Warsaw Studies in Classical Literature and Culture 10

Maciej Junkiert

Cyprian Norwid and the History of Greece

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Ancient Greek history holds a special place in the works of many 19th-century writers. The same goes for Cyprian Norwid, one of the most eminent poets in the history of Polish literature, a thinker, and an artist. This book scrutinizes Norwid's fascination with Greek history and culture, especially his peculiar synthesis of Greek thought and Christianity. It focuses on the key themes of the relationship of Platonism with early Christian writings and their presence in Norwid's contemporary culture, the opposition of memory and history in 19th-century literature and social life, and the image of the artist and its influence on social life in modern everyday. The book analyzes Norwid's oeuvre in a broad comparison with representatives of French, German, and British literature and the humanities.

The Author

Maciej Junkiert is a Polish philologist and historian of ideas, professor at the Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan. His research focuses on the relationships of classical philology with literary studies in Poland and Germany, especially in the 19th century.

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Warsaw Studies in Classical Literature and Culture

Edited by Mikołaj Szymański and Mariusz Zagórski

Volume 10

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Translated by Jan Burzyński and Mikołaj Golubiewski

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Bibliographic Information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available in the internet at http://dnb.d-nb.de.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

The publication of this monograph was supported with 41 520 PLN by the National Programme for the Development of Humanities of the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education in years 2018–21, project no. 0239/NPRH6/H21/85/2017.

NATIONAL PROGRAMME
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMANITIES

This work has been reviewed by: Maria Kalinowska (Nicolaus Copernicus University) and Jerzy Fiećko (Adam Mickiewicz University).

Printed by CPI books GmbH, Leck
ISSN 2196-9779 · ISBN 978-3-631-83077-2 (Print)
E-ISBN 978-3-631-83078-9 (E-PDF) · E-ISBN 978-3-631-83079-6 (EPUB)
E-ISBN 978-3-631-83080-2 (MOBI) · DOI 10.3726/b17341

Peter Lang – Berlin · Bern · Bruxelles · New York · Oxford · Warszawa · Wien

This publication has been peer reviewed.

www.peterlang.com

The publication of this monograph was supported with 41 520 PLN by the National Programme for the Development of Humanities of the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education in years 2018–21, project no. 0239/NPRH6/H21/85/2017.

Cyprian Norwid and the History of Greece was originally published in Polish under the title *Grecja i jej historia w twórczości Cypriana Norwida* (Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2012).

The author won for this book the Polish Prime Minister Prize for the best doctoral dissertation in 2011.

In memory of Józef Grochowski
(1933–2012)

Acknowledgments

In Polish, this book was first written as a doctoral dissertation at the Institute of Polish Philology at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Krzysztof Trybuś, for his invaluable help and tremendous support at all stages of the book's preparation. I wish to thank Professor Maria Kalinowska and Professor Jerzy Fiećko for their thorough and insightful reviews, which allowed me to avoid many inaccuracies and lapses.

Furthermore, I owe many thanks to Professor Barbara Bokus, head of the AAL Inter-University Program of Interdisciplinary Doctoral Studies, for extraordinary scientific sessions and great dedication to the affairs of the Program. I express my gratitude to Professor Marcin Król for inspiring reader's advice. I would like to especially thank Professor Jerzy Axer, who was my supervisor during my studies at the "Artes Liberales" Academy. Thursday seminars with Professor Axer shaped my passion for the study of tradition, in particular ancient tradition in the nineteenth-century literature.

To my wife, Kinga, I thank you for your creative and understanding presence at every written page.

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Preliminary Remarks

1. Norwid and History

In 1909, Cezary Jellenta compared the mind of Cyprian Norwid, the most important Polish poet of the second half of the nineteenth century, to "a greedy museum, which desires to own all treasures of ruins and excavations."[1] The author of this short synthesis focuses on Norwid's relationship with the heritage of classicism, comparing his lyrics and dramas to the Pompeian frescos or Phidias' Parthenon friezes. Moreover, Jelenta emphasizes that what interested Norwid were "the ancient, classical, marble souls of nations with their wisdom, poetry and statuesque movements."[2] Jellenta accentuates Norwid's tendency to exploit themes from the antique world by claiming that in this way Norwid was able to communicate with the classical beauty of a world long gone, thanks to which this world illuminates Norwid's works with the past glow of ancient civilizations, depicted in the moments of their crisis or fall. For Jellenta, the greed with which Norwid attempted to gather the knowledge about the ancient world and the people of that time, representing various cultures, was proof that Norwid aestheticized the stories he described so that one could read from the past the message of the eternal beauty and the classical, universal constancy of human nature.

> The relentless depiction of glorious civilizations is perhaps Norwid's most pleasant activity. He wanders among their statues for the sake of their beauty and richness, whereas the fictional and dramatic plot is only a guise. First, Norwid creates a costly material like a large piece of an embroidered fabric, and then he turns it into a composition, such as *Quidam* or "Pompeja."[3]

Years later, Kazimierz Wyka responded to Jellenta in the periodical *Kultura i Wychowanie* (Culture and Manners, 1933) by expressing his strong objection to the accusation of Norwid for a passive collector's attitude toward the past:

> Museum! It would be a truly dangerous word that carries the whole aftertaste of historicism had it not been for the fact that Norwid was not satisfied with the such cultural collecting. Inarguably, he enjoyed surprising the reader with information that only he possessed. Although, at the same time, the variety of cultures he visited raised in

1 C. Jellenta, *Cyprian Norwid. Szkic syntezy*, Warsaw 1907, p. 26.
2 Jellenta, *Cyprian Norwid. Szkic,* p. 25.
3 Jellenta, *Cyprian Norwid. Szkic*, pp. 33–34.

> Norwid's mind the question of what the fixed fundaments of this variety are, is there and where could lies its possible universality, the base line for such diverse cultures. No culture collector could afford such a question or an answer equal to Norwid's.[4]

Wyka notices the regularity that significantly defines the space of Norwid's research in the meanders of history. While modern people may communicate only with certain set preformed cultural patterns, Norwid tries to not limit himself to reconstructing the history of culture so as to avoid the promotion of a naive imitation. He is fascinated by the formation process of humanity's intellectual and artistic achievements, the covered distance and decisions made on the way, which eventually contributed to the crystallization of culturally valuable philosophical, literary, and theological ideas and creations. By avoiding the temptations of Romantic particularism and universalizing historicism, Norwid chooses the middle ground by searching for knowledge of how the historical process influenced the history of human intellect. Therefore, by observing artists or writers who created in the ancient times, Norwid attempts to recreate all the factors that affected their creation in order to show the innovative nature of the work and explain how it enriched universal human knowledge about ourselves or allowed us to express a previously unexpressed desire or feeling. As Wyka explains:

> Since culture is something unique and irreversible, then the only road to a living culture that captures our most excellent endeavors must be a fresh and proper search for values that – by originating from the deepest needs of our lives – will determine the vitality of the created culture. As in the past, the culture achieved in this new way will certainly one day become something common to all people, existing in a detachment from the base from which it emerged. In this detached form, we obtain results of ancient cultures, but it does not mean that we may achieve a new creative addition to them by the very contemplative tasting and cherry-picking of various cultural creations of the past.[5]

In the article "Main Motifs of Norwid's Poetry," originally presented in Krakow in 1947, Wacław Borowy reverses the opposition of culture and history by making the latter the fundamental factor that shapes Norwid's worldview: "When you immerse yourself in Cyprian Norwid's poems, you almost feel the winds of history blowing through it. In fact, next to 'truth,' the words *historia* or *dzieje* (history) themselves, along with their derivatives, are among his favorite words which

4 K. Wyka, "Cyprian Norwid jako poeta kultury," in: K. Wyka, *Cyprian Norwid. Studia, artykuły, recenzje*, Krakow 1989, pp. 174–175.

5 Wyka, "Cyprian Norwid," p. 175.

he charges with more poetic meaning than any other ones."[6] Borowy notices a strategy in Norwid's works that consists of observing the essential tendencies of historical transformations and intellectual fascinations in various cultural periods. Hence, Norwid is to attribute a special role in his works to individual characters, as their stories often add to the complicated history of civilization, which constitute an apparent background of described events.

> In all of Norwid's poetry you will sense the presence of huge masses, powerful social forces, and great currents of civilization. His *Kleopatra i Cezar* used to be compared with Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra*. What is the chief difference between the two works? Shakespeare describes the tragedy of several great historical figures entangled in historical processes; Norwid presents above all the pressure of tradition, customs, beliefs, political interests, social aspirations etc. on the masses and on great individuals alike. In his *Quidam*, each character stands for one form of civilization of his times. A reader of *Quidam* gets the impression of witnessing primarily movements of large groups, while individuals' actions are of secondary importance. The same is true of *Tyrtej* (Tyrtaeus).[7]

However, the perspective that presents the changes happening in ancient societies and intellectual processes that dominated their lifes is not Norwid's overriding aim. Borowy emphasizes that Norwid always tries to focus on the everyday aspects of history, which escape the great narratives about the past. In this way, Norwid's works about processes fundamental for the history of culture are not abstract descriptions of conflicts between masses but seek to ensure a better understanding of lesser known details. Precise descriptions are supposed to illustrate the character of historical transformations of the world, torn between paganism and Christianity, marked by the influence of human will and not only by the deterministic judgement of God. As Borowy remarks, this approach allows Norwid to maintain a balance between presenting both the monumental and private history. Although, history certainly was the subject that Norwid was most passionate about, from which other phenomena resulted and by which they were determined.

I believe that Borowy's suggestion has not been properly considered in the studies on Norwid so far. We may even state that, due to the introduction of the notion of "old" cultures, the interest in history in Norwid's works became pseudonymized. The prioritization of the exploration of the "old" cultures and civilizations – especially the ancient ones – resulted in less attention payed to the

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6 W. Borowy, "Main Motifs of Norwid's Poetry," *Literary Studies in Poland*, trans. Anna Nierada, Vol. 18 (1987), p. 99.

7 Borowy, "Main Motifs of Norwid's Poetry," p. 101.

ancient history. Scholars have attempted rather at separating the characteristics of particular models of cultures or states and presenting them in a timeless limbo in order to facilitate the comparison of Norwid's reflections on the past with his diagnosis of the present. Zdzisław Łapiński's book *Norwid* is an example of such a practice. Łapiński avoids answering the question on Norwid's attitude toward history – especially the ancient history – by claiming that he was exclusively interested in the achievements of past cultures and how much they foresaw the phenomena noticeable in Norwid's times:

> The old cultures occupy Norwid in two ways. First, they show our beginning, and the understanding of our present is incomplete without the understanding of its genealogy. The way back sometimes is the way forward, as by returning to the past we can better understand the path we will travel in the future. Second, the patterns of culture have certain universal traits. Their internal dynamics repeat in various material.[8]

Did the past really interest Norwid exclusively as an argument to be used in contemporary polemics? It is hard to agree with this statement. Just skimming through Norwid's notes suffices to notice that the vast majority of them does not directly refer to current events. Norwid is occupied with history for the sake of history, as he often expressed the conviction that it is impossible to learn about the human mind in any other way than through examining its creations, among which history is the most brilliant achievement. Norwid expresses this view, among other places, in a fragment from "Garstka piasku" (A Handful of Sand), also mentioned by Borowy:[9]

> Pray know that it is *tradition* by which man's majesty is distinguished from field animals, and that he who has stifled the conscience of history becomes a savage in a remote island and is gradually becoming an animal himself.[10]

The discussion on Norwid's historicism has lasted for over a century, although it still seems impossible to reach a definitive settlement on the issue. The problem of the presence of history in Norwid's works continues to be an unexhausted subject of scholarly interest, despite the existence of treaties and studies – along with those mentioned above – by Zofia Stefanowska,[11] Elżbieta

8 Z. Łapiński, *Norwid*, Krakow 1971, pp. 75–76.

9 See Borowy, "Main Motifs of Norwid's Poetry," p. 101.

10 C. K. Norwid, *Pisma wszystkie*, Vol. III, ed. J. W. Gomulicki, Warsaw 1971, p. 250. Hereafter, the sources of Norwid's quotes will be given in the main text. This edition will be abbreviated as "Pwsz," followed by volume and page numbers.

11 Z. Stefanowska, "Norwida spór o powstanie," in: *Dziedzictwo literackie powstania styczniowego*, ed. J.Z. Jakubowski, J. Kulczycka-Saloni and S. Frybes, Warsaw 1964, pp. 68–90.

Feliksiak,[12] Alicja Lisiecka,[13] Ewa Bieńkowska,[14] Andrzej Walicki,[15] Antoni Dunajski,[16] Grażyna Halkiewicz-Sojak,[17] Krzysztof Trybuś,[18] and many others.

I wish this book to be another voice in the exchange of views, as I intend to focus on just one selected aspect of historicism in Norwid's works. I will make the main thread of below deliberations the history of ancient Greece, along with its cultural derivations, such as the birth of literature, philosophy, art, and theology, in order to take a closer look at the significance of history in the process of the intellectual development of man through the unique case of the history of Greece. We would also like to include the characteristic ambiguity involved in understanding history. Norwid focuses on history as both the course of specific historical processes and stories written down by people; that is, the materials and narrative remnants of past events.

At the foundations of Norwid's views lies the conviction of our active participation in the historical process and the necessity for examining past events by reaching to remote periods in order to find a pattern that proves the irremovable presence of people in history and the organized character of their activity. Norwid expresses this idea concisely in a fragment of "Filozofia historii polskiej" (The Philosophy of Polish History): "not only sole history is history, but so are the conceptions we make of it" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 65).[19]

Norwid does not try to discredit divine presence in history. On the contrary, he believes that providence allowed for the possibility of writing history and creating a narration based on facts. Therefore, Norwid decides not to do anything that would contribute to the further rationalization of the course of history and turning divine influence on history into a dialectic activity of an intelligent spirit:

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12 E. Feliksiak, "Norwidowski świat myśli," in: *Polska myśl filozoficzna i społeczna*, II: *1861–1863*, ed. A. Walicki, Warsaw 1973, pp. 545–593.

13 A. Lisiecka, *Norwid – poeta historii*, London 1973.

14 E. Bieńkowska, *Dwie twarze losu. Nietzsche – Norwid*, Warsaw 1975.

15 A. Walicki, "Cyprian Norwid: trzy wątki myśli," in: *Między filozofią, religią i polityką. Studia o myśli polskiej epoki romantyzmu*, Warsaw 1983, pp. 195–238.

16 A. Dunajski, *Chrześcijańska interpretacja dziejów w pismach Cypriana Norwida*, Lublin 1985.

17 G. Halkiewicz-Sojak, *Byron w twórczości Norwida*, Toruń 1994; G. Halkiewicz-Sojak, *Wobec tajemnicy i prawdy: o Norwidowskich obrazach "całości,"* Toruń 1998.

18 K. Trybuś, *Epopeja w twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, Wrocław 1993; K. Trybuś, *Stary poeta. Studia o Norwidzie*, Poznań 2000.

19 All Norwid's texts are translated for the purpose of this book. For the sake of clarity, the translations abandon the very characteristic style of Norwid, and strive for a more literal and faithful approach.

> If history (in my opinion) had nothing divine in its entirety (that is, if due to that it was not history itself. . .), then indeed, a historian would need a complete inventory of all facts and acts preceding his writing to which he could add nothing or from which he would draw nothing. / In such a case, history would not have its logical cause of existence, nor such a writer would have to consider it a responsibility, which is said to be one of the links and relations of the course of history. / Indeed, I think that deep antiquity bears the great and honorable seal: that not only preserved monuments but also their remains, or even the absence of remains becomes a monument, if someone can make them legible (Pwsz, Vol. 7, pp. 66–67).

Norwid's statements refer to the pre-Slavic period in the history of Poland, but we may assume that they express his convictions about the phenomenon of every antiquity and the beginnings of civilization in general; especially the surviving remains of a heritage that demand study and problematization despite their fragmentary character.

In his reflections on history, Norwid creatively uses the inspiration of Giambattista Vico's *The New Science*[20] (1744), who not only treated history as the proper object of human cognition but also partly freed the view on the course of history from theological interpretations by designing the "border line of the critical transition from the theology to the philosophy of history,"[21] as Karl Löwith describes the role of the Neapolitan thinker:

> But in the night of thick darkness enveloping the earliest antiquity, so remote from ourselves, there shines the eternal and never failing light of a truth beyond all question: that the world of civil society has certainly been made by men, and that its principles are therefore to be found within the modifications of our own human mind.[22]

Maria Janion and Maria Żmigrodzka notice that Romantic literature eagerly absorbed Vico's ideas, which only then were properly popularized. Learning about one's own past became the fundamental historiosophical task, especially in the European civilization, as it was believed to contribute to the better understanding of human nature. However, as Janion and Żmigrodzka emphasize: "this view was especially significant for the notion of national consciousness."[23] In their

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20 The relations between G. Vico's conceptions and historicism in the works of Norwid were described by E. Feliksiak (E. Feliksiak, "Norwid i Vico," *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, 3/1968, pp. 23–42).

21 K. Löwith, *Meaning in History. The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History*, Chicago 1949, p. 135.

22 G. Vico, *The New Science*, trans. T.G. Bergin, M.H. Fisch, New York 1961, pp. 52–53.

23 M. Janion and M. Żmigrodzka, *Romantyzm i historia*, Gdańsk 2001, p. 17.

presentation of relations between history and literature, Janion and Żmigrodzka mainly focus on the events essential for understanding Romantic artists's times. In this way, Trojan history played a special role in the process of creating convictions about the significance of Polish fate, since the former gave faith in the possibility of regaining the lost Polish state, as once was the experience of Aeneas.This is probably why Janion and Żmigrodzka omit Norwid's works. In his case, learning about history – especially the history of ancient Greece – did not serve only to further specify the meaning of Polish history. Norwid constantly proves that he is also interested in the history of Greece itself, due to its universal meaning for the European civilization. Hence, Norwid attempts to find the foundations that made Greek history join rather than divide, especially in the context of the origin and development of Christianity. Therefore, Norwid's goal in evoking ancient history is to illustrate the endeavors of Christian society, while national histories appeared as mediated in the history of the Christian world. This indirectness and multidimensionality of analogies between the past and the present in Norwid's works make him considerably distance himself from the specificity of other Romantic artists.

Norwid Christianizes Greek history and tries to prove how his own times find roots in the past, and that the essential role of Christianity manifested itself even before Christ's birth and passion. Noteworthy, Norwid avoids simplifications that in the writings of ancient authors would allow him to look for clear harbingers of the salvation of humankind. He is passionate about the archaic and classical Greece, but also about its afterlife under the rule of the Roman Empire. Defeated Greece is simultaneously the victor that achieved cultural domination over the Romans and contributed to the crystallization of the Christian doctrine. Thus, Norwid experiments with mental processes and the problem of the cultural continuity of the European continent. By going back many centuries in time, he may present the development of Christianity existing within the pagan empire. Moreover, Norwid attempts at reconstructing the contemporary conflict of reasoning by demonstrating various connections between Hellenism and the teachings of Christ.

Norwid uses the method of distrust and suspicion to oppose various attempts at ideologizing and mangling the image of Greece, including especially the neopagan visions of the land of mysteries and gnosis, the aesthetic and political Hellenic utopia of free people exclusively devoted to art, and the idea of Reason that absorbed Christianity, because the followers of Reason saw Athens the most apt birthplace for Christ. Norwid constructs his own vision of the historical presence of Greece in the form of a spiritual element that cyclically returns in various configurations to awaken in people desire for transcendence.

Norwid's mistrust similarly concerns the antique sources that he learns from, as the essential aspect of his returns to the past is the coexistence of an opposing worldview of people from bygone times and limited cognitive possibilities of an artist peering into history. Hence, the appearance of so many momentary encounters, fleeting impressions, and surprising analogies; approximating the past simultaneously means reconstructing and actualizing just a few of its ideas. The presence of the Greek spirit noticed by the poet manifests itself in an accidentally noticed statue, a quote treated as a snatch of a conversation with the dead, a visit in a place of an unknown purpose, or a blurred writing on a wall. The Greece sought by Norwid is a fragmentary tale about history, whose essence was the strive for wisdom, truth, and beauty. Norwid will remain loyal to those endeavors and questions posed by ancient Greeks for the rest of his life. His attitude toward Greece from the Classical period is the most accurately reflected in the excerpt from Norwid's "Notatki z mitologii" (Notes from Mythology): "From Pericles to Alexander the human mind makes a larger step than India, Egypt, the Chinese and even the Israelites!" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 294).

Hayden White notices that the nineteenth-century bloom of history should be related to the development of a national state and the tendency to legitimize its existence through a careful examination of the issues linked with the past, and to convince the society of the unity of the nation and its rightfulness to the occupied land.

> From the mid-nineteenth century on, historical studies would have the task of studying only what had already happened, what was over and done with and could not be undone, what lay in comforting fixity beyond the horizon of living perception in the past, and what could be known with certainty because it could no longer not be what it was. All this was undertaken in order to allay the fears and anxieties of an uncertain origin and fears of corruptive mixtures of blood, genes, and essences.[24]

Surely, Norwid's ambition is to freely enter areas reserved for historical sciences, which was fostered by evident shortcomings in the institutionalization of Polish historiography. We can draw such conclusions from many of Norwid's drafts, notes, and texts devoted to specific historical issues. We may risk a statement that he sought balance in using history to fulfill the needs of one's own nation and looking back to interpret it in a universalist manner. The balance must be unsteady, because Norwid assumes that his main task – which I will describe

24 H. White, "The Fiction of Narrative," in: H. White, *The Fiction of Narrative: Essays on History, Literature, and Theory, 1957–2007*, Baltimore 2010, p. 316.

further in the book – was to extract and reveal the events of history unknown to the general public, its dark sides and the human struggles that were never expressed. Hence, he is convinced that history is brought to life and gains significance mainly due to the possibilities provided by literature.

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This book consists of six parts. The introductory part focuses on Romantic Hellenism understood as an influential intellectual and artistic movement that very much shaped the aesthetic character of European Romanticisms. I subordinate the choice of representatives of European Hellenism to Norwid's fascination with history in order to anchor his thought more accurately in the intellectual atmosphere of the Enlightenment and Romantic interest in ancient and contemporary Greece. Moreover, I attempt to emphasize the presence of educational and didactic issues in European Hellenism that constitute an important context in Norwid's works. I devote the two remaining fragments of the introduction to the issue of Hellenism in the works of Adam Mickiewicz and Juliusz Słowacki. The problem of the presence of Hellenic issues and references in the works of those two poets is so extensive that it could easily fill separate monographs. Therefore, I exclusively focus on selected subjects in order to more accurately emphasize the differences between how Mickiewicz and Słowacki perceived Greek heritage and how did Norwid. Hence, as far as Mickiewicz's works are concerned, I am mainly interested in the issue of the political image of Greece and its associations with Russian imperialism while, in the case of Słowacki's works, I describe selected examples of relations between Hellenism and classicism, especially in three of his works: *Lambro*, *Podróż do Ziemi Świętej z Neapolu* (Journey to the Holy Land from Naples), and *Agezylausz*.

In the first chapter, I focus on the matter of Norwid's Hellenism in the existing studies on his works and describe how he approached the civilizational heritage of the Greeks. The middle section of the chapter consists of a list of editions by antique writers and contemporary researchers to whose works Norwid probably referred. In the same chapter, I also characterize his views on the birth of literature, historiography, and philosophy in ancient Greece.

The second chapter concerns the history of Greece, observed through the lens of Norwid's notebooks, who attempted at specifying and expressing his own position on Greek history based on various readings. The reading of these notebooks is a fascinating experience that allows one to understand that – according to Norwid – Greece emerged as a result of the clash of the influence of various cultures, such as the Babylonian, Persian, Egyptian, Phoenician, and Pelasgian. The Greeks who arrived at the Mediterranean Sea, when meeting with

new peoples, languages, and beliefs, gained experiences that later allowed them to invent such phenomena as democracy, philosophy, and theater; fundamental from the viewpoint of the fate of civilization. I touch on the issue of connections between Norwid's Socrates from Norwid's lecture on Juliusz Słowacki, rationalist philosophy, and the political role of philosophers in a *polis*. The main point of my interest is to explain why the Socrates from Norwid's works is an incomplete incoherent figure, as if the poet feared the potential of meanings included in the activity of the Athenian philosopher.

In the third chapter, I describe the process called the Hellenization of Christianity, which constitutes an important element of my deliberations, especially in the context of Norwid's *Quidam*. The starting point of this chapter is Harnack's late nineteenth-century critique of the influence of Greek philosophy and language on Christian dogma. I attempt at tracing Platonic threads in the works of Norwid, especially in the context of connections between Platonism and Christianity. While analyzing *Quidam*, I try to prove that the fundamental problem of the text lays in the relationship of Christianity with the ancient Greek heritage, which determined the fate of the Christian religion in the next centuries.

