drums and kettles—
The order is to go to war.
“If someone would give me a horse,
I too would like to go to war.”
Then his older sister gives him
A horse, she saddles it herself.
Into his right hand she places
His sword and cries with tenderness.
“Sister, don’t cry for your brother,
After three years he will come back.”
 Barely a year and a half pass,
The army returns from the field.
“I greet you, honored gentlemen,
How far behind is my brother?”
“He lies in a wide open field,
His head is resting on a stone.
His right leg is in the stirrup,
His horse is standing by him still
And paws with his leg, mourning him.”
“When my master would ride with me
I used to eat nothing but grain;
Now I have neither straw nor chaff,
Ravens and crows ate everything.”
Better to swing the flail at home
Than hear the bullets of a war.
Bo na wojnie szable kruszą,
Nie jeden się żegna z duszą.
Lepszy w domu groch, kapusta,
Niż na wojnie kura tłusta.
Lepiej w domu plugiem orać,
Niż na wojnie szablę dolać.
Lepsza w domu kapuścina
Niż na wojnie kurczęcina.

In war they like to shatter swords
And more than one will lose his soul.
Better peas and cabbage at home
Than a fattened chicken in war;
Better follow the plough at home
Than swing a heavy sword in war.
Better thin cabbage soup at home
Than rich chicken broth in a war.
JAN KOCHANOWSKI
(1530-1584)

The son of a county lawyer, Jan Kochanowski was born in Sycyn near Radom. He studied at the Cracow Academy, and also at the University of Padua in Italy. His short stay at the court of King Zygmunt August between 1560 and 1564 left him with a feeling of bitterness. His ecclesiastical career proved equally ephemeral. In 1574 Kochanowski left both the court and the parish, happily married, and settled on his family estate of Czarnolas. The happiness of the last ten years of Kochanowski’s life—until his sudden death in Lublin in 1584—was marred by the death of two of his daughters. The premature death of his favorite Orszula, in particular, inspired the Laments (Treny, 1580), Kochanowski’s greatest poetic achievement.

Kochanowski started to publish late, and the dates of publication do not reflect the chronology in which individual works were written. Songs (Pieśni), published in 1586, and Epigrams (Fraszki), published in 1584, stretch over a period of some twenty years. The song “What do you want from us, Lord?” (included in this anthology) was written as early as 1562; a Renaissance manifesto, it is Kochanowski’s first known Polish work. His earlier poems were written in Latin. Kochanowski’s other works include several narrative poems such as The Game of Chess (Szachy, 1564), Harmony (Zgoda, 1564), The Satyr, or the Wild Man (Satyr albo Dziki Maż, 1564) and The Banner, or Homage from Prussia (Proporzec albo Hołd Pruski, 1569). Kochanowski was also a masterful translator of the Psalms (Psalterz Dawidowy), and author of a play The Dismissal of the Grecian Envoys (Odprawa postów greckich), both published in 1578. The greatest Polish Renaissance poet, Kochanowski found many imitators, but remained unequalled until Romanticism.
Kochanowski's poetry and in particular his *Laments* present an extraordinary challenge to the translator. It has been pointedly observed that in the *Laments*, the personal, emotion-filled voice of the father alternates with the rhetorical and more elevated voice of the Renaissance man. In order to account for this richness of tone, this anthology presents two different styles of translation of the *Laments*: those by Dorothea Prall Radin, originally published in 1928, are rhymed and metrically regular as well as more rhetorical, while the recent translations of Adam Czerniawski are direct and have a higher emotional pitch.
PIEŚN XXV

Czego chcesz od nas, Panie, za tue hojne dary?
Czego za dobrodziejstwa, którym nie masz miary?
Kościół Cię nie ogarnie, wszędy pełno Ciebie,
I w otchłaniach, i w morzu, na ziemi, na niebie.

Złota też, wiem, nie pragniesz, bo to wszystko Twoje,
Cokolwiek na tym świecie człowiek mieli swoje.
Wdzięcznym Cię tedy sercem, Panie, wyznawamy,
Bo nad to przystojniejszej ofiary nie mamy.

Tyś pan wszystkiego świata, Tyś niebo zbudował
I złotymi gwiazdami śliczniej uhaftował;
Tyś fundament założył nieobeszłej ziemi
I przykryłeś jej nagość zioly rozlicznemi.

Za Twiornm rozkazaniem w brzegach morze stoi,
A zamierzonych granic przeskoczyć się boi;
Rzeki wód nieprzebranych wielką hojność mają.
Biały dzień a noc ciemna swoje czasy znają.

Tobie k’woli rozliczne kwiatki Wiosna rodzi,
Tobie k’woli w kłosianym wieńcu Lato chodzi.
Wino Jesień i jabłka rozmaite dawa,
Potom do gotowego gnusna Zima wstawa.

Z Twjej łaski nocna rosa na mdle zioła padnie,
A zagorzałe zboża deszcz ożywia snadnie;
Z Twoich rąk wszelkie zwierzę patrza swej żywności,
A Ty każdego żywizh z Twjej szczodrośliwosci.

SONG XXV

What do you want from us, Lord? Your countless
Gifts and Your beneficence are boundless.
The church does not contain You; everywhere,
In heaven, earth, sea, the depths, You are there.

