Jagiellonian Epithalamia and New Geographical Knowledge

Introduction

At the turn from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century in Europe, a number of publications appeared that redefined the concept of the world. These were editions of ancient geographical sources (e.g., Ptolemy, Pliny, Strabo, Tacitus), as well as new geographical treatises, travelogs, historical works, maps, globes, and poetry. The authors and publishers of these texts created new European metageographies. In these new spatial frameworks, they presented territories which until then had been poorly known or completely unknown, e.g., Northern Europe, the Far East, America, or Russia. The Polish-Lithuanian Jagiellonian monarchy was one of them.

The process of creating the Jagiellonian metageography can be observed in Latin poetry written in the first decades of the sixteenth century. Among them there are Latin nuptial poems, i.e., epithalamia, written for the wedding of the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania Zygmunt I Jagiellon with Barbara Zápolya (1512) and Bona Sforza (1518).
The epithalamia written in 1512 and 1518 might not seem the obvious first port of call when examining the ways in which a new geographical image of Central-Eastern Europe was shaped in the sixteenth century. There are better-known texts and artifacts which give us an in-depth understanding of this process. Among them, there is the treatise about two Sarmatias by Matthias of Miechów (Miechowita 1517), maps by Bernard Wapowski (1526), geographical manuals by Laurentius Corvinus (1496) and Jan of Stobnica (1512), epistolography and historiography. However, the epithalamia of 1512 and 1518 prove to be unexpectedly valuable materials and can shed new light on the discussed problem.

First, they were published before Wapowski’s maps and before or only a year after Miechowita’s famous *Tractatus de duabus Sarmatiis*. Second, these are poetical texts, which means that they speak about space in a different way than scientific works, such as geographical prosaic treatises or maps. In other words, poets can use a different language than authors of non-poetical works. Thirdly, in the first decades of the sixteenth century, neo-Latin poetry played an important role in shaping the image of the Polish Crown, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and Muscovy. The epithalamia were no less important than other texts dealing with the topic. In the second decade of the sixteenth century, there were only a few printed sources which could inform contemporary readers about the lands of the Polish Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Among them were *Europa* [Europe] by Enea Silvio Piccolomini (1501), *Liber chronicarum* [Chronicle] by Hartmann Schedel (1493), and *Cosmographia* [Cosmography] by Laurentius Corvinus (1496). There were no informative maps of Poland and Lithuania except Ptolemy’s maps and their tentative adaptations by Nicolaus of Cusa, Martin Waldseemüller, and Marco Beneventano. Fourth, the epithalamia of 1512 and 1518 belong to the rather limited number of Latin poems written or published in that period in Central Europe which refer to geography. They also form a coherent set of poetical works which comment on the same political events and have the same literary function. Furthermore, the coherence of the epithalamia can be assigned to the fact that their authors had the same humanist background and belonged to the *respublica litter-
aria of the time. Most of them also knew each other. In their works, they referred to the same ancient and contemporary texts. Lastly, the authors of the 1512 and 1518 epithalamia were officials representing important political institutions in Central Europe, particularly chanceries of kings, politicians, or cities. Many of the poets were figures of high standing. Thus, each of them gave in his epithalamium an official political statement. This was not only the voice of an individual poet but rather the voice of an institution.

In the epithalamia of 1512 and 1518, there is a multitude of geographical references. The authors write about the location of Poland-Lithuania, introduce many toponyms, hydronyms, and names of ethnic groups. In the second decade of the sixteenth century, the use of all these names and locations was a cutting-edge poetic device. The names also bear an important political message. The political elites representing, for example, the Polish king, the members of the Breslau city council or the Holy Roman Emperor sought—through poetry written by themselves or by their clients—legitimization of power in their countries. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, they had to respond to a new challenge: to create and articulate a new spatial language of the reach of this power.

Taking into account all the aforementioned circumstances, it is worth taking a closer look at geography in the epithalamia of 1512 and 1518. In my article, I am going to answer the question of how they create or convey geographic knowledge. I assume that the poets had different political and personal purposes when writing their epithalamia. At the same time, they shared similar attitudes toward geography. They sought to invent or develop a new geographical language by which the Central-European territories could have been created in poetry. I will show how, using this language, they charted a literary equivalent of the tabulae modernae—the new maps, drawn by their contemporary cartographers (Beneventano, Waldseemüller, Wapowski). I argue that the authors of epithalamia took part in inventing a modern image of a part of the world, which is known today known as Central and Eastern Europe.5

5 The concept of Eastern Europe was invented much later, cf. Wolff 1994.
Europe in Laurentius Corvinus’ “Epithalamium”

One of the guests at Zygmunt I and Bona Sforza’s wedding, which took place in April 1518 in Cracow, was the humanist Laurentius Corvinus (1465–1527). He came as a member of a delegation of the Breslau city council, where he held the position of a secretary. It was not his first visit to the capital of Poland. In the late fifteenth century, Corvinus had studied at the University of Cracow (Newald 1957, 372; McDonald 2007, 49–71) and published some of his works in the city’s printing houses. For the wedding, he wrote a two-part erudite nuptial panegyric (Corvinus 1999; Corvinus 2001), which was published in Cracow probably during the celebrations.