The fourth chapter concerns the issue of cultural memory in *Epimenides* and *Kleopatra i Cezar*. In these works, Norwid employs the motif of the birth of memory in ancient Greece and presents the far-reaching consequences of manipulating memory's extraordinary possibilities. *Epimenides* concerns the role of memory in the pre-Christian Greek society, deprived of the theological assurance of the existence of the history of redemption and, therefore, dependent on the experiences from its own past to resolve conflicts and crises. *Kleopatra i Cezar* concerns the decline of the Hellenistic era in Egypt prior to Roman conquest. The events depicted in the tragedy constantly revolve around memory. In this way, Norwid demonstrates the destructive force that resides in memory understood as a tool used to manipulate the society. Moreover, memory plays a role in presenting the phenomenon of tragedy from a unique perspective, which Norwid moves from the set of events experienced directly by the characters to the sphere of their imagination. In this way, the presentation of the tragic conflict of Cleopatra, Julius Caesar, Mark Antony, and Her becomes a theater of memory enacted in front of other *dramatis personae* and – simultaneously – in front of the reader.

The fifth chapter focuses on the image of Sparta and Athens in *Tyrtej*. Here, I focus on the story of the Greek *paideia*, in the context of the Second Messenian War and the role of Tyrtaeus in Greek history. Norwid strongly reinterpretes the story by placing Tyrtaeus on the margin of his work to precisely illustrate the image of two opposing state models based on the example of Athens and Sparta.

Hence, Norwid also summarizes his remarks about ancient Greek history which, on the one hand, is full of gaps and understatements and, on the other hand, is a masterpiece by a group of remarkable Athenian intellectuals. They created a cohesive tale on the basis of Greek history. When writing *Tyrtej*, Norwid pays tribute to the significant role of the history that they wrote, at the same time noticing and describing the cracks and weaker parts of their narration.

2. Hellenism and History

"Being Greek is a real *performance*,"[25] remarks Simon Goldhill, the author of the book *Who Needs Greek? Contests in the Cultural History of Hellenism*. In Goldhill's opinion, the matter of "being Greek" should be considered as an important element of the intellectual and social history of the West. He writes that " 'Greekness' is a constructed quality, crossed by fantasy, projection and desire."[26] Interpreted this way, "Greekness" may be treated as a key element of many cultural projects that regularly emerged throughout the history of the Western civilization and that consisted of identifying the aesthetic and intellectual excellence with the achievements of the ancient Greeks. Undoubtedly, the culmination of this influential intellectual current was the sudden Europe-wide wave of interest in Greece commonly referred to as Hellenism, which began in the middle of the eighteenth century and lasted until the end of the first half of the nineteenth century.[27]

One of the main causes of the eighteenth-century fascination with Greece was the increasing knowledge about the ancient world, which resulted from the development of archeology and historical sciences. In 1738, in Herculaneum began excavations under the patronage of the king of Naples, Charles III, and eleven years later in Pompeii.[28] 1755 saw the establishment of Accademia

25 S. Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek? Contests in the Cultural History of Hellenism*, Cambridge 2002, p. 5.

26 Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek?*, p. 5.

27 " 'Hellenism' most frequently means the renewed interest with Greece at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth century – present in the entire Europe – especially with ancient Greece, but also contemporary, which after almost four hundred years of Turkish occupation 'emerged to independence;' " M. Kalinowska, "Wprowadzenie. Filhellenizm romantyków – specyfika polska i konteksty europejskie. Perspektywy badawcze," in: *Filhellenizm w Polsce. Rekonesans*, eds. M. Borowska, M. Kalinowska, J. Ławski and K. Tomaszuk, Warsaw 2007, p. 11.

28 The first excavation took place in Herculaneum in 1711. A few of the statues discovered then were transported to the court of the king of Poland Frederick Augustus II in Dresden. His daughter, Maria Amalia, married Charles III and convinced him

Ercolanese di Archeologia, which focused on publishing the volumes of *Le Antichita di Ercolano*[29] that contained the engravings of the discovered monuments, which then gained recognition in the entire Europe. The institutionalization of the interest in antique art was one of the key reasons for the success of this influential intellectual movement. In France, such significant role played the activity of Académie des Inscriptions, which supported the archeological studies conducted in Italy, Greece, and Asia Minor, the lands visited by Abbé Barthélemy.[30] In England, we may emphasize the founding of The Society of Dilettanti (1732), an institution interested in the popularization of information on the current state of monuments from the terrains of ancient Greece.[31] This

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to undertake the next excavation in Herculaneum, remembering about the three statuettes of the Vestals that her father bought in Vienna from the Duke of Elbeuf. See G. W. Bowersock, *From Gibbon to Auden. Essays on the Classical Tradition*, London 2009, pp. 70–71.

29 The first book was published in 1757 and, eventually, seven volumes were released. The appearance of books about the excavations in Herculaneum initiated a series of publications on this subject, especially in France. It is worth listing at least the more important editions: *Lettres sur l'état actuel de la ville souterraine d'Héraclée* (1750); David, *Antiquités d'Herculanum* (1754); Cochin, Bellicard, *Observations sur les antiquités d'Herculanum, avec quelques réflection sur la peinture et la sculpture des ancients* (1754). After the release of those important publications from the viewpoint of the popularization of knowledge on Greek art, there also appeared a book by Le Roy, which described the impressions of a traveller that visited Greece: *Ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce considérés du côté de l'histoire et du côté de l'architecture*, 1758. See B. H. Stern, *The Rise of Romantic Hellenism in English Literature 1732–1786*, New York 1969, pp. 11–12.

30 Barthélemy was the author of the *Voyages du Jeune Anacharsis en Grèce vers le milieu du IVe siècle avant l'ère vulgaire* (1788), an exceptionally popular fictional tale about the travels of a young Scythian philosopher in Greece between 363 and 337 BC. By 1799, six editions of the book were published, presenting the knowledge on the ancient Greece available at that time, its political institutions, laws, customs, and history. We shall also list other fictional tales from that time promoting the Greek history and civilizational achievements: Chr. M. Wieland, *Geschichte von Agathon*, and É.-F. De Lantier, *Voyage d'Anténor en Grèce et en Asie, avec les notions sur l'Égypte, manuscrit grec trouvé à Herculanum*.

31 The association was especially recognized for the fact that under its auspices was organized the famous voyage of James Stuart and Nicholas Reyett to Greece in 1751–1755, which resulted in the publishing of the first volume of *The Antiquities of Athens. Measured and Delineated by James Stuart F.R.S. and F.S.A. and Nicholas Revett, Painters and Architects* in 1762. The book included illustrations depicting the current state of the Athenian ruins accompanied by a detailed description. To learn about the interesting

phenomenon of institutionalization and ordering of various aspects of interest in Greece will also play a significant role in the Greek War of Independence, as the national Committees emerging at that time and consisting of the Philhellenes from various countries will coordinate the actions supporting the Greek side in the conflict with the Ottomans, while often engaging in diplomatic games and international rivalry, noticeable especially between London and Paris.[32]

We should mention the role of Johann Joachim Winckelmann[33] in creating the image of ancient Greeks and their art, because the German researcher's perspective determined the form of later references to the Greek heritage. As David Ferris notices, Winckelmann radically revalued the assessment of antique history, contributing to the birth of the phenomenon commonly known as an aestheticization of history. In his fundamental works, *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Mahlerey und Bildhauerkunst* (1755) and *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (1764), Winckelmann formulated the principal conviction that the path to excellence in visual arts leads only through the imitation ancient Greek achievements, as they attained the universal ideal of beauty, especially in sculpture. Culture became the center of Winckelmann's idea, as it allowed for describing all phenomena representing the existence of a nation. As Ferris argues:

> What the rise of Hellenism gave a specific expression to is an understanding of history mediated through a concept of culture. For such an understanding, culture acts as a

story of the Society of Dilettanti, see among others J. M. Kelly, *The Society of Dilettanti. Archeology and Identity in the British Enlightenment*, New Haven and London 2009. Kelly (p. 221) notices that the attitude of Stuart and Reyett was the result of the belief in the existence of an objective reality, which should be accurately documented; thus, their work does not involve any will to modify or embellish the landscape of the Athenian ruins. Romantic wanderers traveling to Greece will treat the observed world with much more freedom, using their imagination, and previous readings.

32 See, among others, C. M. Woodhouse, *The Philhellenes*, London 1969, pp. 66–93; W. St. Clair, *That Greece Might Still Be Free. The Philhellenes in the War of Independence*, London 1972.

33 To learn more about the influence of Winckelmann's works on the emerging Hellenism see also: A. Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal. Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History*, New Haven and London 1994; S.L. Marchand, *Down from Olympus. Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970*, Princeton, New Jersey 1996; É. Décultot, *Johann Joachim Winckelmann. Enquête sur la génèse de l'histoire de l'art*, Paris 2000; C. Güthenke, *Placing Modern Greece. The Dynamics of Romantic Hellenism 1770–1840*, London 2008, pp. 25–28; K. Harloe, *Winckelmann and the Invention of Antiquity. History and Aesthetics in the Age of Altertumswissenschaft*, Oxford 2013.

> common denominator allowing access to other fields and other expressive forms that would otherwise remain isolated by the particularity of the critical discourses to which they had hitherto owed their significance. This is why, under the name of culture, political life, artistic and non-artistic productions, intellectual achievements, history, popular expressions, and even the body can all be treated as expressive forms representing a common significance: culture becomes the medium through which every form of human activity may be examined.[34]

Winckelmann believed that the development of art is irreversibly related to the history of a nation, therefore we may claim that art experiences its own birth, bloom, and decline, all of which occurs simultaneously to the entire nation and its art. For the nation to develop, which consequently results in the development of art, there is a need for favorable external factors; according to Winckelmann, the most important one is political freedom. In this way, the proper relationship between individual freedom and national identity became the foundation without which the achievements of the Greek civilization would be impossible.

The connection between aesthetics and history contributed to the discovery of the Greek potential, useful in defining modern phenomena. Since Greek art did not survive the fall of Hellenic freedom, we may therefore discuss it only from the historical perspective. For this reason – Winckelmann emphasizes – the end of ancient art became the beginning of art history. However, this relates to yet another crucial thread of his deliberations, as his proposal to make the imitation of ancient Greeks the aim of modern endeavors required an explanation of how to imitate the unique history of a nation. As Ferris highlights, this issue forced Winckelmann's contemporaries to face the model of Greek history and to try to follow that path, but also, importantly, to reconsider their own attitude toward the past. On this level of history that cannot be repeated and the need for a critical approach to the past – including relentless crises and ruptures in continuity rather than a continuous accumulation of experiences – Winckelmann established the project to seek the ideal of perfect beauty.

> Inimitability is, in fact, another name for history. If modernity is to imitate Greece, then it must imitate the history that makes Greece inimitable, and this history is nothing less than its failure, its complete ruin. Modernity, in this context, becomes the repeated downfall of Greek art as it imitates the inimitable moment of Greek history and culture. As a result, the onset of such a thing as modernity will always announce the failure of the past to sustain itself.[35]

34 D.S. Ferris, *Silent Urns. Romanticism, Hellenism, Modernity*, Stanford 2000, p. 17.
35 Ferris, *Silent urns. Romanticism*, p. 33.

In this way and because of Winckelmann, ancient Greece became the indicator of the relationship between modernity and the past that constantly reminds us about the impossibility to repeat history. Incessant references to Greece contributed to the visualization of the state of permanent crisis that nations can emerge from only through the self-affirmation of their art. The aestheticization of history contributed to the birth of modern thought, which states that the past constitutes something dramatically ruptured that cannot be repeated. However, we must be aware of this to assess the current situation and locate ourselves in our own present.

Besides the absolutization of Greek art by Winckelmann, Wilhelm von Humboldt's elevation of Greek language and ancient history constituted another foundation of the unwavering nineteenth-century Hellenic influences in Europe. Humboldt set the foundations for a modern university in Berlin and the educational goal of shaping new students of gymnasiums and universities as modern Greeks, imbued with the knowledge of ancient history and relishing classical Greek writers in their original language version. In the treaty *Geschichte des Verfalls und Unterganges der griechischen Freistaaten* (History of the Decline and Fall of the Greek Free States; 1807–08), Humboldt assesses Greek history as an unprecedented phenomenon of constituting the "established standards of eternal beauty and greatness."[36] According to Humboldt, studying the history of Greek civilization is not only informative but also pleasant, as it presents an excellence that modern people may only try to live up to, which is our designated goal, as it is the creation of a divine order and wisdom:

> Therefore, for us the study of Greek history is not as it is with the history of other peoples. The Greeks step forth entirely from the selfsame place; although their destinies belong equally to the general chain of events, therein lies but their least importance in regard to us; and we would absolutely misjudge our relationship to them, were we to dare apply the yardstick of the rest of world history to them. Knowledge of the Greeks is not simply pleasing, useful, and necessary to us—it is only in them that we find the ideal which we ourselves would like to be and to bring forth. Although every other period of history enriches us with human wisdom and human experience, we acquire from the contemplation of the Greeks something more than the earthly, something even almost divine.[37]

36 W. von Humboldt, *O myśli i mowie. Wybór pism z teorii poznania, filozofii dziejów i filozofii języka*, selected, translated and introduced by E. M. Kowalska, ed. by M. J. Siemek, Warsaw 2002, p. 116.

37 Humboldt, *O myśli i mowie*, p. 116.

Thus, to learn Greek history is a necessity, as only this way allows us to sublimate the heart, broaden the horizon of mind, and restore people to the original state of freedom and courage, thanks to which a Greek artist could create in the natural reflex of intuition, while Greek citizens lived in communities "bound by the holiest bonds."[38] The history of Greece allows us to experience the state of human excellence, and it should inspire the desire to imitate Hellenic ideals and restructure the artistic and social life. Thus, Humboldt describes the attitude of the present toward the past events from the Greek and Roman history as the indicator of maturity and the level of development achieved by society; his approach is just as categorical as that of Winckelmann, although with another goal in mind:

> The test of modern nations is their feeling for antiquity, and the more they value the Greeks and Romans equally, or the Romans over the Greeks, the more those nations will fail to achieve their characteristic, specially set goal. For inasmuch as antiquity can be called ideal, the Romans participate therein only to the extent that it is impossible to separate them from the Greeks.[39]

Humboldt appreciates the Greek nature that freely and naturally connected the divine with the mundane (in which he follows Winckelmann's approach); however, he also emphasizes the collective and social character of Greek masterpieces, which he considers the achievements of the entire nation, instead of that of individuals. Therefore, to Humboldt, Greek lifestyle is the model for an ideal harmonization of the needs of an individual. An individual who desires to express own uniqueness in agreement with the requirements of social life and who fulfills own aims without rejecting the joy of existing in a group and joint overcoming of obstacles.

Humboldt's remarks finds apt complement in Johann Gottfried Herder's convictions expressed in the *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man; 1784–1791), which state that Greek history is worth researching not only for its extraordinary educational qualities that those ideal people incorporated into their history but especially for the fact that it hosts the beginnings of the philosophy of history. It was the Greeks who were the first to write down history. Thanks to that, people may look for their origins not only in the silent monuments of Egypt, Phoenicia, or Carthage but also in the tales perfected in form and narrative framework, which for the emerging historicism was a fundamental indicator of the coherence and value of a historical text.

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38 Humboldt, *O myśli i mowie*, p. 117.
39 Humboldt, *O myśli i mowie*, p. 125.

> Thus, the Philosophy of History looks upon Greece as her birthplace, and in it spent her youth. Even the fabling Homer describes the manners of several nations as far as his knowledge is extended. They who sung the exploits of the argonauts, the echoes of whose songs remain, entered into another memorable region. When proper history subsequently separated itself from poetry, Herodotus travelled over several countries, and collected with commendable infantile curiosity whatever he saw and heard.[40]

Therefore, Herder not only gives credit for the invention of history to the Greeks but also notes that history may only be imagined in the form of a written work, since other forms of its occurrence would not allow for the observation of universally binding principles of historical development. In his opinion, it is the search for these principles that created the need to reflect on human history. Therefore, the study of the past served to consider the relationship between human nature and the world that surrounds us.[41] Written down in the form of a tale, history enabled Herder to present it from the perspective of the absence of any non-human divine instance. Thus, the world's history became an inventory of geographical and climatic conditions, along with the resulting human choices and motivations.

The eighteenth-century Hellenism manifested itself mainly in the development of archaeological research, ancient artworks collections,[42] and publishing

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40 J. G. Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, trans. T. Churchill, London 1800, p. 353.

41 The method proposed by Herder assumed a natural similarity of laws ruling both the human world and nature. C. Güthenke notes that: "Herder, in particular, discussing the experience of history, an understanding of the past is possible because of the organic and analogous relationship between the natural and the human worlds, both of which can be analysed by a shared set of natural or ostensibly scientific laws" (Güthenke, *Placing Modern Greece*, p. 29).

42 By far the most famous collection was certainly the so-called "Elgin's marbles." Lord Elgin was a skilled British diplomat, envoy to Vienna, Brussels and Berlin. In recognition of his merits, he was accredited in Istanbul to strengthen Britain's friendship with the Ottoman Empire, work to drive the French out of the eastern part of the Mediterranean and allow the British to trade in the Black Sea. Thanks to an unexpected conflict with France, Turkey's existing ally in Europe and British aid to the Great Port during the war in Egypt, Elgin gained the right to carry out almost unlimited work in Athens (1801), especially on the Acropolis. He took advantage of this situation to gather as many works of art, sculptures, friezes and metopes as possible, often destroying the remains of ancient buildings, and then sent the entire collection to London allowing it to be admired in his private museum. Financial troubles forced him to sell all his works to the British Museum (1816), where they are currently located, although this did not prevent him from fleeing to France, in fear of his creditors. To learn more about Elgin's activity, see W.St. Clair, *Lord Elgin and The Marbles*, London, New York, Toronto 1967;

of the accounts of journeys to Greece and to the East.[43] The literary Hellenism was strongly influenced by classicism and the unity of literature and research on antiquity.[44] With the dawn of the nineteenth-century, Hellenism will become the result of many political interests and individual poetics, while literature will be dominated by the admiration of sincerity, sensitivity, and passionate self-expression.[45] The three different models of Romantic Hellenism – the works of Keats, Shelley, and Byron – aptly reflect the high level of complexity of the particular methods used to refer to the Greek heritage, as their origins are associated with a different treatment of Greek antiquity and stem from various life experiences.

Th. Vrettos, *The Elgin Affair. The Abduction of Antiquity's Greatest Treasures and the Passions It Aroused*, London 1997; D. Williams, "'Of public utility and public property': Lord Elgin and the Parthenon Sculptures," in: *Saisir l'Antique / Appropriating Antiquity. Collections et collectionneurs d'antiques en Belgique et en Grande – Bretagne au XIXe siècle*, eds. A. Tsingarida and D. Kurtz, Bruxelles 2002, pp. 103–164.

43 To learn more about the contemporary travel literature, see O. Augustinos, *Greece in French Travel Literature from the Renaissance to the Romantic Era*, Baltimore 1994.

44 As M.L. Clarke notes, Romantic literature rejected the model of an academic exploring the meanders of Greek literature and history, who at the same time creates Greek literature dedicated to the fight for the right to a private, personal relationship to Hellenic heritage. See M. L. Clarke, *Greek Studies in England 1700–1830*, Cambridge 1945, p. 164. On the other hand, it should be noted that the passion for studying Greek literature and language often yielded extraordinary results, exceeding the standard of academic knowledge of the time: "On the contrary, most of the great European writers of the epoch 1765–1825 knew much more about classical literature than their predecessors, and were more successful in capturing and reproducing its meaning. Shelley knew more Greek than Pope. Goethe knew more Greek than Klopstock. Leopardi, Hölderlin, Chénier were good scholars. The classics were not neglected during this period. Instead, they were reinterpreted: they were re-read with a different emphasis and deeper understanding" (G. Highet, *The Classical Tradition. Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature*, New York 1957, p. 355).

45 G. Highet describes this period as "revolutionary," emphasizing the versatile opposition of young artists in the field of the aesthetics of the time: "Another reason for speaking of revolutionary period in literature as anti-classical is that some of the emotional and artistic ideals it upheld were opposed to the ideals of Greco-Roman life and literature: at least, to those ideals as interpreted by the men of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In particular, restraint of emotion was now decried in favour of strong expression of feeling; polished workmanship was held inferior to improvisation and the gush of natural eloquence; and symmetry of the parts within a complete artistic whole was felt to be artificial, unnatural, dead" (G. Highet, *The Classical Tradition*, pp. 355, 357).

David Ferris emphasizes that the difference between the eighteenth-century classicism and the nineteenth-century Hellenism laid in the undermining of faith in the permanence of style and the discovery of the phenomenon, that style changes under historical circumstances:

> the distinction between classicism and Hellenism is less the opposition of two historical modes of understanding than a distinction created by a model of history represented by Hellenism. This can be clearly seen when it is remembered that classicism is defined by its representation of a style, whereas the emergence of Hellenism as exemplified by Winckelmann owes its existence to an account of how style develops as an indicator of historical change.[46]

According to such an approach, classicism seems to be only one of the stages that led to the birth of Hellenism. Whereas, the latter – understood by Ferris as the universal model of the historical development based on the impossibility of going back in time – thanks to Romanticism contributed to the creation of modern literature. Romantic poets will eventually make the theme of the historicized attitude to the past and the fall of Greece as the beginning of history into one of the core issues of their works. They will continue to problematize the relationship between the past and the present, so that the experiences from the ancient Greek world will facilitate an active change of their times.

Byron's relationship with Hellenism meant in the first place a refutation of the English model of education, which prompted students to become philologists, immersed in the world of Latin and Greek grammars.[47] In 1809, Byron for the first time traveled to Athens. This visit decided on the philhellenic nature of his later engagement in the Greek struggle for national liberation.[48] Instead of a fascination with ancient literature and history, Byron will focus his interest on contemporary Greece, the remnants of its glorious past, and on life surrounded by ruins. He will only be interested in history as an opportunity to awaken the passion for independence in the modern Greeks, as described in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812), when the speaker seeks the opportunity for a revival of freedom in Greece by recalling the places important to Greek history:

> Clime of the unforgotten brave!
> Whose land from plain to mountain-cave
> Was Freedom's home or Glory's grave!

46 Ferris, *Silent urns. Romanticism*, pp. 53–54.

47 See Clarke, *Greek Studies in*, pp. 166–168.

48 The issue is described in: P.C. Sotelo, *The Platonic Experience in Nineteenth-Century England*, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú 2006, pp. 148–149.

> Shrine of the mighty! can it be,
> That this is all remains of thee?
> Approach, thou craven crouching slave:
> Say, is not this Thermopylae?
> These waters blue that round you lave,—
> Oh servile offspring of the free—
> Pronounce what sea, what shore is this?
> The gulf, the rock of Salamis!
> These scenes, their story not unknown,
> Arise, and make again your own.[49]

Maria Kalinowska emphasizes that Byron's poetic imagination was formed in opposition to Winckelmann's aesthetic concepts, as Byron rejected the possibility of a "harmonious and conflict-free reconciliation of life and ideal, spirit and matter, existence and culture; Byron's vision of Greece is dominated by the images of disintegration, destruction, and decay."[50] In Byron's poetry, the decomposition of presented world and protagonists' flaws equally affect the sphere of the lyrical "I" who fashions himself in accordance with the motif of ruin, existence marked by suffering, or an inability to fully exist, similarly to the described Greek landscapes. The inner tear, a characteristic trait of the Romantic protagonists like Harold and Don Juan, will be consolidated by their commitment to the liberation of Greece. Byron's travel to Greece, his work on the creation and training of a battalion of soldiers, the Philhellens, but also the eventual death from exhaustion in Missolunghi (1824) made Byron a martyr who gave his life for the cause of Pan-European freedom. These facts will shape the nineteenth-century image of Byron as much as his work and earlier literary biography.

Contrary to Byron's approach, the Hellenism of Shelley based on a life-long reading of ancient texts as a persistent attempt to actualize the meanings included especially in the writings of Plato and Greek tragedians. As the monographer of Shelley's works, Jeniffer Wallace, writes:

> Instead of the passive and emotional response to Greece, the response is rather intellectual. Shelley spent his life reading Greek, ranging widely through the corpus of ancient literature, philosophy and history. As a result, his idea of Greece was not only based upon the imagination and descriptions of statues and landscapes, but crucially upon a series of texts. Rather than passively imbibing the translations and mediations of other

49 G. Byron, "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," in: T. Spencer, *Fair Greece, Sad Relic. Literary Philhellenism from Shakespeare to Byron*, London 1954, p. 292.

