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Two Polish Renaissance Elegiac Cycles (by Klemens Janicki and Jan Kochanowski) in the Light of the Contemporary European Practice

There were two eminent elegiac cycles written in 16th century Poland: *Tristia* (ed. 1542) by Klemens Janicki (Janicius) and *Elegiarum libri quattuor* (ed. 1584) by Jan Kochanowski (preceded by its hand-written version: *Elegiarum libri duo* from before 1562). Janicki (1516–1543) was generally regarded as the best Polish poet writing in Latin since the times of M.K. Sarbiewski. Kochanowski (1530–1584), in turn, is the most distinguished poet of early modern Slavic culture, who, having encountered Polish literature almost *in cunabulis* (according to the testimonies which have been preserved), set in motion the development of the Polish literary language. He was creating this modern literary language according to the Renaissance principle of *imitatio antiquorum*, and led our literature to the higher European level. Therefore, these two names can be regarded as those which stand out amongst Polish Renaissance elegy creators, i.e. the first creators of the clearly humanistic elegies in excellent Latin, according to the classical patterns.¹

The height of the interest given by classical philologists in the main to Janicius's oeuvre occurred at the turn of 19th and 20th centuries.² Contrasted with the works of ancient poets, evaluated according to post-Romantic criteria, *Tristia* was considered to be an autogenous piece of art, which, apart from its poetic beauty, was surprising in its originality and sincerity of autobiographical expression. The Latin writings of Kochanowski, however, were deemed to be lesser than Klemens's poetic achievements; this opinion, yet not grounded in any detailed compara-

¹ On the very beginnings of Renaissance literature in Poland see, in the same volume, an article by Tadeusz Ulewicz, "The Earliest Harbingers of Polish Humanism in the Golden Autumn of the Jagiellonian Middle Ages", 59–74.

² The most important work is Ludwik Ćwikliński, *Klemens Janicki, poeta uwieńczony (1516–1543)* [A Poet Laureate] (Kraków: PAU, 1893).

tive analysis, caused an underestimation of Kochanowski's Latin texts. *Tristia* by Janicki were at the same time supposed to be the best lyrical collection before the great Polish work by Kochanowski.

An appropriate evaluation of the works of many Neo-Latin writers is rendered extremely difficult due to the shortage or even a complete lack of critical publications; although these days we can observe a great new interest in Kochanowski's Latin works, evidenced by several important studies and new editions. Janicki's *Complete Works*,³ published in 1966, do not meet the criteria of an academic critical edition, whereas the edition from 1884⁴ of Kochanowski's Latin texts (criticised already from the moment of publication) was in use as the most modern one for much longer than one hundred years. The great progress in studies on Kochanowski connected with the anniversary of his birth in the thirties of the 20th century (a new critical edition was also planned at that time) was definitely stopped by the Second World War. In effect, the preparations of the next edition were begun only after one hundred years. But a magnificent edition of *Complete Works*⁵ by the Father of Polish learned poetry, as Kochanowski was known, which was started at the beginning of 1980s and furnished with facsimiles, transcripts and rich criticism, yet stagnated during the preparation of the Polish texts. It had to wait until the last year (2013) for a new big grant from the National Programme for the Development of Humanities to start again.

Meanwhile a first, hand-written version of the collection of the elegies was published by Zofia Głombiowska in *Humanistica Lovaniensia* in 1978 (vol. XXVII). This publication, hardly available in Poland, came almost unnoticed by European Neo-Latin scholars. After the next thirty years, Głombiowska being one of the most important researchers of Kochanowski's output, prepared a critical edition of all his Latin works.⁶ This edition contains photocopies of first editions and manuscripts with transcription, and *index verborum*, and large commentary mostly concerning the classical sources; Polish translations seems not to be planed.

³ K. Janicki, *Carmina. Dzieła wszystkie*, ed. and introduction J. Krókowski and J. Masdorf, transl. E. Jędrkiewicz, Biblioteka Pisarzy Polskich series B no. 15 (Wrocław: Ossolineum-PAN, 1966). Janicki's works are quoted from this edition.

⁴ *Dzieła wszystkie. Wydanie pomnikowe*, ed. J. Przyborowski, transl. T. Krasnosielski, vol. 3 (Warszawa: Drukarnia Jerzego Jeżyńskiego, 1884).

⁵ *Dzieła wszystkie. Wydanie sejmowe*, supervising editor: J. Woronczak, Biblioteka Pisarzy Polskich series B, no. 24 (Wrocław: Ossolineum, from 1983).

⁶ J. Kochanowski, *Carmina Latina. Poezja łacińska*. Pars I: *Imago phototypica-transcriptio*. Pars II: *Index verborum et formarum*, Pars III: *Commentarius*, edited by Z. Głombiowska (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2008, 2013).

There was also popular edition, by W. Walecki,⁷ based on the 1884's edition (both transcription and translations) with very basic footnotes.