I know You do not desire gold: it is
Yours, with all things of the world man calls his.
Therefore we praise You with our heart, we do
Not have any more worthy gift for You.

You built the whole world and the sky we see,
With stars You embroidered it beautifully.
For immense earth You laid the foundation
And dressed with herbs Your naked creation.

The sea tries to leap its limits, it roars
But by Your command stays within its shores.
River waters inexhaustibly flow
While clear day and dark night their own time know.

By Your will Spring blooms burst without number,
By Your will, in corn wreaths enters Summer.
Wines, many apples are gifts of Autumn;
When all is ready numb Winter will come.

Night dew falls on dry herbs by Your mercy
And parched wheat freshens when rain is timely.
Each animal looks for food that will be
From Your hands, from Your generosity.
Bądź na wieki pochwalon, nieśmiertelny Panie!
Twoja łaska, Twa dobroć nigdy nie ustanie.
Chowaj nas, póki raczysz na tej niskiej ziemi;
Jedno zawsze niech będziemi pod skrzydłami Twemi!

O immortal Lord, be praised forever!
To Your grace and goodness there will never
Be an end; as long as it is Your liking,
Keep us here on earth—but under Your wing!
Nieszczęsne ochędztwo, żałosne ubióry
Mojej namiłżej cory!
Po co me smutne oczy za sobą ciągniecie,
Żalu mi przydajecie?
Już ona człomeczków swych wami nie odzieje—
Nie masz, nie masz nadzieje!
Ujął ją sen żelazny, twarty, nieprzespany . . .
Już letniczek pisany
I upłoczki wniwecz, i paski złocone,
Matczynie darzy płone.
Nie do takiej łożnice, moja dziewczo droga,
Miała cię mać uboga
Doprowadzić! Nie taka dać obiecała
Wyprawę, jakć dała!
Giełeczko tylko dała a lichą tkaneczkę;
Ojciec ziemię brełczkę
W głowi włożył.—Niestetyż, i posag, i ona
W jednej skrzynce zamkniona!

Pathetic garments that my girl once wore
But cannot anymore!
The sight of them still haunts me everywhere
And feeds my great despair.
They miss her body’s warmth; and so do I:
All I can do is cry.

Eternal, iron slumbers now possess
My child: each flowered dress,
Smooth ribbon, gold-clasped belt her mother bought—
Their worth is set at naught.

You were not meant, my daughter, to be led
To that last, stone-cold bed

By your poor mother! She had promised more
Than what your four planks store:
The shroud she herself sewed, the earthen clod
I set down at your head.
O sealed oak chest, dark lid, board walls that hide
The dowry and the bride!

Jan Kochanowski, laments
Translated by
Stanisław Barańczak
and
Seamus Heaney
Wielkieś mi uczyniła pustki w domu moim,
Moja droga Orszulo, tym zniknieniem swoim!
Pełno nas, a jakoby nikogo nie było:
Jedną małeczą duszą tak wiele ubyło.
Tyś za wszystki mówiła, za wszystki śpiewała,
Wszystkiś w domu kąciki zawżydy pobiegała.
Nie dopuściła nigdy matce się frasować
Ani ojcu myśleniem zbytnim głowy psować,
To tego, to owego wdzięcznie obłapiając
I onym swym uciecznym śmiechem zabawiając.
Teraz wszystko umilkło, szczere pustki w domu,
Nie masz zabawki, nie masz rozmiać się nikomu.
Z każdego kąta żałność człowieka ujmuje,
A serce swej pociechy darmo upatruje.

The void that fills my house is so immense
Now that my girl is gone. It baffles sense:
We all are here, yet no one is, I feel;
The flight of one small soul has tipped the scale.
You talked for all of us, you sang for all,
You played in every nook and cubbyhole.
You never would have made your mother brood
Nor father think too much for his own good;
The house was carefree. Everybody laughed.
You held us in your arms: our hearts would lift.
Now emptines reigns here; the house is still;
Nobody ever laughs nor ever will.
All your old haunts have turned to haunts of pain,
And every heart is hankering in vain.
Kupić by cię, Mądrości, za drogie pieniądze!
Która, jeśli prawdziwie mienią, wszystki żądze,
Wszystki ludzkie frasunki umiesz wykorzenić,
A człowieka tylko nie w anioła odmienić,
Który nie wie, co boleć, frasunku nie czuje,
Złym przygodom nie podległ, strachom nie hołduje.
Ty wszystki rzeczy ludzkie masz za fraszkę sobie,
Jednaką myśl tak w szczęściu, jako i w żałobie
Zawżyź niesiesz. Ty śmierci namniej się nie boisz,
Bezpieczna, nieodmienna, niepożyta stoisz.
Ty bogactwa nie złotem, nie skarby wielkimi,
Ale dosytem mierzyś i przyrodzenymi
Potrzebami. Ty okiem swym nieuchronionym
Nędznika upatrujesz pod dachem złoconym,
A uboższym nie zająrżysz szczęśliwego mienia,
Kto by jedno chciał słuchać twego upomnienia.
Nieszczęśliwy ja człowiek, którym lata swoje
Na tym strawił, żebych był ujīrzał progi twoje!
Terazem nagle z stopniów ostatnich zrzucony
I między insze, jeden z wielu, policzony.

