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“A Pole Is a Selfless Host”. Old Polish Hospitality, or a Post-Partition Phantasm*

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ABSTRACT: The article discusses the image of Old Polish hospitality in the version presented by Polish writers of Post-Partition era. The analysis conducted uses the categories of myth, stereotype and phantasm. In the conclusion, the material is interpreted in the supernatural, ethical, aesthetic and political order.

KEYWORDS: hospitality, Sarmatism, Romanticism, phantasm

Two quotations to begin with. This is an earlier one: “There are no higher lower ones, our other ones, familiar stranger ones, friends enemies, a Pole is a selfless host” – so says Łukasz Gołębiowski in *Domy i dwory* [*Houses and Estates*] (Gołębiowski 1884: 100), a book first published four years before *Pan Tadeusz* [*Sir Thaddeus*]. And another quote, or, more precisely, a contamination of two quotes: (*Paper Machine; Step of Hospitality / No Hospitality*) “the site of what turns up unexpectedly, inevitably, defying any horizon of expectation” (Derrida 2000: 83–85) “when the host says *yes* to the coming or the unexpected and unforeseeable event of who comes, at any moment, in advance or behind, in absolute anachrony, without being invited, without introducing themselves” (Derrida 2005: 194). These, in turn, are two statements of similar meaning by Jacques Derrida on the subject of neverending hospitality, which, in his opinion, should not be guided by the logic of invitation, but, rather, that of a visitation, that is, the host’s readiness towards conditionless openness to a guest-messiah. Thus, Łukasz Gołębiowski’s patriotic elation has found its expression in a formula strikingly close to the categorical expectations of the

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French philosopher. This formula is also representative – by the rights of a hyperbolic shortcut – for the stereotype of erstwhile, noble Polish hospitality: self-sacrificial and hearty, as well as exceptional against the backdrop of foreign practices. A Pole has drunk hospitality with mother's milk (Gołębiowski 1884: 99), which is why he hosts everyone generously and selflessly, which is what distinguishes him from non-Poles:

he does not seek within it glory like a Frenchman, neither is he proud like a Spaniard, or, like Italians, hearty and stopping at only light treat; nor is he frugal like the Swiss or the Dutch, does not eat [food – D. Ś.] as fatty as a German, or, inviting someone to an inn, does he pay only for himself, demanding equal payment from the invitee; nor will he be as gloomy as an Englishman who pushes aside women so that he can drink more and talk politics; without the fair sex and politeness towards it, there is no feast for a Pole (Gołębiowski 1884: 99–100)¹.

As it is known, Derrida examined paradoxical entanglements of hospitality which – if it is supposed to meet its own maximalist requirements – must deny itself, as it is denied by the very existence of a house, a threshold, and the role of a host. It is significant that Cezary Wodziński, when drawing upon the French philosopher's reflections in his book *Odys. Esej o gościnności* [*Odysseus. An Essay on Hospitality*], began by excluding Old Polish hospitality from his analysis as a peripheral phenomenon (Wodziński 2015: 6), and – as I would guess – one not fitting the mold, as it eccentrically approached the ideal, loosening the tensions of a theoretical paradox. It could be thus surmised that by not including the experiences of his own ancestors, Wodziński, let us imagine it that way, to a degree trusted Gołębiowski, whose opinion came to be preserved in the continuously active stereotype.

My goal is to take a more careful look at the career of this cliché, or, more accurately, one of its episodes drawing on the myth-making energy of a trend that Andrzej Waśko calls Romantic Sarmatism (Waśko 2001: 8). As well as to provisionally locate this entry in the Romantic “encyclopedia”. I had the opportunity to talk about Old Polish hospitality during a conference in the “Kolokwia Staropolskie” series (2024). I finished my presentation with two remarks: pointing out that – firstly – in the light of old texts, Old Polish hospitality appears in a much more complicated manner than it would seem on the basis of contemporary common conceptions thereof, and – secondly – that we owe this common image to nostalgic filters of Post-Partition literature. In the eponymous quote from Gołębiowski, the Pole is obviously a nobleman², and the so-called Old Polish hospitality, today involving an apparently national tradi-

1 The particularity of Old Polish hospitality was repeatedly reported on by foreigners or even neighbors from the same geographic territory, however – frequently – in the guise of mismanagement and burdensome eccentricity (cf. Usatenko 2021).