Currently being developed, as part of the Library of Old Polish and Neo-Latin Literature,⁸ is an Internet edition of the Latin writings of Kochanowski's literary heritage, which seems to have, as it might be expected, a chance to be accessible to a wider audience. This edition includes the photocopies of the first publications and manuscripts, transcripts, new translations into Polish and critical commentary: a collection of comparative studies is also released there.⁹ Such an electronic publication may be used both by Polish readers, for example students or academics, and by foreign scholars (the site is intended to be bilingual – Polish and English).

Another critical edition with a large commentary (containing classical and Neo-Latin sources) is prepared now as a PhD thesis by Francesco Cabras at the University of Milan, Sezione di Slavistica e Ugrofennistica, and in cooperation with the Department of Polish Studies, Jagiellonian University in Cracow.

As today when comparative studies are becoming more and more significant in improving the knowledge concerning modern authors of national literatures, especially those writing in Latin, their popularization gains special importance, as it provides readers of other languages, either in Europe or the New World, who are able to bring their own perspective to the text. And such literature written in a universal language allows such an opportunity for a worldwide audience. What is more, Latin literature is practically the only part of old Polish literature easily available to a world audience, and today, paradoxically, this literature may become an emissary of our nation's centuries' old culture.¹⁰

⁷ I. Cochanovius, *Pisma łacińskie*, ed. W. Walecki (Kraków: Collegium Columbinum, 2008).

⁸ Website: <http://neolatina.bj.uj.edu.pl> (accessed May 5, 2014). This project supervised by the Author is conducted by a group of scholars associated with the Renaissance Literature Lab, which is part of the Department of Polish Studies at the Jagiellonian University. The website will gradually be developed.

⁹ *Twórczość Jana Kochanowskiego w kontekście nowołacińskiej literatury europejskiej i polskiej* [The Works of Jan Kochanowski in the Context of Polish and European Neo-Latin Literature], ed. G. Urban-Godziek, Kraków, 2010, 136 (<http://neolatina.bj.uj.edu.pl/main/reports.html>) (accessed May 23, 2014). Those and the other articles are just published in the quarterly *Terminus*, no. 1 and 2 from 2014 (www.ejournals.eu/Terminus).

¹⁰ As to complete this introductory note to my article, I will mention two new books showing Kochanowski's poetry in the light of humanistic literature and culture. These are: Jörg Schulte's, *Jan Kochanowski i Renesans Europejski. Osiem studiów* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Neriton-Uniwersytet Opolski, 2012) – the first publication in German: *Jan Kochanowski und die europäische Renaissance: Acht Studien* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011); and Mirosław Lenart's, *Patavium, Pava, Padwa. Tło kulturowe pobytu Jana Kocha-*

All this also concerns the genre which is of particular interest in this article. The location of the Polish elegy in a wider, universal context of humanistic European poetry, throws new light on the elegy and demonstrates its place in the European Renaissance – it also provides the readers with ready-made tools for its description: phenomena determined by scholars in other countries. The research into humanistic elegy created within the Polish culture has allowed it to be stated that this elegy fits into the major trends of European practice and the genealogical understanding of the genre.¹¹

Elegy is a hybrid creation which operates at the boundary of literary genres. At each stage of its history, elegy looked completely different, had different functions and was interpreted differently. Renaissance Humanists had two contradictory concepts concerning elegy. The first is the traditional theory, coming from the Alexandrian period, which connects the beginning of elegy with mourning lamentation – in addition to a lack of any traces of Greek archaic funeral elegies. The second is the practice of Roman love elegy. This contradiction was hard for writers who wanted to imitate the Roman examples, and yet to respect the theorists – Horace in particular. His enigmatic statement from *The Epistle to the Pisones* (due to a lack of other sources) was treated as a definition of an elegy. The only problem was its interpretation:

Versibus impariter iunctis querimonia primum,
Post etiam inclusa est voti sententia compos;
Quis tamen exiguos elegos emiseric auctor,
Grammatici certant et adhuc sub iudice lis est; (*Ars Poetica* 75–78).

Today, it is believed that this statement does not concern so much elegies as elegiac distich and the epitaphs expressed in it (*querimonia* – ‘sorrows’) as well as votive epigrams (*voti sententia compos* – ‘the words of fulfilled wishes’). As for elegy, the text says only that it is smaller and less significant than the above-mentioned epos and that it has an unknown origin.¹² In past centuries, both the above-named *querimonia*

nowskiego na terytorium Republiki Weneckiej [The Cultural Background of Jan Kochanowski’s Stay on the Territory of the Republic of Venice] (Warszawa: IBL PAN, 2013).

¹¹ The findings presented below are summarized in the research discussed in my book. See G. Urban-Godziek, *Elegia renesansowa. Przemiany gatunku w Polsce i w Europie* [Renaissance Elegy. Transformations of a Genre in Poland and Europe] (Kraków: Universitas, 2005).