Lament 9

I'd buy you, Wisdom, with all of the world's gold—
But is there any truth in what we're told
About your power to purge our human thought
Of all its dread, and raise up the distraught
Spirit to heaven, to the highest sphere
Where angels dwell beyond distress and fear?
You see mere trifles in all human things;
Mourning and mirth are two extended wings
On which you bring us equanimity,
Yourself unmoved by Death, calm, changeless, free.
For you, the rich man is the one who owns
No more than what's enough—no precious stones,
Or land, or rents; you see through to the truth,
The misery beneath the gilded roof;
But if poor people heed your sober voice,
You do not grudge the poor their simple joys.
To think that I have spent my life in one
Long climb towards your threshold! All delusion!
Wisdom for me was castles in the air;
I'm hurled, like all the rest, from the topmost stair.
DO DZIEWKI

Nie uciekaj przede mną, dziewczko urodziwa,
Z twoją rumianą twarzą moja broda siwa
Zgodzi się znamienicie; patrz, gdy wieniec wija,
Że pospolicie sadzą przy różowej lelią.

Nie uciekaj przede mną, dziewczko urodziwa,
Serce jeszcze niestare, choć broda siwa;
Choć u mnie broda siwa, jeszcze niezgubiona,
Czosnek ma głowę białą, a ogon zielony.

Nie uciekaj, ma rada; wszak wiesz: im kot starszy,
Tym, pospolicie mówią, ogon jego twardszy;
I dąb, choć mieści przesłanie, choć jest na nim płowy,
Przedsie stoi potężnie, bo ma korzeń zdrowy.

TO A MAID

No, do not run away from me, fair maid,
Your rosy cheek and my beard that has greyed
Will match perfectly; in a wreath well laced
Next to the rose, a lily is often placed.

Do not run away from me, fair young maid,
My heart is not old though my hair has greyed;
My beard is white, still there is wind in my sail.
Garlic has a white head and a green tail.

Do not run away for you know the tale,
The older the cat, the harder his tail.
The oak tree may be old and its leaves dry,
If its root is healthy it will stand high.
The Memoirs of Jan Chryzostom
2 Gostawiec Pasek
Translated by Maria J. Świecicka

ANNO DOMINI 1680

By the grace of God also this year I began in Olszówka. Right in the beginning of the year we lived to see something different, because the winter frosts passed and the weather became so warm, so nice, that the cattle went into the field. Flowers sprouted and the earth yielded grass; people plowed and sowed. I hesitated for a long time with the sowing, but when I saw that others had already completed half of their spring sowing, I also began to sow. When, during the carnival season, I accompanied people on their courtings or when I went to weddings, it was so hot that one could not wear fur-lined outfits, only summer ones, as in Augusto. There was no more winter; only rain showers came and went. The grain which was sowed in January grew so high before Easter that the cattle were pastured on it. The cattle thus ate little hay during this winter, since they had very good nourishment in the field.

His Majesty the King sent to me Pan Straszewski, his courtier, with letters in which he urgently sought me to donate to him the tame otter which I had—such a delightful animal that I would have preferred to give away partem1 of my possessions rather than it2 whom I loved so much. The King learned of this otter at first from someone who said that it was cum his et his qualitatis3 and that it was in the possession of a certain nobleman from the voivodeship of Cracow. My name was not known to him, however, and so they did not know to whom to direct the request. At first the Polish Master of the Horse4 wrote to Pan Belchacki—who later became the Vice-Chancellor of Cracow—and asked him to find out in whose possession this otter was and its owner’s name. Since the otter was well known in the entire voivodeship of Cracow, and later even in all of Poland, Pan Belchacki found out about it and informed them that I had it. Only then the King rejoiced in hope and said: “I have known Pan Pasek for a long time. I know that he will not refuse it to me.” He then sent Pan Straszewski to me with a letter. The King and the Polish Master of the Horse wrote to me. Also Pan Adryjan Pickarski, a royal courtier and a relative of mine, begged me in his letter not to refuse the King this gift, since I would be rewarded with all possible grace and favor of His Majesty.

After I had read the letters I was amazed: “Who had reported about it there?” and I asked: “For Heaven’s sake, what does His Majesty need it for?” The envoy said that His Majesty demanded it and begged for it very much. I said that there was nothing in my possession which I would refuse His Majesty, but I felt as if one had scratched me with a sharp curry-comb over the naked skin. Then I sent to the leaseholder of the brewery, a Jew, to send me a sleeve of otter skin. After it was brought to me, I put it on the table and said: “Here, sir, you have a speedy settling of the matter!” He looked at me, and replied: “But there was to be a living one, a tame one here, which the King is asking for!”