The early sixteenth century saw more epithalamia published in Poland. For both weddings of Zygmunt I in 1512 and 1518, a number of poems were composed by Paulus Crosnensis, Ioannes Dantiscus, Andreas Cricius (Andrzej Krzycki), Eobanus Hessus, Laurentius Corvinus, Caspar Ursinus Velius, Caelius Calcagninus (Celio Calcagnini), and Hieronymus Balbus (Girolamo Balbi). Most of them were published in Cracow in 1512 and 1518. Only eight

6 At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the city (Latin: Vratislavia, Czech: Vratislav, German: Breslau, Polish: Wrocław) was not a part of the Polish Kingdom. This Silesian city belonged to the Bohemian Crown, which was ruled by the Hungarian-Czech Jagiellons: Vladislaus II and his son Louis II. At that time Breslau had strong economic, cultural, and personal relationships with Poland.

7 I analyzed two poems by Corvinus in Niedźwiedź 1999. I also refer to some observations relating to Corvinus’ Ad Famam given previously in Niedźwiedź 2001.

8 On these sets of nuptial poetry, see Nowak-Dłużewski 1966, 69–86; Brożek 1995, 39–62; Ryle 1998, 525–532; Niedźwiedź 1999, 23–38. It is probable that Dantiscus wrote two epithalamia in 1518. Only one of them was published then. The author presented the unpublished version to Queen Bona only in 1543 (Skolimowska 2013, 352, note 78). In my analysis I omit the hodoeporicon (a poem about a journey) “Viaggio de la serenissima s. dona Bona reina” [“The Journey of the Most Illustrious Lady Queen Bona”] by Colantonio Carmignano published under the name of Parthenopeo Suavio in Bari in 1535 (Carmignano 1535). Carmignano narrates the journey of Bona Sforza to Cracow in 1518 (see Patrik Pastrnak’s article in this cluster). The poem is very rich in geographical details, mainly related to Dalmatia and the lands of the Habsburg Empire. A thorough geographical analysis of the “Viaggio” and a comparison to the Latin poetry published in Cracow in the second decade of the sixteenth century will be the subject of a future study.
books of wedding poetry or single poems remain extant today.\(^9\) Several of them are epic poems written in hexameter, patterned chiefly after Statius and Claudian. Corvinus’ epithalamium stands out against this background because the poet chose different models. He imitates Ovid’s *Tristia* in a poem entitled “Epithalamium,” and in the other one, “Ad Famam,” despite his use of the hexameter verse, Corvinus draws the concept from a lyrical text, namely Horace’s ode II 20 (Niedźwiedź 2001, 245).

Both poems by Corvinus include many references to places. His “Epithalamium” is a praise of Zygmunt I and Bona, but the main character of the text is the poet’s beloved city: Cracow. Corvinus extols it as the seat of a mighty ruler, the location of a famous uni-

\(^9\) On occasion of the wedding with Barbara Zápolya the following separate books were published: 1) Paulus Crosnensis, *Epithalamion hoc est carmen connubiale in nuptias illustriissimi ac invictissimi domini regis Poloniae nobilissimaeque Barbare, filiae inclyti et magnifici domini Stephanii palatini Pannoniae* [Epithalamium, That Is a Wedding Poem on the Marriage of the Great and Invincible Lord and King of Poland Sigismund and Most Illustrious Princess Barbara, a Daughter of Stephen, Palatin of Hungary] (Cracovia 1512); 2) Ioannes Dantiscus, *Epithalamium in nuptiis inclyti Sigismundi regis Poloniae invictissimi ac illustriissimae principis Barbarae filiae praecleri quondam Stephani comitis perpetui Csepusiensis et regni Ungariae Palatini* [Epithalamium on the Wedding of the Great and Invincible King of Poland Sigismund and Most Illustrious Barbara, a Daughter of Late His Grace the Count of Spiš and Palatin of Hungary Stephen] (Cracovia, 1512); 3) Andreas Cricius, *In augustissimum Sigismundi regis Poloniae et reginae Barbarae connubium* [On the Wedding of His Majesty Sigismund King of Poland and Queen Barbara] (Cracovia 1512); 4) Eobanus Helius Hessus, *Encomium nuptiale divo Sigismundo Poloniae regi scriptum* [The Wedding Encomium Written for the Divine King of Poland Sigismund] (Cracovia 1512). On the occasion of the second marriage with Bona Sforza: 5) Andreas Cricius, *Epithalamion cum aliis lectu non iniocundis* [Epithalamium and Other Pleasant Poems] (Cracovia 1518); 6) Laurentius Corvinus, *Epithalamium in nuptiis sacrae regiae maiestatis Poloniae etc.* [Epithalamium for the Wedding of His Royal Majesty of Poland, etc.] (Cracovia 1518). 7) Caspar Ursinus Velius’ *Epithalamion serenissimi domini Sigismundi regis Poloniae et inclytæ reginae Bonae* [Epithalamium for His Majesty King of Poland Sigismund and Splendid Queen Bona] is to be found in his *Poematum libri quinque* [Five Books of Poems] (Basilea 1522, b–c3v); 8) Ioannes Dantiscus’ “Epithalamium regiae Bonae” [“Epithalamium for Queen Bona”] is part of MS 6548 from the Jagiellonian Library, Cracow (p. 75). The books contain not only epithalamia *sensu stricto* but other texts as well: dedicatory letters, epigrams, short poems, etc. In most cases I quote the epithalamia from the anthology *Szesnastowieczne epitalamia łacińskie w Polsce* (Niedźwiedź, Brożek 1999).
University, and a capital with a long history. He tells the legend of King Krak, the founder of the city, who is believed to have killed the dragon living in a cave in the Wawel hill (Corvinus 1999, 204–207). There is much to suggest that Corvinus’ “Epithalamium” is an etiological elegy.

