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OLD POLISH SOURCES OF THE ROMANTIC PICTURE OF PODOLE (SELECTED EXAMPLES)

The tradition of Poland before the partition was important for Romantic writers, both as an object of ideological interpretations, and as a newly discovered pool of original literary motives.¹ Podole, although not as often as the neighbouring Ukraine, was one region dealt with by Romantics as a part of this fascination. The pictures of Podole created by eulogists of this region seem to be clearly rooted in Old Polish literature. We are not concerned here with showing concrete sources, but more with showing inspirations, the specific grounding in Old Polish literature in the Romantic works discussed here. The main goal of this paper is to draw attention to the selected motives of Old Polish literature, which were used in Romantic works to create a historical picture of Podole.

Maurycy Gosławski, one of the members of the so called 'Podole group',² while defining in a long poem *Podole* the status of the land he was describing, stressed its uniqueness and singularity, which are the result of both beauty and utility:

¹ Andrzej Waśko, *Romantyczny sarmatyzm. Tradycja szlachecka w literaturze polskiej lat 1831-1863*, Kraków 2001, 97.

² A regional group of a social and situational character. The poets were united by age and social background. The group also included: Tymon Zaborowski, Franciszek Kowalski, Stanisław Doliwa Starzyński. See Barbara Czwornóg-Jadczak, *Tymon Zaborowski (1799-1828)*, in *Pisarze polskiego oświecenia*, vol. 3, ed. by Teresa Kostkiewiczowa and Zbigniew Goliński, Warszawa 1996, 639; Danuta Kowalewska, *Poeta wśród «zdarzeń prawdziwych». Puścizna prozatorska Stanisława Doliwy Starzyńskiego*, Toruń 2001, 27.

Jakie dzisiaj Podole, takie było zawsze,
 Jemu słońce chętniejsze i niebo łaskawsze;
 [...]
 I jak zajrzysz daleko tę przestrzeń błękitną,
 Pod jej tchnieniem łagodnym nasze pola kwitną.
 Kraj piękny, urodzajny, bogaty i żyzny,
 Miły oku, powiewał złotymi płaszczyzny.³

Utilis et dulcis—are, for Gosławski, two inextricably connected features which are fundamental for the essence of Podole; he also referred to them in the commentary he added to the poem. He assumed that the ‘category’ of usefulness did not require any extra explanation, as it was a part of the common consciousness: “[n]ot dealing with Podole from the perspective of spoils, which are limitless, and noticing only [...] its poetic nature, a traveller will see beauty everywhere and will be reluctant to stop looking.”⁴

This myth of Podole—as the land of milk and honey—started to be created in the Old Polish period in numerous chronicles, starting with Jan Długosz’s *Annales*.⁵ In a specific way, it was also shaped by poets in their works on anti-Turkish themes, determined by political events: continuous attacks of Tartars and military conflicts with Turkey, which were taking place in the south-eastern parts of Poland, including Podole. These writers stressed the land’s economic importance, and they did not deal with the beauty of it. The list of various spoils of the land was contrasted with the thought of the wealth devastated. And so, Bartłomiej Paprocki, one of the first

³ Maurycy Gosławski, *Podole. Poema opisowe w czterech częściach*, in Idem, *Wybór poezji*, ed. by Jacek Lyszczyzna, Katowice 2005, 55. “Podole as today, has been always like this/It gets warmer sun and more lenient heaven/[...]/And when you look far away at its blue space/Its mild breath makes our fields bloom/The land beautiful, fertile, rich and fecund/Nice to behold, shining with gold.”

⁴ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁵ A review of old historiographic approaches to Podole, and more generally, of Ruthenia, can be found in Piotr Borek, *Staropolskie kreacje ruskiej arkadii w ujęciu historiografów*, in Idem *Szlakami dawnej Ukrainy. Studia staropolskie*, Kraków 2002, 15-45.

poets fascinated by the south-eastern borders of the Commonwealth, in the poem *Historyja żałosna*, (*A Sad History*), which describes the tragic Tartar raid of 1575,⁶ using the conventions typical for the Old Polish 'squirearchy poetry',⁷ lists goods which were made by the people of Podole, which have been looted, and are now used by enemies.