¹² See e.g. J.J. Donohue, *The Theory of Literary Kinds: Ancient Classifications of Literature*, vol. II, chapter IV (Dubuque: Loras College Press, 1943), 91–96.

and *voti sententia compos* used to refer to the subject matter of elegy. An attempt to connect theory with practice was seen in the formula: *querimonia amantium*, which was created as early as in the Middle Ages. However, its understanding as a piece of love suffering, the pain of non-fulfilment or the permanent loss of a beloved one, became grounded in 16th century. This was, to a large degree, caused by a Petrarchian influence taking hold within Latin poetry. Thus, Julius Cesar Scaliger, developed his theory as a result of this influence.¹³

Scaliger presented his contemplation of elegy in Chapter 50, Book I, and then in Chapter 125 (in Deitz's edition 124), Book III of *Poetices libri septem*. Once the funeral origin of the genre is assumed, further changes in the subject matter can be explained by the similarity of the emotional states accompanying mourning and love: a lover frequently laments and mourns. The feeling of love may also be perceived in a similar manner to death, because, if a lover loses his senses, he dies of desire, as it is evidenced in mythology ("Nam et frequens conquestio in amoribus et verissima mors, quae a nobis amentissimis amentissimo atque ingratisimo sexui vivitur"¹⁴). Later on, Scaliger modified this theory, stating that elegy was applied to "ad amantium commiserations,"¹⁵ which was a lamentful calling at the door of the beloved: "Vox est tragica ελελευ, qua ad amicarum fores usos fuisse priscos arbitror." Thus paraclausithyron can be seen as the oldest form of elegy. This primary function was then extended in order to describe also the fulfilment of desire – as if to thank the song for the accomplishment of its task. "Voti deinde composites, quasi eiusmodi carmini gratiam referrent, etiam secundiorem illam fortunam celebrarunt."

A general characteristics of such an understanding of elegy's task is evidenced by the literary practice of 15th and 16th century writers. The examples given can be seen in three elegiac cycles well known amongst and of significance within European Neo-Latin poetry. Of these, the most expressive according to Ludwig – is the literary work of Janus Secundus Hagiensis (1511–1536). The edition of his *Julia monobyblos* (1541) preceded, by two decades, the publication of Scaliger's *Poetica* (1561). Both these extremely popular and influential works changed the under-

¹³ The genre interpretation by Scaliger and its influence upon the practice of the genre is discussed in W. Ludwig, "Petrus Lotichius Secundus and the Roman Elegists: Prolegomena to a Study of Neo-Latin Elegy," in *Classical Influences on European Culture A.D. 1500–1700*, ed. R.R. Bolgar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

¹⁴ J.C. Scaliger, *Poetices libri septem, Sieben Bücher über die Dichtkunst*, Band I, Buch 1 und 2, Herausgegeben, übersetzt, eingeleitet und erläutert von L. Deitz (Stuttgart-Bad Constatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1994), 416.

¹⁵ Op. cit., Band III, Buch 3 und 4, 201.

standing of the genre. Elegy was then supposed to express the emotional states of a lover, firstly vexed by unfulfilled passion (*querimonia, vota* – i.e. desires), and then joyful with the happiness of fulfilment (*voti sententia compos*). The above criteria (plus, certainly, the example of Roman elegy writers) allowed for the creation of a pattern of the development of feeling, which is usually a compositional core of the elegiac cycle. Numerous variations were possible within this pattern.

In Secundus's book, a mocking attitude towards the topic of the work and its subject can be sensed; the initial elegies within the cycle are a journal of the character's efforts to win his beloved: they praise the love which is expected and which is promised. The texts which follow are lamentations and complaints about the rival who stole the girl from him. In the tenth elegy, there is an unexpected fulfilment – yet this is only in a dream. The elegy which closes the cycle is – in spite of the disappointment experienced – in praise of the gods of love. The poet, having come to terms with his experience, looks upon love as on a literary subject, which will provide him with immortality. Literary fulfilment turns out to be the true fulfilment of love.

A different manner of constructing the cycle and the interpretation of the subject matter can be demonstrated in the work of Giovanni Pontano (1429–1503). His *De amore coniugali* is an attempt to adapt a Roman love elegy to the Christian morality and customs of his contemporaries, being also a model of marital and paternal love. Pontano's cycle, whose main character is his wife Ariadna, preserves the above-described elegiac dynamics of the development and progress of the feeling for a woman. The period of courtship and engagement is a desire full of hope. The end of such expectations and the fulfilment of love is found in the wedding, shared happiness, the birth of children (the cycle also contains *naeniae* – lullabies for a son), family expeditions to natural settings, a letter concerning his daughters' upbringing and epithalamia for their weddings. Lamentations are also present in the cycle: *querimonia* contain numerous poems full of longing and anxiety written during long wartime partings. Unjustified fears of his wife's infidelity in the initial years of wartime absences, then great pain at his permanent parting from his beloved wife, who, even after her death, is the addressee of the poetic confessions. Elegiac texts from other collections, such as *Tumuli, Urania, Iambici, Eclogae* complete the poetic love cycle written for his wife and children.