After this joke, I had to present it. It was not at home, however, for it was roaming somewhere around the ponds. We drank some vodka and then we went to the meadows. I began to call it by its name. It was called Robak.5 The otter came wet out of the thicket; it began to fawn on me and then it followed us into the house. Straszewski was amazed and said: “For

1Part.
2Pasek always refers to the otter as “she”. It is not clear however whether this merely refers to the gender of the Polish word for otter, wydra, which is feminine.
3Had such and such qualities.
4In Polish Robak means a worm or a maggot.
Heaven's sake, how could the King not grow fond of it when it is so tame! I answered: "Now, sir, you see only its tameness and you praise it; but when you see its virtues you will praise it even more."

We went to the pond. I stood on the jetty and said: "Robak! I need fish for my quests: jump into the water!" The otter jumped in and at first brought back a roach. I ordered it to go a second time; it brought out a small pike. The third time it dragged out a pike the size of a dish, which it only hurt in the neck a little. Straszewski grabbed his head: "For Heaven's sake, what do I see here!" To this I said:

"Would your Lordship like for it to bring some more? For it will keep carrying them out until I have enough; even if I needed a tub full of fish, it would fill it up, because a fishing net does not cost it anything." Straszewski said: "Now that I see it, I believe it; if someone had told me about all this, I would not have believed him." Straszewski caught me in my vows et consentit to my proposal nonetheless, seeing that this would facilitate the description of its qualities to the King. Before his departure I showed him all its skills, which were the following:

First of all, the otter slept with me in my bed and it was so tidy that not only did it never mess up my bed, but not even under the bed. It went to one place where a container was put for it. Only there it obeyed the call of nature. Secondly: it was such a good guard at night. God forbid if anyone approached my bed! After it allowed my orderly to take off my boots he could no longer show himself, for it would make such a noise that I would wake up no matter how sound asleep I was. When I was intoxicated and someone passed by my bed, it trod on my chest and squeaked until I woke up. And during the day it would stretch itself out somewhere and would sleep so soundly that even if I were to take it in my hands, it would not open its eyes. This animal trusted me so much! It refused to eat either fish or meat raw. Even when on a fast day or a Friday it was served a chicken or pigeon without seasoning and parsley, it refused to eat it. It grasped like a dog when I said: "Don't let it be touched!" If someone pulled me by my frock and I said: "Seize him"—it would jump with a terrible shriek, would pull him by the frock, by the legs, aided by the dog, the only one whom it loved—his name was Kapreol and he was a shaggy German dog. It learned all this from him and the other tricks as well. It was friendly with this dog only. This dog was kept in the house and during travel the otter was also with him. It did not like other dogs and when one entered the room it immediately pushed it out, even if it were the biggest greyhound. Once, Pan Stanisław Ożarowski came to see me;
actually he just dropped in, since we were travelling together. I was glad to have him; the otter was also glad, since it had not seen me for three days. It came toward me and was overwhelmed with joy and tenderness. The guest had with him a nice female greyhound and he said to his son: "Samuel, hold this greyhound, so that she does not hurt it!" I said to this: "Do not worry, sir: this animal will not let anyone harm it, even though it is small." He said surprised: "Are you joking, sir? This greyhound attacks a wolf, and disposes of a fox in a trice!" After the otter had rejoiced at seeing me, it saw this dog which did not belong to the household. It went up to that greyhound and looked her in the eyes, and the greyhound did the same; it walked around the dog and smelled her back leg. Then it stepped away from her and went away. I thought: "Maybe now it will do nothing more." We had hardly begun to talk about something, however, when the otter, which had stretched itself out at my feet, got up again and went quietly under the bench, came in back of the dog again, and bit her in the calf: the greyhound jumped toward the door and the otter chased her: the greyhound ran behind the stove, the otter still followed her. When the greyhound saw that she could not escape anywhere she jumped on the table and wanted to dash out the window. Ożarowski grabbed her by the legs; she broke two fine wine glasses however. Later, when she was let out, she did not show herself to her master, even though he did not leave until after dinner of the next day. Other dogs were just as afraid of the otter everywhere. Even on the road, as soon as a dog smelled it and it squeaked violently, the dog immediately ran away. On the road it was very useful on a fast day. In our country, especially in this region, when one arrived in a town and asked: "Can one buy fish here?" they were even amazed at the question: "Where are we to get fish from? We don't even see them here." But whenever I rode by a pond or by a river and the otter was with me, there was no need of a net. I would get out of my carriage for awhile and shout: "Robak! Hop, hop!" Then Robak would jump in and bring out whatever fish that water had, one after another, until I had enough. I was not as particular there as when near my pond at home; whatever it brought, I would take except for frogs, which it brought often, since—as I have already mentioned—it was not choosy, but took whatever it came across. Then I and my orderlies had it nice and sometimes even a guest was fed. When—as it happens—several guests stayed at one inn, people wondered: "I gave orders to look for fish in this particular town, and I could not get any. Where did Your Lordship find such nice fish?" To this I would say: "In the water!" Even on a meat day my retainers sometimes said to me: "Oh, sir, it's swarming with fish in this pond; let the otter go!" I would go with it—because it did not want to go with anyone else except with me—and it fished them out. When it was a good fish, like a pike, or a big bass, then I also ate it, not only the orderlies, because I would forsake even the best meat dish for a good fish.