Gdzie ony stada wielkie, co konie mnożyły,
Na których cni rycerze pogany gromili.
Gdzie i ony, co żywność obfitą dawały
Owce, krowy u pogan wszystkie się zostały.
Nie pójdą już do Rzesze woły wychowałe,
Karmią dziś mięsem swoim Tartary zufałe.⁸

Perception of Podole in terms of devastated lushness was noticed by some of nineteenth century poets. Gosławski, who has been referred to earlier, while giving 'characteristic features' of Podole, saw that its aesthetic values ('beautiful'), and particularly utilitarian values ('fertile', 'rich', 'fecund') had become the reasons for the country's

⁶ The unusually large scale and cruelty of this raid and also the political background in the period of the interregnum in the Commonwealth was noted by chroniclers of this period. Świętosław z Borzejowic Orzelski, *Bezkrólewia ksiąg ośmioro, czyli Dzieje Polski od zgonu Zygmunta Augusta r. 1572 aż do r. 1576*, vol. 2, transl. by Włodzimierz Spasowicz, Petersburg 1856, 173-176.

⁷ On 'squirearchy poetry' and the topics characteristic for it, including the stress in nature's descriptions placed not on aesthetic but of utilitarian values Janusz S. Gruchała, Stanisław Grzeszczuk, *Staropolska poezja wieśniacza*, in *Staropolska poezja wieśniacza. Antologia*, ed. by J.S. Gruchała, S. Grzeszczuk, Warszawa 1988, 48-55.

⁸ Bartłomiej Paprocki, *Historyja żałosna o prędkości i okrutności tatarskiej a o srogim mordowaniu i popsowaniu ziemi Ruskiej i Podolskiej, które się stało księżycą października roku 1575*, Kraków 1575. I wrote more about this topic in Renata Ryba, *Literatura staropolska wobec zjawiska niewoli tatarsko-tureckiej. Studia i szkice*, Katowice 2014, 76-97. Where are those great herds of horses/On which honest knights defeated pagans/Where are the animals which gave food/ Sheep and cows are all with pagans now/Herds of oxen will not go west/They are eaten now by brazen Tatars.

miseries. “The dowry was attractive to the others/And their greed brought thunder/[...]/And Turks more greedy than anyone for our herds and daughters/Were fighting with sword, fire and plague.”⁹ Tymon Zaborowski used the motif of a manager’s list of losses in an even more emphatic manner in *Dumy podolskie za czasów panowania tureckiego* (*Podole Songs from the Time of the Turkish Rule*). He stressed the loss of goods which fell into enemy hands: “Is it for them that these bees are working?/Is it for them that these fields are blooming?/[...]/Is it for them that the corn is shining with gold?”¹⁰

So, Romantic writers perceived the Podole of old as a space touched by war and destruction—on the one hand, and on the other, as land fertile and beautiful and well managed by people. Therefore, the descriptions are based on a specific dualism: “Arcadia”, which “was fed with the blood of its inhabitants, and soaked with the ashes of fires and wars”, wrote Seweryn Groza.¹¹ This tradition of the antithetical perception of Podole as a land oscillating between “heaven” and “hell” can be found in the works of Old Polish literature. In the poetic representation of Marcin Paszkowski Podole is personified as Podole-Mother, lamenting the sudden change which has happened to her. The picture was constructed on the opposition: then—now. In this picture the past, with which growth and wealth were associated, was replaced as a result of Tartars’ looting with “degenerated” presence. “You know how I flourished years ago”, and now: “You see that I have lost my beauty/And I have barely escaped with my life”.¹² Paprocki, on the other hand, used the concept of Fortune, good and bad, which at first “[...]kept this land for a long time in wealth./With abundance of all goods”, and finally “[...]gave this land away to suffer under cruel pagans.”¹³ In the following part of this poem we have a Tartars’ raid

⁹ Maurycy Gosławski, *Podole...*, op. cit., 55-56.