What is interesting, this – as it can be called – Horacian-Scaligerian paradigm of interpretation of the genre of elegy is also seen in cycles which subject matter does not belong to *amores*. *Elegiarum libri tres* written by a German, Petrus Lotichius Secundus (1528–1560), are centred around a longing for the lost motherland and are modeled upon

Ovid's exile poetry. However, the pattern of development of the feeling is the same. Lotichius's phraseology is borrowed to some extent from Ovid's, yet Horace's terminology occurs to a significant extent as noted (Ludwig) in the interpretation produced by Scaliger. Lotichius's *vota* refer not to winning a woman but to the motherland – a real and a literary version, where the desired *otium litteratum* can be found. *Querimonia* – is the remembering of a loss, the description of an "exile," the necessity to participate in a war, the unsuccessful conclusion to the journey to the motherland etc. Only the last elegy of the collection brings some fulfilment – reaching the destination of the pilgrimage.

The elegiac cycles listed above, whose titles may be defined, respectively as: *amor puellae* (Secundus), *amor coniugalis* (Pontano), *querimonia de se ipso* (Lotichius) may serve as a background for the previously mentioned Polish elegiac cycles.

Jan Kochanowski's *Elegiarum libri quattuor*

The tetralogy of Kochanowski's elegies is composed according to the principle of *varietas*. Apart from love as the subject matter, there are also political, philosophical, meta-literary and other themes. *Res amatoriae* however, dominates the entire cycle. Yet this topic is also presented with specific attention to the preservation of variety in the genre, topic and style in the matter of love. Apart from elegies presenting the experiences from the point of view of the speaker (which will be discussed in detail further on), there is an elegy in which – as inspired by Ovid's *Heroides* – the voice is given to Fedra, full of her passion (I 2); in another, the theme of the love rejected by Princess Wanda and her suicide constructs the story of the origin of Wanda's Mound near Cracow (I 15). There are also erotic bucolics (I 9; 11), and additionally elegies with a love subject matter which exploit idyllic topics (I 13, II 9, III 2) and meta-literary topics (III 11; 13; 15), epithalamion (III 16), paraclausithyra (I 8; 12; 14; II 5; 9; III 1), propemptikon for the man leaving his young wife (IV 1 – epyllion with mythological subject matter: Ulysses and Penelope) or the imprecations of a betrayed lover (II 5; 7; III 17).

The first versions of Kochanowski's elegies probably was written during his studies in Padua c. 1559–1561. The version printed twenty years later, more than twice as long, contains the majority of the texts from the two-volume book – sometimes they are significantly modified, occupying different places in the collection, and the entire collection is

composed according to different composition principles.¹⁶ It seems that here Kochanowski tends to derive his writings more from the heritage of Renaissance elegy.

The composition of particular books, though apparently chaotic because of the variety of the subject matter, once closely analyzed proves to be clear and deliberate. The first two books are concerned with *amor puellae* (the main character is *puella docta* – Lidia) and, as with both Roman and modern elegy authors, a development of feeling is presented: love is born expecting fulfilment (i.e. *vota*) – book I el. 1; 3; 8, before a period of reciprocity (*voti sententia compos*), however, not devoid of anxiety (I 6 and 10–14). The third stage is the period of love dying after a betrayal or after a recognition of the true character of the lover – *querimonia* from the second book. Similarly, in the five elegies of Book III devoted to a new love (industrious Pasiphile), the style of which allows us to refer them to a type of *de amore coniugali*,¹⁷ codified by Pontano, the first presentation concerns *vota* – confession (III 1) and waiting for the consent of the beloved (III 2); *voti sententia compos* – a fulfilment of the wish for happy co-existence (in an idyllic environment), III 3; and also *querimonia* – when the protagonist is forced to convince the desperate woman of his fidelity – against the gossip (III 6), or when, upon staying far away and missing her he is tormented by the bitter suspicions of her betrayal (III 12). However the pattern of Pontano's *De amore coniugali* is not consequently followed here (if it is). Kochanowski seems to be classicist in all his works, also in creating the female characters in elegiac cycle.¹⁸

From a different perspective the three books dominated by a love theme permit the observation that the first is concerned with the desired love, never giving satisfaction (*vota*), the second – with the painful death of love (*querimonia*), and the third with the achievement of happiness (*voti sententia compos*). The second book seems to be the most interesting and the most dynamic. The range of emotions is extremely

¹⁶ The two collections are compared in Z. Głombiowska, *Elegie łacińskie Jana Kochanowskiego. Dwie wersje* (Warszawa: PWN, 1981).

¹⁷ A vision of marital love presented with the natural background (based on Tibullus) proved to be so suggestive and similar to that presented in Polish literature that past scholars associated Pasiphile with Dorota Podlodowska, Kochanowski's wife – however there are no grounds in the texts for such assumptions.