There was trouble with it on the road, as wherever I traveled people were amazed. They gathered in crowds, just as if something had been brought from India. There were plenty of onlookers, especially in Kraków. When I rode through the streets there, a crowd of all sorts of people escorted me out of the city. Once I was at the place of Pan Szczęsny Chociwski, my cousin; Father Trzebieński was also there. He sat down at the table next to me and the otter lay next to me on the bench; the otter gorged itself and slept stretched out on its back, because such was its favorite lying position. After the priest had sat down for awhile, he saw the otter and thought it to be a fur sleeve. He grabbed the otter and wanted to look at it. The otter awakened, gave out a terrible shriek, grabbed him by the hand and bit him. The priest fainted from fright and pain; we hardly managed to revive him.

After Sraszowski had seen the qualitates of this otter, he also saw my aviary, that is: my huge bird cage, which I had built and had covered with wire grating. In it there were as many kinds of birds as could be found in Poland. The birds made nests in the little trees planted there and were hatched there. I not only had birds which could be found in Poland,
but also other, foreign ones. I had whichever kinds I could get and from wherever I could get them. Straszewski was also present at the time when the birds sat on their nests and hatched their eggs. He saw everything: that the birds obeyed me; he saw that they let themselves be stroked in the nest; he saw partridges hatching there and taking their offspring for a walk in flocks—he also saw that when I called them they came running like chickens when grain is thrown to them.

Straszewski went back to the King and reported on everything he had seen. He had hardly arrived and given his report when the King was seized by such a fancy: “It cannot be otherwise, you must go there again, and you must bring back the otter by all means: I simply must have it!” Letters were again written to me asking what I desired to have in return for it. The Polish Master of the Horse and Pan Piekarski begged in their letters: “For Heaven’s sake! Make no more excuses. Give it away and you will be rid of the trouble; you shall have no peace otherwise, because the King keeps thinking about this otter walking, riding and sleeping. So that nothing would be of hindrance to it, he gave his beloved lynx away to the voivode of Malbork; his cassowary, a bird, he sent to Jaworów so that he could enjoy the otter all by itself.”

Straszewski came back again, delivered the letters and related how grateful the King was for the promise of the otter, how lonely he felt without it and begged for it with these words: “Qui cito dat, bis dat.” In the letters they made big promises. Straszewski told me that the King wanted to offer me a monetary compensation, but that Pan Piekarski advised him against doing so: “Gracious King, it is useless to send money because it will not be accepted. This nobleman has great pride and he surely would not take it. One should send something which would be more graceful to accept.” The King sent then to Jaworów for two Turkish horses to be sent to me. These

Franciszek Jan Bieliński.

On the margin a postscript: a cassowary is a big bird without any feathers but only with a coat like a pig.

Near the city of Lwów; a favorite place of Sobieski’s sojourn.

He who gives readily, gives doubly.
horses were very beautiful and he ordered to have them delivered with rich saddlery. I said that I would take neither money nor the horses, because I would be ashamed to receive such honoraria for such a trivial gift.

I then sent the otter off on its new mission. It accepted this most ungratefully, squeaking and screaming in its cage when it was driven through the village. I went into the house, because I did not want to hear this. I felt so sorry for it. On the way, wherever there was water in plano so that it would not hide away—it was let out of the cage several times in order to cool off and to enjoy itself. But even this did not help: there was plenty of squeaking and screaming. The animal longed to go back and pinned away; it was brought to the King ruffled as an owl. The King was immensely glad when he saw it and said: “The otter got homesick but it will recover.” Whoever was ordered to stroke it, the otter-grabbed his hand. The King then said: “Marysieńska, I shall dare to stroke it.” The Queen warned him not to do it, as the otter would bite him. He nevertheless sat down next to it, after it was put on the bed again, and he stretched out his hand to it, slowly saying: “I shall consider this a good omen if it does not bite me; and even if it does bite me it does not matter, the newspapers will not write about this.” He stroked it then; it bent toward him. The King became even more delighted and continued to stroke it. Later he ordered food to be brought for it and he fed it bit by bit. Reluctantly it ate a little on that gold brocade.

Soon after it began to crawl from room to room, wherever it wanted to, more and more freely; it was already there two days. Water was placed for it in big containers and small fish and crabs were put there. It rejoiced at that and kept fetching them out. The King said to the Queen: “Marysieńska, tomorrow I shall only eat the fish which this otter will fish out for me. Tomorrow we shall go, God willing, to Wilanów. We shall test it, if it can handle the fish there.”

I had written a whole list of information, how one should deal with it. I had also written down that it should never be tied by the collar, but right next to the collar, because an otter’s neck is thicker than the head. No matter how tight the collar were, it would be immediately pulled off its head. Indeed this happened. It was tied by the collar; it pulled the collar off itself together with the bells and it ran away. During the night it crawled around on the steps and, homesick, it somehow managed to get outdoors. At my place it became accustomed to go wherever it pleased, to roam around ponds and rivers as long as it wanted to, according to its wish, and then to come back home again. After it had crawled out, it wandered along the paths there not knowing where to turn. Early in the morning a dragoon came across it; not knowing whether it was wild or tame, he struck it with a halberd and killed it.