In “Ad Famam,” Corvinus presents Cracow in a broader context. The poet asks Fama to praise the name of King Zygmunt, his young wife, and the capital city in all countries that the goddess of fame and rumor visits. She should then soar on her wings above the Wawel Castle and fly first over the cities of Lesser Poland. Next, Fama should go to Hungary, then to Austria, Bohemia, and Silesia. Further stages of the journey include other territories of the Holy Roman Empire, Scandinavia, the British Isles, France, and Spain. Zygmunt was already famous in Italy, Poland, and Lithuania, which is probably why they were excluded from the list of places to be visited by Fama.

By listing all these countries, Corvinus sketched a complete political map of Europe, which was well within his capabilities. In the early 1490s, he participated in lectures on Ptolemy’s Geography at the University of Cracow and later, when being a university lecturer, published his Cosmographia, a commentary to Ptolemy’s work written partly in verse and partly in prose (Corvinus 1496). There are some overlaps between Corvinus’ treatise and the epithalamium issued twenty years later.10 The scholar ended his Cosmography with a poem dedicated to the book. Like Fama, it was to embark on a journey to far-away countries:

Perge liber sine me tenues venture sub auras,
   Hinc ubi Sarmatico stringitur ora gelu
Qua quoque praerupto se tollit in aera muro
   Structa sub umbrosis regia Croca iugis. (Corvinus 1496, g5v, v. 1–4)

Set off, my book, without me to meet more delicate winds. / [Set off] from here, from the country bound with Sarmatian ice, / from

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10 For example Corvinus’ Cosmographia lists European countries according to Ptolemaic maps (Corvinus 1496, g8–g8v.), ascribes a special role to Cracow and Poland (in the treatises there is a poem devoted to this city, Corvinus 1496, c4–c5), and praises Silesia (a poem about Silesia, Corvinus 1496, c5–c6).
underneath a shadow-casting hill, on which the steep walls / of
the royal edifice of Krak\textsuperscript{11} rise high to the sky.\textsuperscript{12}

It might appear that personal interests of the Vratislavian poet are
the reason why geography is so important in his poems. This is
plausible to some extent, but if we take a closer look at other texts
written for Zygmunt’s weddings in 1512 and 1518, it becomes clear
that other authors also used an impressive number of geographical names. There might be several reasons why the poets decided
to use geography in their texts. The most obvious was to inform an
international audience where the realm of King Zygmunt was lo-
cated. The strange names of distant places seem to have been at-
tractive both for the authors and the readers. The political reasons
of using geographical terminology were also important.

The New Geographical Language of the Epithalamia

Geographical names used in the epithalamia written in 1512 and
1518 can be divided into three groups. The first group contains
toponyms and hydronyms such as Samos, Cyprus, Colchis, Scylla
and Charybdis, etc., originating from ancient texts. [Fig. 1] The use
of ancient names was mainly a requirement of contemporary poet-
ics. A poem was expected to contain mythological and classical allusions and references. These names also constituted ready met-
rical “building blocks” that facilitated the construction of proper verses, because poets could have used them conveniently and
without fear of a metrical error. The second group of names in-
cludes newer geographical and ethnic names such as Cracovia,
Polonia, Russi, Mosci, etc. Finally, the third—transitive—group
covers places on the modern map of Europe named with antique
terms such as Sarmatia, Scythia, Thanais, etc. I am most interest-
ed in the two latter groups.

There are plenty of such names in the epithalamia from 1512
and 1518 (cf. the annex at the end of this article). All the authors
tried to describe the location of Poland in various ways, but it was
not an easy task, as such poetic tradition was scarce. The main

\textsuperscript{11} Krak (Cracus, Gracchus) is a legendary prince who was believed to
have built Cracow. The first mention of this legend is in the \textit{Polish Chronicle}
by Magister Vincentius (Wincenty Kadłubek, ca. 1150–1223).

\textsuperscript{12} Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own, J. N.
Fig. 1: An early 16th-century map coalescing ancient and modern names. A fragment of a map of the world by Martin Waldseemüller showing territories of the Polish Crown (Waldseemüller 1507). On the left part of the map there are modern names: Cracovia (Cracow), Istula (Vistula) fluvius, and Carpatus Mons. On the right bank of the Vistula there are names of peoples listed by Ptolemy: Ombrones, Sulones, and Burgiones. *Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, public domain.*
predecessor was Conradus Celtis (Konrad Celtes, 1459–1508), who spent three years in Poland.\textsuperscript{13} His elegies (1502) and odes (1513) contain many remarks about Poland, the Vistula river, and the Carpathian Mountains.\textsuperscript{14} Some local poets could have known his texts (especially his friend Corvinus).

When poets used modern names (e.g., \textit{Polonia, Moscus, Tartari, Sigismundus}), they also had to face the challenge to them in the quantitative metric system. Velius writes “Mare Baltheon” instead of “Mare Balthicum” or “Mare Germanicum” (Velius 1522, b2) and Hessus “Slesia” instead of “Silesia” and “Livo” instead of “Livonus” (Hessus 1999, 120, v. 154 and 164). However, the extent to which poetical patterns developed by ancient authors could aid the definition of the location of Poland and Cracow was limited. When sixteenth-century poets wished to delimit this location, they had to use their own invention and knowledge drawn from historical and geographical treatises.