¹⁰ Tymon Zaborowski, *Dumy podolskie za panowania tureckiego*, Puławy 1830, . 83.

¹¹ Seweryn Groza, *Wstęp do rozprawy o dialekcie gminnym podolskim*, in Idem, *Poezje*, Wilno 1836, IX-X.

¹² Marcin Paszkowski, *Podole utrapione*, [b.m.]1618, k.Aij.

¹³ Bartłomiej Paprocki, *Historyja żałosna...*, k. Ciijj v.

described in a way which is radically realistic. Paszkowski stunned his readers with descriptions of cruel attackers, merciless towards the weakest: "He cut little children into two, and took off their heads/ The old [...]"¹⁴ The raid results not only in death, but also in the slavery of numerous inhabitants, abducted by attackers. And now the poet shocks with the vision of a de-humanized world: human life is decided according to "assessment", in which what matters is economic utility and ability to walk a long way to a destination. In Paprocki's poem slavery, as well as the physical destruction of the inhabitants of borderlands, acquires the form of a total phenomenon, out of the bodies of murdered "infidels built bridges through marshes./ They settled whole Ukraina and Podole with dead bodies", many became slaves: "[n]ew born babies lie hungry in fields/They have all lost fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters/They were all taken by fierce pagans to their land"¹⁵

Piotr Gorczyn, in a later poem written at the beginning of the seventeenth century, also dealt with the problem of frequent Tartar looting raids on Podole in an attempt to get slaves as spoils. "Having searched all Podole/They, the damned, take goods and never give them back/Moreover, they take slaves and sell them."¹⁶ Undoubtedly, the problem of taking inhabitants of south-eastern borderlands into slavery, described many times in Old Polish literature, was connected specifically with Podole by Jan Kochanowski. As we remember, in a very popular poem, the so called *Pieśń o spustoszeniu Podola* (*A Song About Podole's Desolation*), Kochanowski focused on the horrible fate of numerous "daughters of noblemen" turned slaves together with their children: "[...]A Turk let loose its dogs/Which have chased your beautiful hinds/Together with their children [...]"¹⁷

¹⁴ Ibid., k. D.

¹⁵ Ibid., k. Fij.

¹⁶ Piotr Gorczyn, *Tren abo lament żałosny więźniów koronnych do hord tatarskich w roku 1618 zabranych*, [b.m.r.], k. A.

¹⁷ Jan Kochanowski, *Pieśni*, w: tegoż, *Dzieła polskie*, t. 1, Warszawa 1953, 317.

This characteristic motif, popular in literature, of the historically determined topic of slavery by Tartars and Turks, was taken up by Romantic poets, who reconstructed the colouration of time and space in seventeenth century Podole. Slavery, in many texts, becomes almost a structural feature of this space: "Fire is destroying huts and fields/ Girls will become slaves of Tartars."¹⁸ Usually, slavery is presented as the worst threat, worse even than death. That is how Gosławski saw slavery in the part of his poem entitled *Klęski Podola*, (*Podole's Calamity*). The events, as he claimed, happened in the times of Jan Karol Chodkiewicz, near Kamieniec Podolski, when as a result of a Turkish raid, a few thousand people were killed. "After all, it is better to die in battle as a hero/Than give your unworthy body to slavery".¹⁹ The fear of becoming slaves is widespread in the whole community in the poetic novel by Mieczysław Romanowski *Łużeccy*, (*Łużeccy*), which is set in Podole and Ukraine in the times of the fall of Kamieniec. "A crowd of people pale with fear" looks at how war destroys their homes and "thinks with anxiety about their future fate/Today beggars, tomorrow maybe slaves."²⁰ Inhabitants of lands to which the war with Turks has come are trying to avoid slavery through escape: "Virgins of the steppes hide in deserts/It is a horrible day for them, because here slavery awaits them/And into Turkish lands the road is long";²¹ others draw their hope from prayers: "Mothers don't dare to think of slavery/The have knelt, a bell has called them to God."²² News about Turkish danger and its horrible consequence of slavery were connected by Romantic poets with the highest emotions, and extreme anxiety. In another poem, *Berszada* (*Berszada*) by Adam Pajgert, these emotions have been poetically conveyed through dramatic scenes recreating nightmares:

¹⁸ Władysław Chomętowski, *Obrona Trembowli*, in Idem, *Legends polskie*, Kraków 1862.

¹⁹ Maurycy Gosławski, *Podole...*, op. cit., 59.

²⁰ Mieczysław Romanowski, *Łużeccy. Ustęp z wojen tureckich*, Lwów 1856, 48.

²¹ Ibidem.

²² Ibid., 49.

A głucho wieści krążą o hordach
I o jasyrze [...]
[...]
I dzieci nocą przez sen wołają
Z płaczem i jękiem: „Mamo! Tartary!”
[-]
Niewiasty w sennych marzeń przestrachu
Słyszą już groźny okrzyk: „Alla-hu!”
I ukraińskie blade dziewice,
Gdzieś na Tartarskich widzą już siodłach,
Aż się przebudzą, zakryją lice,
I toną we łzach i modłach.²³

Let us note the similarity to texts of Old Polish literature (as in the text by Kochanowski referred to earlier); in their renderings of the past, Romantic poets used the motif of “female slavery”, to stress the strong expression of scenes, and to show how the threat of slavery attacks the closest space, that of a family.

In Romantic texts about Podole there also exist reflexions about the consequences of slavery—this time not of individuals, but of whole lands. Romanowski points to the destructive actions of the aggressor: “Podole is all devastated/And *bunchuk* flutters all over Podole!/Kamieniec has fallen!...”²⁴ Everyday life, with its creative, agricultural rhythm has stopped, all land is ruled by death, and depopulation becomes a clear sign of slavery.

[...]jaw podolskiej ziemi
Śmierć przeleciała skrzydłami czarnymi.
Ni dzwon już woła o rannej godzinie,

²³ Adam Pajgert, *Berszada. Rzecz historyczna z XVII wieku*, in *Idem Poezje*, vol. 2, Lwów 1876, 43. And horrible tales circle about hordes/And of slavery/[...]/ And children cry at night when they are asleep/With tears and moaning/”Mum, Tatars!/[...]/Women in nightmarish fears/Can already this terrible cry “Alla-hu!”/ And Ukrainian pale virgins/They see on Tatars/ saddles/Till they wake up and cover their faces/And are soaked in tears and prayers.

²⁴ Mieczysław Romanowski, *Łużeccy...*, op. cit., 37-38.

Ni hula stado po kwietnej wyżynie,
 Ni w pocie czoła robotnik się trudzi,
 I zda się nigdy nie było tu ludzi.²⁵

This vision of a Romantic poet was not alien to his sixteenth century predecessors—for example to Paprocki. Paprocki, too, in *A Sad Story* saw the transformation of the ordered world, economically stable, into a “horrible place” (*locus horridus*)²⁶ as the key effect of this Tartar attack.

Człowiek dziw na Podolu [...]
 [...] psi tylko brzechają
 I ci snadź w rychłym czasie z głodu pozdychają,
 Pochowawszy swe pany w swe łakome gęby,
 Których kości roznoszą kończatemi zęby²⁷.