They got up—the otter was not there; they called and looked for it (...) a great commotion. In the city an announcement was made with both threats and entreaties that no one should dare to keep the animal after he had found it. Then a travelling Jew came from Pińczów, followed the dragoon, who wanted to get paid for the skin. “What do you have here, man?”—a porter asked him. The Jew kept his hand in his pocket; the porter looked under his frock and found the skin stuffed with straw. Both the Jew and the dragoon were seized and brought before the King. The King looked at the skin; with one hand he covered his eyes and with the other he grabbed his hair. He began to shout: “Kill them, whoever is a man of honor! Kill them, whoever believes in God!” Both were thrown into the tower. Conclusum to shoot the dragoon. He was ordered to take the last rites. Priests and bishops came to see the King. They argued and begged to realize that the dragoon did not deserve the penalty of death, for he had merely sinned in ignorance. The only thing that they effecerunt was that the dragoon was not to be shot, but to run the gauntlet.
through the Galecki regiment. The regiment took the customary position in two files. The decree was that he was to run the gauntlet fifteen times; he was allowed to rest at the flanks, nihilominus. He ran so twice. There were a thousand and a half men in the regiment and each one struck him once. The third time around the dragoon fell in the middle of the file; contrary to the law he was hit even when lying down. Later he was wrapped in a sheet. It was rumored that he never recovered.

Thus great joy turned into great grief, because the King did not eat anything and did not talk to anyone for a whole day; the entire court was in a state of despair. So they deprived me of a beloved animal; yet they did not rejoice over it long and even brought trouble upon themselves.

I also kept hunting game, which aroused admiration. I shall begin with the birds. I used to have very nice falcons, hawks, merlins, hobbies, and ravens all the time; they were used to the hunting rod under which the partridges let themselves be caught. These birds hunted a hare like a lanneret; all of them did their share. I once had a huge hawk which was so swift that it could catch any bird. It was not even reluctant to go after the smallest bird; it would snatch it in his huge clutches and every time it would bring it to me unharmed. Even if it were set upon very big birds, it did not mind that; he pursued geese, ducks, storks, kites, ravens, as well as quail. He managed to catch several quail a day. It was so strong that whenever it fought with an old hare, it strangled him; it then straightened out its plumage and flew with it to another field, lifting the hare from the ground like a partridge. I had the hawk for eight years, until it died.

As for the hunting with greyhounds, I bred for myself a leash of them from the breed of Pan Stanisław Pasek, my cousin, who lived in the region of Sochaczew. These greyhounds were tall and beautiful and at the same time so swift that it was not necessary to let them off the leash to hunt a hare or a fox; they took turns, every hare was pursued by a different dog and none of the hares ever escaped. Against a wolf all the greyhounds dashed ahead however. The hunters in the neighborhood used to say: "Woe to the animal which comes across Pan Pasek, for it will not manage to escape."

I enjoyed very much training the wild animals to become tame, to be friendly with dogs and to hunt with them their own wild brothers. When someone came to visit me, he saw a fox playing with greyhounds in the courtyard; when he entered the house he saw a wolfhound lying under the table and a hare sitting on top of him. If some stranger met me on my way to a hunt, he saw several greyhounds, several scenting dogs and a fox, a marten, a badger, and an otter running among them; a hare with bells hopped behind a horse, a hawk sat on the hunter's arm, a raven flew right over the dogs and from time to time it would sit down on the back of one in order for ride for awhile. The stranger would just cross himself then and say: "For Heaven's sake! this is a sorcerer; animals of all kinds run among his dogs. What is he looking for? Why does he not bait these animals which run behind him?" If another hare jumped out, all these animals followed him, even the tame hare did so when he noticed the dogs rushing ahead. But when the pursued hare began to moan, however, the tame one ran blindly back to the horse. My hunting was made famous in all of Poland, even in an exaggerated way. But I shall drop this subject now and shall return to the events of the year.

It came to an unfortunate demarcation of the borders in Podolia with the Turks this year. The army was encamped in Mikulince. I sailed to Gdańsk with two barges; I arrived there on the ninth day, since the current was strong and calm. I sold wheat to Pan Tynf at 160 zlotys. I returned by land and my barges arrived in the harbor six weeks ( . . . ) later.

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2Nonetheless.
At night, on the seventh of October of this year, my stockyards and my barns burned down in Smogórzów. Prices were very low everywhere and for that reason I was not selling anything; in Gdańsk the price of grain was low, only wheat paid well. At a conservative estimate I suffered a loss of twenty thousand zlotys because of that. The peasants blamed the fire on the overseer ex invidia for him. According to them he started the fire when he looked for his boar with a light. I had a lawsuit brought against him and I had him tortured. He did not admit anything, because he was innocent. The scoundrels had accused him falsely out of hatred; by doing so they also led me to sin and deprived me of a good administrator, since I took aversion to him for being in the hands of the executioner and I dismissed him. Later, after I had learned that the cause of the damage was different, I regretted doing so. I learned that the fire had started at the blacksmith's, since a strong wind blew directly at the stockyards; the barn began to burn most likely ab extra and non ab intra. Later also other barns, stacks, ricks, and haystacks caught fire. Thus was the will of God: Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit.27

24 Out of hatred.
25 From the outside.
26 Not from the inside.
27 God gave it and God took it away.

By the grace of God I began this year in Olszówka. Toward the end of the carnival season, I gave a wedding reception for his Lordship Aleksander Tomicki and her Ladyship Makowiecka, a widow, née Gołuchowska in Kraków. On the twenty-first of June I became ill periculosissime; I nearly found myself at Heaven's gate. Let the Merciful God be blessed for my recovery and may He spare me from such an illness a second time! In Augusto I went to Gdańsk; by the grace of God I sold my grain profitably and returned happily. Afterwards I helped to bring agreement between his Lordship Trzemeski, my relative and his Lordship Kielczowski concerning the matter of Klimontów.