50 M. Kalinowska, *Grecja romantyków. Studia nad obrazem Grecji w literaturze romantycznej*, Toruń 1994, p. 14.

> scholars and dilettanti writers, he actively struggled to read the texts in the original, and hence Greece appealed directly to his mind as well as to his emotions.[51]

Shelley's works show a tear between two different concepts of Greece. On the one hand, he very early on saw Greece as a model of a completely different, free, and classless world with great potential offered by its radicalism and liberalism, which might be able to help changing the prevailing model of a stagnant society. On the other hand, Shelley noticed a tendency of using the Greek image as an educational framework to sustain existing social inequalities and the aparent political order. According to Wallace, the artificially created model of "Greekness" taught to all students was – for Shelley – promoting conformism, suppressing the diversity of beliefs, and made students withdraw from politics.[52] In the introduction to the poem *Hellas* (1821), Shelley clearly takes the side of the fighting Greeks, as he writes "We are all Greeks," while simultaneously proving that the roots of the European law, literature, religion, and art may be traced back to Greece. To oppose the contemporary degeneration of Greek inventions, Shelley will promote the image of the "Greek" model of antique life, focused on experiencing sexual pleasure and independence in a spiritually pagan world.[53]

Winckelmann's texts constitute an important point of reference also for the works of John Keats. Especially in his "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1820) and "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" (1817), Keats opposed the classical model of antiquity that can only be approached through the illustrative description of an object, usually a piece of art, as suggested by Winckelmann. "Ode on a Grecian Urn" is a poetic ekphrasis of a non-existent Greek vase. According to David Ferris, Keats intended to show this way a problematic relationship existing on two planes: between the antique and material work of art, and between the antique and its linguistic representation mediated by a material artifact, such as an ancient vase. The achieved effect leads to the conclusion that the only way to present antiquity now is to replace its presence with a literary voice, which is the idea considered in the poem "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer."

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51 J. Wallace, *Shelley and Greece. Rethinking Romantic Hellenism*, London and New York 1997, p. 4.

52 See Wallace, *Shelley and Greece,* p. 35.

53 It is important to remember that Shelley considered the history of the Greeks as a real reference point for the future. He claimed that: "What the Greeks were, was a reality, not a promise. And what we are and hope to be, is derived, as it were, from the influence and inspiration of these glorious generations," from: T. Webb, *English Romantic Hellenism 1700–1824*, Manchester 1982, p. 26.

> If, in distinction to the Renaissance, antiquity arises for the eighteenth century not through texts but through aesthetic objects, then Keats's insistence on antiquity as something that has to be told indicates his distance from the visual aesthetic that fuels eighteenth-century Hellenism and its concept of history. But, as Keats's sonnet continues, the terms in which this relation is presented also undergo a complication. No longer is this relation simply based on a distinction between a text and objects of visual experience. Now a text occupies the place of antiquity and it, too, becomes supplanted by a voice albeit a voice not its own.[54]

Due to the meaning that Keats atributed to literary representations of antiquity, it appears in his poetry as a phenomenon devoid of history, something that is yet to come and be discovered, like an unknown land. This is how Keats describes the experience of reading Homer in Chapman's translation:

> Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken[55]

Martin Aske provides a different interpretation of the fragment. He finds there a rather skeptical resignation, which means the impossibility of a direct and unmediated return to Homeric beginnings. The directly expressed desire is accompanied by the silent discovery of the lack of chance for its fulfillment. Keats' nostalgia would consist of the desire of conquering history and liberating oneself from its influence, which separates the poet from the past. Meanwhile, he cannot deny that Chapman's translation irretrievably distorted the Homer he deals with, and that translator's voice suppressed and replaced that of Homer.[56]

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Modern Hellenism occurred in various forms and was exploited in diverse ways. Its literary influences quickly became obsolete; however, this did not limit its presence in other fields. In Germany, it served the cause of national rebirth under the guise of neohumanism, and despite numerous revaluations it retained its influential role throughout the nineteenth century thanks to its links with the historical and philological sciences, but also with the educational system.[57] A similar phenomenon occurred in Great Britain, which made classical education an important factor of educational reform. Hellenism manifested there mainly in the form of the influence on architecture and fine arts, seamlessly

54 Ferris, *Silent urns. Romanticism*, p. 72.

55 J. Keats, *The Poems*, Introduction, Glossary and Notes by Paul Wright, London 2001, p. 43.

56 See M. Aske, *Keats and Hellenism. An Essay*, Cambridge 1985, pp. 42–43.

57 See Marchand, *Down from Olympus*.

merging with classicism.[58] In France, late literary Hellenism was an important factor in stimulating the development of new trends, such as Parnassianism.[59] Hellenism survived in the form of Philhellenism, as an active engagement in the liberation of Greece from the Turkish influence; or, as a message of political freedom to small nations. However, no matter where it emerged, Philhellenism immediately caused one undeniable result – the problematization of national identity – and, thus, became an important inspiration for the formation of the nineteenth-century national movements.[60]

3. Myth of the Greek-Slavic Unity in the Works of Adam Mickiewicz

The issue of Hellenism does not play a significant role in the study of Adam Mickiewicz's relations with Russia. In fact, we may even say that it was successfully pushed to the margins of the Mickiewicz studies and does not attract much interest of Polish or classical philologists. However, the character of this complex matter calls for a fresh approach to the problem that, while being a side issue, is at the same time an important thread. Mickiewicz's intellectual path began with a fascination with the Greek antique during his stay in Vilnius and resulted in the creation of texts important for the period. After his departure to St. Petersburg, Mickiewicz rapidly revaluated his approach, which fully showed once he became a lecturer in Lausanne and Paris. Mickiewicz criticized the broadly accepted method of speaking about a Hellenic turn in European culture. Interestingly, in this way he revaluated his own literary biography – as he believed – by eliminating threads clearly conducive to Russian propaganda. As for the primary theme of our reflections, I wish to focus mainly on the issue of the cultural and

58 See also: M.L. Clarke, *Classical Education in Britain 1500–1900*, Cambridge 1959; F.M. Turner, "Why the Greeks and not the Romans in Victorian Britain?," in: *Rediscovering Hellenism. The Hellenic Inheritance and the English Imagination*, ed. G.W. Clarke, with the assistance of J.C. Eade, Cambridge 1989, pp. 61–81.

59 To read more about Hellenism in France, see the classical treatise by R. Canat: *L'Hellénisme des Romantiques*, I: *La Grèce retrouvée*, Paris 1951; II: *Le Romantisme des Grecs 1826–1840*, Paris 1953; III: *L'Éveil du Parnasse 1840–1852*, Paris 1955.

60 Glenn Most approached the issue in the article from 2008, claiming that Philhellenism from its first appearance on the historical scene, became associated with European nationalisms and caused international rivalry of the superpowers in the fields of studies on history, culture and literature of ancient Greece. See G. Most, "Philhellenism, Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism," in: *Hellenisms. Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity from Antiquity to Modernity*, ed. K. Zacharia, Burlington 2008, pp. 151–167.

historical heritage of ancient Greece, which could become a point of reference for the Slavs, with the special consideration of Poland. I would like to propose scrutinizing the presence of Greek themes in some of Mickiewicz's works that express the complexity and specificity of his attitude toward European Hellenism and Philhellenism, because the changes in Mickiewicz's worldview are inseparable from his perception of the role of Russia in the world's history and, importantly, of Poland.

To say that the history of Polish culture is almost completely devoid of a hellenocentric element raises little doubt, as the point of reference for the former Polish Republic was not Athens but Rome. In Poland, the ability to speak Greek was extremely rare, which translated into the special character of the reception of Greek literature, philosophy, historiography, and theology, most often mediated by the Latin language. From the mid-seventeenth century to the partitioning period, the weak influences became increasingly illusory. Hence, it should not come as a surprise that Komisja Edukacji Narodowej (Commission of National Education) decided to remove Greek from secondary school curricula and establish Greek language chairs only in Krakow and Vilnius, both institutions of Szkoły Główne (Principal Schools).

Meanwhile, the Polish *latinitas* manifested itself in a fondness for traditions of Roman republicanism and foregrounding the ties with Western Christianity. As Jerzy Axer writes, "when we consider the behavior of the political nation – that is the nation of nobility of the former Polish Republic – the Latin culture and Roman semiotics of behavior, the Latin word and the Roman pose ruled absolutely."[61]

The situation lasted until the collapse of the Polish state at the end of the eighteenth century, because the old system of symbolic references began to slowly lose its relevance. The historical process that followed[62] surprisingly reversed the proportions of the Polish culture, so far traditionally Latin. After the defeat of the November Uprising (1830–31), those forced to emigrate became aware of a clear resemblance, although no longer to the fate of ancient Greeks. Instead, the

61 J. Axer, "Orka na ugorze. Filhellenizm wobec tradycyjnie łacińskiej orientacji kultury polskiej," in*: Filhellenizm w Polsce. Rekonensans*, eds. M. Borowska, M. Kalinowska, J. Ławski and K. Tomaszuk, Warsaw 2007, p. 40. See also: J. Axer, "'Latinitas'" jako składnik polskiej tożsamości kulturowej," in: *Tradycje antyczne w kulturze europejskiej – perspektywa polska*, ed. J. Axer, Warsaw 1995.

62 For the change of moods after the fall of the November Uprising and the behavior of the Germans during the movement of the insurgents to the west, when Poles were treated similarly to Greek insurgents see J. Axer, "Orka na ugorze," pp. 42–44.

sphere of associations that was more meaningful was that of the national liberation movement of the Greeks fighting against Turkey until a complete victory in front of European public.

This process overlapped with the belated reception of the intellectual and artistic current that began in Western Europe in the first half of the eighteenth century, and that is usually associated with such figures as Abbé Barthélemy and Johann Joachim Winckelmann. Today known as European Hellenism, this movement resulted in an increased interest in ancient Greece, which embodied freedom, the natural way of life, and the deification of art and man. According to some researchers, especially to Gilbert Highet,[63] this revolutionary time was characterized by an increased confidence in imagination and human genius, a favor to express feelings and a rejection of the excessive use of mythology, which was reduced to a purely ornamental role.

In Poland, Hellenism appeared relatively late. October 3, 1810 may be regarded as the symbolic date of its beginning, as on that day the classical philologist Gotfryd Ernest Groddeck began teaching in Vilnius. In Göttingen, he learned from Christian Gottlob Heyne, a student of Winckelmann and at the same time a mentor of the intellectual elite of the emerging Romanticism. The German scholar Groddeck transferred a philological seminar to the University of Vilnius, analogical to those that had been previously created in, among other places, Göttingen, Kiel, Königsberg, and Berlin. Scholars like Tadeusz Sinko,[64] Marian Plezia,[65] and Jerzy Axer[66] agree that Groddeck was the first fully educated Hellenicist in the Polish lands. His appearance at the University of Vilnius was related to the plans of the curator of the Vilnius district, Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski and his father, to restore the method of educating through teaching classical languages and literature in the spirit of modern humanism, which was a reference to the best educational models of the time.[67] Groddeck enthusiastically took up the work. We should remember that his aim was not only to provide

63 G. Highet, *The Classical Tradition. Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature*, New York 1957, pp. 355–367.

64 T. Sinko, *Mickiewicz i antyk*, Wrocław, Krakow 1957, pp. 66–94.

65 M. Plezia, "Geneza seminarium filologicznego G.E. Groddecka," *Eos,* 52/1962, pp. 403–425.

66 J. Axer, "Mickiewicz – zbuntowany filolog klasyczny (wypowiedź niebezinteresowna)," in: *Wykłady lozańskie Adama Mickiewicza*, eds. A. Nawarecki and B. Mytych-Forajter, Katowice 2006, pp. 28–37.

67 See D. Beauvais, *Szkolnictwo polskie na ziemiach litewsko-ruskich 1803–1832*, I: *Uniwersytet Wileński*, trans. I. Kania, Rome, Lublin 1991.

Vilnius students with the knowledge of ancient literature but also to educate future staff that could teach the youth at the gymnasium level of education. It was for this reason that Mickiewicz appeared at Groddeck's philological seminar and became undoubtedly his most famous student.

Researchers disagree in their assessment of Groddeck's influence on the worldview and work of young Mickiewicz. An adequate example of interpretive problems with complicated relations between the young poet and the noble professor is an article by Stefan Zabłocki "Mickiewicz w kręgu neohellenizmu" (Mickiewicz in the Circle of Neohellenism).[68] Zabłocki places the influence of Groddeck's seminar in the cultural history of Vilnius, emphasizing that the German scientist unofficially served as the ambassador of the revelatory intellectual fascinations with Greek art and the lands of the ancient Greece:

> Full of admiration for neohumanism, maybe already during his studies, Groddeck embraced the new trend at the University of Göttingen and – despite the underestimation and disregard of his initiatives by Śniadecki – founded a center for antique studies in Vilnius.[69]

Zabłocki locates Groddeck's influence in the context of the young Mickiewicz's vision of development, which assumes his slow abandonment of classicism. In this way, it is easy for Zabłocki to explain Mickiewicz's ambivalent attitude toward professor Groddeck. The beginner poet Mickiewicz – only just entering the uncertain field of Romanticism – should maintain a reserved attitude toward a scholar who tries to encourage him to devote his life to collecting and publishing with a philological commentary the poetry of an unknown Greek author, probably Eumenides. However, there remained a sphere of shared views on the birth and role of poetry in primitive societies, which founded Mickiewicz's respect for Groddeck that the former retained in later years. When Zabłocki discusses Mickiewicz's trip to Kaunas, his complicated situation – so when the reader would expect a description of Mickiewicz's relationship with the Western European literary Hellenism – he performs an interpretative volta and introduces a comparative commentary on Mickiewicz's Pindarism, completely abandoning the historical and cultural context of the period. This literary technique used by Zabłocki is still visible even in modern studies of Mickiewicz, which apparently cannot deal with the figure of Groddeck. Zabłocki's statements would be complete if he only emphasized that Vilnius from that period should

68 S. Zabłocki, "Mickiewicz w kręgu neohellenizmu," *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis*, *Classica Wratislaviensia*, Vol. 3, 73/1968, pp. 41–67.

69 Zabłocki, "Mickiewicz w kręgu," pp. 48–49.

not be described, as if it were a Polish Göttingen, where modern antique research was born without conflict and where methods based on the ideals of educating through teaching ancient languages and literature were implemented at the same time. For it is impossible to compare the Polish and German educational systems in the context of such historical situation without giving it any consideration. As Tadeusz Sinko notes:

> Hellenism . . . presented itself to the German progressives of the time – thirsty for something more profound than the French Enlightenment – as a new religion, more "human" than Christianity. The study of Greek antiquity became a cult, while concern for Greekness was to lead to a revival of true humanity, for which antiquity was supposed to be not only a model but also a norm, a rule of conduct and life. Therefore, W. Humboldt recommended that the managers of new classical gymnasiums shape youth into Greeks through education, fill them with the Hellenistic spirit, courage, and strength to study the truth, the energy of will to oppose external resistance, the joyful love of everything that is beautiful and perfect, and above all – human.[70]

These innovative rules are most completely expressed in Wilhelm von Humboldt's findings concerning the establishment of the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin (1809), which promoted the unity of research and education, along with the linking of development through acquired knowledge and the shaping of morality and character of students. According to Humboldt, as emphasized by Herbert Schnädelbach, "culture . . . is the process of self-development of the individual, who embodies in himself a true and moral world."[71] However, the association of the antique world with emerging individualism and freedom movements was an extremely fleeting achievement, since – after the Congress of Vienna – the Classics massively joined the representatives of loyalism and reactionism.

In its original form, Hellenism was supposed to encourage patriotism among the youth, but Groddeck remained completely indifferent to the longings of independence. One could even say that he critically approached patriotic convictions of his students. Kazimierz Mężyński aptly presents a realistic and complex image of Groddeck by emphasizing Groddeck's conservative views and his aversion to the idea of self-education among the academic youth.[72] Noteworthy, Groddeck's views on the aims and methods of classical studies perfectly aligned with the

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70 Sinko, *Mickiewicz i antyk*, p. 205.

71 H. Schnädelbach, *Philosophy in Germany 1831–1933*, trans. E. Matthews, Cambridge 1984, p. 176.

72 K. Mężyński, *Gotfryd Ernest Groddeck. Profesor Adama Mickiewicza. Próba rewizji*, Gdańsk 1974.

lofty intentions of neohumanists but diverged from the desires of young Polish patriots. In Groddeck's opinion, the classical philology was the most important field of research that enables observing the development of the human spirit over the centuries. Antoni Szantyr reconstructs Groddeck's views on the significance of the research on ancient literatures as follows: "The study of the classical philology holds values that educate the mind better than other sciences, because it develops all intellectual forces of people, if only one has the right scope and the right method."[73]

The knowledge of dead languages – Latin and Greek – was not Groddeck's aim per se, but only a chance to learn about the achievements of two societies that reached the heights of artistic and intellectual achievements. Such a judgement was related to his unquestioning praise of ancient literature, visible in the article "O celu i sposobie uczenia starożytnej klasycznej literatury w szkołach i gimnazjach" (On the Purpose and Method of Teaching Ancient Classical Literature in Schools and Gymnasiums) from 1805. Only literature that is "original, simple and natural"[74] serves to shape the human mind, which should draw inspiration to discover innovative ideas from the past, as opposed to modern literature that is unnatural, uncouth, or overly refined. Thus, since Groddeck treated literature in a utilitarian manner and considered its study to reinforce the body and mind, he condemned practically every artistic activity, because it destroyed the good taste shaped by perfect ancient patterns. It is easy to see that both the Philomaths – a secret student organization co-founded by Mickiewicz – and Groddeck followed the ideal of developing the human spirit, but they perceived the potential use of this process of (self-) improvement differently. Groddeck desired to educate decent specialists who would be modern educated people yet formed like the ancient Greeks. On the other hand, the Philomaths were interested in work devoted to the Polish nation, as Mickiewicz puts it in his letter "O planie nowej organizacji Towarzystwa" (On the Plan for the New Organization of the Society), seeking to:

> *spread as far as possible thorough enlightenment among the Polish nation; to better by instruction; to ground the nationality unwaveringly; to expand liberal principles; to awaken the spirit of public action, of dealing with things concerning the entire nation;*

73 A. Szantyr, "Działalność naukowa Godfryda Ernesta Grodka," in: *Z dziejów filologii klasycznej w Wilnie*, ed. J. Oko, Wilno 1937, p. 89.

74 Szantyr, "Działalność naukowa Godfryda," p. 91.

> *finally, to form, raise, and establish public opinion.* I would also add: to strive to spread certain principles of morality, so strongly deteriorated among youth.[75]

Mickiewicz's skepticism toward European Hellenism may originate in, among other things, the difficult relation with Groddeck, who did not allow Mickiewicz to defend his master's thesis and eventually took offence at him. The reason for such development of their relationship lies in their different approach to the application of the knowledge on antiquity. While Groddeck considered the study of ancient literature to bring satisfaction in itself, Mickiewicz demanded from classical philology, as Axer puts it, "a chance for a dialog with the present."[76] As a result, Groddeck became for Mickiewicz the symbol of the ease with which one may turn passion for ancient literature and culture into a resignation from actively changing the world and – what is worse – into a politicized fight against the Latin Christianity and vernacular cultures.[77]

For the first time, Mickiewicz posed the issue of the specificity of Greek culture in his poem "Do Joachima Lelewela" (To Joachim Lelewel; 1822).[78] There,

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75 A. Mickiewicz, "O planie nowej organizacji Towarzystwa," in: A. Mickiewicz, *Dzieła. Wydanie Rocznicowe*, VI: *Pisma filomackie. Pisma polityczne z lat 1832–1834*, eds. M. Witkowski, Cz. Zgorzelski in association with A. Paluchowski, Warsaw 2000, p. 49.

76 Axer, *Mickiewicz – zbuntowany filolog klasyczny*, p. 31.

77 An important issue which we are omitting, as it has already been undertaken in previous research, is the poet's attitude to Byron's work and his influence on Mickiewicz's views on the role of Greek civilisation. It should be noted, though, that this influence had to be limited, as Mickiewicz particularly emphasized Byron's role as an important participant of the present, actively responding to the political and military challenges of the period. This is indicated in the article by Goethe and Byron, among others, in which the English artist was compared with Greek poets (such as Pindar, Alcaeus and Tyrteus), engaged in the affairs of the world, who observe and describe, unlike Homer, who was focused on learning the secrets of the past. Surely Mickiewicz would agree with Byron's criticism of the dandruffy robbery of Greece of works of its works of art and other memorabilia of its past, e.g. by Lord Elgin. As time goes by, the Byron and Hellenic threads seem to be less and less connected in Mickiewicz's thinking.

78 For interpretations to date, see also: A. Witkowska, "Historiozoficzna lekcja romantyka. O wierszu *Do Joachima Lelewela*," *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 3/1961, pp. 23–49; D. Seweryn, *"…jak tam zaszedłeś". Mickiewicz w szkole klasycznej*, Lublin 1997; J. Fiećko, "Polityczne podteksty wiersza 'Do Joachima Lelewela,'" in: *Adam Mickiewicz i kultura światowa. Materiały z międzynarodowej konferencji Grodno – Nowogródek 12–17 maja 1997 r. w 5 księgach,* Vol. 1, eds. S. Makowski and E. Szymanis, Warsaw 1999; M. Śliwiński, "Grecja i Rzym w wierszu Mickiewicza *Do Joachima Lelewela*," in: *Antyk romantyków – model europejski i wariant polski. Rekonesans*, eds. M. Kalinowska and B. Paprocka-Podlasiak, Toruń 2003; J. Borowczyk, "Poeta i (zbuntowany) filolog. Mickiewicz

Mickiewicz refers to the history of Greece to present a synthesis of the love of beauty and freedom, which contributed to the creation of the model of civilization different from the Asian solutions:

> Among islands and bays
> The frail Greek ruled on common matters,
> Moving like the animals called myrmidons
> From whom he thought to take origin.
> He settles in foreign cities but makes them rich,
> Gives own shape to foreign gods;
> For unknown daughters of heaven the first of its kind
> He built the church of Beauty and Freedom.
> Filled with such inspiration the Greek
> Fought, discussed, loved, taught, and sang.[79]

Mickiewicz begins by recalling the interdependence between the past and the mind of an insightful researcher who explores it, who can reveal from a layer of events the hidden mechanisms that rule history. After all, such work serves the purpose of discovering the truth about the past – which brings to mind certain associations with Groddeck's method – to properly understand the present and reveal the sense of the approaching future, along with the opportunities and threats it brings. Such understood, history for Mickiewicz becomes a process of the human search for information about us, as it may only be reached by examining our own works and their fates – both material and non-material – by way of exercising power in various states with their laws, wars, artworks, and new ideas. In Mickiewicz's view, the history of Greece in this context is limited to a few rough details that still form a coherent image of a nation forced to constant movement, thus endowed with the qualities of vitality and entrepreneurship. The axis of Mickiewicz's description of history became Europe's struggle with Asia, the Greek-Persian wars, and the subsequent creation of the Hellenistic empire, which spread Greek culture in the East. The presentation of these events from the perspective of a conflict fundamental to the fate of the world made the Greece from Mickiewicz's poem seem to be an artificial, rationalistic creation that adopted such unexpected shapes solely because of the specific climatic and geographic conditions experienced by the Greeks. In this respect, Mickiewicz follows Montesquieu's Enlightenment conviction about the determining role of

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wobec klasycyzmu (do roku 1830). Z glosą o 'Wykładach lozańskich,'" in: *Klasycyzm. Estetyka – Doktryna literacka – Antropologia*, ed. K. Meller, Warsaw 2009.

79 A. Mickiewicz, "Do Joachima Lelewela," in: Mickiewicz, *Dzieła. Wydanie Rocznicowe*, Vol. 1: *Wiersze*, ed. Cz. Zgorzelski, Warsaw 1993, p. 145.

the environment in the history of every society, which agrees with the natural human character and in each community shapes a different "spirit." This rational conviction about the functioning of the unchanging rules that help shaping various groups of people and decide about their existence gave birth to the tendency to generalize historical phenomena and view Greek history as an abstraction. Therefore, the world presented by Mickiewicz was not concerned with the process of formation, birth, and growth. Mickiewicz focuses only on the slow decline of Greek customs, which ultimately destroyed the Hellenic empire.[80] This tendency of Mickiewicz to seek the rules governing Greece aptly corresponds to the foreword to Montesquieu's work *The Spirit of Laws* (1748):

> I have first of all considered mankind; and the result of my thoughts has been, that amidst such an infinite diversity of laws and manners, they were not solely conducted by the caprice of fancy. I have laid down the first principles, and have found that the particular cases follow naturally from them; that the histories of all nations are only consequences of them; and that every particular law is connected with another law, or depends on some other of a more general extent.[81]

Usually referred to as the inductive-empirical method, Montesquieu's method consisted of generalizing historical data to discover an ideal present in the history of any community or state, embodied in the system and the state of law, binding for a group of people. As a faithful student of the university of Enlightenment, Mickiewicz reiterated a similar conviction so as to quickly make significant corrections. The harmonious image of Greece, in love with freedom and art, clashed with the ominous vision of Rome, the world's tyrant. In the depiction of the Roman tyranny and its imperial invasiveness, which suppressed the Greek love for self-determination and co-deciding on the fate of the state by masses of citizens, Jerzy Fiećko[82] sees a falsification of historical reports, allowing for a clear

80 Certainly, Mickiewicz based his work on the fragment of *Dzieje starożytne* by Joachim Lelewel, in which he described the collapse of Greece, initiated by the Athenian-Spartinian struggle during the Peloponnese War: "A long series of massacres, sometimes inhumanly harsh, bloodied the places of meetings, as well as domestic shelters, those of people merry of entertainment and sanctity. The violence insulted the safety, the sanctified shelters; with cunning and betrayal it sought the means of protection against itself. ... The dying Polish Republics, deserted, devoid of virtues and noble feelings, lost their resilience and activity." See J. Lelewel, "Dzieje starożytne od początku czasów historycznych do drugiej połowy wieku szóstego ery chrześcijańskiej," in: J. Lelewel, *Dzieła*, IV: *Dzieje starożytne*, ed. T. Zawadzki, Warsaw 1966, pp. 161–162.