The authors of the epithalamia identify Poland with Sarmatia and the remote, freezing North. This North is described with notions referring to ancient names of the Great Bear constellation and the frosty northern rivers and mountains. Therefore, Paulus

\textsuperscript{13} Celtis was one of the most important German humanists at the turn from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century. He spent three years in Cracow (between ca. 1488–1491), where he studied astronomy. He devoted the first book of his cycle of elegies (Celtis 1502) and a part of the first book of his odes (Celtis 1513) to Poland and its capital. In Cracow, Celtis established the Societas Litteraria Vistulana [Literary Society on the Vistula River]. Among the members of the Societas were Philippus Callimachus, Corvinus, and professors of the University of Cracow.

\textsuperscript{14} On the other hand, we have to bear in mind that Celtis was not interested in the geography of Poland or Sarmatia as such. He considered the Vistula river and Cracow to be the eastern borderlands of Germania. In his writings there is no evidence that he had a thorough knowledge about the Jagiellonian monarchy. Cf. elegies I 3 “Ad Hasilinam de aborta tempestate dum Gracoviam Sarmaciae peteret et signo veris” [“To Hasilina about a Premature Tempest when [the Poet] Travelled to Cracow in Sarmatia and about a Sign of Spring”] and I 8 “Ad Hasilinam insertum heroicum” [“A Heroic Insertion to Hasilina”] I 15 “Ad Vistulam fluvium ortum et exitum eius describens et de vesontibus et eorum venationibus” [“Elegy to the Vistula River Describing Its Sources and Estuary and about Bisons and Bison-Hunting”] (Celtis 1502); odes I 7 “Ad Philippum Callimachum,” I 8 “Ad Ursum medicum et astronomum de situ Cracoviae” (Celtis 1513). For Celtis' view on Europe and the Jagiellonian Monarchy, cf. Piechocki 2019 (especially Chapter 1, 26–67).
Crosnensis wrote in 1512 that Jove “turned his eyes to the Sarmatian lands that the Parrhasian Bear bounds with hard ice” (“Parrhasis Ursa,” i.e., *Ursa Maior*, the ‘Great Bear,’ or, in English, ‘Big Dipper’; Crosnensis 1999, 62, v. 54). His disciple, Ioannes Dantiscus, wrote on the same occasion (in 1512) that Zygmunt’s father, “the famous King Casimir ruled in the lands of Arctic Bears” (“Arctois [...] in oris,” 84, v. 67). Elsewhere in the epithalamium of 1512, the same author wrote that Venus rode in her chariot from Cyprus “in the direction of the Hyperborean Mountains, the Aquilonian summits” (“Versus Hyperboreos, Aquilonia culmina, montes,” 90, v. 174). Eobanus Hessus noted that the Sarmatians were neighbors to peoples that “dwell in the high steppes along the snowy Don”15 (“Ad Tanaim nivalem,” 116, v. 83), and the already mentioned Laurentius Corvinus placed Silesia, which bordered with Poland, “underneath Corona Borealis [...] and the twin Septentrion” (Corvinus 1999, 202, v. 10).

All these poems are abundantly encrusted with toponyms and ethnonyms. The most recurrent are Cracow and Vistula. But there is also the Don (*Tanais*), the Dnieper (*Borysthenes*), Muscovy (*Moscovia*), Poland (*Polonia*), Ruthenia (*Ruthena Leopolis*, i.e., contemporary Lviv), Sarmatia, Scythia (“Scythicis [...] in Oris”), and Tartaria (“Tartaris [...] tellus”). In order to render these names more meaningful to the contemporary sixteenth-century readers, it was necessary to join them with a well-known system of terminology. In other words, they had to be linked to the sixteenth-century geographical knowledge. This could be achieved either with the use of internal chorography of the Kingdom of Poland or by sketching its external geographical context.

Poetical Chorographies in the Epithalamia

Short chorographies of Zygmunt’s monarchy appear in five epithalamia; they are applied by Hessus, Velius, Dantiscus and twice by Cricius. It is also possible that an abridged chorography was included in the non-extant epithalamia by Calcagninus and Balbus, because they both had a keen interest in geography. As to the surviving texts, the main reference points were the Vistula and other

rivers, as well as the Carpathians and the Baltic Sea. Velius describes Poland in the following way:\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Parrhasis e coelo qua despicit Ursa patentes}
\textit{Sarmatiae campos, qua carulus arva pererrat}
\textit{Vistula, arenosoque intrat Mare Baltheon aveo}
\textit{Usque ad Carpathii montis iuga celsa nivosi.}
\textit{Et latos Scythiae fines Tanaimque remotum}
\textit{Rex populis bello, rex optimus, optimus idem}
\textit{Arte togae, sceptris ac legibus imperat aquis.} (Velius 1522, b2)
\end{quote}

The Parrhasian Bear [i. e., \textit{Ursa maior}] looks from the sky / On the land where the fields of Sarmatia lie, where the blue / Vistula meanders among the fields and flows to the Baltic Sea with its sandy bed / And extends to the high snowy ridges of the Carpathian Mountains. / The best of kings, the king / Who governs the extensive borders of Scythia and the remote river Don / By war, diplomacy, his dignity and law.