Immediately after, I attended the wedding of her Ladyship Tomicka, the daughter of the Castellan of Wieluń, to his Lordship Walewski in Pińczów. The wedding was splendid and was attended by many guests.

From this wedding all of us went to Kraków to attend the...

1 The widow of Mikołaj Makowiecki, the master of the pantry of Halicz. Czubek, Pam., p. 511, note 1.
2 Very seriously.
4 Marianna Tomicka, the daughter of Konstantyn and Agnieszka, née Myszkowska, first cousin of the heir in tail Franciszek Myszkowski. Czubek, Pam., p. 511, note 7.
5 Aleksander Walewski, the standard-bearer of Sieradz. Czubek, Pam., p. 511, note 8.
JAN ANDRZEJ MORSZTYN
(1621-1693)

From a Calvinist family, Jan Andrzej Morsztyn studied in Leyden. His close association with the eminent Lubomirski family paved the road to a brilliant career at the royal court. Sent on numerous diplomatic missions, Morsztyn eventually received the title of Treasurer of the Crown. After the Swedish invasion, Morsztyn converted to Catholicism. He was a favorite of the queen Ludwika Maria, and was actively involved in her attempts to strengthen royal power and win the Polish throne for a French candidate. For his efforts, Morsztyn was remunerated by the French king Louis XIV. After the election of Jan Sobieski and the victory of the pro-Austrian faction, Morsztyn continued to work as a supporter of France. He was accused by the Diet of the treason of state and lèse-majesty. In 1683 he fled to France, where he died in 1693 as comte de Chateaumvillain.

Morsztyn wrote all his poetry before 1661. He gathered his poems into four collections: Dog Days (Kaniłuta albo psia gwiazda, 1647), Lute (Lutnia, 1638-1661), Epigrams (Fraszki, 1645) and Riddles (Gadki, 1651); a considerable number of his poems, however, are not contained in these volumes. In addition to poetry, Morsztyn was a talented translator. His translations include Tasso’s Amintas (1650), Giambattista Marino’s Psyche, and above all a masterful translation of Corneille’s Cid (Cyd, 1660).

Morsztyn’s skillful virtuosity in politics was matched by his virtuosity in poetry. Neither profound nor original (many of his poems are paraphrases of Latin, neo-Latin, French, and Italian poets), Morsztyn’s poetry dazzles by its craftsmanship. His master was the Italian poet Giambattista Marino. The central theme of Morsztyn’s poetry is love, but
it is not easy to decide whether there is any genuine emotion behind his clever poetic figures and verbal games. Morsztyn was a consummate player, irrespective of the object of his game: politics, love or language. *Concetti*, plays on words, paradoxes, antitheses, sophisticated metric forms—all of these presented an exciting challenge, and were congenial to his temperament. He was not interested in philosophical or moral issues but in expression itself. A perfectionist who would work and rework his poems, Morsztyn published reluctantly, less concerned with poetic fame than the technical perfection of his texts.
DO TRUPA
Sonet

Leżysz zabity i jam też zabity,
Ty — strzał śmiertci, ja — strzał miłości,
Ty krwie, ja w sobie nie mam rumianości,
Ty jawne świece, ja mam płomień skryty,

Tyś na twarz sukrem żałobnym nakryty,
Jam zawarł zmęcze w okropnej ciemności,
Ty masz związane ręce, ja wolności
Zbywam się razem łańcuchem powity.

Ty jednak milczysz, a mój język kwili,
Ty nic nie czujesz, ja cierpię ból środze,
Tyś jak lód, a ja w pieknej śrzedzie.

Ty się rozsypujesz prochem w małe chwili,
Ja się nie mogę, stawszy się żywiołem
Wiecznych mych ognów, rozspąć popiołem.

TO A CORPSE
A Sonnet

You lie on the earth, killed, I have been killed too.
You—with an arrow of death; I—with love’s arrow.
You have no blood, in me it continues to flow;
You have candles but my flame is not in full view.

Your face is covered by a shroud and you feel no pain.
My senses are shut in terrible darkness.
Your hands are tied, and my freedom is
Lost, my mind shackled with a chain.

You, however, are silent, but my tongue whimpering.
You feel nothing, while my body painfully suffers.
You are like ice, I am pierced by hell’s searing flash.

You will crumble to dust in a short moment
While I—become the eternal nourishment
Of my own fires—cannot crumble to ash.
NIEGŁUPIA

„Kiedy się lepiej zalecać — doktora
Pytała panna — z rana czy z wieczora?”
Doktor powiada: „Lepiej to osłodzi
 Wieczór, lecz zdrowiu nie tak rano szkodzi.”
„Uczynię — mówi — według twoego zdania:
 Wieczór dla smaku, dla zdrowia z zarania.”