81 Ch. de Secondat, Montesquieu, *The Spirit of* Laws, trans. T. Nugent, Kitchener 2001, p. 14.

82 See Fiećko, "Polityczne podteksty wiersza," p. 56.

analogy to the recent past. As a result, Mickiewicz's work offers a clear suggestion about contemporary Russia. Mickiewicz's allusion consisted of a transformation of the idea of Moscow as the Third Rome, whose foundations he sought in the dark times of the Roman Empire and the medieval papal Rome. For the Caesars' Rome contradicted the cheerful Greek character, as the former had only one goal: to ruthlessly subjugate all independent peoples and take control over the contemporary world:

> So they took him, sleepy and free, in chains,
> The Romulus wolfkind, the Italian shepherds,
> Quarrelsome and raised by their own arguments,
> How to destroy neighbors with violence and cunning,
> Incessant aggressors, in times of peace
> They trained their arms for new robbery;
> Or they fought each other, only in agreement,
> When they jointly planned how to hurt another.[83]

At this point, Mickiewicz completely abandons the method of generalizing historical facts in order to propose a convoluted interpretation of Roman history. In this view, the splendor of Rome ended with the existence of enemies that the Romans could enslave. This was followed by the rule of tyrants: the emperors. The slow decline of the Roman Empire transformed it into a dead creature that had to surrender to the livelier Germanic peoples. A particularly surprising element in Mickiewicz's approach is the subordination of the dynamics of the Empire's development to external events. It was the enemies who determined the fate of Rome, as the former's initial weak resistance – including that of Greece itself – contributed to the growth of the splendor and wealth of Rome. Over time, barbarian invasion devastated the despotic superpower. The perspective adopted by Mickiewicz lacks room for the complicated process of transforming the republic into the empire; he also completely ignores the fact that the falling Rome was a country that adopted Christianity. Mickiewicz does not mention that the empire divided itself into the eastern and western part. Only later will he devote his attention to the former, which survived for the next millennium, seeking in Byzantium the presence of despotic tendencies whose historical continuation was Russia.

The second domination of Rome described in "Do Joachima Lelewela" occurred in the Middle Ages and was characterized by the growth of the power

83 Mickiewicz, "Do Joachima Lelewela," p. 145.

of the papacy, which dominated the secular monarchies and imposed its own vision of the world, far from the evangelical values:

> Meanwhile their abbots settled in their castles,
> A priest found his way to a cell, a nun moved behind bars;
> When a bull was fired, crowns rolled from thrones,
> Rome embraced earth with another set of arms.[84]

Thus, the Rome of Mickiewicz's poem is a counterbalance to the republican and libertarian tendencies that periodically recur in history to destroy the existence of countries like the First Polish Republic. For the latter, Mickiewicz determined the role of a place where the spirit of the old Greece can be reborn; in fact, this is the only possible interpretation of the ending of the poem's historical part, which summarizes the achievements of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic period.

We should pay special attention to two texts by Mickiewicz – "O poezji romantycznej" (On Romantic Poetry; 1822) and the "Foreword" to Part IV of *Forefathers' Eve* (1823) – as these works define the particular myth of the Greek-Slavic cultural unity. As Maria Kalinowska indicates,

> in Mickiewicz's works, the classical harmony of Greece is not given but acquired by man. The original ancient Greece has nothing to do with the gentle Arcadian South described by Brodziński. The ancient Greece is reminiscent of the North, with its dark, bleak, unshaped, and monstrous imagination, but also with a kind of disjunction between the ideal and the sensual.[85]

The essay "On Romantic Poetry" presents a vision of ancient Greece, in whose history of we may observe the processual character of human nature's self-improvement. One that gradually shapes own harmonious and versatile skills, enriches its imagination, and hence improves political and religious institutions. From his fascination with the classical period in the poem "Do Joachima Lelewela," Mickiewicz retreats into the act of shaping the Greek spirit by evoking the phenomenon of the birth of philosophy, which allowed him to employ rational speculation as a tool to decide on the issues of the *polis*.

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84 Mickiewicz, "Do Joachima Lelewela," p. 146.

85 M. Kalinowska, *Grecja romantyków. Studia nad obrazem Grecji w literaturze romantycznej*, Toruń 1994, p. 47. It should be mentioned that in the quoted work M. Kalinowska precisely discusses the first nineteenth-century references to the image of Greece in Polish literature, which appeared in the works of Kazimierz Brodziński and Maurycy Mochnacki.

> Finally, Greek minds – elevated, curious, persistent – began searching for the truth early; they constantly practiced their reasoning by taking various, usually original paths; therefore, the philosophical spirit awakened, they became accustomed to think diligently and deeply, which is how they trained, strengthened, and organized reason.[86]

The favorable coincidence resulted in the appearance of many excellent Greek artists who skillfully used archaic images and beliefs of their ancestors. This maintained a link between the sphere of art and community, it was a harmonious use of the potential of reason, imagination, and feelings, which in the case of artworks achieved "greatness with simplicity, form with variety, beauty with ease."[87] In this way, Mickiewicz used and processed the terms of "noble simplicity and sedate grandeur" invented by Winckelmann. We should remember that "On Romantic Poetry" was an introduction to Mickiewicz's first poetry book *Ballady and romanse* (Ballads and romances), so the lack of references to the Slavic language is a deliberate procedure. Folk poetry became a reference point for his own work, whose source Mickiewicz sought in the ancient Greece. He placed in the center of interest love for balanced proportions, which he understood as the harmonious relationship between reason and feeling, but also between theoretical erudition and archaic nature of folk imagery.[88]

Mickiewicz applied a similar technique to the Slavic-Greek parallel in the "Foreword" to Part IV of *Forefathers' Eve*. Also in this case, his aim was to find original space and a certain cultural nucleus that radiates on the history of civilization. Mickiewicz claimed that "it is noteworthy that the custom of offering food to the dead seems to be common to all pagan peoples: in ancient Greece in the times of Homer, in Scandinavia, in the East, and on the islands of the New World."[89] Michał Kuziak emphasizes the palimpsest nature of the world in *Forefathers' Eve* suggested by Mickiewicz: "We may assume that, according to Mickiewicz, there generally is a single source that differentiates itself in history, while at the same time providing a hidden basis for cultural universalism."[90]

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86 A. Mickiewicz, "O poezji romantycznej," in: A. Mickiewicz, *Dzieła. Wydanie Rocznicowe*, V: *Proza artystyczna i pisma krytyczne*, ed. Z. Dokurno, Warsaw 1996, p. 111.

87 Mickiewicz, "O poezji romantycznej," Warsaw 1996, p. 111.

88 About theory of imagination and its Platonic dimension, see M. Rudaś-Grodzka, *"Sprawić, aby idee śpiewały". Motywy platońskie w życiu i twórczości Adama Mickiewicza w okresie wileńsko-kowieńskim*, Warsaw 2003, pp. 269–274.

89 A. Mickiewicz, *Dziady cz. IV*, in: A. Mickiewicz, *Dzieła. Wydanie Rocznicowe*, III: *Dramaty*, ed. Z. Stefanowska, Warsaw 1995, p. 13.

90 M. Kuziak, *Wielka całość. Dyskursy kulturowe Mickiewicza*, Słupsk 2006, p. 61.

Mickiewicz declares the existence of a deep kinship between the Slavic and Greek world, emphasizing not so much the fact of repeating the same gestures in the archaic Greece and contemporary Lithuania, Prussia, and Courland, but rather the fact that the Slavic culture follows the cultural path paved by the ancient Greeks. After all, building a genealogy for the ritual of the Forefathers' Eve did not intend to construct a generally applicable model of culture. The aim was to place the Slavs in the line of truly pagan peoples, whose archaic nature remained visible. At the same time, we must emphasize the superior role of Greeks in the described ritual, because Mickiewicz clearly stresses that himself: had it not been for the Greek tragedy, we would have no intellectual model allowing us to name the phenomenon of communities that build their identity through this particular contact with the dead. This is why not only the repetition of the exact same gestures is important but also the meaning of the Forefathers' Eve as a repetition of an aspect of Greek culture.

While living in Russia, Mickiewicz fundamentally revalued his attitude toward Greece. The poet became skeptical toward antiquity, emphasizing that the extremely limited access to the past creates opportunities for various manipulations. He describes this in the poem "Na pokój grecki. W domu księżnej Zeneidy Wołkońskiej w Moskwie" (One a Greek Room. In the House of Princess Zeneida Volkonskaya in Moscow; 1827). Written in the convention of a poetic joke and salon flirt, the text touches upon the problem of the inability to reach the "genius of Greece," embodied in the collected monuments of the Greek antiquity:

> Here a traveller does not dare nudge a stone with her leg,
> From the stone through a relief looks out the face of a god;
> He is angry, seemingly ashamed of the disgrace,
> He hates the people that trample on the old faith,
> So he hides back in the bosom of marble,
> Out of which he was snatched long ago by woodcutters' hands.[91]

Jerzy Borowczyk notes that the souvenirs from the collection of Princess Volkonskaya are "subject only to an external description. Contact with the classical past is doubly broken."[92] On the one hand, it is impossible to read the signs of history, as the chance to understand the reality of the people from that is lost forever and, on the other hand, "the subject that desires to be studied stands

91 A. Mickiewicz, "Na pokój grecki. W domu księżnej Zeneidy Wołkońskiej w Moskwie," in: A. Mickiewicz, *Dzieła. Wydanie Rocznicowe*, I: *Wiersze*, p. 267.

92 Borowczyk, "Poeta i (zbuntowany) filolog," p. 318.

helpless, incapable of understanding the traces of its own heritage.[93] Mickiewicz's poem indicates yet another element connected with the phenomenon of collecting Greek art. The dead feel of the room is intensified by the fact that all objects are torn out of their natural surroundings. An educated Westerner, when looking at the collected statues, obelisks, and urns, must have felt the barbarity associated with robbing the lands of historic Greece of sculptures, mostly taken from tombs and temples. The playful tone of Mickiewicz's poem seems to mask the confusion of the exiled man, who notices the effects of the brutal looting, offending the world of ancient Greek beliefs and people whose tombs were robbed. For Mickiewicz, the death of ancient Greece thus became a personally witnessed fact, so in the following years he will deal only with the heirs of Greek ideas.

At the same time, Mickiewicz's suspicion of Hellenism must have also increased, as under the guise of fascination with the Greek past and the current state of its historical lands, it sometimes turned into predatory robbery, a good example of which is the life of Lord Elgin.[94] This influential aristocrat took advantage of his position as a diplomat in Istanbul and deprived Athenian Acropolis of its most valuable reliefs, metopes, and sculptures, later transporting them to London. Mickiewicz wrote this poem only about a dozen years after those events, as it was only in 1816 that Elgin's collection was relocated to the British Museum. At the beginning of the twentieth century, while visiting Rome, Pavel Muratov will address the problem of collecting and storing works from ancient Greece. He will contrast the southern light and Mediterranean climate with the artificial surroundings of the building in London, which completely eliminates the uniqueness of Elgin's collection:

> Who could claim that after seeing the masterpieces of Greek art in the halls of the London Museum, he managed to preserve the image of Greece in his soul, going out to the eternally wet and busy Strand or strolling among the northern melancholic, foggy, and Romantic thickets of Hyde Park? London's *genius loci* is the complete opposite of the genius of the lands where the marbles of Parthenon and Demeter of Knidos saw daylight.[95]

Muratov forms an exceptionally controversial opinion, which sounds surprisingly contemporarily: "One day it will become obvious that objects of ancient

93 Borowczyk, "Poeta i (zbuntowany) filolog," p. 318.

94 See also: W.St. Clair, *Lord Elgin and The Marbles*, London 1967.

95 P. Muratow, *Obrazy Włoch*, trans., with annotations and afterword, by P. Hertz, Vol. 1, Warsaw 1988, p. 283.

art are more suited to a dignified death, inflicted by time and nature, than to a lethargic dream in a museum."[96] It should not come as a surprise that the monuments admired by Mickiewicz in a room in Moscow must have evoked in him at least ambiguous feelings. We should note that the poem begins with a picture of a dark space, with only individual exhibits emerging from it, and the way of weaving subsequent objects into the description reflects their chaotic and lacking composition. Thus, this is a complete opposite of the spaces designed for marble sculptures by ancient artists, who "called" them into existence. Hence the speaker's call:

> Oh, let all these deities over the land of memories
> Eternally slumber in a marble and bronze sleep![97]

There are two ways to understand this fragment. On the one hand, it is a tribute to the uniqueness of the observed works, which should be admired forever. However, on the other hand, the evocation of the deities clearly indicates the sphere of ancient religiousness, which was disregarded and desecrated by collectors' greed. Thus, a sleep of past gods may be connected with leaving the remains of dead civilizations in peace due to the deceased and cult objects. In this way, the speaker wants to correct his mistake, especially that of entering the world of the dead with impunity. The salon convention of the poem conceals the fact that Mickiewicz describes a funeral space filled with remnants of antiquity, namely findings from robbed cemeteries. Hence, the "angry" and "disgraced" face of the deity, a capital resembling a skull, a thought like a mummy "captured in a balsamic bed." We should probably associate the incomplete salvation from the end of the poem – besides social subtext – with Mickiewicz's quasi-mourning situation, who is the only one trying to save the memory of the dead civilization of antiquity, as he moves beyond the level of sterile aesthetic awe for the shapes and proportions of the marble ruins.

Mickiewicz's departure for St. Petersburg ends a certain stage of his fascination with Hellenism. It is then that "Hellenity" gains a "Byzantine"[98] connotation

96 Muratow, *Obrazy Włoch*, p. 286.

97 Mickiewicz, "Na pokój grecki. W domu księżnej Zeneidy Wołkońskiej w Moskwie," p. 268.

98 See J. Ławski, "Bizancjum Mickiewicza. Cesarstwo Wschodnie w 'Pierwszych wiekach historii polskiej,'" in: *Antyk romantyków: model europejski i wariant polski*, eds. M. Kalinowska and B. Paprocka-Podlasiak, Toruń 2003; M. Kuziak, "Bizancjum Mickiewicza (na podstawie *Literatury słowiańskiej*)," in: *Bizancjum – Prawosławie – Romantyzm. Tradycja wschodnia w kulturze XIX wieku*, eds. J. Ławski and K. Korotkich, Białystok 2004.

in Mickiewicz's works and begins to be associated with the problem of Russia in the cultural space of Europe. However, we should note that the process of revaluation of Mickiewicz's opinions was of a long-term nature that lasted at least several years. In two important texts from 1827–1829, Mickiewicz will still refer to erudite examples from the history of Greek poetry. In the article "Goethe i Bajron" (1827), he will still stress the need to draw inspiration from foreign cultures, like in the case of the decline of the literature of ancient Greeks, while in the work "O krytykach i recenzentach warszawskich" (On Warsaw Critics and Reviewers; 1829), he will refer to the presence of dialectal differences in the Old Greek language. However, Mickiewicz's subsequent works show a change of beliefs. In *The Books of the Polish People and of the Polish Pilgrimage* (1832), Mickiewicz suggests that the high level of science in ancient Greece, especially the development of philosophy, did not stop the fall of the Hellenic world. Meanwhile, the revival of the Greek state is to be possible only many centuries later, when the memory of the intellectual achievements of the Ancients and their works disappeared, and the nation found in itself a secondary "simplicity." *The Books* refrain from explicitly accusing philosophy of bringing historical catastrophe to Greece, but in the following years Mickiewicz will only reinforce his argument.

At this point, we should make a reservation essential for further considerations. Mickiewicz will be particularly suspicious of the tradition of the Greek sophistic, which, according to the poet, contributed to the rationalization of most aspects of the Hellenistic civilization. "Pierwsze wieki historii polskiej" (The First Centuries of Polish History; 1836–38) reveals the process of darkening the image of Greece as a waste land by the actions of philosophers focused solely on constructing sophisms and rhetorical persuasion that would overturn any judgment:

> In the East, the Church encountered other difficulties. The West was the camp and courtroom of paganism, the East was its academy; there rested all power, here all pagan reason. The immense philosophical system, the immeasurable abundance of literature taken from and imbued with paganism, filled the minds of the Greeks. The philosophers, having long lost all moral feeling, no longer knew the difference between good and evil, so they boasted that they could turn every reasoning to two sides with equal ease. The rhetors introduced empty treatises without a moral purpose. The lawyers did not know where to seek the rule of law, and in the end they agreed that one certain axiom in the moral world is power, the emperor, and the law is what the emperor likes.[99]

99 A. Mickiewicz, "Pierwsze wieki historii polskiej," in: A. Mickiewicz, *Dzieła. Wydanie Rocznicowe*, VII: *Pisma historyczne. Wykłady lozańskie*, ed. J. Maślanka, Warsaw 1996, pp. 45–46.

Mickiewicz traces the rise of the Byzantine Empire back to the spirit of the Greek sophistry and simultaneously pushes back the moment of the birth of Byzantium to St. Paul's arrival at the Areopagus because, according to him, this gathering determined the shape of Eastern Christianity:

> The Greeks did not throw themselves violently at the apostles, but listened to them indifferently, as ordinary public speakers. Seeing that the people were accepting the new faith more and more widely, they challenged it to a dispute. An unheard mass of writings and words came of those trained for so long in the sophistic, and the scholars who were not concerned about the purpose of life on earth and about the life to come, began to light up when it came to spreading syllogisms. This spirit of education also influenced the Church. Hence, more and more general councils, less and less propaganda, more teachers, less martyrs in the East.[100]

In Mickiewicz's view, the excess of philosophical speculation paradoxically contributed to the disappearance of thought and to spiritual emptiness, while this complicated process – in which pure faith had to give way to a careful deliberation of dogmatic issues – resulted in resting all the power over the church in the hands of the emperor. Mickiewicz identifies the Greek tendency to analyze every element of existence by using rational judgment and the centuries-long tradition of philosophizing with the futile pursuit of theological disputes that led Christianity under the influence of Hellenic philosophy. In reference to Thomism, Józef Tischner emphasizes the multi-faceted process of translating religious texts into the speculative language of philosophy that "inserted its own language and images in place of the language of the Revelation and created with it a more or less uniform whole."[101] Mickiewicz treats this process as contrary to the teachings of Christ, because it turned faith into thinking, which resulted in the surrender of the Church to the secular authority. It is impossible to ignore the fact that Mickiewicz's criticism of the relations between the Christian religion and the authorities in Byzantium is a clear allusion to analogical practices in the Russian Empire. Hence, he indicates the insurmountable barrier between the Polish and Russian approaches to faith.

This process of Mickiewicz's change of attitude toward Greece is best illustrated in his lecture given on November 12, 1839, in Lausanne. In a brilliant erudite speech, he presents the reasons why he definitively abandoned thinking of the archaic Greece as a regressive anthropological utopia. He emphasizes the ideologization of a language that uses an idealized image of relations among the

100 Mickiewicz, "Pierwsze wieki historii polskiej," p. 46.
101 J. Tischner, *Myślenie według wartości*, Krakow 1982, p. 207.

ancient Greeks. The danger inherent in the image of Greece had a dual dimension for Mickiewicz and could serve to promote neopaganism or, on the contrary, religious commitment, although with a specific Orthodox character.

> Should you ask me now, gentlemen, which of the two literatures we should give priority to, I reply that a modern writer who seeks the honor of classicism, that is to say, universality, would inevitably have to combine Roman artistry with Greek directness. In recent times, some tried in vain to only imitate the Greeks and to revive naive folk song or Pindar's Bacchic exaltation. This means as much as wanting to take humanity back to the era of Homer. Our modern enthusiasts found only inspiration in the works of their role models, Goethe and Byron; they did not appreciate their deep studies, especially the study of the Roman classics.[102]

Mickiewicz expresses at the same time an extremely sober and critical opinion about European Hellenism. In this way, he surprisingly revaluates his own youthful solutions. He seeks to balance his tendency to overestimate the natural Greek inspiration with the Roman love for the conscious use of literary forms and the functionalization of creative enthusiasm. Mickiewicz abandons the possibility to replicate Hellenic models in literature in order to consistently promote the Roman model of creativity, although it is a completely different Rome from the one presented in his poem "Do Joachima Lelewela." Mickiewicz invites his listeners in Lausanne to reflect on a phenomenon that fully exceeded the course of Latin literature. In his lectures he discusses the text *Relatio Symmachi ad Augustos*, which describes the reaction of pagan dignitaries to the removal of the statue of victory from the senate altar. Mickiewicz focused on the poetic response of Prudentius, who attempted to refute the arguments of Symmachus. Mickiewicz concentrates on the new quality introduced to literature by Christian artists. Based on a body of images and philosophical ideas taken from the pagan literature, Christian artists subjected their work to a radical process of moralization, which reversed the phenomenon of ruthless personal invective known from Greece and Rome:

> [Prudentius] treats Symmachus with due consideration, with respect, calls him his master and humbles himself before his abilities and knowledge. This humanity in polemics is a new phenomenon. We find nothing like that in the [output of] satirical writers of Greece or Rome.[103]

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102 A. Mickiewicz, "Wykłady lozańskie," in: A. Mickiewicz, *Dzieła. Wydanie Rocznicowe*, VII: *Pisma historyczne. Wykłady lozańskie*, ed. J. Maślanka, Warsaw 1996, pp. 173–174.

103 Mickiewicz, "Wykłady lozańskie," p. 247.

The humility and tolerance for the representative of the pagans, which did not stop Prudentius from rejecting the demands of Symmachus, are for Mickiewicz proof of the uniqueness of Latin Christian writers and the crowning achievement of classical literature. Moreover, Mickiewicz's arguments indicate that he definitively abandoned the thought of ancient Rome as a tyrant, whose only purpose was to expand his sphere of influence. Mickiewicz distances himself from a one-sided vision of the Roman history in favor of emphasizing the multi-faceted and unusual nature of its history. We should note that Rome will no longer appear in the context of comparisons with the history of Russia.

In his Paris lectures, no longer limited by the specificity of the situation in Lausanne, Mickiewicz describes the relationship between Poland and Russia,[104] often using ancient Greece as a background for illustrating a problem selected in such a way as to show the differences between what is Polish and Greek. During the third lecture of the first course, Mickiewicz said:

> Nothing truer than the words that the great poet uttered in the Chamber of Deputies: "The power of Russia is as patient as time, as vast as space." It has never marked itself a borderline. Polish patriotism also knows no limits. It is not a selfish concept or material love for the homeland of the ancient Greeks and Romans, it is not attached to the *Capitol* and does not necessarily need a *forum*, it does not enclose itself in any personification.[105]

Mickiewicz repeats in his Paris lectures most of the remarks that already appeared in his "Pierwsze wieki historii polskiej." In his opinion, the philosophically sophisticated Greeks contributed to the schism, while dogmatic reasons were only a pretext for the political ambitions of the Eastern Christianity:

> The beginnings of apostasy existed already in the first centuries of Christianity. As we know, Greece was the eternal homeland of philosophers. Trained in dialectics and disputes, it did not want to and could not surrender to the authority of Roman bishops, which began to organize itself in the sixth century and was already accepted by many patriarchs of the universal Church. In fact, the Greeks sought in dogmas only pretenses to break with less civilized countries and, at the time, invaded by barbarians.[106]

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104 On the presence of Russian themes in Mickiewicz's lectures see, among others: K. Mężyński, *Rosja w wykładach paryskich Mickiewicza*, Poznań 1938; S. Pigoń, "Dramat dziejowy polsko-rosyjski w ujęciu Mickiewicza," in: S. Pigoń, *Poprzez stulecia. Studia z dziejów literatury i kultury*, collected and edited by J. Maślanka, Warsaw 1985; J. Fiećko, "Rosja w prelekcjach paryskich Adama Mickiewicza," in: *Księga Mickiewiczowska. Patronowi uczelni w dwusetną rocznicę urodzin 1798-1998*, eds. Z. Trojanowiczowa and Z. Przychodniak, Poznań 1998.