¹⁸ I discuss my previous opinion from *Elegia renesansowa...*, 186–192, in: G. Urban-Godziek, "Elegia na progu. Antyczne dziedzictwo motywu paraklausithyron w twórczości elegijnej renesansu (usque ad Ioannem Cochranovium)" [Elegy on a Threshold. The Antic Heritage of the Paraklausithyron Motif in the Elegiac Production of Renaissance], *Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne. Seria Literacka* 18 (38) (2011): 45–81, espec. 70.

large – unsuccessful attempts to liberate himself from love lead the lover to the verge of death. Kochanowski uses here a figure of a dream maybe following Secundus.¹⁹ And although he is most likely to have applied the same Petrarchian tradition, he uses the illusion of the state of half-consciousness which is meant to alleviate the suffering from unsatisfied love in a completely different manner.

The Polish Humanist refers here to the Ficinian concept of a dream – elevation of the soul which allows a reality inaccessible to the mortals to be actually seen. Kochanowski's dreams have the character of an epiphany in their presentation.²⁰ In the second book of the elegy, a dream is a figure which allows the solution of the tormented and disdained love. Elegy II 4 seems to refer to the tradition of consolation in a dream, which has its roots in Boethius, Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio.²¹ The poet, once asleep, has a vision of a beautiful-faced Venus (presented as Lady Philosophy in Boethius), with a mission to revive the love in his heart. This dream-like evocation of his deepest wish to excuse Lidia is meant to give the poet a moral right to return to the girl whom he has already rejected. Once the attempt to rehabilitate the unfaithful lover fails, and thus concord is not reinstated, another *remedium amoris* must be found. The loss of hope, the rejection of life, the desire to punish the girl and make her regret her actions – they all result in the sole consolation of all torments – death. In elegy 10, the poet presents a vision of visiting Lidia in her dreams as a phantom, even taking her to Hades, where mythological traitors and malefactors who have committed crimes against love are

¹⁹ So far there have not been any publications concerning Kochanowski's knowledge of Secundus' writings. According to my researches, I am more and more convinced, that the Polish poet knew him very well. With regards to the other poet mentioned in the beginning – G. Pontano, Kochanowski, without doubt, was familiar and referred to his various writings, but still there are no further comparative studies concerning the subject. Ref. M. Hartleb, "Jan Kochanowski i włoskie Cinquecento," in *Pamiętnik Zjazdu Naukowego im. Jana Kochanowskiego w Krakowie 8 i 9 czerwca 1930* (Kraków: PAU, 1931), 243–244; M. Bersano Begey, "Treni e Tumuli," *Rivista di Lettere Slave* V (1930): 167–173; Urban-Godziek, "Patrum erga filiam amor luctuosus. L'espressione funebre dell'amore familiare nella poesia di Giovanni Pontano e Jan Kochanowski. Paralleli e ispirazioni," *Studi Slavistici* III (2006): 65–80 (on-line version: <http://www.fupress.net/index.php/ss/article/view/2142>, accessed May 5, 2014).

²⁰ Unless this is a criticism of human presumptuousness and of the belief in the power of one's mind, which allows us to assume that he will resist the weakness of the spirit as in the Polish *Treny XI*, 11–14.

²¹ For the details see: G. Urban-Godziek, "De consolatione somni. Three Ways of Conquering Love's Torments Inspired by Boethius and Petrarch: Giovanni Pontano, Janus Secundus, Jan Kochanowski," in *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Upsaliensis. Proceedings of the Fourteenth International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies (Uppsala 2009)*, ed. A. Steiner-Weber et al., vol. 2 (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2012), 1143–1153.

suffering. The unhappy lover in elegiac tradition, finds consolation in the Elysian fields of lovers. Kochanowski's character justifies his place amongst ancient poets, lovers and those who have taken their own lives: Sappho, Orpheus and Lucretius. This desire is fulfilled in a dream. In his dream vision – due to the intermediation of God in his revelation – like Sappho,²² he leaps from the Leucadian rock, which is meant either to achieve reciprocated love with his beloved or to free him from this love. The leap (fatal for the singer from Lesbos) in his dream becomes both *fugium amoris* and, paradoxically – a protection against love. The dream, and the fatal leap experienced in it, are the oeniric propitiation for Venus.²³

Diis haud aversis etiam per somnia fas est
 Defungi fati sorte premente gravis.
 Cum mactanda esset castae Iphianassa Dianae,
 Virgo volente dea caede redempta ferae est.
 Virgo redempta fera est, me saltu somnia solvant,
 Victus et Actaea sit meus ignis aqua. (elegy II 11, 45–49)

Klemens Janicki's *Tristia*

The background to the earlier of the Polish elegy writers in contemporary European poetry can be found in the elegiac humanistic biography. This genre was described by Josef IJsewijn in his article "Humanistic Autobiography,"²⁴ presenting a full history as well as the representation of elegy in Europe. Poland is represented by Jan Dantyszek and Janicki. A year later IJsewijn's article was developed by Ryszard Turzyński²⁵ and subsequently published. Turzyński pays attention to the influence of the ancient rhetoricized laudatory biographies and he also presents, the most complete analysis so far of the famous elegy VII from Janicki's *Tristia*, and adds Grzegorz from Sambor to IJsewijn's Polish canon.