Stanisław Makowiecki, in his poetic *Relacya z Kamieńca wziętego przez Turków w roku 1672* (*An Account of Kamieniec Taken by Turks in 1672*) revealed one more aspect typical of the situation of enslavement in the given historical situation (Kamieniec Podolski was taken by the Turkish army). A substantial part of his account is taken up by the description of the forced evacuation of the town’s inhabitants. Makowiecki focuses on the sad fate the exiles’ faces: “[...] from farms/ All are exiled [...]”²⁸ “All is lost [...] / And we are drifters now [...]”²⁹ This motif of exile as a result of the actions of invaders (within the themes connected with Podole) was eagerly taken up again by Romantic

²⁵ Ibid., 38. “[...] In Podole/Death has come with black wings/Bells don’t ring in the mornings/Herds don’t feed on flowery meadows/Workers don’t work hard anymore/And it seems that this place has always been deserted.”

²⁶ On the topoi of “charming place”, “horrible place” as basic in the descriptive convention of European literature see, for example Teresa Michałowska, *Opis – pojęcie*, in *Słownik literatury staropolskiej (średniowiecze, renesans, barok)*, ed. by T. Michałowska Wrocław 1990, 524.

²⁷ Bartłomiej Paprocki, *Historyja żalosna...*, op. cit., k. Fij v.

²⁸ Stanisław Makowiecki, *Relacyja Kamieńca wziętego przez Turków w roku 1672*, ed. by Piotr Borek, Kraków 2008, 32.

²⁹ Ibid., 33.

writers. And thus, in Paigert's poem, Berszady castle was burnt down by Poles. This was considered an honourable solution, performed so that the castle would not be taken by Turks as a result of the peace treaty of Busz (1617). But before it happened the inhabitants had left the castle: They have been all sentenced to exile: "And here a barefooted little boy /Runs [...] /And here they drag on old man with a stick/ They look longingly back."³⁰ Their fate is to leave the homesteads in which their families have lived for many generations : "You have to leave your ancestors' old place!"³¹ This time, however, an exodus has a happy ending: drifters settle down in a new place, the village of Bobrówka.

In *Łużecy* the exile of these people who did not want to live under the Turkish occupation of Kamieniec is seen in categories of moral imperative: "The old cry: It is better to leave the land! /They have taken a lyre and a stick and full of grief /Went far away to eat beggars' bread."³² Zaborowski presented the problem of leaving Podole—the homeland—in a different way. He took the position that it was a patriotic duty to persevere, and fight for freedom on the spot; being free in exile for him was clearly impossible: *Duma I: Ojczyzna (Song I: Homeland)*.³³

The pictures of slavery presented in Old Polish literature and by Romantics were therefore united by a similar message: to show the tragedy of a human being entangled in various forms of slavery, always destructive.

Anti-Turkish poems from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, set in Polish south-eastern borderlands, were first of all critical of the lack of proper defence of these areas. However, even in critical works, the cases of heroism were presented with stories of great knights defending the borderlands: Samuel Korecki, Konsanty Ostrogski,

³⁰ Adam Paigert, *Berszady...*, op. cit., 44.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 43.

³² Mieczysław Romanowski, *Łużecy...*, op. cit., 7.

³³ See Maria Danilewiczowa, *Tymon Zaborowski. Życie i twórczość (1799-1828)*. Warszawa, 1933, 227.

Stefan Potocki. The heroic poems, on the other hand, praised glorious battles for borderland castles—with the defence of Chocim, first in 1621 and then in 1673: *Dźwięk Marsa walecznego w walnej ekspedycji chocimskiej* (*The Sound of Valiant Mars in the Mass Chocim Expedition*) by Mateusz Ignacy Kuligowski (1674), *Sławna wiktoryja nad Turkami* (*Famous Victory over Turks*) by Zbigniew Morsztyn (1674), *Zwycięstwo niezwyciężonego narodu polskiego nad hardym Turczyńcem na polach chocim-skich* (*The Victory of the Invincible Polish Nation over Tough Turks in the Fields of Chocim*) by Rafał Leszczyński (1673), *Transakcja wojny chocimskiej* (*A Report of the Chocim War*) by Waclaw Potocki (1675). It was Paprocki who appreciated most the military vigour of the inhabitants of Podole. In a rhymed introduction to a heraldic work *Panosza* (1575) he showed the total commitment and constant readiness of the chivalric inhabitants of the borderlands (including those from Podole) to defend the country's borders and Christian faith. In *A Sad History* he describes the self-defence campaign organized by the Podole nobility against Tartar invasion when the Polish regular army failed. So, Old Polish writers saw Podole as a fighting land.