105 A. Mickiewicz, "Wykład III," in: A. Mickiewicz, *Dzieła. Wydanie Rocznicowe*, VIII: *Literatura słowiańska. Kurs pierwszy*, ed. J. Maślanka, Warsaw 1997, p. 36.

106 Mickiewicz, "Wykład III," pp. 142–143.

The process whose source Mickiewicz sought in the intrigue of the Byzantine clergy, especially that of Photios, did not culminate until Russian tsardom. It was then that the Eastern Christianity definitively lost its independence. The loss of the possibility to document own history proved to be particularly acute:

> Eventually, Russia undertook final measures to destroy all freedoms of the Eastern Church. As the only literate people around, the monks wrote chronicles. Someone must have clearly thought that independently written chronicles may be dangerous, and therefore the authorities banned writing them. Thus, instead of the unlimited freedom that the Greek Church intended to achieve, it became completely voiceless.[107]

In the Paris lectures, Mickiewicz reinterpreted his own early ideas about the cultural affinity of Greeks and Slavs. In the eighteenth lecture of the first course, Mickiewicz proves something opposite to the solutions he adopted during his stays in Vilnius and Kovno. He claims that Slavic origins should be sought in the fate of the Pelasgians, the mythical people inhabiting Greece before the Greeks. Mickiewicz presents the parallel development of the Greeks and the ancestors of Slavs by claiming that the conflict between these two groups, hidden in an earlier stage of history, intensified during the Byzantine era. Mickiewicz uses many analogies in describing the Greeks and Russians, especially in the context of their methods of governance. The negative background of Mickiewicz's reflections is the treatment of the Slavs. In this respect, the attitude of the Byzantine emperors and Ivan the Terrible seems extremely similar:

> It can be said that the Greek emperors put all their cunning into bringing their own country to ruin. They disarranged the Slavic countries and sought to remove them from the influence of Rome; they banished Catholic bishops from Bulgaria; they established Eastern rites in Serbia; finally, they instilled in the Greeks of Asia Minor a deep hatred for the Catholic Church.[108]
>
> By their subversion and greed, these knyazes first managed to destroy the local knyazes, their relatives; this heritage later moved to knyazes with great political abilities. Ivan the Terrible was the one who particularly implemented this method.[109]

The Byzantine catastrophe coincided in Mickiewicz's view with the growing significance of Russia. In fact, we may say that Russia assumed the historical place of the rational, material creation that was the Byzantine Empire. The search for the sources of Russian spirit in the philosophical traditions of ancient Greece via Byzantine religion is a characteristic feature of Mickiewicz's thinking about the

107 Mickiewicz, "Wykład III," p. 143.
108 Mickiewicz, "Wykład III," p. 357.
109 Mickiewicz, "Wykład III," p. 411.

origins of civilization. However, this is not the only reason behind his references to Greek history in the Paris lectures. The poet creates a network of relations between the ancient Greeks, their rational and materialistic approach to the world, and the peculiarly understood cultural formation of classicism. The classicism from the Paris lectures represents mainly the end of the period, manifested in the form of crystallized artistic forms that cannot be modified in any way, due to artists' lacking spirituality. For Mickiewicz, the philosophical equivalent of classicism is the activity of sophists and their spectacular speeches intended to support surprising subversive opinions. In the twelfth lecture of the fourth course Mickiewicz claims:

> The Greeks quickly became spoiled by their materialistic and purely external civilization; they themselves quickly spoiled the Romans. There was a time when the great cities of Greece and Italy served only as a place for the sophists and comedians to show off.[110]

On the other hand, while discussing the work of Trembecki, Mickiewicz touches upon the subject of the link between Greek art, primitive folk poetry, and archaic intellectual culture whose permanent formalization in literary canons at one point ceased energizing Greek art. Mickiewicz emphasizes in the sixteenth lecture of the second course that,

> What we admire in the Greeks, this grace and perfect moderation of form, is largely the result of their spiritual deficiency. Greek charm, the perfection of Greek forms, all that we call classical art, begins at the time of the fall of Greece. When the breath of inspiration, which still enlivened the old poets, faded, it was possible to close – as professional experts say – the infinite in the finite, which is an excellent description of Greek art. Nothing heavenly was sought anymore and then they achieved perfection in the mundane aspect of art.[111]

In this way, Mickiewicz returned to his original fascinations, while interpreting the same facts in a different and somewhat subversive manner. What he originally considered to be a process of the versatile development of human nature, during his Paris lectures meant for him only a degradation of natural beauty and reduction of the metaphysical element to plain materialism.

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In a work subordinated to the rigorous interpretation of selected works, it is impossible to provide a detailed description of the change of Mickiewicz's views

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110 A. Mickiewicz, "Wykład XII," in: A. Mickiewicz, *Dzieła. Wydanie Rocznicowe*, VIII: *Literatura słowiańska. Kurs czwarty*, ed. J. Maślanka, Warsaw 1998, p. 152.

111 A. Mickiewicz, "Wykład XVI," in: A. Mickiewicz, *Dzieła. Wydanie Rocznicowe*, VIII: *Literatura słowiańska. Kurs drugi*, ed. J. Maślanka, Warsaw 1997, pp. 213–214.

on the history and art of ancient Greece and on the importance of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Hellenism. Jerzy Axer emphasizes that the reasons for Mickiewicz's change of mind on the history of Greece should be sought in the context of a polemic with classical philology, the subject of his studies in Vilnius. From this perspective, Mickiewicz's opinions appear to be a consistent, anti-Russian crusade in the name of defending Latin Western Christianity. Axer argues that,

> The use of an antique mirror to understand the present is both organic and true for Mickiewicz, as are his spiritual connections with the tradition of the First Polish Republic and the mentality of the citizens of this non-existent state. This is how a sequence of associations takes shape: the historical Greece turns into Byzantium, from which rises Russia, an Orthodox Empire that threatens everything most valuable to the Christian tradition. Not less authentic is the following sequence: the Roman tradition, regardless of its sins and falls, gives rise to the mission of the Western Church. *Ergo*, the neo-Hellenic interpretation of European culture stands in opposition to the European interest. Consciously or not, it paves the way for the spread of the Russian idea to Europe.[112]

The image of Greece in the nineteenth century was often used to verbalize aesthetic, political and anthropological ideas and was exposed to ideological pressures like any other way of presenting opinions. Certainly, what should interest scholars of Polish literature is the connection between Hellenism and the role of Russia in the nineteenth century, its ambiguous affiliations with Athens and Byzantium. Particularly in the context of the works of Mickiewicz, this extremely complicated and multi-faceted issue should constantly prompt further research.

4. Classicism as a Necessary Hypothesis in the Reading of Juliusz Słowacki's "Greek" Works

In his book on Słowacki's Hellenism, Tadeusz Sinko writes that,

> Juliusz entered the temple of art in a classical form, as a cupid with wings, a bow, and an arrow (actually portrayed this way by Rustem in 1814). Boyish games, which he still recalled when he was older, also had a classical character. Once . . . he staged Time, that is Saturn. Two sticks tied together imitated exquisitely if not a scythe, then a flail; he had a huge doll in his hands whose head he devoured. Another time, when playing and pretending to be in the army, he was Achilles in his armor. These details reflect the atmosphere that prevailed in the house of his father Euzebiusz.[113]

112 Axer, *Mickiewicz – zbuntowany filolog*, p. 33.

113 T. Sinko, *Hellenizm Juliusza Słowackiego*, Krakow 1909, p. 2.

Obviously, we should not settle that Słowacki's childhood, spent on games connected to mythology, could push him to make specific aesthetic choices in his adult life. However, we know that he later indeed engaged in dialog with the heritage of classicism while searching for his own formula, which allowed him to draw from ancient achievements and creatively use the literary works of classicists. In his journey, Greece dominates Rome; this is how Sinko arranges this matter, creating an unambiguous antinomy: Mickiewicz / Latinity, Słowacki / Hellenism. For the very reason of the dominating presence of Hellenism in the poetic imagination of Słowacki, we should consider his works in which Greece constitutes the focal point.

When attempting to determine what means the presence of classicism in *Lambro, Powstańca grecki* (Lambro, a Greek insurgent, 1832), *Podróż do Ziemi Świętej z Neapolu* (Journey to the Holy Land from Naples, 1836–37) and *Agezylausz* (1844), the most fitting inspiration may be found in the words of Ryszard Przybylski, who states that classicism "was actually a great tribute made to cognitive distress."[114] This particular tension, which establishes boundaries beyond which the omnipotence of the mind ends, allows one to observe the dark side of classicism, which plants in the souls of its admirers the feelings of lovers straight from Plato's *Symposium*, who feel 'something' that they are unable to express or describe."[115] More specifically, this formula discloses the *episteme* of classicism that is Greece's heritage, its past splendor, its cultural continuity interrupted during historical catastrophes, and its history in the nineteenth century – having Słowacki in mind – surprisingly close to the history of Poland, which thus became the source of this distress in his works. Hence, Słowacki perceived Greece as a particular case in the history of the Mediterranean civilization, which nevertheless captures general history and allows us to notice the potential threats lurking for Europe in the future.

Lambro was written only a few years earlier than *Podróż do Ziemi Świętej z Neapolu*; however, it is difficult to indicate any ground for comparison as both these poems draw from different patterns and are connected to diverse

114 R. Przybylski, *Klasycyzm, czyli prawdziwy koniec Królestwa Polskiego*, Gdańsk 1996, p. 35. The cited opinion of Przybylski, despite its undoubted controversy, constitutes an accurate background for divagations on what classicism meant for Słowacki, who in a puzzling manner linked the reflection on Hellenic order and on the admiration of proportion with the historiosophical phenomenon of catastrophes, regularly returning in the history of Greece, and the Dionysian power encompassing the minds of acolytes fascinated with Greece.

115 Przybylski, *Klasycyzm, czyli prawdziwy koniec*, p. 32.

inspirations. *Lambro* is a polemic voice targeted at various apologies of individualism and an individual act of saving the nation, while *Podróż do Ziemi Świętej z Neapolu* is a study of the crisis of the Romantic subjectivity and language, which do not fall apart only thanks to irony.[116] In fact, only the classical basis of both texts allows them to be compared, as in this interpretation we will focus neither on the Greek national liberation aspirations nor on the meaning of the oriental elements in these texts, which would also allow for such a comparison. However, the classicism of these two long poems does not constitute the implementation of the aesthetic and literary doctrine, as it is mostly expressed with respect to the literary tradition and regressive anthropological utopia, projected on the heroic past of Greece thanks to the European interest in Greek history and art. *Agezylausz*, the subsequent and representative text by Słowacki – written after his mystic breakthrough[117] – evokes a different Greece and, as a consequence, the included classical inspirations undergo a reformulation and modification of shape.

Lambro

The sources of the vision of the Greek world in *Lambro* should be sought in the works of Johann Joachim Winckelmann, included especially in *Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture*, a work full with admiration for the perfection of the Greek art and the ideal shape of Hellenic past:

> The last and most eminent characteristic of the Greek works is a noble simplicity and sedate gradeur in Gesture and Expression. As the bottom of the sea lies peaceful beneath a foaming surface, a soul lies sedate beneath the strife of passions in Greek figures.[118]

Winckelmann was particularly interested in the Hellenistic sculpture depicting Laocoön, a Trojan priest who was punished by death with his sons, Antiphantes

116 Michał Kuziak interprets this poem as an evidence of Słowacki's struggles with the Romantic subjectivity. See M. Kuziak, "O »Podróży do Ziemi Świętej z Neapolu« Juliusza Słowackiego. Próba lektury (po)nowoczesnej," in: *Dziedzictwo Odyseusza*, eds. M. Cieśla-Korytowska and O. Płaszczewska, Krakow 2007, pp. 225–242.

117 "In *Agezylausz* – according to M. Saganiak – all means of imagining typical for the mystical period and its proper symbolism may be found, even though the poet gives his tragedy an ancient tone" (M. Saganiak, *Mistyka i wyobraźnia. Słowackiego romantyczna teoria poezji*, Warsaw 2000, p. 196).

118 J. J. Winckelmann, *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks: With Instructions for the Connoisseur, and an Essay On Grace in Works of Art*, trans. Henry Fuseli, Millar and Cadell 1767, p. 30.

and Thymbraeus, for advising the inhabitants of Troy to be cautious while taking into the city the horse left by Greeks as a supposed gift to appease Athena. In the depiction of the death of mythological Laocoön, Winckelmann views a rule organizing the world of Greek art, focused on ignoring volatile sensations and depicting lasting qualities of the human spirit:

> For, the more tranquility reigns in a body, the fitter it is to draw the true character of the soul; which, in every excessive gesture, seems to rush from her proper centre, and being hurried away by extremes becomes unnatural. Wound up to the highest pitch of passion, she may force herself upon the duller eye; but the true sphere of her action is simplicity and calmness.[119]

However, Greek art could not have come to be without favorable circumstances, especially without a proper climate to shape the gentle nature of the Greeks and their love for beauty, and without the freedom which, in turn, shaped the need for noble rivalry that manifested itself in the field of artistic activity and competition during games, which Winckelmann clearly emphasizes.

In *Lambro*, Słowacki applies Winckelmann's rule – "a noble simplicity and sedate grandeur" ("eine edle Einfalt und eine stille Große")[120] – to all characters in the poem and makes the entire Greece a cemetery filled with human and marble monuments of suffering:

> On tops of columns are cracked heads;
> Over them always blooms the pink laurel,
> Orange trees eternally blossom,
> And with their flowers snow they cover the ruins
> And people – suffer that dared not die;
> Their face marked with pain.
> Should here flash the old gaze of Medusa,
> Should these people, as they are, turn to stone,
> How many new sculptures would there appear,
> Torn by perpetual pain like Laokoön.[121]

However, there is an irremovable contradiction in the presented world of *Lambro* on the basis of antiquity, which results from the clash of the timeless ideal of

119 J. J. Winckelmann, *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks*. . ., p. 32.
120 J.J. Winckelmann, *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks*. . ., p. 34.
121 J. Słowacki, "Lambro," in: J. Słowacki, *Dzieła*, ed. J. Krzyżanowski, Vol. 2: *Poematy*, ed. E. Sawrymowicz, Wrocław 1959, pp. 161–162.

noble beauty, represented in the stillness of suffering,[122] with the necessity of including the events of this work in the course of history, which makes the poem of Słowacki filled with characters, as if taken straight from a puppet theater; they freeze in an arrogant pose presenting contempt for the tormentors of the nation and that are completely bound by the perfect lifelessness of their shape. In a conversation between Lambro and Ida, they are both presented as gravestones, which cover the ashes of their fatherland. The corsair Lambro tells his lover Ida to read grave inscriptions from his forehead while she, absorbed with the past, turns into stone like the wife of Lot:

> When this smile was killed by worry,
> When he atrophied sleepy from the pondering,
> She was like the wife of Lot,
> When she drowns in the final smile
> Into a mysterious pain, in a stone-like slumber,
> And yet she listens turned toward the past. . .
> And so she assumed the lifeless shape of sculptures,
> So she let fall her arms inertly,
> That her robe flowing from arms to ground
> Broke as if into a waterfall.[123]

In turn, when Lambro experiences a narcotic dream, the shadows of heroes from the past intertwine and mix with the spirits of columns. In this early poem, there is no difference between gloomy ruins, scattered in the Greek landscape, and people turning into stone from their despair. Even the Angel of Revenge, another character from Lambro's dark visions, assumes the shape of a marble monument, which crushes his hated enemies with the power of his monumental incarnation.

The dynamics of metamorphoses in *Lambro* is restrained with the subjugation of life to the anthropological ideal which – when moved back to the times of Greece's fall and the loss of significance of the nation – turns out to be a incessant sluggishness, while the abundance of tombs, which remind of the heroic history of this land, seizes existence and forces life to become as small as possible. In fact, *Lambro* may be recognized as an objection against the blurring of the lines between the sphere of art and reality and as an act of rebellion against the passive imitating of classical patterns, supposedly drawn from antiquity. In *Lambro*,

122 Cf. Z. Przychodniak, "Śpiew Orfeusza. Od 'Lambra' do 'Kordiana'," in: *Słowacki współczesnych i potomnych. W 150 rocznicę śmierci Poety*, eds. J. Borowczyk and Z. Przychodniak, Poznań 2000, pp. 59–60.

123 Słowacki, "Lambro," p. 172.

Greece becomes the manifestation of the idea of melancholy and loss, deprived of memory and frozen, with its gaze fixed on the dark past.

Only Ryga avoids the tragic confliction. He is a warrior and martyr murdered by Turks, who does not rest in "marble dungeons"[124] or transform into the aesthetic ideal of a perfect soul – such that does not show agitation, suffering, or fear – and does not become a serene monument on the fatherland's grave. Such a fate is reserved for Lambro, who desperately attempts at breaking free of the imposed obligation of turning into stone on the national altar. His struggles constitute a peculiar psychomachia, a conflict masked with a narcotic dream, between the frenetic hatred for his enemies, distant from classical patterns, and desire for rest in the afterlife, emphasized by Lambro's physiognomy. In this fragment, Winckelmann's order means the annihilation of individual desires, the end of the individual:

> Face as if from an ore, it breaks so hard,
> Painted in turns with a smile, with pain, or contempt;
> And then it assumed inert peacefulness;
> If a face can die, Lambro's face has died.[125]

He is not even entitled to the saving blue of the heavens or "the goblet of the sea,"[126] which takes the ashes of Ryga, as if they were an accepted burned offering. The body of Lambro drowns in the sea like a stone; there disappears a man of dual nature, torn by passions and the sinister memory of committed crimes. There only remains the legend of a corsair enchanted into dead shapes.[127]

Podróż do Ziemi Świętej z Neapolu

If one attempted at brief summary of Słowacki's *Podróż do Ziemi Świętej z Neapolu* as a story of his literary inspirations, one should clearly state that he experienced this journey without his great Romantic predecessors – they appear merely episodically in the persons of Lamartine and Byron – as in the center of

124 Słowacki, "Lambro," p. 180.

125 Słowacki, "Lambro," p. 183.

126 Słowacki, "Lambro," p. 180.

127 To learn more about historical Lambro and his literary legend, initiated by Byron in *The Bride of Abydos*, see M. Mikuła, "Grecki i polski 'Korsarz'. 'Lambro' Juliusza Słowackiego i 'Lambros' Dionizjosa Solomosa," in: *Filhellenizm w Polsce. Rekonesans*, eds. M. Borowska, M. Kalinowska, J. Ławski and K. Tomaszuk, Warsaw 2007, pp. 227–229.

attention Słowacki puts the poets connected to the classicist tradition, whom he mentions when approaching Mount Parnassus:

> Oh, Romantic muse, fall to your knees!
> For I bear bows for this here mountain
> From the fragrant linden of the classic Jan
> And from the singer of children and tonsure,
> And from the singer of Potocki's garden,
> And a silent one. . . the sentimental bow of my father.[128]

Besides Kochanowski, Trembecki, and Euzebiusz Słowacki, Juliusz Słowacki saw on the same Parnassus enough space also for Feliński. Słowacki ironically summarizes the normative character of Feliński's opinion on "constructing" a poetic edifice, of convictions dominated by the search for order, of proportionality and harmony:

> This is how Feliński wanted it to be: compose the second verse,
> And then the first one let out gently,
> So they will be strong – and the long chain
> Will break in no place, nowhere will it falter;
> On the belt of such a nanny
> Older bards stroll over Parnassus.[129]

Even though Słowacki refused this artificial order a place in poetry, he did not deprive it of an important existential role for those seeking foundations that can support a lost poet. The negation of normative classicist poetics is accompanied by a reflection on the constancy of phenomena, the permanence and predictability of certain forms of life. Forms that enable experiencing a peculiar "rhythm" of existence and play a key role in settling matters on the character of human nature. The constancy that he seeks may be found in the cycle of nature's metamorphoses and, more precisely, in the certainty of the mind that it can identify analogies and, thus, admire a peculiarly abstracted, natural "core" of the world, hidden under the fluidity of phenomena:

> Purple covers the sky on the east.
> Then a bright white takes its place,
> While pink cut off like the lighest cloud
> Flows into the blue. . . Oh, classical constancy!

128 J. Słowacki, "Podróż do Ziemi Świętej z Neapolu," in: J. Słowacki, *Dzieła*, ed. J. Krzyżanowski, Vol. 4: *Poematy*, ed. J. Pelc, Wrocław 1959, pp. 80–81.

129 Słowacki, "Podróż do Ziemi Świętej," p. 47.

Often did I see through this thin cloud
The bosom of the roses-pouring dawn.[130]

The method of choosing colors plays a significant role in the poem, as by using them, Słowacki creates oppositions and contrasts passivity with persistence and immobility with order based on the cyclic self-renewal of the world. In this case, "classical constancy" constitutes a visible harmony of beings and creates frames for the fortunate existence of those who can notice it. The silver sea and the pink sky evidence a reality afflicted with a disease that disallows transfiguration, one which leads to the immobilization of the eternal order. The blue that envelops the horizon and saturates the landscape evokes the heroic sphere of Greek experiences. The poet who notices this sphere wishes to look at the world from the perspective of historical figures whose works decided about the greatness of this land.

It is worth emphasizing the distinctiveness of the project included in *Podróż do Ziemi Świętej z Neapolu*, which could only be guided by classicist poets and which concerned an attempt at perceiving the continuity of Greek culture and saving the memory of the possibility of constancy, excluded from chaos and the Promethean plurality of Romanticism's incarnations. However, Słowacki paradoxically perceived the continuity of Greece's existence in a manner that excluded a naive idyllic perspective and utopian harmony, as Maria Kalinowska argues, because "Słowacki is fascinated with the heroic, raw, and primeval Greece. Greece that is not idyllic. The Greece of combat and wars, both historical and mythical."[131] Moreover, Greece that washed off the shame of Chaeronea with the heroic revival in the national liberation fight.

In the long poem, the manner of valorizing tombs in the cultural space changed, as they become carriers of life, potential sources that initiate historical changes.[132] Kwiryna Ziemba claims that "it is tombs that are depositories of spiritual values here. The more they are empty, the more they are obliging."[133] Tombs attract Słowacki, as they constitute a place that cumulates the memory responsible for the quality of the collective soul of a society. It is the same with

130 Słowacki, "Podróż do Ziemi Świętej," p. 32.

131 M. Kalinowska, *Grecja romantyków. Studia nad obrazem Grecji w literaturze romantycznej*, Toruń 1994, p. 68.

132 See M. Kalinowska, "Kilka słów o posągowej piękności marmurowej w poezji Słowackiego," in: *Lustra historii. Rozprawy i eseje ofiarowane Profesor Marii Żmigrodzkiej z okazji pięćdziesięciolecia pracy naukowej*, eds. M. Kalinowska and E. Kiślak, Warsaw 1998, p. 111.

133 K. Ziemba, *Wyobraźnia i biografia. Młody Słowacki i ciągi dalsze*, Gdańsk 2006, p. 193.

the tomb of Virgil. Naples from the first song of *Podróż do Ziemi Świętej z Neapolu* freezes, influenced by the all-encompassing gaze with which the poet standing next to the tomb of Virgil tries to immobilize the city. The historical perspective demonstrates Naples in the time of counterrevolution. Słowacki recalls the death of Francesco Caracciolo, hanged at the yard of admiral Nelson's ship, which ended the influences of pro-Napoleon republicans in the so-called Parthenopean Republic and restored the reign of the Bourbons.[134] A small mention about the exploding "legal volcano," which brought Naples its constitution, gives room for assuming that Słowacki references another uprising, initiated by the Carbonari and brutally suppressed by the Austrians in March of 1821. He shows Neapolitan politics as sluggish, full of unfulfilled hopes, and under the European superpowers' influence.[135]

The mythological, literary, and ancient Naples meets with the modern Naples in the ironic gaze, which removes the superficial manifestations of urban existence in order to search for the essence of Neapolitan nature:

> Oh Naples! Where is your soul?
> For your soul is not life and movement;
> I look at you from Virgil's grave,
> And you are in the blue of the sky and waves
> So dissolved in the feerie painting
> As if a soap bubble fell on the coast. . .
> Oh Naples! The evening fumes
> Are your blush, your smokes are a rainbow,
> You harmonize like songs
> With the silence of air, your bells don't moan
> And your hill covered with houses
> Is white like light clouds on the blue sky.[136]

As Muratov claims, the life in Naples "was always like a rapid river, on whose shores history left no residue."[137] When leaving the city, Słowacki notices this apparent changeability, which became a rule that arranges the functioning of Naples. The piercing burden of history did not stop its development; on the contrary, despite unfavorable external factors, Naples continues its fast life, in its own way modern. There is no reason not to agree with the opinion of Leszek Libera

134 See J. A. Gierowski, *Historia Włoch*, Wrocław – Warsaw – Krakow 1999, pp. 323–325.
135 Gierowski, *Historia Włoch*, pp. 350–351.
136 Słowacki, "Podróż do Ziemi Świętej," p. 11.
137 P. Muratow, *Obrazy Włoch*, Vol. 2, trans., footnotes and afterword by P. Hertz, Warsaw 1988, p. 33.

who claims that, "here, the reality of industrial civilization violates history."[138] This aspect of an apparent indifference toward history's meanders essentially belongs to Neapolitan nature, resilient to historical fluctuations and attached to its own individuality. If this strong bond had not existed, Naples would not have survived all these historical changes when it was inhabited, respectively, by Greeks, Sabellians, Romans, Byzantines, Normans, Spaniards, Austrians, the French, and lastly, by Italians.