2 As it turns out further on, anyone can enter if he carries a saber (Gołębiowski 1884: 80).

tion, consists in practices cultivated by a social state deployed in a social and spatial order that Andrzej Zajączkowski refers to – very aptly – as a federation of neighborhoods (Zajączkowski 1961: 71). Let us add: dispersed and lonely³ neighborhoods, in which melancholia is easy to come by. In order to avoid it, as a Renaissance chronicler, Marcin Bielski, wrote, “one rides out to another, having no measure in drinking”, and, as follows, he postulated for the nobility to settle in towns (Bielski 2019: 10). Gołębiowski saw it in a different, or even opposite, manner: according to him, isolation protected native customs:

This loneliness makes it possible to maintain, untainted, customs, far from any corruption we keep seeing in crowded towns, they lead an independent and peaceful life, free of hatred and jealousy, truly patriarchal, and it is one of main reasons why Poles have retained their ancestral virtues for so long (Gołębiowski 1884: 7–8).

Obviously, these two points of view are not mutually exclusive, but the shift on a scale of values is clear.

I was less concerned with testimonies of fortunate hospitality, that is, hospitality in accordance with the norm and the ideological program popularized, especially, by gentry literature, poetry of worldly pleasures and popular guides. More with those – which imposed themselves in the material sample – that reported hosting guests as an arrangement demanding, tense and risky: for one’s reputation, fortune, health and, sometimes, life, as within its paradoxes there is mutual conditioning of protection and violence, particularly easy to set off in the circumstances of the time. Some of these testimonies are simply aware of the burden resulting, for instance, from the double compulsion: taking in an unannounced guest (who could also be an *importun*)⁴, or – conversely – seeking accommodation while traveling and taking on the role of an intruder. There is, however, no shortage of examples (I must omit names and titles here) dominated by the poetics of excess: from Dionysian drinking and abject loss of control over physiology to altercations and bloody fights to the death (*biesiada* [a feast] – *bies siada* [devil appears] was a frequent play on words of the time). Based on his own experiences, Szymon Starowolski advised not to take firearms when visiting, and to put melee weapons aside (Starowolski ca. 1650–1653: 79). The rhetorics of wedding speeches foresaw appeals to the guests that they remain peaceful (Trębska 2008: 118–120). The historical representative nature of literary documentation is an obviously complex issue (e.g., excess is more attractive in storytelling than satisfying hospitality), but it is not reconstruction of actual social practices that has been my subject, but the literary history of the notion.

3 Cf. the landscape sketched by Hieronim Powodowski (Powodowski 1578: 27).

4 Cf. the adage *Hospes non invitatus, recedit saepe ingratus* – A guest not invited to the feast will not be much celebrated (Chodźko 1898: 72).

When analyzing the Post-Partition project of Old Polish hospitality, I freely use such concepts as myth, stereotype or – finally – phantasm⁵. I assign two scopes to myth. I understand the first one – following Marcin Czerwiński – as a discursive myth-like structure (Czerwiński 1973: 134–142). This type of activity of the presence of myth provides validation to the debate on the myth of Old Polish or simply Polish traditional hospitality – an important position in the axiological order ascribed to the narcissistic *imago gentis*. Another, narrower scope concerns hospitality as a significant attribute of the myth of the Golden Era of the First Polish Republic, that is, in historical phraseology, of the times of honest ancestors; a myth revealing itself here in another variation, key to Sarmatian Romanticism, which found a familiar equivalent of Western European Middle Ages in the Old Polish times (Waśko 2001: 204–205). “The mighty of the world – as Seweryn Soplica claimed – would be jealous of a Polish noble if they had only witnessed how he entertained himself and his guests in an equal field” (Rzewuski 1983: 39). Given the conviction that there was a radical difference between the Pre-Partition generation and the contemporary⁶ one, as well as that hospitality was disappearing everywhere (e.g., according to Niemcewicz, this process began already in the second half of the 18th century; cf. Niemcewicz 1868: 39), this myth takes on the marks of retrospective utopia⁷. However, each of these senses relies on mechanisms of stereotypization, that is, generalization, simplification, selectivity, dissemination and consolidation. Stereotypization standardizes a myth (which is, by nature, variable), and, simultaneously, extends its duration beyond the direct historical necessity (Post-Partition times). In its current state, “Old Polish hospitality” remains an important motif in the collective self-portrait, but its essential noble provenance is definitely not experienced as a foreground determinant. Frequently, it is also reduced to the general formula of “Polish hospitality”.