The most comprehensive representation of Poland’s geographical context is to be found in the already mentioned “Ad Famam” by Corvinus, though he was not the first poet to apply this means of contextualizing Poland; Eoban Koch Hessus had used geography in that way in his “Encomion nuptiale” already in 1512. But while Corvinus used the enumeration technique, simply listing all European countries in Poland’s proximity, Hessus reached for metonymy, enumerating legates and guests who came to the wedding, their countries mentioned by way of identifying them. Thus Hessus lists the delegation of the Teutonic Order (“Teutons”) “clad in mail and heavy armour,”\textsuperscript{17} the Silesians, especially good in using weapons, Moravians who are famous for their good wine, “the combative

\textsuperscript{16} It is possible that Velius borrowed this way of describing Poland from Conradus Celtis’ “Elegy to the Vistula River Describing Its Sources and Mouth, and also on Bisons and Bison-Hunting” (elegy I 15, Celtis 1502).

\textsuperscript{17} All translations of Hessus’ epithalamium by Harry Vredeveld (Hessus 2008, 27). The word “Teuton” was translated by Vredeveld as “the Germans.” However, it is highly probable that Hessus put the representatives of the Teutonic the following separate books were. His patron, the bishop of Pomesania Job von Dobeneck, who attended the wedding as a representative of the Teutonic Order, is called in v. 229 “Teutonicae ductor fortissime militiae” [“a powerful Commander of the Teutonic Order”] (Trans. Harry Vredeveld).
Hungarians laden with Pannonian gold,” “the formerly loyal Bohemians who are expert at fighting in the German style,” the Ruthenians, “their faces raw from the cold climate back home,”18 the Livonians “hoary with Scythian snow, who had hurried here from the Baltic Sea,” as well as people “who live along the deep Strait of Kerch” (i.e., the inhabitants of the Bosphorus coasts), meaning the legates of the Ottoman Empire, and finally “men who drink the frigid waters of the billowy Don, men who dwell by the Sea of Azov and the Hebrus River,” by which Hessus probably denotes the representatives of the Khanate of Crimea:

Venerat et gravibus cataphrattus Teuton in armis,
Precipue armipotens quos misit Slesia tellus,
Slesia confini nimium vicina Polono
Et quos laudato genera Moravia Baccho.
Magnanimi venere duces non unus et alter,
Sed pluribus; numerare piget, nec forte necesse est.
Pannonico pugnax venit gravis Ungarus auro
Regalem patriiis nuptam comitatus ab oris.
Venit et Herciniae, quondam bonus, Sylvae,
Teutonico doctus ritu pugnare Bohemus
Oraque frigoribus rigidi squalentia Russi
Sarmaticoque ruens Pannosus ab aequore lipo
Venerat et Scythica canus nive. Venit et alti
Accola Bosphoreos et qui vada frigora potat
Undosi Tanais, iuxta Maeotin et Hebrum,
Et quot praeterea populos numerare molestum est.

This is not a complete enumeration of the “nations” and international guests who attended the wedding, and the aim of this list is rather to offer a geopolitical context for Zygmunt’s monarchy.19

18 Vredeveld translates Russi as “Russians” (i.e., Muscovites). However, in this context the word “Russi” refers rather to the Ruthenian inhabitants of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania than to the Muscovites. Actually, the magnates from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (among them certainly the Orthodox nobles) participated in the wedding. Cf. «Magnates item Regni utriusque status et sexus […] fueret.» [“There were magnates of the Kingdom of both state and sex.”] (Decius 1901, 58).
19 Decius (1901, 56–58) offers such a list in his chronicle published in 1521 (The Book of the Times of Sigismund). Elsewhere in his epithalamium (v. 218–280) Hessus lists the most important representatives of the
Six years later, in 1518, Hessus’ model was used by Ioannes Dantiscus, who combined enumerative mapping with metonymy:

Adveniunt omni vicini ex parte, remoti
Totque duces et tot turmatim denique gentes,
Quas Albis latebrosus et unda binominis
Histri,
Piscosus Viadrus, vagus Istulaque alluit
et quas
Ripa procul magni sinuosa Borysthenis ambit,
Quae Phasim Tanaimque bibunt fluctusque
pererrant
Euxinos et quae pelagus Glaciale frequentant,
(\textit{Dantiscus} 1999b, 174f., v. 602–608)

Finally, all close neighbours, princes from distant Countries and delegations of many peoples come in groups: From Albis [the river Elbe] meandering in hiding, from the waves for the Hister with its two names [Danube], From the Viadrus [Odra] rich in fish, from the wandering current of the Istula [Vistula], And from the far away banks of the winding and great Borysthenes [Dnieper]. They come who drink the waters of Phasis and Thanais [Don], Who wander on the waves of the Euxine Sea [the Black Sea], and those who travel the Glacial Sea.

The quoted geographical descriptions from the epithalamia by Hessus, Corvinus, and Dantiscus have one thing in common: without familiarity with the geographical terms used, it would be as difficult to understand them in the sixteenth century as it is in the twenty-first. When Hessus and Dantiscus list Livonians, Scythia, Hister, Viadrus, Phasis, Borysthenes, and Thanais, they use a code available only to well-educated humanists, thus posing a double challenge to the reader. First, he or she must display a certain familiarity with ancient geographical treatises, notably Ptolemy, which was common knowledge among the humanists of the early sixteenth century. Apart from Ptolemy’s treatise, six editions of which existed by 1518, there were also commentaries and abridged versions, for example, Corvinus’ ‘\textit{Cosmographia}’ (Corvinus Church, archbishops and bishops. This list seems to have another function than the enumeration of peoples or nations (cf. the interpretation by Marion Rutz in her contribution to this thematic cluster).
Furthermore, since the 1490s, Ptolemy’s treatise was the subject of lectures at the University of Cracow, meaning that its alumni, e.g., Dantiscus, were almost certainly familiar with it.