A SMART MAIDEN

“When is the better time for flirting,” a maiden
 Asked a doctor, “In the morning or the evening?”
The doctor replied, “It makes the evening sweeter
 But in the morning it will harm the health less.”
“I will follow your advice,” she said, “and do it
 For taste in the evening, at early dawn for health.”

DO WALKA

Sam osobliwe stroje, sam masz dwory,
Sam masz dochody, sam nabite wory,
Sam stawy, stada, zwierzyńce i gaje,
Niepospolite sam masz obyczaje,
Sam i naukę od inszych zakrytą —
Żonę tylko masz z nami posполитą.

TO WALEK

Alone, for yourself, you have fine clothes and estates,
 Alone you have revenues and sacks of money,
Alone you have ponds, flocks, forests of animals,
 It is you alone who have uncommon manners,
Alone you possess knowledge hidden to others—
 Only your wife you have in common with us all.
A SONG OF THE BAR CONFEDERACY
(ANONYMOUS)
(1768-1772)

Songs of the Bar Confederacy (1768-1772), composed by anonymous poets-soldiers, find their way into anthologies of Polish poetry not because of their artistic merits, but because they are written in a characteristic style; their ardent patriotism welded to a no less ardent Catholicism, is expressed in peculiar baroque metaphors. Filled with military as well as religious rhetoric and imagery, these anonymous war songs belong both spiritually and stylistically to Sarmatism—and they represent low-brow literature. Written at the time of the Enlightenment, they sharply contrast with the intellectual, caustic and witty poems of Krasicki or Trembecki. However, the Romantics admired them greatly; Mickiewicz praised their genuine lyrical impulse as well as the feeling of nobility and self-sacrifice with which they are inspired.
ODWAŻNY POLAK NA MARSOWYM POLU

Stawam na placu z Boga orygnansu,
Range porzucam dla nieba wakansu.
Dla wolności ginę, wiary swej nie minę.
Ten jest mój azard.

Krzyż mi jest tarczą, a zbawienie łupem.
W marszu zostaje; choć upadnę trupem,
Nie zważam, bo w boju — dla duszy pokoju
Szukam w ojczyźnie.

Krew z ran wylana dla mego zbawienia
Utwierdza żądze, ukąsa pragnienia,
Jako katolika — wskroś serce przenika,
Prawego w wierze.

Śmierć Zbawcy stoi za pobudki hasło,
Aby wzniecenie złych czynności zgasło,
Wolności przywary, gwałty świętej wiary
Zniesione były.

Wyroku twego, wiem, że nie zapłacę:
Niech, choć przed czasem życie moje tracę,
Aby nie w upadku, tylko w swoim statku
Wiara słynęła.

Nie obawiam się przeciwników zdrady;
Wiem, że mi dodasz swej zbawiennej rady,
W zamysłach obronu, dla praw swych powrotu
Jak rekrutowi.

A BRAVE POLISH SOLDIER ON THE FIELD OF MARS

On God’s order I must enter the field,
Forego career for a place in heaven.
Such is my wager: my faith is my shield,
I die for freedom.

I know that my marching will never cease,
The cross is my armor, salvation my spoils.
If I fall in battle my soul seeks peace
For my country.

Blood was spilled from His wounds to save me, too.
It confirms my desire, soothes my yearning,
As a Catholic my heart is pierced through,
Loyal to my faith.

The death of the Savior is reveille:
The call to extinguish all evil deeds,
Violence against faith that is holy,
Abuse of freedom.

I will never pay for Your suffering,
But let me lose my life before its time
So faith will be famous for enduring,
Not for its downfall.

I fear no treason nor enemy’s might,
I know You will give Your saving advice
About fortune’s turns, about restored right
To me, a recruit.
Matka łąskawą, tuszę, że się stawi,
Dzielnością swoich rąk pobłogosławi,
A że gdy przybraną, będę miał wygraną,
Wiary obrona.

Boć nie nowina Maryji puklerzem
Zastawiać Polskę, wojować z rycerzem
Przybywać w osobie, sukurs dawać tobie,
Miła ojczyzna!

W polskich patronach niepłonne nadzieje,
Zelantów serce niechaj się nie chwieje.
Gdy ci przy pieczy miecze do odsieczy
Dadzą Polakom.

Niech nas nie ślepą światowe ponęty:
Dla Boga brońmy wiary Jego świętej.
A za naszą pracą będzie wszystką placą
Żyć z Bogiem w niebie.

I trust in our gracious Holy Mother
To give me her blessing with potent hands.
Once she adopts me, our Faith’s defender,
I shall surely win.

We have always used the shield of Mary
To protect Poland and fight with the knights,
To come in person, O my dear country,
And bring to you aid.

It is not vain to trust Poland’s patron,
Let the hearts of the faithful not falter.
The saints protect the Poles; so they fight on
They lend them swords.

Let the lures of the world not make us blind,
Let us defend the holy faith for God;
Our labor’s reward is the life we find
With God in heaven.