The cult of heroism and the apology of patriotic military actions so typical for Old Polish writers was taken up by Romantic writers, together with chivalric themes. The protagonists of these works, while facing the Ottoman invasion, adopted a heroic stance: “Am I to wait till a Turk/Will come with his bloody sword/Looking for ransom here/And will drag you by your blonde hair to slavery?”³⁴ Tomasz Łużecki faced the Turkish enemy to defend the land and the honour of his family (his brother Karol dishonoured himself by running away from the battlefield). The story of the defence of one of Podole's castle, Trembowla, was popular with a few writers. It was an inspiration for Władysław Chomętowski. In the long poem *Obrona Trembowli* (*The Defence of Trembowla*) published in the cycle entitled *Legendy polskie*, (*Polish Legends*) the focus was placed on Anna Dorota Chrzanowska, a woman experienced and hardened by life in the borderlands: “I have been washed in blood since my

³⁴ Maurycy Gosławski, *Podole...*, op. cit., 61.

cradle/For the pillow my granddad gave me armour/When he saved me from Chan's slavery."³⁵ She is cultivating "virtues of ancestors".³⁶ Encouraging her husband Samuel to fight, ready for full sacrifice: "You care so much about your son and wife/I have a mother's heart, but I am ready/To sacrifice my child in order to defend [the land]."³⁷

The concept of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as the 'antemurale' of Christian Europe³⁸ started to be formed in the sixteenth century. It was related to the whole country, but in the writings of this period the focus was mostly on the south-eastern borderlands and also on Podole. The term "mur" ("wall") was used by Paprocki to refer to Podole and Ukraine in *A Sad Story* to stress the importance of these areas for the country's defence. "This is your wall today, noble Poland["]/[...]Give it advice, give it help [...] /So, that pagans will not destroy you with their fast army."³⁹ For Paprocki the south-eastern borderlands were chosen by God to be *antemurale christianitatis*. The destruction of Podole during the invasion is seen as God's punishment for sins of the whole nation. It was God who "destroyed the renowned wall."⁴⁰

Podole also received the status of 'antemurale' in Romantic accounts; as professor Tazbir noted, the myth after Poland lost its independence not only was not discarded, but became quite popular.⁴¹ In *Łużecy* the role of Poland as the defender and shield of Europe (the role of Poland-Ukraine-Podole) was stressed at the very beginning of the poem, before the fight of the eponymous protagonists with Turks begins (at the same time using the motif of Poland fighting on its own,

³⁵ Władysław Chomętowski, *Obrona Trembowli*, op. cit., 8.

³⁶ Ibid., 30.

³⁷ Ibid., 28.

³⁸ Andrzej Borowski, *Powrót Europy*, Kraków 1999, 121.

³⁹ Bartłomiej Paprocki, *Historyja żalosa...*, k. Fij v.

⁴⁰ Ibid., k. Aii v.