Second, the reader needs a good orientation in the contemporary sixteenth-century geography of Sarmatia and Scythia, that is—using modern terminology—Central and Eastern Europe. The humanists who produced the wedding poems in 1512 and 1518 would have had access to a relatively small number of texts that described political relations in this part of Europe. They included, among others, Liber chronicorum published by Hartmann Schedel in 1493 and the treatise De Europa by Enea Silvio Piccolomini (Schedel 1493, 168–170; Piccolomini 1501, Aii v.–Bii; Piccolomini 2013, 138–148). The first was known to Corvinus, who refers to it in his Cosmographia (Corvinus 1496, a2–a5), while an abridged version of the latter featured in a study by a professor at the University of Cracow, Jan of Stobnica, entitled Introductio in Ptolemei Cosmographiam [Introduction to Ptolemy’s Cosmography], first published in Cracow in 1512 (Jan of Stobnica 1512). There were also a number of poems, including elegies by Celtis and Philippus Callimachus,20 available both in print and manuscript copies, that told the geography of Sarmatia.

Jagiellonian Epithalamia as tabulae modernae

But the real novelty in the epithalamia of 1512 and 1518 are the references to contemporary sixteenth-century cartography. In order to fully understand how geography works in these and other poems written in Cracow in the early sixteenth century, it is indispensable to be cartographically literate, use cartographic reason, and cartographic imagination (cf. Piatti 2017, 45–46). Cartographic imagination and cartographic literacy are the ability to read and understand a map, and an intellectual capability which allows us to imagine a three-dimensional world with the aid of such two-dimensional models (Jacob 1999, 24–25, 46–49).

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, cartographic literacy and imagination were not yet common. For a twenty-first-century

20 Callimachus, alias Filippo Buonaccorsi (1437–1496), was an Italian humanist. He was accused of taking part in a plot against Pope Paul II (1468) and had to flee Rome. In 1470 he found shelter in Poland. There he first became a teacher of King Kazimierz IV Jagiellon’s sons and then worked in the Polish chancery as a diplomat. He died in Cracow.
reader, using a map and a dictionary of geographical names is a rather simple task, but in the early sixteenth century, only few had access to such instruments, which were used almost exclusively by the educated and the ruling elites. All poets who wrote the epithalamia for Zygmunt’s weddings belonged to these groups. For them, a map was a cutting-edge device and an inspiration, which is referred to as the “cartographic impulse” in studies on the history of cartography (Alpers 1987, 51–96; Pickles 2004, 104; Jacob 2006, 19; Conley 2007, 402). The importance of this impulse is difficult to overestimate as it changed the way humanists thought about themselves, their space and place in the world (Conley 1997, 1–2; Brotton 1998, 180; Padrón 2004, 39–40; Woodward 2007, 3–8).

This cartographic revolution was triggered by the discovery and publication of the Geography by Claudius Ptolemy (Babicz 1994, 50–69; Dilke 1987, 177–200; Jones 2012, 109–128). Ptolemy demonstrated how a map should be drawn and how it works based on mathematical principles. What is more, editions of his treatise included small and large-scale maps so that humanists could view the surface of the Earth in an utterly different manner than before. With one glance, they were able to grasp the whole of it but also change perspectives, zoom in and out. This allowed them to understand the relationship between geographical locations in various new ways, but also to combine maps with non-cartographic texts, like poetry.

Humanists began to use maps to aid the interpretation of ancient and modern texts. Maps drawn according to Ptolemy and with the use of a mathematical grid were combined with text (understood as a linear sequence of words). The already mentioned book by Matthias of Miechów, a historian and geographer at the University of Cracow, is a good example. In 1517, he issued the Tractatus de duabus Sarmatiis, where he negated some of Ptolemy’s findings (Matthias de Miechów [Maciej Miechowita] 1517; cf. Ulewicz 1950, 41–42; Buczek 1963, 23, 27; Bagrow 1975, 48–51; Piechocki 2015, 76–96; Piechocki 2019, 79–87). More importantly, we know that

Ptolemy explained two things. First, how to render the surface of a sphere on a two-dimensional surface of plane. To do so, he invented the equidistant conic projection. Second, on his map Ptolemy used a mathematical grid. The grid enabled him to establish coordinates (longitude and latitude) of any city, mountain, river, lake, etc. Books 2–8 of the Geography contain ca. 8,100 locations.
he also drew maps to illustrate his theses. The only extant map of this type was printed in 1538 by Sebastian Münster (Solinus 1538, 48, 181; Bagrow 1975: 51; Niedźwiedź 2019: 71). It illustrates Matthias’ research, proving that the three rivers Daugava, Dnieper, and Volga, have independent sources. [Fig. 2] This is an example of how the process of combining a map and a text could have also been reversed. The map as a medium began to be an inspiration for scientific texts as well as for poetry and rhetorical prose.

Maps and geographical treatises were also an inspiration for at least some of the epithalamia (cf. Appendix). If we take a closer look at the toponymy in Hessus (1999), Dantiscus (1999a, 1999b), Criccius (1999a, 1999b), Velius (1522), and Corvinus (1999, 2001),
their engagement with ancient geographical texts such as Pliny, Solinus, and Tacitus is clear, with Ptolemy and his maps being the most influential. Plausibly, some of these authors could have come across maps drawn by their contemporary cartographers as well. It is clear from the works of Corvinus and the abovementioned manual by Jan of Stobnica that they had access to treatises and maps by Martin Waldseemüller from 1507 and 1513 as well as to cartographic works by Marco Beneventano and Bernard Wapowski produced in 1507 (Birkenmajer 1901, 21–29).