Neapolitan experiences suppress any manifestation of universal optics that would like to immobilize the history of a place in the modes of linear development. Słowacki in an obstinate manner emphasizes the specific mentality of the inhabitants of Naples, among whom one may notice to the similar degree an attachment to the current state of affairs among beggars and fashionable aristocratic youth. The historicity of Naples as the awareness of subsequent civilizational influences that shaped its complex history does not exist. Only the cyclic constancy is significant, as it is connected to the prosperous fortune-telling and to the city that holds its breath and awaits for the next miracle of Saint Januarius.

At the end of the first song, the ironic voyager makes a promise that he will begin writing a poem in the style of *Odyssey* or *Argonautica.* Słowacki, while leaving Europe with its complex history, seems to promise a journey beyond the borders of reality and suggests that a radical change of a person, who should look for an authentic heroism in ancient Greece, is possible. After all, it is a mystification, the heroic actions of the ancient Greeks will not create any more epic power in literature. However, they are still able to inspire other heroic actions. In this regard, Greece constitutes for Słowacki a space for an alternative, European history, based on a constant call to action. Thanks to contrasting the world of the self-renewing Italian catastrophes with the history of Greece, subjected to the logic of a single fall and revival, Słowacki changes the meaning of traditional and opposing models of temporality. It is Europe that turns out to be the domain of cyclic time, the spiral of history in which subsequent revolutions mean the return to a *status quo.* Słowacki gives Greece the role of the motherland of the linear order, which allows to conclude from the death of ancient Greece that the birth of a new country is necessary.

It is the Neapolitan reflections by the tomb of Virgil, this "handful of dust / Always lying under the classical laurel,"[139] that make Słowacki abandon his

138 L. Libera, *Juliusza Słowackiego* Podróż do Ziemi Świętej z Neapolu, Poznań 1993, pp. 26–27.

139 Słowacki, "Podróż do Ziemi Świętej," p. 14.

faith in the possibility of writing an epic poem that could match the ancient ones. A similar gesture of resignation takes place during his visit to the tomb of Agamemnon, where a broken string from the harp of Homer (that is a solar ray) strips him of any illusion that there is a chance of creating heroic poetry[140] based on tragic experiences taken from the Polish history. As Krzysztof Trybuś claims, "it is difficult to find a more moving testimony in the Romantic literature on the fiasco of dreams of an epic poem"[141] than the fragment of the eighth song:

> Over the grave, on the granite slab
> There grows a small oak in the triangle of stones;
> Sparrows or pidgeons planted it
> So it greens with his black leaves,
> Not letting any sun into the dark tomb;
> I cut one leaf from the black tree;
> No ghost or specter defended it,
> No spirit moaned among its branches,
> Only the crack for sun became larger
> So it ran inside, golden, and fell under my feet.
> At first, I thought that the one that rushes inside,
> The shining – that it is a string from Homer's harp;
> So I extended my arm into the dark,
> To grasp the string and pull it, and trembling
> Force to cry and sing, and to be angry
> Over the large nothing of the graves and the silent
> Handful of dust – but in my hand
> The string twitched and broke without a moan.[142]

In the poem, tombs constantly attract the attention of Słowacki. After all, it is "in a beautiful soul's marble shapes"[143] of Leonidas that Słowacki sees the possibility of changing the fate of his fatherland and also in the arrangement of tombs which, like landmarks, contribute to diagnosing problems and transforming the reality, as they are the focal point of stories that concern the heroic history. The liberation is born thanks to voices coming from the past, that is those, which by being crystalized in revolutionary poetry influence the souls of the contemporaries

140 Cf. R. Przybylski, *Podróż Juliusza Słowackiego na Wschód*, Kraków 1982, pp. 28–30.
141 K. Trybuś, *Epopeja w twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, Wrocław – Warsaw – Krakow 1993, p. 28.
142 Słowacki, "Podróż do Ziemi Świętej," pp. 75–76.
143 Słowacki, "Podróż do Ziemi Świętej," p. 77.

and evoke the need to act. In the case of Greece, the revival was initiated on the fields of Chaeronea, which brings to Słowacki's mind a book on a Greek uprising that he read as a child:[144]

> A lion's breast was torn by growing souls!
> So that it lies today on a lonely field
> As if blown up with mighty gunpowder,
> And head is full with eternal pain
> It fell on earth – it would seem that it rests,
> A soul sad and terrifying.[145]

When observing Greece in *Podróż do Ziemi Świętej z Neapolu*, Słowacki notices the continuity of constancy and the permanence of the world, hidden in the apparent entanglement of events and phenomena. The inhabitants of this land did not renounce the traits of their ancestors, but thanks to their heroic attitude, they regained an independent state, although entangled in diplomatic intrigues. However, more importantly, after years of war chaos, there came a period of peace and a peculiar stillness of history, as if the static order was irrevocably connected with Greek fate. After the uprising, Greece turned out to be a land consequently omitted by violent winds of history and its recent heroes, like Solomos and Canaris, contemplate in their lovely homes this unsteady stabilization:

> Happy! he met his garden and trees,
> His sofa and window on the see,
> His favorite table, at which he writes and yawns,
> His bed covered under gauzes;
> Maybe he will rejoice or cry today
> When looking at his small house, where he loves and loved.[146]

Who knows, perhaps the cheerful old age of Menelaus spent with Helen by his side looked similar, once the ruins of Troy grew cold. Słowacki, whose plans of having his own house with a garden never realized,[147] also experienced an episode of being a poet in times of revolution, who should be followed by masses.

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144 To learn more about the guesses concerning the book read by Słowacki, see J. Zieliński, *SzatAnioł. Powikłane życie Juliusza Słowackiego*, Warsaw 2000, pp. 44–48.

145 Słowacki, "Podróż do Ziemi Świętej," p. 38.

146 Słowacki, "Podróż do Ziemi Świętej," p. 30.

147 Various biographical patterns in the works of Słowacki are interpreted by K. Ziemba (*Wyobraźnia i biografia*, pp. 136–163).

Obviously, it was his activity during the November Uprising that constituted this episode. Perhaps this is the reason why he chose for his companions in his journey to the East the classics, the depositories of tradition engrossed in voices from the graves.

Agezylausz

Słowacki expressed his aversion toward the Greek world of the aesthetic ideal in his poem "Wiesz, Panie, iżem zbiegał świat szeroki" (You Know, My Lord, that I Traveled the Wide World), which constitutes a peculiar comparison of his impressions of his stay in Greece with the experience gained thanks to the contemplation of Hellenic artworks:

> So there too, my Lord! Under these heavens
> Of turquoise, when I listened pale,
> There came at me many voices of truth,
> Like echoes from the harps of dead Hellas.
> Alas, sad did I abandon the echo
> Of Parthenon, where the marble pink
> And soft – eternally smiles from heaven,
> Like Venus returning into silver seafoam.[148]

Peeped at, Greek art reveal no secrets and does not support the contemplation of the work of Creation. It reveals only the eternal ideal of gentleness and moderation, a peculiar "lightness of being," which condemns the dark dimension of the human fate rooted in mortality. However, when the poet attempts at listening to the Hellenic voice that comes from the past eras, he discovers a trace of sound that takes him directly to the world of past heroes entangled in existential conflicts. The sound so diligently studied by Słowacki is the voice of the Greek tragedy and, especially, of the ancient chorus, which appears in his *Agezylausz:*

> Our girls seemingly in a rhythm
> Swept pomegranades into black raisin heaps;
> A few Corinthian columns in a silvery cloud
> Of seafoam, turned into stone flowers
> To testify to Diana's silvery cult,
> Though the deity's pure – my heart was wrapped in flames.
> I don't know. . . but these places held invisible grace,

148 J. Słowacki, "Wiesz, Panie, iżem zbiegał świat szeroki," in: J. Słowacki, *Dzieła*, ed. J. Krzyżanowski, Vol. 1: *Liryki i inne wiersze*, edited and introduction written by J. Krzyżanowski, Wrocław 1959, p. 130.

Which on my mouth began a never-ending song
As if I were one voice in a choir of yore
That has forgotten many of its sounds
And with many brotherly voices linked,
But now goes lonely – let it end. . .[149]

The voice of the chorus coincides with Słowacki's experiences from his visit in Corinth, described in the ninth and the last song of *Podróż do Ziemi Świętej z Neapolu*:

I entered. . . in the temple two Greek girls
Swept from the ground on heaps –
Corinthian raisins black from dust,
While on truncated columns small boy
Shepherds. . . played reed pan pipes,
A few sleepy rams and so on.[150]

The fate of the nineteenth-century poet, who observes the ruins of the Hellenic civilization, is to tell the story initiated by the ancient chorus, which should be incorporated into the difficult present day that does not listen to any rudimentary basis of knowledge about humankind, drawn from myths and history of ancient Greece. This forgotten voice recalls a memory of Greek world's magnificence, its cultural unity and the ensuing strength. This is how Słowacki employs the significance of the Spartan myth in modern culture which, according to Maria Kalinowska, was essentially based on the admiration of the Spartan courage, heroism, and conviction about the necessity of sacrificing an individual when the wellbeing of the entire *polis* so requires. Sparta was also perceived as an ideal of a strong state, created by one legislator (Lycurgus) who ordered that all citizens should undergo a rigorist or even warriorlike process of education.[151] However, the chorus recalls the less known side of Sparta, which was also the place of development of Alcman's choral poetry; while the unusual role given to women in the drama constitutes a reference to the motif of the Spartan woman who for centuries governed the state alongside men.

Słowacki uses the character of king Agis to create an impression of the unity of experiences of the young reformer from Sparta with the efforts of Poles who

149 J. Słowacki, "Agezylausz," in: J. Słowacki, *Dzieła*, ed. J. Krzyżanowski, Vol. 10: *Dramaty*, ed. Z. Libera, Wrocław 1959, p. 187.

150 Słowacki, "Podróż do Ziemi Świętej," pp. 82–83.

151 See M. Kalinowska, *Los. Miłość. Sacrum. Studia o dramacie romantycznym i jego dwudziestowiecznej recepcji*, Toruń 2003, pp. 131–132.

tried to understand their role in history. The task that Agis undertook constituted a three-aspect renewal of the Hellenic world. It served Sparta itself, which after years of humiliating defeats wanted to once more lead in the Greek world, and its purpose was to overcome the sluggishness present in the harassed society. The erasing of debts could restore its inhabitants – obviously, only the privileged ones – a primordial sense of belonging to a *polis*, when each vote had the same importance and all of them had similar wealth. They were to once again become *homoioi,* that is equals. Even though, for Agis, it probably was only the beginning of reforms and not their end, his purpose was to change Spartan minds and hearts:

> You see, we must correct Spartan nature,
> Pick up folk heart from the ground and change it in hand –
> As if a stone egg into an eagle – and let it go
> Once you notice that it's changed in your hand.[152]

In a broader perspective, the appearance of Agis constituted a breakthrough for Greeks and gave them a chance to reintegrate the Hellenic spirit, which manifested itself in the form of a young man who embodied all traits of a true Spartan, a loyal citizen-hoplite and a lover of freedom (in a platonic sense). Centuries ago, this image was validated by Lycurgus. The young king Agis directly admits to this inspiration, he even accuses before a court the biased winners that – by convicting him – they go reject the rules established by the mythical sage Lycurgus:

> What do I pay for with my head – it all comes from my head
> And some old Lycurgus the lawyer suggested to me,
> But you will not go searching for him among the spectres,
> Neither will he come here for judgment out of free will.[153]

During Agis's journey, the spirit of Leonidas, king from Laconia, is revived for a short period of time and leaves his safe fatherland to fight on behalf of entire Greece. However, the idealistic assumptions of Agis clash with brutal reality, which is the betrayal of Agezylausz, who destroys the reform work in the country, and with the betrayal of Aratus, who makes a fragile peace and sends Agis back to Sparta.

In the space of Słowacki's tragedy, the appearance of the Spartan commander near Mount Parnassus triggers the memory of the chorus, which notices the

152 Słowacki, "Agezylausz," p. 160.
153 Słowacki, "Agezylausz," p. 223.

break in the chain of tradition. It is not an accident that the chorus regains its memory when Agis goes to the rescue of Achaean League armies. It is the moment of overcoming particularism and facing an all-Greek challenge, despite it being targeted at other Greeks and, thus, doomed to fail from the very beginning. At the foot of Mount Olympus, Hesiod received from the Muses the gift of poetry which allowed him to profess the laws and customs in force in the entire community.[154] At the foot of Mount Parnassus, the echo of this event is noticeable in the utterances of the chorus. For a moment, perhaps the last one, there may be felt in Greece the presence of a spirit calling for taking and reformulating the achievements of the past eras and for facing the challenge of the cultural discontinuity and the crisis of the Greek identity.

However, the death of Agis, immersed in the world of old values, leads to the appearance of a different element, which in Słowacki's imagination is permanently connected with Greek history. Thus, in Greek history Słowacki sought references to the history of Poland, perceived through the lens of the Christian mystery, the great mystery of death and resurrection.[155] The character of the heroic king is full of traits of a Slavic knight, who dies for his faith and hence anticipates the passion of Christ. Afflicted with anarchy and egoism of aristocracy, Sparta appears here as the prototype of problem-ridden Polish Republic. It is a vision of a symbolic kingdom, which will be able to be effectively reborn thanks to such selfless and tradition-oriented sacrifices as the suffering of king Agis. The rebirth will not be interrupted by the fact that even Agis himself remains unaware of the direction of the initiated changes. The chorus is the intermediary of these stories and – by abandoning its pagan origins – it enables the approximation of distant worlds, Greek and Christian, presented in the light of the idea of progress of the Slavic spirit through time. Chorus' voice is taken up by the speaker himself, which allows him to introduce into the events the perspective of eternity. Thus, the tragedy of replacing primordial forms by their increasingly perfect incarnations becomes the crowning of Słowacki's Hellenic search and passions.

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Undoubtedly, these few remarks do not suffice to draw conclusions of a more general nature, which would precisely encompass the sphere of connections

154 See E. A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, Cambridge 1963, pp. 97–111.

155 To learn more about the connection between the ancient chorus and the Christian mystery in *Agezylausz* see Kalinowska, *Los. Miłość. Sacrum.*, pp. 180–198.

between classicism and Hellenism in the works of Słowacki. However, we may attempt at formulating at least a couple of fragmentary conclusions. As a reference to antiquity and a creative use of past poets' achievements, classicism accompanies the vision of Greece entangled in history and deprived of a spiritual element, in which life struggles among the ruins. However, it also concerns the land where authentic heroism from many centuries ago helped to revive the sense of pride of being Greek and contributed to banishing invaders; in this regard, it constitutes an unsurpassed ideal for Słowacki. Such Greece appears in his *Lambro* and *Podróż do Ziemi Świętej z Neapolu*. However, Słowacki also emphasizes that there exists a gap between the literary, travel, and philosophical depictions of Greece – the ones of Winckelmann, Lamartine, Byron, and probably of Chateaubriand and Hegel – and their functioning in a difficult reality. Classicism and Romanticism equally appropriated Greece for their needs by making it an element of a fierce debate about aesthetics and literature. Słowacki seeks to observe Greece outside of ideological assumptions, supported by his ironic distance and skeptical attitude. He is also characterized by a firm objection to the utopian generation of an image of the Greek past, filled with resentments evoked by aversion to the modern age. The regressive anthropological utopia describes the harmonious coexistence of people and gods, creates freedom as a fundamental rule of the functioning of *polis*, and indicates the gentle and noble character of the people of that time as loving art. This utopia actually effected from the disappointment with the present day for which the cure was searched in another version of the myth of "the golden age" of the humankind. Similarly to Mickiewicz, who expressed his criticism of the anti-Latin turn in culture (Herder, Wolf, Goethe, Byron) in his Lausanne lectures, Słowacki disagrees with those who want to "return humankind to the times of Homer,"[156] as he knows that this is an attempt to ideologize art. Therefore, this is probably the source of Słowacki's predilection to present Greece as heroic and experienced by history and its capricious gods.

Later years bring a radical change. *Agezylausz* introduces a relevant correction to Słowacki's Hellenism, as it incorporates Greek history into the rhythm of the Spirit's march through history and recalls the tragedy of the classical era as the model that allows Słowacki to transpose Greek-Slavic history onto the dimension of mysteries, which tells the earthly history of the Kingdom of God. The

156 A. Mickiewicz, "Wykłady lozańskie," in: A. Mickiewicz, *Dzieła. Wydanie Rocznicowe*, Vol. 7: *Pisma historyczne, wykłady lozańskie*, ed. J. Maślanka, Warsaw 1996, p. 174.

tragedy in *Agezylausz* and, especially, the chorus takes off its majestic buskin to fly higher and observe history from a bird's-eye view because, as Słowacki writes:

> My dear, we now witness an Aeschylus era:
> Poems are born large and dark,
> Frightening heads of deities on wings of gold
> They appear like underground Samuels.
> But one does not see, if he is not new in spirit
> Or has a wicked heart,
> This one hears not the echoes sung in heaven
> But has his own bards – just like himself.[157]

157 J. Słowacki, "Nastał, mój miły, wiek Eschylesowy," in: J. Słowacki, *Dzieła*, ed. J. Krzyżanowski, Vol. 1: *Liryki i inne wiersze*, p. 196.

Chapter I. Norwid reads Greeks

1. The Hellenism of Norwid

Tadeusz Sinko writes about one fragment of Norwid's "A Dorio ad Phrygium," published by the National Library of Poland: "Indeed, the decline in knowledge about antiquity is appalling among Norwid's commentators and, after all, without this knowledge he cannot be explained."[1] Once he justifies in such a manner this blameworthy ignorance of Norwid scholars, Sinko reviews the key works – in his opinion – in which antiquity is an inalienable element of the presentation of the literary world or it constitutes an important background, connected by means of cultural and political allusions with Norwid's times.

A meticulous philologist, Sinko establishes as his goal the explanation of the majority of the key phenomena in Norwid's oeuvre that should be associated with the world of antiquity. However, Sinko's commentaries lack opinions that would allow us to associate Norwid's perception of antiquity with the phenomena characteristic for nineteenth-century culture. Sinko avoids unambiguous conclusions and, thus, he deprives Norwid of the right to his own original views on ancient history, literature, and philosophy. In this optics, Norwid is presented as a derivative writer, in whose works antiquity – the Greek one in particular – is only a tool that enables the construction of intellectually surprising but entirely unjustified analogies. Thanks to such an approach, Sinko avoids answering the question whether Norwid leans more toward the Latin or Greek patterns. Sinko only suggests that the artistic imagination and temper of Norwid made him refer in a syncretic manner to various periods of time and works of particular artists from different circles. Sinko does not arrange Norwid's diverse net of connections with the world of antiquity, because he believes that Norwid had a disorganized and chaotic mind, unable to establish subtle meaningful dialog with the works of the distant past. For Sinko, Norwid's works do not constitute an intellectual challenge. However, they are – and this is the sole sign of Sinko's appreciation – the source of extraordinary poetic images, which prove that Norwid had a mentality of a sculptor and painter, and that he was an artist fascinated with small details and not with syntheses, historiosophical visions, or dialogs with ancient writers based on quotation, allusion, or reminiscence.

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1 T. Sinko, "Klasyczny laur Norwida," in: T. Sinko, *Hellada i Roma w Polsce. Przegląd utworów na tematy klasyczne w literaturze polskiej ostatniego stulecia*, Lviv 1933, p. 61.

Sinko devotes to Norwid only one chapter in his book *Hellada i Roma w Polsce* (Hellas and Rome in Poland), even though he devoted monographies to his great predecessors.[2] This particular approach toward Norwid's works – especially manifested in malicious and depreciating insertions – probably caused a mediocre interest in Sinko's 1933 book among Norwid scholars.[3] In fact, the reading of Sinko's book forces the reader to constantly pose questions such as why the works of Norwid instill such a firm aversion in Sinko. Curiously enough, he does not indicate Norwid's lack of knowledge, visible in his references to antiquity. However, Sinko repeatedly emphasizes that the way Norwid associates certain facts from the ancient world must evoke wonder and confusion in an educated reader and may be seen as nothing but a manifestation of Norwid's intellectual oddity.

Sinko also does not value Norwid as an erudite, so in his literary attempts Sinko sees almost exclusively incompetence and "a lack of compositional economy:"[4] "We have already noticed it in *Tyrtej, Epimenides, Dwa męczeństwa*, and it is very characteristic for all of Norwid's works. The pursuit of redundant subtlety leads him to primitivism."[5] Even though it demonstrates the superficiality of Sinko's opinion, it is an extremely interesting proof of how Norwid was treated by antiquity experts. Such a perspective presents him not as an admirer of ancient literature but an enthusiast of monuments, especially architecture and sculpture. Sinko notices Norwid's inclination to perceive antiquity through the prism of material remains, and this fact in a sense supports Sinko's feeling of exemption from devoting to Norwid a more detailed contemplation: "We underlined the oddity of Norwid's associations to express an admiration for the picturesqueness

2 T. Sinko, *Hellenizm Juliusza Słowackiego*, Krakow 1909; "Antyk w 'Królu Duchu'," *Pamiętnik Literacki,* 9/1910, pp. 251–266; "Manilius i Mickiewicz," *Eos*, 20/1914–1915, pp. 165–169; *Echa klasyczne w literaturze polskiej. Dwanaście studiów i szkiców*, Krakow 1923; *O tradycjach klasycznych Adama Mickiewicza*, Krakow 1923; *Mickiewicz i antyk*, Wrocław – Krakow 1957. To learn more about the comparative works of Sinko see, among others: S. Stabryła, "Wstęp. Tadeusz Sinko jako komparatysta," in: T. Sinko, *Antyk w literaturze polskiej. Prace komparatystyczne*, ed. T. Bieńkowski, introduction by S. Stabryła, Warsaw 1988, pp. 5–27.

3 However, it should be noted that opinions of Norwid scholars regarding the work of Sinko also present a simplified view on the matter and an aversion to undertake a constructive, detailed polemics. Z. Łapiński did so, by writing that: "This work is chaotic and it lacks a convincing critical and literary concept, but it gives a great amount of information" (Z. Łapiński, *Norwid*, Krakow 1971, p. 112).

4 T. Sinko, *Klasyczny laur Norwida*, p. 90.

5 Sinko, *Klasyczny laur Norwida*, pp. 90–91.

of his material visions, visible in the details of his descriptions. He insisted that the admirers of antiquity should leave texts for the benefit of ancient monuments, which should be frequently studied."[6]

Sinko does not raise the issue of Norwid's Hellenism; he even suggests that Norwid did not consider numerous issues, especially in the case of the relations between conquered Greece and Rome. Therefore, a fundamental difference appears already in the title of Sinko's work, because in the case of other Romantics, he is fascinated, for instance, with the connections of Mickiewicz with the ancient world and the Hellenism of Słowacki, but for Norwid he reserves only "the classical laurel" and suggests that he returned to antiquity only because of his connections with the aesthetics of classicism. Norwid is to exclude himself from the area of interest of this excellent scholar, as his fascination with antiquity does not touch the sphere that is truly interesting for Sinko. In Norwid's works, the influence of Greek and Roman literary works is barely visible and, therefore, as a scholarly challenge he must have seemed uninteresting. After all, Sinko suggests it in one of his footnotes that he did not find time thoroughly research the archaeological expedition caricatured by Norwid in *Epimenides*. Sinko indicates that if someone was to pay some attention to Norwid, it should be an archaeologist, Polish philologist, or art historian. A classical philologist cannot find in the works of this poet any source of scholarly challenges.

Zofia Szmydtowa raises the issue of Norwid's connections with antiquity, while considering his views on the works of Italian Renaissance. She follows Sinko's concept that the source of Norwid's fascinations connected with antiquity should be sought in his admiration for the Roman copies of Hellenistic sculptures, especially those that he could admire in Rome. After all, Johann Joachim Winckelmann was Norwid's intellectual master, who shaped his taste and views on plastic arts. Szmydtowa notices traces of Norwid's knowledge of Winckelmann's concepts in his early works. She thinks that the fragments of "Wyjątek z listu z Krakowa" (Excerpt from a Letter from Krakow), in which Norwid contrasts the Renaissance tombs from the Wawel Cathedral with Rococo sculptures, may constitute proof that already then he was convinced of the decline of art and the necessity of returning to the sources of natural beauty and inspiration, which was the contribution of Greek artists.