Humanists desiring fame chose with enthusiasm the elegiac genre in order to commemorate their names and deeds – this genre permit-

²² See Sappho's letter to Faon from Ovid's *Heroides*.

²³ Ref. A. Gorzkowski, *Bene atque ornatum. Twórczość łacińska Jana Kochanowskiego w świetle lektury retorycznej* [J. Kochanowski's Latin Output in a Light of Rhetorical Reading] (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2004,) 119.

²⁴ *Studia Humanitatis. Ernesto Grassi zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. E. Hora and E. Kesslers (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1973.)

²⁵ "Z problematyki polsko-łacińskiej autobiografii humanistycznej" [From the Issues of the Polish-Latin Humanistic Authobiography], *Meander* 29, fasc. 3 (1974).

ted the possibility of a free combination of descriptive parts with lyrical confession. However, the “career” of elegy as an autobiographical genre was determined by an example from Ovid’s Pontic texts, in particular his elegy *ad posteritatem* from *Tristia* (IV 10). And this model – exile poetry, poetry of suffering – dominated the Humanists’s texts referring to themselves. All variations and forms of this genre have their source in *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*. Moreover, the experiences of funeral genres were also used: epicedium, epitaph, *mandata morituri*. Additionally, the Christian tradition of *contemptus mundi* was reflected in autobiographical elegy. Apart from this, elegy contains forms of poetic letter, encomion, panegyric, influences of prose biographies or Medieval hagiographies. Confessions, too were a significant model: *Confessiones* of St. Augustine as well as *Secretum* and *Epistula ad posteritatem* by Petrarch.

The most frequently exploited motifs comprise longing for the motherland (*patriae desiderium* – an example of which can be found in Joachim Du Bellay’s poem using the same title, or the above-mentioned Lotichius’s cycle), a story of his own exile (*de exilio suo* – this is the title of Michael Marullo’s elegy), of the way to the desired land (a form of hodoeporicon – present in the majority of such elegies), a story of one’s own illness (*de se aegrotante* – e.g. Marcantonio Flaminio), of oneself for posterity (*de se ipso ad posteritatem* – the title of which was used by Helius Eobanus Hessus). Other Ovidian forms are also used, like one’s own genethliacon denied (instead of a beautiful song of thanks to celebrate *dies natalis*, a mourning song and the ritual of his own funeral; such a composition from *Trist.* III 13 is imitated by Lotichius II 8). The phraseology, subject matter and imagery taken from Ovid’s exile poetry, used in the above texts and in similar ones, situate the Renaissance autobiographical poem within the variety of lamentation elegy.

The elegies from the *Tristia* of the Polish poet can be compared with many similar texts. However, the association of this creation with *Elegiarum libri tres* written by Petrus Lotichius, twelve years younger than Janicki, seems to be the most striking. In both cases they deal with an elegiac cycle inspired by Ovid’s exile poetry and refer to the same subject matter: illness which cannot be cured by the art of medicine, classical pathography, a creative inability caused both by bodily weakness and separation from the literary motherland, from *otium litteratum*, a journey to the dreamed-of place and a message for future generations expressed by the dying poet. It is also hard to resist the temptation to compare both poets, contemporaries of each other, which, in the case of writers of humanistic autobiography does not seem unjustified. Paral-

lels can be observed even in the manner of reading and the evaluation of these works by literary critics.²⁶

Klemens Janicki, who, presumably, as the only Neo-Latin poet takes over the title of the volume from Ovid, took the topos *de se aegrotante* as the dominating motif of his *Tristia*. The reason for this can most probably be found in his own life. It must be stressed here that an elegy concerning one's own illness or the illness of a beloved person has its origin in Naso's older colleagues – in Roman love elegies. It can also be found with Ovid himself: two letters to friends which describe the symptoms of the poet's illness (*Ex Ponto* I 10 and *Trist.* V 13) and the letter to his wife dictated during his illness (*Trist.* III 3).²⁷

The main motif, being the compositional axis for the cycle of Janicki's ten elegies, is illness: in elegy II it is a fever, whilst in others (IV, V, VI, VII and X) – hydropsy (*hydrops*). In the fifth and the tenth elegy, the subject matter of *de se aegrotante* is connected with a form of itinerarium; the second elegy has the form of a prayer; the fourth gives thanks to the doctor for his care; the sixth elegy – a letter to his protector; and the seventh is autobiographical. Contrary to the majority of poets taking up this subject matter, e.g. Lotichius, a professor of medicine from Marburg, Janicius – apart from classical pathography, like in el. II – describes the symptoms of his illness in a very realistic manner. As a result, an attempt can be made at a clinical diagnosis of his ailment (this was probably hepatic cirrhosis).