Waldseemüller and Beneventano not only reissued Ptolemy’s Geography but also added to their 1507 and 1513 editions sets of tabulae modernae: the “new” or “contemporary maps.” In fact, they were not completely new, because Waldseemüller and Beneven-
tano charted new content based on Ptolemy’s maps. [Fig. 3] Thus, their maps become hybrids combining ancient and contemporary names, old and new geographical knowledge.

The same phenomenon appears in epithalamia from the beginning of the century (cf. Appendix). Muscovites appear together with Scythians, Poles with Gethi, the Riphean Mountains with Lithuania, etc., which suggests the extent to which epithalamia were a reflection of the contemporary geography and cartography. This interspersing of ancient and contemporary sources and the distinct inspiration drawn from Ptolemy’s maps are also visible in poems commemorating the victory over the Muscovite forces in the battle of Orsha, particularly in a poem by Bernard Wapowski from 1515. This is also the case with Hieronymus Balbus’ texts. Even though his epithalamium from 1518 has not been preserved, his extant writings reveal his interest in geography. In De rebus Turcicis liber [A Book about Turkish Affairs] from 1526, he included a detailed description of Sarmatia, in which he refers to Solinus, Tacitus, and Ptolemy. With regards to later sources, Balbus considered Paolo Giovio’s account on Muscovy as particularly significant (Giovio 1525, Balbus 1526, g–g v.). This report was accompanied by the first map of Russia, which was developed in a manuscript version by Battista Agnese and printed in 1525 (Agnese, Giovio 1525; Bellingeri, Milanesi 2020, 47–51). It is quite possible that Balbus was familiar with it.

The Jagiellonian Monarchy on the New Representations of the Globe

Corvinus and Dantiscus used geography creatively for the purposes of imagining the translatio studiorum. According to them, Poland and Lithuania were remote northern countries, where liberal arts were not yet a Sarmatian strength. Another author, Nicolaus Hussovianus (Mikołaj Hussowski), elaborated on that subject in Carmen

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22 Several poems about the battle of Orsha were published in Cracow. They were reissued in Rome in 1515 as Carmina de memorabili cede Scismaticorum Moscoviorum... [Poems about the Memorable Defeat of the Muscovian Schismatics]. The volume contains works by Franciscus Tranquillus Andronicus (Fran Trankvil Andreis), Ioannes Dantiscus, Andreas Cricius, Jan Łaski, Jacobus Pisonis (Jacob Piso), Christoph Suchten, and Bernard Wapowski (cf. Nowak-Dłużewski 1966, 49–59; Piechocki 2019, 92).
de bisonte [Poem on the Bison] from 1523 (Hussovianus 1523, [A4–A4 v.]), revealing that in his youth he (or at least his poetic alter ego) practiced hunting bison rather than writing. However, according to Corvinus and Dantiscus, the arrival of Bona in Cracow introduced the Ausonian (Italian) muses to the capital city of Poland. To put it differently, arts practiced in Italy had crossed the Alps and settled under the cold Great Bear. Poland was in this way included into the cultural world of the South and its ancient past.

Several decades later, it would turn out that Dantiscus’ metaphors rendered the process of re-mapping of Europe and the world quite accurately. Globes, maps, and atlases produced in the second half of the sixteenth century (Ortelius 1570; Lafreri 1575; Mercator 1595) exhibit Poland (Polonia) and its capital Cracow as major places in Europe. The epithalamia written to celebrate Zygmunt’s marriages—to both Barbara Zápolya and Bona Sforza—had their share in this mapping. They are a testimony to the negotiations conducted between ancient texts, the personal first-hand knowledge and experience of their authors, and maps. These negotiations were intended to define Poland and Cracow as a specific place.

This is particularly explicit in Laurentius Corvinus’ “Ad Famam,” with which I began my analysis. We remember that Fama flies over Europe and arrives in Spain. This is far from the end, however. In Spain, Corvinus commands her to change her wings to a ship and embark to praise the name of Zygmunt I in the New World:

Audax hesperium conscende in navibus aequor
Praeter et Herculeam Calpen, post torrida Cancri
Brachia retrogradi, atque expertem frigoris orbem,
Naviga ad insignem stellis radiantibus aram,
Donec ad oppositi nobis conquerteris astrum
Segne poli. Hinc Indum te caerula ducat in aequor
Navis, ad extremas Bromii patris usque columnas.
(Corvinus 2001, 252–255, v. 35–41; cf. also Niedźwiedź 2001)

Sail to the western seas with confidence. / Pass the Pillars of Hercules [the Rock of Gibraltar], then the torrid arms of a backwards-walking Cancer / And the lands seasoned by frost. / Sail under the bright beams of the great constellation of the Altar, / Until you reach the motionless star / Of the sky on the opposite side of the Earth. Thence, let the ship take you to the Indian seas, / Still to the farthest borders of Bromius’ father [i. e., Bacchus].
As we can see, two distant areas meet in the ending of Corvinus’ poem, but one of them, India, is absent from Ptolemy’s maps. The other is indeed marked on the Ptolemean map of Sarmatia, but the map itself is inconsistent with the knowledge about Poland and its neighboring countries at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Therefore, Corvinus put both these areas on the modern map of the world, similarly to how Waldseemüller defined America in 1507 and Beneventano Poland in the same year. In the first thirty years of the sixteenth century, the process of placing Poland on the map of Europe and the World was done in a similar manner by other humanists in Cracow. Among them was Bernard Wapowski, who in 1526 published his first map of the territories belonging to the Kingdom of Poland and a part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the printing house of Florian Ungler: *Mappa in qua illustrantur ditiones Regni Poloniae ac Magni Ducatus Lithuaniae pars* [Fig. 4]—a map on which the dominions of the Polish Kingdom and a part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania are illustrated (Wapowski 1939; Buczek 1939; Buczek 1963, 23–32).