The Post-Partition era discovered for itself a fascinating corpus of Old Polish texts from outside the school canon of the Enlightenment (Waśko 2001: 144), but it did not yet know several important titles (such as Potocki’s *Ogród nieplewiony* [*Unweeded Garden*]), which from today’s perceptive are fundamental for recognizing the notion. Instead, it drew upon resources of memory: individual, and, in the longer temporary perspective – post-memory and collective memory. The utmost importance of this kind of sources for creative endeavors is shown in the *topos* of an old man telling stories of what the ancient times were like (Waśko 2001: 139–140, 167). As it is known, the Romantic discovery of primary tradition in Sarmatism was accompanied by Henryk Rzewuski’s dis-

5 This term has already been used in reference to hospitality (cf. Loska 2015: 214).

6 See e.g. Gaszyński: “Nowhere are we struck by such a big leap, such a large difference, – as between the generation that lived prior to the Partition of Poland – and ours” (Gaszyński 1908: 6–7).

7 It is, however, necessary to mention here the experience of hospitality (frequently long-term one) as a gesture of national solidarity after the fall of the November Uprising (see Wybranowski 1898: 5–6).

covery of *gawęda szlachecka* (noble storytelling), which turned out to be something akin to a genealogical calling card for Sarmatian heritage. Storytelling imposed the tone in a double way: as a ready literary form and as a modality suggesting an oral communication scheme as a primary scheme, with a particular stylistic marking, which Konstanty Gaszyński aptly referred to as *kontusz style* (Gaszyński 1847: 11–12). Significantly, the modality of storytelling also organized the narration in a genre graphemic by definition, namely, a memoir – however, this pertains to a falsified noble memoir (such as Gaszyński's diaries of Maciej Rogowski, or Rzewuski's diary of Bartłomiej Michałowski), which explains a lot. Moreover, one should not forget the encyclopedic efforts (including tourist, ethnographic, historical compendia), starting with Łukasz Gołębiowski and finishing – roughly – with Władysław Łoziński and Zygmunt Gloger. It was a discourse that mediated between a corpus of sources (written and oral) and literary creation, and thus, it considerably influenced the shaping of the model of Sarmatian hospitality; its impact has not waned to this day.

One can have the impression that this model, despite editorial achievements increasing the access to original testimonies from the old eras (with Kitowicz and Pasek in the lead) was headed towards autarky of a kind, meaning also: a kind of immutability particular for mythical depictions. A myth established itself by ignoring contradictions in historical testimonies (e.g. the idea of an open house *versus* being allergic to nuisance guests), as well as selecting features and motifs affirming Old Polish hospitality against the negative (as was emphasized eagerly and frequently) background of "customs [influenced by] foreigners". This meant silencing or muting reports that did not serve this goal: excess, criticized by Old Polish authors, now becomes renamed to generosity juxtaposed with foreign avarice, or directly ascribed to foreign influences (Goczalkowski 1862: 2); regional dietine assembly feasts, who can believe, were celebrated entirely selflessly (Gołębiowski 1884: 100), and drunkenness, difficult to omit, was presented with understanding (e.g. Rzewuski 1841: 240–267), as an expression of honest "will" and morally sound habits (Orpiszewski 1838: 176). As expressed by Władysław Syrokomla in a nostalgic rhyme (Syrokomla 1856: 148):

Bo tu była zamożność i wiosną i zimą,
Wiesz, jaka była tu cnota?
Každy, kto tu przyjechał lub zbłądził mimo,
Nie wyszedł trzeźwy za wrota.