However, I would like to indicate here how – being aware of the literary output of his contemporaries – Janicki models his genre of humanistic autobiography according to the Ovidian example. The subject of illness is a significant element of elegy VII *De se ipso ad posteritatem, cum in summo vitae discrimine versaretur, quod tamen everserat*. Thus, a deathly – as it might seem – risk of the next attack of the illness induces the poet to sum up his life for the benefit of future readers and to leave a memorial of himself. Two initial distichs and the last part of the text introduce the reality of the illness and the premonition of approaching death. Between these two poles, the story of his own life and of himself as a person is revealed. In the first part, in particular, an important element of the rhetoric pattern of praise biography, adapted by Ovid for

²⁶ I have presented a comparison of the elegy collections of both poets in: G. Urban-Godziek, "The Topos of *de se aegrotante* in Humanistic Elegiac Autobiography. The Relation of Clemens Janitius' *Tristia* to Petrus Lotichius Secundus' *Elegiarum Libri*," *Civitas Mentis* 1 (2005): 92–109.

²⁷ For the subject *querimonia de se ipso* in autobiographic elegy see: Urban-Godziek, *Elegia renesansowa...*, 205–243, and for Janicius himself *ibidem*, 243–264.

auto-thematic purposes and used here by the Polish poet is clearly seen. Turzyński lists its consecutive elements: presentation of the family line (*genus*) – a poet from Januszkowo emphasizes his peasant origin and the poverty in which he grew up; the time and place of his birth (*patria*); then *educatio* – apart from the chronological stages in his education and praeceptors, Janicki lists ancient poets that he was familiar with and whom he regarded as equal to gods. This fragment can be paralleled with Ovid's presentations of *bona extra posita*, in which he speaks of nobilitating friendships and his personal acquaintance with the famous poets of the epoch – Ovid shows his own place in the canon of elegy writers. The entire construction of the Roman poet and the use of encomion performs the function of emphasising the divine level of his talent. It comes from Destiny's and the Muses' will and is victorious in spite of the obstacles – in spite of parental prohibitions and attempts to write in prose, the metric song was born under the hand of the young Naso and gained fame soon after its first public presentation.

Janicki takes up the same motif, however – in a much more modest manner – emphasizing also here his inferiority in relation to Ovid. He creates his works in a period of admiration and imitation of the great classics and he stresses his consciousness that also the scale of his talents is incomparable. The poet's literary ability and fame, did not appear by themselves, but resulted from a great desire supported by diligence and respect for literature-Febus. And thus Janicki's poetic skills fit within the previously discussed *educatio*, which was necessary for his later work.

Mox quas non lacrimas, quae non ego vota precesque
 Phoebos, cui vatum maxima cura, dedi,
 Ne sibi me famulum dedigneretur inertem
 Inque suo minimum vellet habere choro.
 Annuat, accessi, plectrum citharamque recepi,
 Porrexit dextra quam deus ipse manu.
 Tractavi sumptam assiduus cupidusque; sine illa
 Nulla fuit, meminini, nox mihi, nulla dies.
 Nec me paenituit coepti piguitque laboris,
 Profeci aetatis pro ratione meae. (39–48).

His first public appearance allowed the young artist to win a place amongst the students of the Collegium Lubranscianum (*comparatio*) and initiated his path to his future success and fame, and his ambition elevated his status in life.

The participation of destiny in shaping the poet's fate is contrary to that of Naso's. His talent was born out of personal effort, the fall – out of fortune. The adversities of fate from the very beginning were obstruct-

ing the way of the Muses. The first obstacle was “tristas egestas,” which was solved by the promise of benevolence and protection by the primate and poet, Andrzej Krzycki (Andreas Critius) – this support ended with the death of the protector. Also the generosity of his next patron could not win over Fortune, who was against him (“Invidit fortuna mihi morboque gravatum / compulit,” 79–80), as in her hand, there are both our deeds and desires (“Sed res sub fatis votaue nostra iacent,” 82). Ovid, in turn, confronts the divine origin of his talent with the anger of his Princeps, who sentenced him to exile (*Ov. Trist.* IV 10, 97–98). Caesar’s decision as a man (here there are no suggestions of Augustus’ divinity) was an attempt to divert Ovid’s destiny, although it failed to defeat the power of the Muses. Poetry, which became the object of the emperor’s anger, still faithful to its creator, becomes his comforter, his relief in suffering and his medication: it also gave him fame and immortality. In his final thanks to the Muses and then to the readers, he makes them all – goddesses and subjects of the emperor – accomplices in his opposition to the decision of the ruler.