**Conclusion**

The epithalamia of 1512 and 1518 are primarily comments on two important political events, the marriages of one of the most powerful monarchs of Europe at that time, Zygmunt I the Old. Geography is a part of the propaganda message contained in these poems. Their authors and some of their political patrons apparently attached great importance to spatial discourse. There is no concrete evidence that the ruler himself was interested in geography. However, some of his officials, especially those from the royal chancery, tried to use geographical discourse in political purposes. These purposes were different, for example, for Hessus and Dantiscus, but the mode of using geography was very similar. This combination of political propaganda and scientific knowledge clearly reflects Michel Foucault’s model of close relationship between power and knowledge (cf. Harley 1991, 52–60, 71–73). The geographical knowledge mentioned above reflects an attempt at real and symbolic control over space.

The analysis of the poetic language of these epithalamia leads to the following conclusions:
1. All analyzed poems contain many toponyms and ethnonyms. They usually aim to locate the Polish-Lithuanian monarchy (Cricius, Crosnensis, and Dantiscus) or/and surrounding countries (Dantiscus, Hessus, and Velius). The use of geography in such official texts as epithalamia was a new and fashionable literary device.

2. The use of names of places and peoples reflects changes in the contemporary understanding of space. The authors of the epithalamia of 1512 and 1518 disseminate or even produce a new geographical knowledge. This new knowledge is also a form of co-
testation of already existing and common geographical images of this part of Europe. The poets offering this “counter-mapping” question especially some information transmitted in Ptolemy’s Geography and the Ptolemaic tradition. The most important change is the introducing names of places and peoples from Sarmatia Europaea unknown to Ptolemy and his modern editors.

3. Some of the texts discussed here (by Cricius, Crosnensis, Dantiscus, and Velius) represent the power and the location of the Polish-Lithuanian monarchy, and show the fact that it was a vast territory. At the same time, an appropriate arrangement creates a political and geographical context for the authority of the Polish king. It can be regarded as a panegyric exaggeration, but the main purpose of praising the monarch and his power was to express the dynastic aspirations of the Jagiellonians and imperial aspirations of the political and cultural elites of Poland-Lithuania at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The geographical discourse was part of this policy.

4. The authors of epithalamia developed a new language with which it was possible to speak about the geography of this part of Europe. They adapted ancient topoi or created new ones. With their help, Poland, Lithuania, and Ruthenia (roughly speaking, today’s Belarus and Ukraine) were given specific locations on the map of Europe and the world. They became a fixed part of a newly defined geographical system/order, involving physical, political, and symbolic geography. This three-dimensional geographical definition of the Polish-Lithuanian monarchy and the accompanying topoi were used by successive generations of many Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian poets until the nineteenth century.

5. In addition to ancient geographical and ethnic names, sixteenth-century denominations appear in the epithalamia. The juxtaposition of new toponyms, hydronyms, and ethnonyms in parallel with the ancient ones resembles the actions of the then cartographers (Waldseemüller, Beneventano and others) who created tabulae modernae [contemporary maps]. The Cracow epithalamia from 1512 and 1518, the epinicia from 1514 and 1515 as well as epic poems from the 1520s are poetic equivalents of such contemporary maps. They can, therefore, be called poeticae tabulae modernae.

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23 The unique copy of the map (Cracovia: Florian Ungler 1526) burnt on September 2, 1944 in the Central Archives of Historical Records, Warsaw. Thus, the reproduction in Buczek is all that remains.


Die jagiellonischen Epithalamia und das neue geographische Wissen

Appendix

A list of selected geographical names on early maps, in geographical treatises and epithalamia written in 1512 and 1518. Treatises and maps by ancient (Ptolemaeus, Solinus, Mela) and Renaissance geographers (Piccolomini, Münzer/Schedel, Corvinus, Waldseemüller and Beneventano/Wapowski) influenced the epithalamia. Ancient and modern names are laid out like on the *tabulae modernae* (modern maps) published in the early sixteenth century.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contemporary Name (English)</th>
<th>Ptolemaeus 1482</th>
<th>Münzer 1493</th>
<th>Corvinus 1496</th>
<th>Piccolomini 1501</th>
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<th>Beneventano/Wapowski map 1513</th>
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Jagiellonian Epithalamia and New Geographical Knowledge

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**Note:** The table above represents a partial list of contemporary names and maps, focusing on the geographical knowledge of the region. The names are translated from Latin to English, and the table delineates the geographical regions and their corresponding names and maps from the 15th to 16th centuries.
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<th>Contemporary Name (English)</th>
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<th>Corvinus 1496</th>
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<th>Waldseemüller map 1513</th>
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208584_Slavische-Philologie-2-2020.indb   370