Here we had wealth in the spring and in winter
Do you know the virtue that was had?
Nobody who came here or lost his way
Would leave sober these parts
(trans. E.B.)

Regional differences did not particularly influence the coherence of the stereotype: while the Eastern territories were especially remarked upon, the cordiality of inhabitants of the Greater Poland also made an impression on Pol and Syrokomla. Simultaneously, desired attributes were depicted in the mode of hyperbole and emphasis, for the hospitable Soplicowo gate invited "all" but not everyone; and although it was open wide, it was not so day in, day out. Moreover, in the symbolic dimension, it was closed off to anything that was

new (see Kuziak 2015). Some motifs became preserved in series of “common places”. As we know, a Pole asks not who and where from. A good example was pointed out by Teofil Lenartowicz in the poem *Wincentemu Polowi* [*To Wincenty Pol*], whose addressee supposedly gave him this very kind of welcome in the doorway of his countryside residence:

Do twojej piersi garnąłem się młody,
A kto ja taki, tyś się i nie pytał,
Tylkoś mnie w progach wiejskiej swej zagrody
Sercem powitał.

A youth, I flocked to your breast
and you never asked who I was
but welcomed me in the doorway to your country
house with your heart.

Prosto, poczciwie, pychy ani cienia,
Choć czoło złotym kraj otaczał liściem,
Jak gdybyś czekał u domku przedsienia
Za brata przyściem
(Lenartowicz 1881: 91–92).

Simply, nicely, no trace of pride
though the country adorned your forehead with gold leaf
as if you waited in the hallway
for your brother to come
(trans. E.B.)

The older poet is here ascribed the role of a devoted custodian of the old customs, in accordance with the assumption that rustic province (countryside or *zaścianek* – backwater, a poor nobleman’s estate) favors best relics of the golden age – the further the province from civilization, the better, which put the Eastern territories in a privileged position (e.g. Pol 1876: 36, 43–44; Chodźko 1880; Wybranowski 1897: 71–72; Janion 2007: 170; Sokołowska 2022: 302). This motif of an old generation mediating, as if in a “county song”, between the old and the new years, underwent, as I have mentioned, broadly documented topoization: “there is nothing more holy for today’s Polish youth than an old Pole in a *kontusz*; nothing more desirable than his conversation, cheerful yet serious; simple yet dignified and firm” (Orpiszewski 1838: 126; see also Syrokomla 1868: 180). Let us go back to Gołębiowski. He wrote that in a manor of old a place was always reserved for “gentlemen from beyond the mountains” (Gołębiowski 1884: 80), that is, unexpected arrivals. These gentlemen later appeared in Pol’s *Pieśni o ziemi naszej* [*The Song of Our Land*] (Pol 1876: 60 [separate pagination], Aleksander Wybranowski’s *Drobi-azgach z różnych czasów* [*Trifles from Various Times*] (Wybranowski 1897: 71) and other places too numerous to list them here. Suffice it to say that they were included (with a direct reference to Gołębiowski) by Gloger in his *Encyklopedia staropolska* [*Old Polish Encyclopedia*] (Gloger 1985: 208), and finally – with a reference to Wincenty Pol – noted by the so-called *Słownik warszawski* [*Warsaw Dictionary*] (Karłowicz, Kryński, Niedźwiedzki 1927: 92).

It is a thread closely connected with the picture of an imaginary house as e.g. envisioned – in the mode of Piast’s hospitable cottage – by Teofil Lenartowicz in the poem *W rocznicę listopadową* [*On the November Anniversary*] (Lenartowicz 1848: 4), a piece I will return to; a house larger “in case”, in anticipation of guests (Gołębiowski 1884: 8), small, but surprisingly spacious inside (Łoziński 1999: 198), or becoming larger while more banqueters arrive (as a metaphor of the hospitable heart). Such an estate was provided by

Henryk Rzewuski in one of his stories (Rzewuski 1983: 32), its flexible architecture was sketched out by Wincenty Pol in *Pieśń o ziemi naszej*:

Wielkie domy za granicą, A w nich ciasno, choć nieludno. U nas mury się nie świecą, A o kącik nie tak trudno. Ledwo człek by czasem wierzył, Dom niewielki – wtem gość wchodzi, Ot i domek się rozszerzył, I wnet miejsce gdzieś się rodzi. Przybył drugi i dziesiąty, I nie ciasno jest nikomu: Wyprzątnięto wszystkie kąty,	Grand houses abroad Crowded but not with people Our walls do not shine But a nook will be found Sometimes a person can't believe it A small house – then a guest comes in And the house grows in size And a place appears Another comes, soon a tenth one And nobody lacks for space: All corners cleaned out
Coraz szerzej w małym domu. Zda się, że pan domu sobie Ścian i miejsca gdzieś przysporzył, A on tylko w domu tobie Drzwi i serce swe otworzył (Pol 1876: 59) ⁸ .	More and more space in the small house Seems that the host has Built more walls and space But he only for you Opened his door and heart (trans. E.B.)

And further: such a house was mentioned by Antoni Odyniec in *Listy z podróży* [*Letters from Travels*] (Odyniec 1875: 45), while Tadeusz Pini in his book about Władysław Syrokomla wrote that the poet's little estate grew larger for his guests, according to the adage (Pini 1901: 55–56). Indeed, the adage is noted in Samuel Adalberg's *Księga przysłów, przypowieści i wyrażen przysłowiowych polskich* [*The Book of Polish Adages, Parables and Proverbs*] (Adalberg 1889–1894: 154). It is worth mentioning here not a house, but a single chamber, which in Aleksander Groza's *Starosta kaniowski* [*The Starosta of Kanie*] resisted historical catastrophes "as a seed in ash" (Groza 1855: 7) – it is clearly possible to note the similarity with the romantic allegory of a seed.

I propose at the end to categorize all this myth-making intensification into four mutually non-exclusive orders: supernatural, ethical, aesthetic and political. In the supernatural order, hospitality is, as Wincenty Pol put it in his cycle *Z podróży po burzy* [*From Travels in Storm*] "inheritance from God" (Pol 1876: 52), a divine gift funded by an act of epiphany, preserved in the adage "Gość w dom – Bóg w dom" ("A guest at home – [is like] God at home"). In our tradition, these are obviously the angels visiting Piast and Rzepicha, who, to quote Kazimierz Stadnicki: "find shelter under the peasant roof. They crown his hospitality with the miracles of their grace, and, [as] bearers of divine judgments, give a scepter to the offspring of this peasant, and existence to a nation" (Stadnicki 1842: 2). In his treatise *O duchu poetyckim polskiego narodu* [...] [*On the Poetic Spirit of the Polish Nation*] Stefan Witwicki points directly to the aspect of epiphany in Piast's hospitality: "These same angels who visit

8 Similarly, although shorter, in *Mohort* (Pol 1855: 80).

the wheelwright's poor cottage connect us visibly to another, otherworldly plane, attach our thought to heaven, and will become a symbol of our faith" (Witwicki 1866: 18).

The ethical order puts hospitality into the countryside fences, that is, into georgian tradition. Here, only one quotation, but from *Pieśń o ziemi naszej*:

Chwała świętych i rogoża	Glory to the saints and a knight's hard bedding
I ta służba gościnności,	And the service of hospitality
Miłość ludzka – bojaźń Boża,	Human love – fear of God
Czułość serca i sumienia,	Sensitive heart and conscience
I co tylko nam z przejrzenia	And what only from a glance
Opatrzności było dane,	Of Providence was given
Wszystko pługiem wyorane	All plowed over
(Pol 1876: 8).	(trans. E.B.)

This tradition, fading very slowly in Polish conditions, now aided Romantic moralistic xenophobia, aversion to towns and achievements of civilization (Janion, Żmigrodzka 1978: 55). An estate or a castle remains an axiological "orientation point" (Waśko 2001: 151), but particular moral privileges were ascribed to *zańcianek*.