The ailing humanist, having prepared his gravestone inscription (to be discussed below) uncovers the other part of his memorial: a scrupulous description of his looks, way of life, customs and literary activity. As a result, we get a picture of a slightly neurotic person who is sickly, excessively delicate and enjoys luxury. The features of the body (*corpus*) and spirit (*animus*) are discussed: an impatient character that cannot stand contempt (“Impatiens animus contemni et pronus ad iram, / Duravit multos quae mihi saepe dies.” 99–100), a shyness, a tendency to affection, tears and compassion as well as fear (“Cor subitum ad lacrimas, misereri molle gerebam, / sed quale in pavido pectore cervus habet.” 111–112), a dislike of warfare and fighting, infirmity, bodily feebleness and weakness, womanly preference for beautiful garments, courtly manners, an indulgence for the pleasures of cuisine – these are all features overly anti-heroic – thus not corresponding with the form of encomion, although characteristic of an elegy, in particular a Tibullian one. One may find some traces of Horacian description in that of his own feeble body, a tendency to anger etc. in *Epist.* I 20, 23–25, or the description of the abandonment of a shield in *carmen* II 7. On the other hand, however, the text bears a resemblance to the Aristotelian *Megalopsychos* – beauty and appearance, ease of self-expression, a careful selection of a company, loyalty in friendship. A declaration of potential generosity (if I were rich...) is a reference, supported with an exact quotation, to the attitude of Emperor Titus described by Suetonius in *Lives of Caesars* (*Tit.* 8, 1). To this inspiration one can also ascribe the declarations of

purity of habits – a similar contradiction of the suspicions of the abuse of spirits and indulgence in Venery as the reason for a loss of health and strength can be found in *ex Ponto* I 10. Janicki explains such gossip with his preference for cithara, song and gaiety as well as love as the subject matter of his primary literary creations, which he, having regarded them as imperfect *juvenilia*, burned (cf. *Ov. Trist.* IV 10, 61–64). In this manner, the poet justifies a lack of the obligatory elegiac subject matter in his literary output. In this creation we may find proof of his modesty and moderation, but also the awareness of his own greatness.

The Polish poet based a vision of death on the motifs from *Trist.* III 3 by Ovid (death and burial in the exile, without people close to him and without the proper rites, intensify the pain caused by the illness). Janicki comforts himself that although he had to leave Lazio and Eugeanean Pallad against his will, he will probably die in his home country: “Ergo domi moriar, quod nobis molliter unum / Cessit, in externa nec tumulabor humo” (83–84). However, Janicki pursues the topos of *patriae desiderium* in a completely different manner than the above-mentioned Lotichius, who made this theme central to his elegiac cycle. For the Polish poet, the literary home country, *locus poeticus* is the desired Italy (and here he is close to Ovid), from where he was banished by his illness. This is where his source of inspiration is to be found and this is where he left a sensitive literary environment, where his talent was appreciated and celebrated with the poetic laurel (cf. *Trist.* X and V 55–56).

However, he constructs his epitaph in a different manner. Ovid wanted to be remembered as “tenerorum lusor amorum” (*Trist.* III 3, 73; IV 10, 1). The epitaph of the Pole is entirely Christian, and, at the same time – by a game of words, meanings and sounds, it has the simplicity of archaic epitaphs or *mandata morituri*: “Spe vacuus vacuusque metu cubo mole sub ista / et vero vivo. Mortua vita vale!” (89–90). Death as salvation from misleading hopes and existential fears, opens the gates of real life. Janicki decided to devote the very last words, ascribed already to the buried body, not to his own fame, but to the transiency of earthly life and human deeds.

The last part of the text is a return to reality of life-threatening illness. The prevailing funeral subject matter, belongs to the sphere of Christian devotion, whilst, at the same time, there is a completion of the description of *res gestae*. Although – as the character of Janicki says – he was summoned to greater deeds in the twenty-fifth year of his life, and leaving so early, he had no chance to perform the deeds he would desire to do (a catalogue of unfulfilled poetic intentions is treated with a rhetoric

form of *praeteritio*). As he says, he will not manage to glorify the motherland, its history and rulers (a reference to the cycle *Vitae regum Polonorum*) or the wedding of the King Sigismund Augustus (in fact Janicki managed to write two epithalamia for this occasion). The only things that are left for him are prayers for the king's health and victory.

The elegy ends with a farewell to friends connected with an elysian motif; this is primarily a farewell to Antonin, the doctor, which becomes one of Janicki's numerous praises for the art of medicine. He addresses his last words to his family promising to await a swift reunion with them and to worship, amongst the dead, the name of the great doctor who was, for a long time, mocking the authority and anger of the Parcae (the Fates) by prolonging his life. He did not manage to defeat the illness entirely only because – "Hydropis victor quis nisi Christus erat?"

The collection of *Tristia* by Janicius fits very neatly into the tradition of Renaissance elegiac autobiography. The Polish Latin poet uses the generally applied topoi and subject matters. Undoubtedly, however, he managed to create, within those limits, living poetry touching upon the reader's sensitivity – poetry that grasps the heart of the reader with its credibility and charm. The pages of the elegy hide a man who – in spite of sufferings experienced and the adversities of fate – is serene, friendly, trusting in God and the power of learning and art – believing in its immortalizing power.

And literary comparative studies, with regard to new Latin poetry, seems to be the field that promises new interpretations and a deeper understanding of the early-modern Europe unified by the Latin culture.