Szmydtowa explains Norwid's admiration of antiquity by referring to two potential sources of inspiration. On the one hand, she makes him a successor of Renaissance ideas, particularly ancient writing (and respective philological

6 Sinko, *Klasyczny laur Norwida*, p. 86.

attitude); on the other hand, she situates Norwid's inclination to study ancient arts and literature in the context of Europe-wide neohumanism, fascinated with the idealized image of ancient Greek life and their artworks. Szmydtowa writes that, "due to his taste in the field of art and writing Norwid is situated among people of the Renaissance who, among other things, discovered the existence of poetry in *the Bible,* and neo-Hellenists or neo-classics from the German school, with their cult of plastic arts and Greek poetry, especially Homer's."[7]

In such a manner, according to Szmydtowa, the phenomenon of Romantic Hellenism may be completely excluded from Norwid's fascinations, as Winckelmann was his only master in the scope of plastic arts while in literature it was Goethe. She similarly explains Norwid's admiration for the person and works of Homer, which he also took it from German writers and philologists. We should emphasize that this vision refers only to the "light" and classical side of Hellenism, which immensely influenced Norwid's views.

The work of Alicja Lisiecka should be considered as an addition to Szmydtowa's remarks and the best clarification of the issue of Norwid's Hellenism.[8] In her book *Norwid – poeta historii*, Lisiecka proposes that Norwid should be positioned in the later phase of the Hellenistic movement, which is clearly Christian:

> The author of *Bezimienni* [Norwid] comes from the second phase of Hellenism in Europe after 1835, that is Christianized Hellenism. Its advocates refer to Laprade and Ballanche, to Schlegel and *The Death of Socrates* by Lamartine. Its theme is found in Schlegel's thesis stating that Greek philosophy, and Plato in particular, prepared Christianity, along with Ampère's statement that Christian churches in Rome are built on the ruins of pagan temples.[9]

Lisiecka seeks to present Norwid's Hellenism by connecting his fascination with two different sources of inspiration. The first one is the Christianized vision of Greek antiquity, concentrated on demonstrating the phenomena that foreshadow the arrival of Christianity; the second one is Hegel's interpretation of history, focused on the complex process of the Spirit's march through history. In such a manner, Lisiecka emphasizes the internal conflict of Norwid's poetry. In her opinion, Norwid uses not only the "light," Christian vision of the Greek antiquity, but also this "dark" one, based on the fascination with violent changes in

7 Z. Szmydtowa, "Norwid wobec włoskiego Odrodzenia," in: *Nowe studia o Norwidzie*, eds. J. W. Gomulicki and J. Z. Jakubowski, Warsaw 1961, p. 151.

8 A. Lisiecka, *Norwid – poeta historii*, London 1973.

9 Lisiecka, *Norwid – poeta historii*, pp. 49–50.

history. Therefore, he contrasts Dionysus with Apollo and, as a Christian creator, he is not indifferent toward the historical aspects of historic, cultural changes:

> So, who was Norwid? Among various antinomies in his poetry, one more emerges: an Apollonian Hellenist with an attitude sometimes close to Winckelmann's in regard to his admiration for Phidias and Homer, as he searched for perfection in ancient history. For Norwid, this perfection was embodied in ancient beauty and wisdom, associated with the pre-Christian need of freedom, a premonition of the future faith of Christ. / However, Norwid, who interpreted the history of humankind in a tragic and Hegelian manner, also experienced the anxiety of Dionysus' believers. Hegel's vision of history found in their cult of dramatic passions the germ of modern dialectics. Hegel's antiquity is the tragic antiquity, Dionysian antiquity. Winckelmann's antiquity is the Apollonian antiquity, close to the "Christian" one.[10]

Lisiecka's consideration is a good starting point for the analysis of Norwid's situation. First, let us consider her image of the "Christian" antiquity. She proposes a view on Christianized Hellenism in which ancient Greece constitutes a graceful field for seeking a prefiguration of Revelation. In other words, if someone (especially Socrates) or a philosophical concept (particularly certain elements drawn from Plato) corresponded with the content of the truth about the salvation brought by Christ, then they became interesting from the viewpoint of a modern artist. If not, then they deserve no mention and reinterpretation in the Christian spirit. Lisiecka emphasizes that Winckelmann played a particular role in this process, as he associated Greek admiration for the aesthetic ideal with the desire for freedom. Once such an assumption is accepted, there remains but a small step to acknowledge that Christianity brought freedom of which the ancient dreamed. By contemplating this issue from another perspective, we may conclude that the manner in which the Renaissance artists adopted Hellenic heritage proves the perfect combination of ancient form with Christian spirit, as the best representation of Hellenic admiration for proportion and harmony may be found only in the works of Michelangelo and Raphael.

However, Lisiecka mentions an astonishing regularity that suggests a moderation in the thoughtless ascription of Norwid to "Christian" Hellenism. Let us note that such a manner of conceptualization of Greek antiquity did not abound in remarkable works, as the majority of works mentioned by Lisiecka is practically deprived of artistic qualities and constitutes second-rate literature at most. However, we cannot say about Norwid's works that refer to Greece that they are of little value. On the contrary, his works were predominantly written at a later

10 Lisiecka, *Norwid – poeta historii*, p. 50.

stage of his life and, thus, are artistically mature and ambiguous in meaning, which is accurately proved by their reception and the long time through which they drew little attention of Norwid scholars. Therefore, we should make some reservations about the positioning of Norwid's work's in "Chrisitian" Hellenism.

In fragments Friedrich Schlegel published in *Athenaeum* (1798), we find the following remark that perfectly corresponds with the earlier contemplation on the Christian vision of antiquity:

> The systematic Winckelmann who read all the ancients as if they were a single author, who saw everything as a whole and concentrated all his powers on the Greeks, provided the first basis for a material knowledge of the ancients through his perception of the absolute difference between ancient and modern. Only when the perspective and the conditions of the absolute identity of ancient and modern in the past, present, and future have been discovered will one be able to say that at least the contours of classical study have been laid bare and one can now proceed to methodical investigation.[11]

The phenomenon of the birth of Enlightenment Hellenism did not consist of stating the proximity and the extraordinary bond of ancient Greeks and early modern people. On the contrary, Schlegel saw in the activity of Winckelmann an attempt at creating the notion of antiquity based on proving a complete rupture of the cultural continuity between antiquity and early modern times. It was the next phase that could be composed of research on the lost identity; after all, it was supposed to be a study, which would be able to exceed the factual understanding of antiquity. "Christian" Hellenism may be treated as an attempt at confirming this identity, but which tries to blur the impression of the rupture and gap that divides the ancient and the early modern people.

There exists a significant gap between Schlegel's interpretation of Hellenism and the trend in which Lisiecka tries to situate Norwid. In the case of Norwid, we are unable to indicate unambiguous links to the vision of antiquity present, for instance, in *The Death of Socrates* by Lamartine. René Canat notices that,

> *Mort de Socrate* est une ingénieuse adaptation de l'hellénisme à la pensée contemporaine. Socrate, sur le point de mourir, a des lumières; à ses amis fort intéressés, il prophétise la vraie religion dont il fixe très exactement l'avènement à quatre siècles plus tard; une très vieille et très noble histoire habille une philosophie moderne, et même davantage.[12]

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11 *Friedrich Schlegel's Lucinde and the Fragments*, trans. P. Firchow, Minneapolis 1971, p. 181.

12 R. Canat, "L'Hellénisme des Romantiques," Vol. 1: *La Grèce retrouvée*, Paris 1951, pp. 294–295.

Lamartine's Socrates openly announces the arrival of a new religion, which constitutes a complete opposite of his portrayal present in the works of Norwid, who emphasizes that Socrates was unable to accurately express the truth of Revelation, as Christianity was yet to emerge. Moreover, as Norwid claims in his draft of "Jasność i ciemność" (Light and Dark) that the death of Socrates resulted from the inability to conceptualize the mystery of salvation in the language of his time, which then disallowed expressing phenomena connected to Christian morality and faith. Norwid writes in "Zmartwychwstanie historyczne" (Historical Resurrection) that, "In an obscure premonition of Christianity, Socrates proved with all his life the existence of immortality – gathering increasingly stronger evidence – he had to use poison as his last proof and, thus, he almost did not die. . . he just finished his philosophical argument" (Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 609). In this Socratic process of argumentation that the soul is immortal, Socrates used death to emphasize his own convictions with an act of nonverbal testimony.

In the case of Norwid, we should indicate a position in the scope of phenomena connected to nineteenth-century Hellenism different to that evoked by Lisiecka. Let us make two reservations. First, Norwid's reception of the Greek antiquity is based mainly on reading ancient works of such writers as Herodotus, Thucydides, Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, Pausanias, and Strabo. Information written by Norwid in his notebooks clearly indicates such readings. His supplementary reading, which sometimes removed the need to read directly from sources, consisted of nineteenth-century historians who described various aspects of knowledge of the ancient world. Second, for Norwid's Hellenism especially important are the works of key writers of the Enlightenment who initiated the European Hellenism (especially Winckelmann) and Romanticism, but not necessarily of the French one (mainly Byron). Such a dialogical positioning of references to the history of Greece, contextually rooted in historical research, source texts, and actions of figures important for Hellenism, made Norwid's reception of antiquity unusually original and unique. By creating his own literary patterns, as we see in the case of *Quidam* and later than the poem works by Jean-Jacques Ampère on ancient Rome, the nineteenth century tried to innovate the way of describing Greek and Roman antiquity and sought visionary methods of using knowledge about antiquity in the modern world.

The case of Ampère – mentioned by Lisiecka – indicates another aspect of nonuniformity of Norwid's concept to the vein of Christian, second generation of Hellenists. Lisiecka recalls the opinion of Ampère on Christian churches built on the remains of pagan temples. Norwid expresses a similar thought – although only seemingly – in the dedicatory letter to *Quidam*, which apparently indicates the similarity of thought between these two authors. However, Lisiecka does not

notice that Ampère's concept concerns a parallel between the Greek and French civilizations. By using the history of the Greek colony founded on the grounds of today's Marseille, Ampère stated in 1836 that the French civilization comes directly from the Hellenic spirit of Marseillais newcomers from Greece who passed their admiration for art to the natives and taught them their language.[13] Thanks to that, the French became – so to say – Greek successors, gradually marginalized as a dead and incomprehensible language. Ampère justified his statement with the specific form of medieval Gaulish culture and saw in the sound of wedding and funeral songs their direct link to the ancient sources.

Meanwhile, Norwid in his letter "Do Z. K." (To Z. K.) expresses the questionable relations between the Greek culture and Christianity. Norwid puts a question mark in the key moment of his contemplation and thus, indicates the ambiguity of relations between antiquity and Christianity:

> Civilization, in all similarity – claims Norwid – until now is still similar to the church which you watched behind the Capitol so many times in the moonlight – to this church, which in the square of the columns of an ancient temple looks like a pigeon in a broken cage, so that when you go to the mass, you go through this vestibule of Jupiter. . . . Civilization consists of the achievements of the *Israeli, Greek, and Roman* knowledge and, do you think that its Christian bosom in the self-aware reality has already shone with triumph (Pwsz, Vol. 3, pp. 79–80)?

The views of Norwid should not be confused with Ampère's statements, as scholars repeatedly attempted. After all, Norwid must have been perfectly aware of the meaning of Ampère's idea, as in *Quidam* he banished one of the characters (Artemidor) to the coast of "wild Gaul" (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 227) and suggested in a footnote that it was Marseille. Perhaps the philosopher indeed instilled the spirit of Hellenic "Enlightenment," philosophy, and educational concepts on the territory of future France, but the pagan temples on whose foundations Christian churches would be later built remained in Rome. Thus, it is the Eternal City that in this case constitutes the center of Norwid's attention and not Gaul.

Saved by Christianity and incorporated into the Christianized vision of the world, Greek remains constitute for Norwid the basis without which it is impossible to understand the path of European thought from antiquity to the nineteenth century. At the same time, the Greek remains constitute a fundamental obstacle to Christianity's full expression. As they are rooted in the pagan method of perceiving reality and based on rational discourse – unknown to

13 See R. Canat, "L'Hellénisme des Romantiques," Vol. 2: *Le Romantisme des Grecs 1826–1840*, Paris 1953, pp. 87–88.

Christianity – they contributed to the partial return to paganism of the European spirituality. Norwid mentions this process in the commentary to *Album Orbis:*

> Christianity became the propriety of such expanded Hellenism. . . . The entire organization of the Church from Asian-Greek troughs: *ecclesia*, bishops' *senate* (archons), commemoration, *theories, panegyrics*, mysteries. . . However, a Greek mind that thinks independently, where will it find peace? Pantheism, Platonism, materialism (Arius, Polizius) – hence *Ecumenical Councils* – new great works! – a determined Symbol: supposedly *limits* (?) for the Divine (Pwsz, Vol. 11, p. 400).

Despite many centuries of reforming Hellenism, the heritage of this extraordinary relation created on the basis of Greek elements – saved and then incorporated into Christianity – constantly showed Norwid the dynamic character of this relation and the mutual transformation of Christianity and the Greek spirit during this multi-century evolution of doctrines and dogmas. After all, it is impossible to ignore the matter of origin of these Greek ruins and the fragments that survived. It is Christianity that saved certain Greek works in order to use them for its own needs. While conquering the pagan world, Christianity allowed for the preservation of certain Greek inventions and achievements. Therefore, Norwid does not state that there is an opposition between antiquity and Christianity, as currently these two foundations of civilization are practically indistinguishable.

However, we should remember that the phenomenon of saving the Greek heritage was a marginal aspect of the strategy realized on a much bigger scale, which consisted of a complete destruction of all pagan relicts of architecture, sculpture, literature, philosophy, and, which is particularly significant, religion. The relicts that survived had to suit, for various reasons, the Christian vision of reality, but for every individual temple that survived – for instance in the Roman *Forum Romanum* or *Forum Boarium* – there were thousands of buildings destroyed by Christians.

Another matter which comes to mind after reading Lisiecka's work, concerns Hegel's version of the history's interpretation.[14] She touches on the issue of the "Dionysian" fascination with violent passions in which she sees dialectic thinking. Meanwhile, we should note that the dichotomous "breaking down" of Norwid's attitude toward history into the fascination with its "light" side, which reflects the Greek admiration for aesthetic harmony and individual freedom,

14 E. Feliksiak expressed a critical opinion about Lisiecka's interpretation, which links Norwid's thinking of history with Hegelianism ("Norwid i Vico," in: E. Feliksiak, *Poezja i myśl. Studia o Norwidzie*, Lublin 2001, pp. 215 and 228).

and with its "dark" side, based on the conflict of a prominent individual and the society, is in fact an illusion, exaggerated and absolutized by Lisiecka.

The fundamental innovation, which Hegelianism produced in the approach toward history, is the phenomenon of "historicization of history," as Herbert Schnädelbach calls it, which concerns the bilateral relation of reason and history. This German researcher is mainly interested in the problem of the ahistoricality of change, described in a considerable retrospect. Schnädelbach claims that in a situation when the description criterion cannot be drawn from history itself, each change must seem ahistorical, that is unsubordinated to the rules of history, but subordinated to reason.[15]

In Lisiecka's opinion, Norwid interprets history by means of two contradictory models drawn from antiquity. "Light" Hellenism is composed of a version of the myth of return, the cyclic rebirth of the admiration for proportion, harmony, and order, accompanied by the desire for broadening the sphere of freedom. "Dark" side of Hellenism aligns with the model of historical catastrophe and decline, which eventually turns out to advance humankind thanks to the sacrifice of a prominent individual, like Socrates or Michelangelo. Noteworthy, according to Norwid every model of historical change with a rational character and drawn from reason must turn out to be insufficient in describing the phenomenon of the historicity of changes. The human mind is not identical with God, and only the adoption of his perspective – impossible for the individual – guarantees the understanding of history. Thus, in this spectrum there will always exist a fundamental conflict between Hegel and Norwid, as in the works of the latter "holy history" happens in the life of every individual. Arent van Nieukerken claims that, in the case of Norwid,

> A man "recovers," realizes his essence when drawing conclusions from the historical event of the Incarnation of the Word of God, when he perceives his essential similarity to Christ, this God-human, when he gains the ability to interpret all aspects of his current life in reference to the life of Christ (therefore, he must refer the lives from before the Incarnation of the Word of God to this prototype – so the lives of Socrates and Spartacus turn out to be in some sense a prefiguration of the life of Christ).[16]

We should state that, when Norwid refers to antiquity, he does not want to illustrate this predetermined thesis that ancient Greeks prepared human minds for

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15 See H. Schnädelbach, *Zur Dialektik der historischen Vernunft*, in: *Vorträge und Abhandlungen*, Vol. I: *Vernunft und Geschichte*, Berlin 1987.

16 A. van Nieukerken, *Perspektywiczność sacrum. Szkice o Norwidowskim romantyzmie*, Warsaw 2007, p. 305.

the reception of Christianity, as he treats Christianity as a historical creation and knows that demonstrating pre-Christian analogies with Christianity leads astray, intellectually and artistically. However, he is aware that the arrival of Christianity changed the existing views on the world's history. Thus, he considers it his job to take a closer look at the history of Greece from the perspective of the Christian triumph, taking into account all the complications that would have manifested in such a perspective. In other words, Norwid's works present the history of Greece as history reinterpreted for the needs of a world, in which Christianity performs the role of the spiritual guide of humankind.[17] Inevitably, Norwid had to highlight certain figures (like Homer, Epimenides, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, or Alexander the Great) and topics (like the birth of philosophy or tragedy) while other incited none of his interest, as they did not match his criteria.

2. "Greek" Characters, Journeys to Greece

We find many Greek or Greek-speaking characters in Norwid's works. Artemidorus, Zofia z Knidos, and Jazon Mag from *Quidam*, along with Julius Caesar and Cleopatra from the drama dedicated to them, are characters irrevocably marked by their relationship with the Hellas by their knowledge of the language and Greek culture. Apart from Jazon, all these characters were created by Norwid from his readings of Greek masterpieces and are the perfect incarnation of the Greek ideal of a man whose existence is based on social coexistence with other people and rhetoric skills. However, Norwid deprives his "Hellenic" heroes of the possibility of coexisting with Greek culture in its full bloom. He brings them to life in conditions of Greece's full dependence on Rome (Artemidorus, Zofia) or makes them cosmopolitans who do not pay attention to

17 Norwid's rewriting of the history of Greece from the Christian eschatology's point of view may be considered as a variation on the theology of history of Augustine of Hippo. Norwid's intention was to demonstrate the reasonableness of history, but without its reinterpretation in the spirit of a specified historiosophical thesis. The secular history in the final perspective of the history of salvation entirely loses its meaning and its role is visible only when history is considered as the fight between faith and atheism, on all levels, from the life of an individual to the international conflicts. K. Löwith notices: "Hence the whole scheme of Augustine's work serves the purpose of vindicating God in history. Yet history remains definitely distinct from God, who is not a Hegelian god in history but the Lord of history. God's dealing in history is beyond our disposal, and his providence (like Hegel's "cunning of reason") overrules the intentions of men." K. Löwith, *Meaning in History*, p. 170.

the fate of Greece, even though Greek education is an essential element of their functioning in the world of power (Julius Caesar, Cleopatra, Her).

As Maria Kalinowska notes, references to "Greek" journeys play an equally important role in Norwid's work. There, we may often encounter the figures of travelers from Greece or characters that are in other ways related to this land.[18] Harold in *Zwolon* undoubtedly travels through Sparta, Szeliga in *Pierścień Wielkiej Damy* (A Great Lady's Ring) travels from the East. Besides, the journey to Greece appears episodically in *Szczesna* and *Assunta*. We may conclude that, for Norwid, it is not a way to describe the phenomenon of a journey to the East nor a way to introduce the current state of knowledge of the locations from the perspective of the advancement of culture. Instead, he juxtaposes the European space with another world, which once contributed to the development of civilization. In *Zwolon* it is the Eurotas Valley where ancient Sparta was located, in *Assunta* it is the Acropolis Hill in Athens, in *Szczesna* these are the Italian remains of Magna Graecia, while in *Pierścień* a unique role is played by Asia Minor's Smyrna. Thanks to his "Greek" journeys, Norwid reveals the message he reads from European history. The destruction of the world, which once was the center of civilization and contributed to the creation of literature, philosophy, and democracy, concentrates in its complicated nineteenth-century fate the spiritual and intellectual apathy of the present day, unable to take care of its continuous development and in many matters reminiscent of that ruined and neglected landscape.

Norwid himself probably also traveled around the Mediterranean Sea between July and early October of 1848,[19] which in his later statements, especially in his "Autobiografia artystyczna" (Artistic Autobiography), will take the form of a journey through "classical countries" (Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 556). Perhaps it was under the influence of this journey that Norwid established his conviction that the experience of Greek culture is possible primarily through the contemplation of a landscape filled with architectural remains and the admiration of artworks, especially ancient sculptures. In this respect, Norwid remained a faithful student of Winckelmann. The reverberations of this journey are two works marked by Norwid himself as created during a sea trip on the Mediterranean Sea: "Marmur-Biały" (White Marble) and "Z listu (Do Włodzimierza Łubieńskiego)" (From a Letter to Włodzimierz Łubieński):

18 Kalinowska, *Grecja romantyków*, pp. 81–106.

19 Z. Trojanowiczowa and Z. Dambek, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, Vol. 1: 1821–1860, Poznań 2007, pp. 321–322.

> And you will reprimand me that a Greek column
> Over seaside, glazed by waves – I miss so!
> That I nearly had a tear of it like for a coffin,
> While so many pains and sorrows today are psalmed (Pwsz, Vol. 1, p. 97).

The aesthetics inspired by Winckelmann's works regularly returns in Norwid's works, especially in concise attempts to define the phenomenon of Greek culture, verbalized by means of deliberations on other issues. At that time, Norwid concentrated on features derived from the analysis of Greek sculpture and architecture, using the notions of symmetry, harmony, and order as fundamental metaphors for the Hellenic world. He mentions it in his draft of "Boga-Rodzica (The Mother of God): "For Greeks, reason is the result of aesthetic symmetry, but no Greek hero is known for his reason only, rather for his fervor only or for his wit" (Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 514). In a letter to Maria Trębicka from May of 1854, Norwid describes this phenomenon as "the beauty of Athenian form" (Pwsz, Vol. 8, p. 213). He emphasizes the Greek tendency to consider as artistic work only what corresponds to the Hellenic image of (ideal) beauty and to refer in a similar way to all aspects of life, naturally closer to art in Greece than in any other place or time. We may notice that with the crystallization of Norwid's views on Greek history, he became decreasingly likely to refer to this new image of Greeks that stems from the reading of Winckelmann's works, as people free and devoted to art who created the canon of beauty, which shows humanity in its full dignity and greatness. With time, this image will become more complicated in Norwid's works, bringing less clear decisions; nevertheless, in the context of Greek art, Norwid will remain faithful to the views close to Winckelmann's. Hence, he will approve of a fragment of Proudhon's deliberations, quoted in the draft "Obywatel Gustav Coubert" (Citizen Gustav Coubert): "The constant feeling of worship for the Divine and the constant feeling of human dignity, *balancing* themselves endlessly in manifestations of this small people, gave the *sacred proportionality of forms*, and this is what the whole moral existence of Greece expresses" (Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 490).

In *Promethidion*, Norwid contrasts the European fascination with Greece with the inept imitation of its art by his contemporaries. However, the past cannot be revived by imitation of shapes and proportions; it usually remains inaccessible to human cognition and impossible to reconstruct from a distant perspective.[20]

20 On the methods of poetic cognition in Norwid's work and their connection to historical truth, which can only be addressed through "closer approaches," see A. Dunajski, *Chrześcijańska interpretacja dziejów w pismach Cypriana Norwida*, Lublin 1985, pp. 69–71.

Reflection on the distant lost world of Greek ideals inevitably leads to the question of the heritage of Hellenic wisdom, the desire for which Norwid treats as one of the types of Platonic *mania*:

> Oh! Greece – that you were loved, I see
> Today in every speck of marble,
> In the imitation of which I am ashamed
> For my age – in the reed of carved columns,
> Mourned from the top with acanthus,
> In verses broken from the zeal of crying
> And in Socratean owl with diamond eyes,
> And in your whole *Philos* – up to the brink of madness (Pwsz, Vol. 3, pp. 442–443)!