In the aesthetic order the ideal of hospitality, generous as much as irrational, is associated with the "cordial noble whim" („serdeczną fantazyją szlachecką”; Gaszyński 1908: 8; see also Waśko 2001: 76–77, 100); “if only it were possible to carouse today as in the days of old!...” Syrokomla would sigh. However, both the world and the poet himself had become older: “It is not the same with people, and not the same in the heart!” (Syrokomla 1856: 51), which sounds like a weakening echo of the timeless analogy between the macrocosmos and the microcosmos. Wincenty Pol attempted to resurrect the old-time zest by composing a behavior code of a sort (*W pamiętniku Pani Włodzimierzowej Dzie duszyckiej* [*In the Album of Mrs Włodzimierzowa Dzie duszycka*]), which advocated for unrestrained, or even extreme behaviors:

Kiedy zbrojnie – to ze szablą,	If [one's] armed – then with saber
Kiedy z miną – to już z djabła,	if making faces – then demonic
Kiedy strojnie – to we złocie,	If well-dressed – then in gold
Gdy pracować – to już w pocie,	If working – then to sweat
Bankietować – to już szumnie,	If banqueting – pompously
Sejmikować – to już tłumnie.	Rallying – in a crowd
Kiedy spać się – to jak Bela,	If drinking – into stupor
Kiedy pić – przyjaciele,	If drink-offering – to friend
Gdy pomagać – to sownie,	If helping – then generously
Kiedy bić – to naleźycie,	If beating – then painfully
Kiedy pościć – to na sucho,	If fasting – then while dry
Kiedy palnąć – to już ucho!	If hitting – someone's ear!
(Pol 1876: 360)	(trans. E.B.)

In the eyes of the Romantics, rampant "whims" were seen as a peculiar manifestation of the nation's poetic spirit:

this boundless hospitality, humor unperturbed by any adventure, focused on good thought and pomp, burning through the largest fortunes, a common, unanimous trust in tomorrow, blind reliance on Providence, finally, the national slogan and deep faith that Poland is based on misrule... Indeed, one does not require the aforementioned primacy⁹ for this tangled ball of many peculiarities, for this compact mix of the most contradictory God-knows-what, and things heard nowhere else a ribbon of as varied poetry as possible was span

– Stefan Witwicki wrote, and he noticed this "poetry" on all pages of old and new histories (Witwicki 1866: 19n). Rzewuski chimed in by saying that the Pole's element is "full of poetry" which is revealed in conversations, feasts, arguments, travels and "disorder at home", which differentiated him (positively!) from a German or a Muscovite (Rzewuski 2003: 17–18, see also 21).

In a conservative¹⁰ political order, in my opinion the superior one, the social phantasm of Old Polish hospitality (that is, the active and historically conditioned side of the myth¹¹: a compensatory set of reading, imagination, emotions and memory) seems to be an important factor of integration, especially in the experience of colonization (also in its modernizing aspect) or emigration otherness, in the traumatic process of going from a community of actual privileges within a social state to the national imagined community (referring to Benedict Anderson's well-known concept), devoid of background in the form of state and forced to rely on cultural ties, including – creative collective memory. In a broader dimension, this phantasm spread over the entire Slavic tradition. As we know, the Romantics were diligent, if selective, students of Johann G. Herder, who seemed to recognize another version of the "noble savage" in Slavs: "they were helpful, hospitable to the point of profligacy, they were lovers of countryside freedom, but, at the same time, submissive and obedient, they were foes to robbery and burglary" (Herder 1962: 326). Protecting this depository of virtues was supposed to open the road to a dominating position for the Slavs. This is exactly how, in the formula of *long durée*, Wincenty Pol commented upon the durability of this Slavic heritage (*W podróży po burzy* [*From Travels in Storm*]):

9 The paradox of first among equals (Lat. *primus inter pares*). It concerns the king, whose status in the noble Commonwealth was equal to that of the poorest nobleman.

10 Generally, in the sense used by Andrzej Waśko (2001: 67), who, using Karl Mannheim's distinction (conservatism v. traditionalism) is too strict in eliminating the traditionalist aspect. Traditionalism can become conservatism's tool as a quotation from the past or a reference to residuum (enclaves of old custom are presented as pattern-generating), otherwise this distinction is not upheld consistently, e.g. 74–75.