⁴¹ Janusz Tazbir, *Polskie przedmurze chrześcijańskiej Europy. Mity a rzeczywistość historyczna*, Warszawa 1987, 5.

while Europe remained indifferent.)⁴² “Your neighbour is peacefully dancing/While you are fighting with pagans/[...]/And you are his shield against pagans.”⁴³ On the other hand, Zaborowski, in *Dumy podolskie (Sad Songs of Podole)*, connected the idea of ‘*antemurale*’ exclusively with Podole. In his poetic cycle the river Dniestr and the Miodobrody mountains—symbols of Podole’s topography—are fundamental in the construction of Podole as ‘*antemurale*’. Although the poem concentrates on the issues of freedom and not on religious aspects, these are also present. After all, the poem is set “during the times of Turkish rule”: “O Dniestr! You sentinel of Podole, who never runs away/ O you, mountains, its eternal *antemurale*/Which have protected our freedom for so long.”⁴⁴, while Jermołaj—the main protagonist of the cycle—solemnly declares that he is ready to sacrifice even his life for his country. “How I wish!.../To die for freedom and for faith. [...]”⁴⁵ The concept of ‘*antemurale*’ is associated with the themes of providence. Raids and attacks by Tartars and Turks are treated as expressing God’s anger and punishment. The war with the Turkish aggressors in *Łużeccy* is preceded by the signs of God’s anger:

Oj, Ukraino-Polsko biada tobie,
Biada Podolu! [...]
[-.]
Nad Ukrainą tli płomień dwóch zorzy,
Nad Rusią miotła ognista się sroży,
Zawisł nad nami płomieniem gniew Boży!
[-.]
Turek kajdany aż poza Dniestr rzuci,
I lud wypleni [...]”⁴⁶

⁴² The Old Polish writers also called to set up an anti-Turkish Christian alliance and to unite Europe under the Commonwealth’s aegis against the expansion of Turkey (see also *passim*).

⁴³ Mieczysław Romanowski, *Łużeccy...*, op. cit., 4.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 14. “O Ukraine-Poland, woe betide you/Woe to Podole[...]/[-]/Over Ukraine smoulders the fire of two auroras/Over Ruthenia the fiery broom is threatening/

When inhabitants of Podole's village in Gosławski's poem, hiding in a cave, are found by the enemy, the Old Man, telling this story after many years, explains this in the following way: "[...]It is clear that God's wrath was above them."⁴⁷ God is, however, capable of changing the flow of events, for example through the intervention of a chosen individual. In *Sad Songs of Podole* this role is given to King Jan III Sobieski.⁴⁸ Then, a different new plan of history will be fulfilled "[...] the Angel of vengeance will frown menacingly/The fierce adder he has defeated is groaning under his foot/The adder which has drunk innocent tears and blood."⁴⁹

In the Romantic poems referred to in this article, history became the pretext to the reflection on times contemporary to them. Using events from the past, they were writing about Poland of their times, and the theme of wars with Tartars and Turks was clearly potent with contemporary meanings.⁵⁰ Firstly, Tartars and Turks were aggressors from the East, which must have created all too powerful associations for nineteenth century readers. The clear parallel between the conflict in the past with Ottoman Turkey and contemporary Russia was constructed by Aleksander Groza in the poem about Marek Jakimowski and of the sad fate of knights taken prisoners by Turks during the disaster at Cecora (1620); "sons of fame" dying in

God's wrath is hanging as a fire over us/[-]/A Turk will throw his chains beyond Dniestr/And will decimate the people."

⁴⁷ Maurycy Gosławski, *Podole...*, op. cit., 65.

⁴⁸ Tymon Zaborowski, *Dumy podolskie za panowania tureckiego*, op. cit., 46. The themes of providence and messianism in Zaborowski's cycle is discussed in Barbara Czwórńóg-Jadczak, *W kręgu liryki Tymona Zaborowskiego. «Dumy podolskiej»*, *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska* 1991/1992, vol. IX/X, section FF, 267.

⁴⁹ Tymon Zaborowski, *Dumy podolskie za panowania tureckiego*, op. cit., 46.

⁵⁰ As Barbara Czwórńóg-Jadczak notes about Zaborowski's *Sad Songs of Podole*: "The contemporary aspects of *Sad Songs of Podole* were flawlessly read by contemporaries. "Powstanie" ("An Insurrection"), one of the poems from this cycle, was popular during the Insurrection of 1831. (B. Czwórńóg-Jadczak, *W kręgu liryki Tymona Zaborowskiego...*, op. cit., 267.

exile are [...] bricks of ante-murale/Which stopped the thunder from the East.”⁵¹

Secondly, the ground for making the parallel between Turkey and Russia was created by the conviction, common in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, that Ottoman Turkey was a tyranny⁵²; a country governed despotically. This particular ‘feature’ of Turkey was highlighted, for example, by Zaborowski, who created a clear picture of another tyranny—the Russian one. Greedy, aggressive, curbing the freedom of many nations: “A frost which creates manacles with ice/So strong is the power of a tyrant/That it cannot be broken/By nations frozen with fear.”⁵³

What is more, the enemy are Muslim (for Zaborowski it means “an enemy of faith”⁵⁴, and “a godless tribe”⁵⁵), who openly threaten Christians. “Ha! O faithless Giaur! Why do they put up crosses?/They should die of hunger or moan in slavery.”⁵⁶ So, while they were recalling the past conflict with Muslim aggressors, Romantic writers raised at the same time the issue of the fight with the Tsar—another aggressor of an ‘alien religion’.

Similarly to Old Polish literature, where writers called for the defence of the south-eastern borderlands in the name of the security of the whole Commonwealth, Romantic writers treated Podole in a wider perspective—that of the whole homeland.⁵⁷ It became a symbol of Poland fighting with the aggressor from the East and at the same time suffering under his yoke. Pictures of devastated Podole

⁵¹ Aleksander Groza, *Marek Jakimowski. Duma historyczna*, in Idem, *Hryć. Dramat ukraiński*. [...] *Marek Jakimowski. Duma*, Wilno 1858, 160.

⁵² See Andrzej Borowski, *Powrót Europy*, op. cit., 69.

⁵³ *Tymon Zaborowski, Dumy podolskie zapanowania tureckiego*, op. cit., 88.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁵⁶ Mieczysław Romanowski, *Łużecy...*, op. cit., 39.

⁵⁷ It is particularly clearly seen in the cycle *Sad Songs of Podole* by Tymon Zaborowski. Here patrimony is associated with the whole country (for example in “Ojczyzna” (“Homeland”). See Barbara Czwórnóg-Jadczak, *W kręgu liryki Tymona Zaborowskiego*, op. cit., 271-272.

referring directly to the reality of the past started to be important in the Romantic present. In the poem of Aleksander Groza, Jakimowski's home area—he was born in Podole—was described as a suffering land "in mourning", in which only old and invalid people remained. The young were either killed or became slaves. Zaborowski described the situation of Podole and the whole nation in a similar way: "A land untouched by the plough goes wild/Because all the people are either slaves/Or fight in defence of their country"⁵⁸. The nature and civilization of Podole were contaminated by the aggressive actions of barbarians.

Equally topical are reports about escapes, about people being forced to leave their homes, to run away from the advancing Tartars of Turks. They are filled with allusions to the situation of Poles in the nineteenth century, when many people were forced to lead sad lives in exile—similar to the fate of Groza's protagonists—Marek Jakimowski and his comrades from Cecora, who were slaves of Turks and died in exile. "And sougning the sea rocked/Not its own children—exiled from afar/They were covered by a snowy wave/The sun shone instead of a blessed candle lighted at the deathbed."⁵⁹

These Romantic poems about Podole (similarly to poems from the Old Polish period) were written for patriotic reasons. They were written to remind Poles about their chivalric traditions and in order to attempt to keep them alive in the times when Poland was not independent any more. The message of freedom, addressed to contemporary readers, was connected with pictures of the Podole of the past.

⁵⁸ Tymon Zaborowski, *Dumy podolskie zapanowania tureckiego*, op. cit., 52.

⁵⁹ Aleksander Groza, Marek Jakimowski..., op. cit., 160.