11 I am referring here to Maria Janion's approach; she excavated this notion from its psychoanalytic terminological field (Janion 1998).

Bo tam gościna puścizną po Bogu,
 Więc głosy serca nie cedzą przez zęby,
 Lecz chlebem gościa witają u progu
 I plackiem do nóg, pirogiem do gęby...
 I po te czasy obyczaj ten samy,
 Choć lis borsuka wyparował z jamy
 (Pol 1876: 52).

For there, hospitality is legacy from God
 so voices are not frugal with heart
 but welcome a guest with bread in the doorway
 bow down, feed with pierogi
 and until now, the custom remains
 even if fox hunted the badger out of the den
 (trans. E.B.)

Therefore, the phantasm of ancient hospitality (together with other distinguishing virtues) could soften the feeling of civilizational loss. And it was all the more acute given that it was unfamiliar to Sarmatian ancestors, or, at least, not on this scale and with this profile. Imaginary hospitality was to consolidate in the face of violent political changes, as a tool of resistance against the pressure of history. It was active (although in an undefined perspective) in the pen of Teofil Lenartowicz (I return to the poem *W rocznicę listopadową* [*On the November Anniversary*]): it is the Piast's hospitable cottage that will give shape to national awakening, understood as resurrecting the past:

Wybudujcie domek mały,
 A poważny jak świątynia,
 W gruncie mocny jako skały,
 A tak czysty jak źrzenica.
 A niewola i zamieszka
 W naszym domu niech nie mieszka:
 Lecz gościnność i prostota
 Niech otwiera drzwi ubogiem,
 Bądźmy rzewni jak sierota,
 A rządźmy sie Panem Bogiem
 (Lenartowicz 1848: 4).

You should build a little house
 Serious like a shrine
 On foundation of rock
 Clean as an eye's pupil
 And slavery and unrest
 Shall not live in our house
 But hospitality, simplicity
 Shall open the doors to the poor
 Let us be tender like orphans
 and let God be our ruler
 (trans. E.B.)

This poem, contextually connected with the 1848 events, and found in a volume published in a lithographic form, probably due to censorship (Bełcikowski 1893: 37–38), is a kind of a call-to-arms – fiery as much as poetically weak – calling “brothers” to unite around the traditional order of values, for it is what marks the right directions towards the “true miracle” of political freedom.

A decade later, Piast's humble abode was referenced by Władysław Syrokomla, touched by seeing Gopło and Kruszwica. However, he shifted the responsibility for the motherland's resurrection from Piast's heirs to the angels themselves:

But let these tears not be poisoned with bitterness – it is just the cradle,
 not yet the tomb of the past! After all, this is the soil upon which angels
 went to be hosted by Piast... An angel blessed the cradle, the angel ate
 our bread, tasted our mead... If only by a prayer, the angel should pay
 for Lechitic hospitality (Syrokomla 1914: 133).

However, as can be seen, this is a reference of another kind: although in both cases visions of the future are lit up by a miracle (and thus the political order

meets, however else, the supernatural one), Lenartowicz connects it with an exceptional communal effort, while in Syrokomla's approach, resistance seems resigned and passive – since one can only count on the angel's good manners as he reciprocates a favor. Let us remind the reader that hosting a visitor from the otherworld is an important founding myth not just for the Polish ethnic community (see Pitt-Rivers 2012: 508–509; Rancew-Sikora 2021: 20–23). It can thus be said that the "countryside lyre player" (as Syrokomla was called, following the title of his poem) recognized a chance for independence in reformulating linear historical time into sacral time, assuming the possibility of return to the starting point, an actualization of the *illo tempore* era (as Mircea Eliade, the classic scholar of these problems, was fond of calling it). Thus, the convention close to a travel journal, particular for the text under discussion, is summarized by a sample of prophetic vision. Not for nothing was the lyre player's instrument made of enchanted wood (Syrokomla 1890: 203).

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