Norwid follows Winckelmann in one fundamental issue in particular, which concerns the apotheosis of Greek art in the works of the latter. Alex Potts notes that Winckelmann could not resolve the dilemma how to remove the tension between considering art as an ideal and art as a historical phenomenon. On the one hand, the ideals of Greek sculpture were derived by Winckelmann from the observation of authentic works but, on the other hand, the question of how to admire the Greek ideal of beauty on the basis of late Hellenistic or even Roman copies was unavoidable. Potts turns this inconclusive tension into a key to understanding the nature of Winckelmann's deliberations, as the former claims:

> [Winckelmann] internalized these tensions within the very structure of his history of Greek art. If classical Greece was a uniquely privileged moment in human history, Greek sculpture as a material reality, as manifest in the actual course of its historical realization, was for Winckelmann always in some sense necessarily incomplete.[21]

The ideal of beauty that Norwid mentions in *Promethidion* on the example of Greek sculpture conforms with these assumptions of Winckelmann's research. The ideality of sculpture refers in this case to something elusive and absent in the stone itself, but it may simultaneously be captured only through contact with authentic material art:

> Take a Greek statue – cut off its arms –
> The nose – the head – the legs tight in buskin
> And leave barely the torso's form:
> It's still soulful for a hundred living men
> It's not yet a blind stone – but a vein

21 A. Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal. Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History*, New Haven and London 1994, p. 19.

> Leave, it will resurrect!. . . cut it as well – there will remain
> Matter enough. . . for chatter!. . . (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 445)

In the quoted fragment, Norwid describes the process of discovering the beauty visible in the block of sculpture. He also creates an opposition between the creation of art and its destruction.[22] The latter is unable to destroy the spiritual dimension of the existence of a work of art. Moreover, destruction appears in this case as the next stage in the creation of a sculpture; it is the discovery of a new potential of meanings, hidden in the stone substance. However, it simultaneously is the loss of many details of the sculpted body and the disturbance of the harmony of the ancient statue. Marked by the passing time, the sculpture refers the viewer to a different form of beauty than its original form, because beauty as a universal phenomenon was also historically transformed in this manner; it became the effect of various procedures on the observed figure.

Let us notice the importance of this tension between the beauty of sculpture and its eternally unfinished character and susceptibility to the touch of time, which transforms the synthesis of material and spiritual spheres in sculptures. Alternatively, we should consider that the material character of the sculpture admired in the poem is the final effect of its historical degradation and that the poetic subject, observing the sculpture, is aware of the fact that it barely shows the complete Greek ideal of the body, which remains only in the imaginary sphere.[23]

Norwid's sorrow for the lost glory of Greece is mixed with his critical view of the history of Greeks, who could not appreciate the greatness of certain figures, such as Socrates, Themistocles, and Phidias, who immortalized Greece. Norwid indicates that similar tendencies will also characterize contemporary Greek struggle for a state independent from Turkey. The poem "Epimenides," also biographically connected with a journey in the Mediterranean, is the quintessence of this admiration for the Greek culture revived among the noble ruins, mixed with a skeptical reflection on Greek flaws. The poem ends with an admonition from an ancient hero:

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22 See considerations of B. Kuczera-Chachulska devoted to this fragment of *Promethidion*: "Norwida 'przypowieść o pięknem,'" in: *Norwid-artysta. W 125. rocznicę śmierci poety*, eds. K. Trybuś, W. Ratajczak and Z. Dambek, Poznań 2008, pp. 241–251.

23 See D. Pniewski, *Między obrazem i słowem. Studia o poglądach estetycznych i twórczości literackiej Norwida*, Lublin 2005, pp. 73–96, for interesting and accurate remarks about Norwid's views on the aesthetic dimension of ancient sculptures in the context of nineteenth-century criticism and their significance for Christian art.

> He told me one thing in a Greek accent of the Eumenidies:
> "*I lied to rest and return, I bid you welcome*
> *And goodbye – the one who says this is Epimenides*" –
> And he left (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 67).

From this poetic message, we may draw one conclusion in particular, namely that the speaker who meets Epimenides in Crete did not have the slightest difficulty in understanding ancient Greek. The question should be asked whether Norwid disseminated a similar view about his knowledge of the ancient Greek language. Did Norwid want to know Greek to a degree similar to that used by the characters he created in the long poem *Quidam* and the drama *Kleopatra i Cezar*?

In the poem "Z listu (Do Włodzimierza Łubieńskiego)," Norwid describes an episode from Plutarch. Cicero traveling to Sicily as a consul encounters a Greek exile, a philosopher, who is moved by the fluency with which Cicero uses Greek:

> – Cicero spoke – he spoke not to the Roman throng,
> As if a cunning gladiator – but as a ghost that hurries
> With his lips to keep up with the rhythmic lava –
> So like inspired – being nearly born as as Greek;
> And he did speak *always with Greek word and aspiration,*
> *For the things was about the spirit* (Pwsz, Vol. 1, p. 98).

This fragment of the poem raised Tadeusz Sinko's doubt and malice – "he did speak *always with ... aspiration*"[24] – so he stressed in a manner characteristic of Greek language? Could it be that Norwid confused the so-called weak or strong aspiration (*spiritus asper* or *spiritus lenis*) with stress? If so, it would mean that Norwid did not have any proficiency in Greek, not even elementary.

However, in his letters, Norwid suggests the opposite. In 1876, he writes to Józef Ignacy Kraszewski about this in the context of own translations of *The Odyssey*: "It is sad to Mr. Norwid to recall that J. I. Kraszewski in a column claims as if there were no poets who know ancient literatures. There are such, dear Sir! And they are such that not only know Greek or Latin, but also Hebrew, semitic, and oriental languages (Pwsz, Vol. 10, p. 81)."

A little earlier, Norwid mentions that his translation of Homer was based on the original; thus, despite the undoubted emphasis, easily visible in the quoted fragment, we should treat Norwid's declaration with full seriousness. Did he really use the original text of *The Odyssey*, which would forejudge his knowledge of Greek? Gomulicki claims that Norwid used a school edition of *The Odyssey*

24 Sinko, "Klasyczny laur Norwida," p. 67.

with a commentary (although he does not give any specific edition) and a French translation by Jean-Baptiste Dugas Montbel.[25] This last source seems to play an essential role. Zofia Szmydtowa devoted an article to Norwid's translation of *The Odyssey*, in which she stresses the importance of Dugas Montbel's translation and notices the influence of Madame Dacier's older translation. She also compares Norwid's translation with the Greek original.[26] However, the failure to account for Dugas Montbel's indirect source is a big mistake, primarily because Norwid relied more on this French translation than on the original.

Following Dugas Montbel, Norwid repeats numeorus formulations and completely abandons the specificity of the Greek text. "Sing, oh Muse! Man fertile with inventions / Who, though he wins over Troys sacred trenches, / Wanders for long" (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 676); so begins Norwid, faithfully translating after Dugas Montbel the descriptions of Odysseus as "homme fertile en stratagèmes" and of Troy as "après détruit les remparts sacrés d'Ilion."[27] The verb "*détruire*" means "to destroy," but also "to rout," which probably led Norwid to emphasize the victorious aspect of Odysseus's activity. Meanwhile, Homer uses the term "*ἔπερσεν*" (in the past tense) derived from the verb "*πέρθω*," which means "to destroy," "to desolate," and Odysseus is called "*πολύτροπος*," which means "versatile," "ingenious," "cunning," but also "diverse." It is far from the French epithet "fertile" with which Dugas Montbel tried to convey the traits of Odysseus. Norwid continues in a similar manner. Dugas Montbel writes about Odysseus that, "sur mer souffrit dans son âme bien des douleurs," which Norwid expressed as follows: "He suffered much in his heart on the treacherous wave" (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 676); although he could find many other equivalents for the expressions "θυμός" ("soul," "mind," "heart," "courage," "spirit") and "*ἄλγος*" ("pain," "worry," "sorrow"). Thus, we cannot overlook the fact that Dugas Montbel's translation played a decisive role in Norwid's translation efforts. In addition to Dugas Montbel's, other French translations were also crucial for Norwid, such as the one by Madame Dacier. The Greek text had to play a less prominent role as an auxiliary source of knowledge about Homer's epic.

Therefore, we should consider whether Norwid really used the original of *The Odyssey*. He probably used it but his lack of knowledge of the Greek language

25 Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 783.

26 Z. Szmydtowa, "Norwid jako tłumacz Homera," in: Z. Szmydtowa, *W kręgu renesansu i romantyzmu. Studia porównawcze z literatury polskiej i obcej*, ed. Z. Libera, Warsaw 1979, pp. 601–621.

27 *L'Odyssée; suivie de La Batrachomyomachie; des hymnes; de divers petits poèmes; et fragments attribués à Homère*, trans. Dugas-Montbel, Paris 1830.

made it impossible for him to translate some fragments of *The Odyssey* more accurately. The influence of Dugas Montbel's version is striking and must have had an enormous impact on the shaping of Norwid's translation as a whole. Therefore, Norwid's opinions from his letter to Kraszewski must be treated with reservation. Perhaps Norwid wanted to use Greek to a sufficient degree to read ancient literature in the original but it was impossible for him. That is why Norwid also remarks in his notes that he reads French translations of ancient texts but does not refer to the editions in original languages. He surely would not handle reading them. One thing is certain, however, Norwid knew the Greek alphabet and could read Greek inscriptions noticed in catacombs. He mentions this in his lectures *O Juliuszu Słowackim* (On Juliusz Słowacki). Norwid's considerations concern the Hellenization of the Roman elites, influenced by the literature and language of the conquered Greeks:

> Thus, Rome could not understand the word "fatherland," and even if there are figures that shine in Rome's history with exquisite patriotism, they are but remains of the Greek sun, it is Roman patriciate raised on Greek songs and knowledge. I myself saw by an oil lamp in Scypios' graves: instead of the Roman *c* a Greek *k* on inscriptions. And if someone used foreign ortography on family grave, then he certainly must have been raised outside of his family (Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 411)!

Tadeusz Sinko was probably right when he suggested that Norwid was not familiar with the original texts of classical masterpieces. On the other hand, we should admit that Norwid relatively often correctly noted down many Greek words, so that Greek must have been for him, for many reasons, an essential language for European culture.[28] Moreover, reading translations and specialist studies allowed Norwid to gather a great deal of knowledge about Greek history.

3. Greek Readings

The lecture of Norwid's notebooks allows us to formulate the opinion that Norwid read a lot about Greece and primarily focused on Greek literature, history, and religion. His fascination with Greece began during his journey to Italy, and it never abandoned him. Norwid read both serious scientific treatises on the history of ancient societies, the history of philosophy or religion, and also various popularization works that familiarized him with a specific aspect of the

28 In particular, the following section of *Białe kwiaty* (White Flowers) should be noted: "The pathetic [in the archaic sense related to emotions] does not come from *πάθος* (choroba). The pathetic comes from *πάσχω*. . ." (Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 191).

ancient world. He also used compendia, which presented the fate of ancient art and described the latest discoveries in this field. It is more difficult to assess the scope of Norwid's reading of ancient works. He probably read Homer, Herodotus, and Plutarch more thoroughly than other writers, as evidenced by the frequent references to these works in Norwid's works. In the case of other writers, it was probably a superficial and fragmentary reading. However, it cannot be excluded that some of the books that Norwid used, especially Alfred Maury's *La Magie et l'Astrologie* and Fustel de Coulanges's *La Cité antique* could have replaced Norwid's source research, since abundant quotations, summaries, and interpretations provided the knowledge he sought. A great amount of information about the Chaldeans in Norwid's notebooks comes from Maury's book rather than from direct lecture of sources, while recurring reflections on the race of Ham, Japheth, and Shem are probably an echo of his lecture of Giambattista Vico's *The New Science*.

When considering the issue of Norwid's erudition, we should try and list the main editions and studies from which he could acquire his knowledge. This will create an initial "map" of his knowledge of the Greek antiquity, based on which he constructed his historiosophical concepts.

Antiquity Sources

1. *Description de la Grèce de Pausanias*, traduction nouvelle avec le texte grec collationné sur les manuscrits de la bibliothèque du Roi, M. Clavier, 6 volumes, Paris 1814–1821.[29]
2. *Géographie de Strabon*, traduit du grec en français par De La Porte du Theil, Avec des notes et une introduction par Gosselin, 5 volumes, Paris 1809–1819.[30]

29 Norwid's reading of Pausanias was noted in his *Notatki z mitologii* (Notes on Mythology, Pwsz, Vol. 7, pp. 280, 281, 311, 316). This edition provided a Greek text with a translation into French. It is very likely that Norwid used this translation, as it was extremely popular in France, and there was no other version that would provide a translation of the entire text of Pausanias. It is also stated by J.W. Gomulicki (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 686).

30 Strabon's work appears in footnotes to *Sztuka w obliczu dziejów* (Art in the Face of History) and in Norwid's notebooks (Pwsz, Vol. 7, pp. 257, 258, 264, 279, 281, 288, 305, 334). This edition was the first full translation into French and Norwid could only use it, as the next edition (trans. A. Tardieu, 4 volumes, Paris 1867–1890) did not appear until the second half of the nineteenth century, already after most of the Norwid's preserved notebooks had been created. It was also stated by J.W. Gomulicki (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 686).

3. *Histoire de l'Église*, Écrite par Eusèbe, traduite par Monsieur Cousin, Paris 1686.[31]
4. *Histoire de Thucydide*, traduite du grec par Lévesque, Paris 1841.[32]
5. *Histoire d'Hérodote, suivie de la vie d'Homère*, nouvelle traduction, par A.F. Miot, 3 volumes, Paris 1822.[33]
6. *Histoires d'Hérodote*, traduction nouvelle, avec une introduction et des notes, par P. Giguet, Paris 1864.
7. *Histoire universelle de Diodore de Sicile*, traduit en François par M. l'Abbé Terrasson, 7 volumes, Amsterdam 1737–1744.[34]
8. *La Préparation Évangélique*, traduit du grec d'Eusèbe Pamphile, des notes critiques, historiques et philologiques par M. Séguier de Saint-Brisson, 2 volumes, Paris 1846.[35]
9. *Les Vies des hommes illustres de Plutarque*, traduites du grec par Amyot, avec des Notes et des Observations, par MM. Brotier et Vauvilliers, Nouvelle Édition, Revue, corrigée et augmentée, par E. Clavier, 26 volumes, Paris 1801–1805.[36]

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31 Norwid noted this translation of Eusebius of Caesarea in his *Notatki z mitologii* (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 297).

32 Norwid mentions his reading of Thucydides in *Notatki z mitologii* (Pwsz, Vol. 7, pp. 247, 248, 281). It is impossible to determine which edition of the Peloponnesian War he used, as there were several. The indicated edition was a popular and frequently resumed translation.

33 Herodotus belonged to a narrow group of Norwid's most important readings, which shaped his knowledge of Greek history. It is not clear which edition Norwid used, as Herodotus was often translated into French. These editions are among the popular and frequently reprinted versions of *The Histories*.

34 Norwid repeatedly notes references to the work of Diodorus Siculus in his notebooks. Since he summarized in them a fragment devoted to the tomb of Ozymandias, it is highly probable that he used the eighteenth-century translation by Abbé Terrasson (Pwsz, Vol. 7, pp. 286–287). It was also stated by J.W. Gomulicki (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 686).

35 Norwid noted a reference to this edition of Eusebius of Caesarea in his notes (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 300).

36 Plutarch returns many times in Norwid's work. He is referred to in his poems *W pamiętniku L.A.* (In L.A.'s Diary), *Z listu (Do Włodzimierza Łubieńskiego)*, *Dwie powieści* (Two stories), lectures on Juliusz Słowacki, and in a commemorative speech *W rocznicę powstania styczniowego* (On the Anniversary of the January Uprising). Plutarch also appears several times in Norwid's notebooks. Because Solon's life was referred to by Norwid in the introduction to the poem *Epimenides*, where he repeated a mistake in the translation of the name of the nymph Blast, it is known that he used Amyot's translation.

10. *L'Odyssée; suivie de La Batrachomyomachie; des hymnes; de divers petits poèmes; et fragments attribués à Homère*, Traduction par Dugas-Montbel, 2 volumes, Paris 1818 (II ed. Paris 1830).[37]

Historians, Philologists, Religious Experts

1. Ampère J.-J., "Rome sous Auguste d'après les poètes contemporains," *Revue des Deux Mondes* 1866, Vol. 66.[38]
2. Champfleury J., *Histoire de la caricature antique*, Paris 1865.[39]
3. Champollion J.F., *Précis du système hiérogliphique des anciens Egyptiens*, Paris 1828.[40]
4. Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité antique. Étude sur le culte, le droit, les institutiones de la Grèce et de Rome*, Paris 1864.[41]
5. Cousin V., *Histoire générale de la philosophie depuis les temps plus anciens jusqu'à la fin du XVIII^e siècle*, Paris 1864.[42]
6. Creuzer F., *Religions de l'Antiquité*, trans. J.D. Guigniaut, 4 volumes, Paris 1825–1851.[43]

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37 The fact that Norwid used Dugas Montbel's translation was indicated by J.W. Gomulicki (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 686).

38 Norwid mentioned Ampère's reading in a letter to Marian Sokołowski of November 8, 1866, (Pwsz, Vol. 9, p. 263). J.W. Gomulicki linked Norwid's mention to an article from the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (the poet himself gave the location of the article, Pwsz, Vol. 9, p. 584), although it is worth mentioning that a few years earlier Ampère also published a book in which, among other things, he described Rome during Hadrian's reign (J.-J. Ampère, *L'histoire romaine à Rome*, 4 volumes, Paris 1862–1864). This Norwid's reading should not be excluded. It is worth noting, however, the possibility that the poet also became acquainted with two other works, important from the point of view of the nascent comparative studies, in which the history of poetry in ancient Greece plays a key role: *De l'histoire de la poésie: discours prononcé à l'Athénée de Marseille, pour l'ouverture du cours de littérature*, le 12 mars 1830, Marseille 1830; *La Grèce, Rome et Dante: études littéraires d'après nature*, Paris 1870.

39 The circumstances of Norwid's reading of this book were described by J.W. Gomulicki (Pwsz, Vol. 7, pp. 474, 594).

40 Norwid wrote down information about Champollion's book in his notes (Pwsz, Vol. 7, pp. 258–259, 272).

41 Norwid borrowed this book from L. Rettel in 1882 and described his impressions in three letters (Pwsz, Vol. 10, pp. 169–172).

42 Norwid mentions Cousin's book in *Notatki z mitologii* (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 313).

43 Norwid read Creuzer's book in Guignaut's French translation, although it was probably not a meticulous reading. He mentions this book only once, and it is a multi-volume, extremely erudite work, which was widely discussed when it first appeared in France

7. Grote G., *Plato and the other Companions of Socrates*, 3 volumes, London 1865–1860.[44]
8. Görres J., *La mystique divine, naturelle et diabolique*, trans. M. Charles de Saintefoix, 5 volumes, Paris 1854–1855.[45]
9. Maury A., *La Magie et l'Astrologie dans l'antiquité et au moyen âge, ou Étude sur les superstitions païennes, qui se sont perpétuées jusqu'à nos jours*, Paris 1860.[46]
10. Quatremère E., *Recherches historiques et critiques sur la langue et la literature de l'Egypte*, Paris 1808.[47]
11. Riambourg J.-B.-C., *Du Rationalisme et de la tradition, ou Coup d'oeil sur l'état actuel de l'opinion philosophique et de l'opinion religieuse en France*, Paris 1834.[48]
12. *Principes de la Philosophie de l'Histoire*, traduits de la *Scienza Nuova* de J.B. Vico, et précédés d'un discours sur le système et la vie de l'auteur, par J. Michelet, Paris 1827.[49]

(Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 274). On the role of the French edition of Creuzer's work, see: R. Canat, *L'Hellénisme des Romantiques*, Vol. 2: *Le Romantisme des Grecs 1826–1840*, Paris 1953, p. 13.

44 Norwid's reading of Grote's book is indicated by a passage from *Notatki z mitologii* (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 313). We should also note that at the time when Norwid's notebooks were written, the translation of the monumental history of Greece, which for many reasons represented a breakthrough in the study of Greek antiquity, continued: G. Grote, *Histoire de la Grèce depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à la fin de la génération contemporaine d'Alexandre le Grand,* trans. A.-L. de Sadous, Vol. 1–19, Paris 1864–1867.

45 Norwid summarizes excerpts from the book by Görres in *Notatki z historii* (Notes on History, Pwsz, Vol. 7, pp. 369–371).

46 Norwid owned Maury's book and included some passages from it in a collection of his notes (J.W. Gomulicki's opinion, Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 689). We should stress Norwid's reading of another work by Maury, namely *Histoire des religions de la Grèce antique depuis leur origine jusqu'au leur complète constitution*, 3 volumes, Paris 1857–1859, which may have drawn Norwid's interest to the beginnings of Greek religiousness and the role of the Pelasgians as intermediaries between the civilizations of Egypt and Greece.

47 Norwid mentions this book in his *Notatki z mitologii* (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 258).

48 Evidence for Norwid's reading of the Riambourg dissertation can be seen in his notebooks (Pwsz, Vol. 7, pp. 242–243).

49 Norwid mentions Vico's book in his notebook (Pwsz, Vol. 7, pp. 361, 367). E. Feliksiak, "Norwid i Vico," *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, 3/1968, pp. 23–42 for the connection between Vico's thoughts and the concept of time and history in Norwid's work.

It is easier to indicate which books Norwid read than to specify how he did it and which information he considered particularly important. A good example that aptly illustrates Norwid's way of reading may be *La Cité antique* by Fustel de Coulanges. Norwid borrowed the book in February or March of 1882 from Leonard Rettel and described his impressions in three letters.[50] The book is devoted to the socio-political institutions of Greece and Rome, but Norwid's reading is puzzling, as he completely distorts its meaning, while his letters give the impression that he ultimately failed to understand this valuable work.

De Coulanges's work is an early work of a historian today considered the most outstanding nineteenth-century French researcher of institutions.[51] In a book devoted to the ancient city, de Coulanges assumes that the comparative method can give the most comprehensive answer to the question of the birth of the *polis*. He focuses on the phenomenon of shaping urban communities, organized on the basis of religious legitimacy. The observation of the evolution of ancient institutions, such as property law, lineage, and marriage, gives de Coulanges an opportunity to describe the changes in human intelligence. It is in the changes of reason – also effecting in transitions of religious beliefs, rituals, and the organization of state – that Coulanges sees the foundation for the comparative analysis of different cultures. In *La Cité antique* the subject of research is the development of Greek and Roman cities compared in terms of the divine origin of the idea of private property.

This book must have seemed to Norwid an extremely controversial way to describe the transformations of the ancient world. In particular, the way de Coulanges presents the genesis of all the changes is strongly opposed by Norwid. As Donald R. Kelley claims, de Coulanges objects to the subjectivization of history, as Kelley states that it was not "the work of individuals or even of the "people,"[52] but it rather was a logical result of changes in human intelligence. Moreover, Kelley asserts that the only way to study it was "an approach not only impartial, but also extremely literal, based on a detailed and very narrow study of the text."[53]

De Coulanges's positivistic approach is the reason for Norwid's criticism, as he could not agree to deprive the Greek world of all traces of the role of the

50 Z. Trojanowiczowa and E. Lijewska, *Kalendarium życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, Vol. 2: *1861–1883*, Poznań 2007, pp. 743–744.

51 D.R. Kelley, *Fortunes of History: Historical Inquiry from Herder to Huizinga*, New Haven 2008, p. 251.

52 Kelley, *Fortunes of History*, p. 254.

53 Kelley, *Fortunes of History*.

Revelation and divine presence. Moreover, de Coulanges not only tried to limit the influence of religious ideas and beliefs on the creation of the socio-political shape of ancient states by explaining the beliefs of Greeks and Romans but also referred to individual metamorphoses of human intelligence and formulated a coherent image of antiquity as an epoch in which existence after death was to only mean a continuation of earthly life, as evidenced by ritual meals prepared for the dead. This attachment to the material world and the exclusion from the ancient world of divine Demiurge's influences, who ordered human life according to his will, was inconceivable for Norwid. In his view, the Greek way of conceptualizing knowledge about the world was a preparatory stage for humanity so that it would be more natural for people to understand and accept the existence of the Christian God.

Norwid treats *La Cité antique* as a book devoted to the history of Greek religiousness, contrary to the intentions of its author. After all, Norwid believes that elements of religiousness persist in the structure of the human language. Therefore, since the book discusses old literary and historical texts as testimonies of the ancient era, it is impossible to judge it in any other category than religious. Accordingly, Norwid considers the issues contained in de Coulanges's work from the perspective of a historiosophist, who defines the notion of personal freedom differently than a historian of antiquity. Norwid stresses that de Coulanges wants to present Rome not as a city but as an abstract concept, because Rome without the presence of women and people is an artificial creation, one that has never existed in the historical reality:

> He quickly omits *the abduction of the Sabine women* (small thing!), because it would be rather embarrassing *in theory*, as it halves the ritual of triumph, for then one should say that the triumphant entered through a *breach in a holy wall* (like Remus, killed for this act) and that without breaching this wall *there would be no triumph at all* . . . but this would embarrass the Author in theory!. . . who, so it would seem, wants to describe a certain Rome – – – *without women, the people, and the triumphant* . . . indeed, what interesting Rome (Pwsz, Vol. 10, p. 170)!

Norwid complains that the author of *La Cité antique* excludes the phenomena that he does not intend to examine, and certainly not to the extent preferred by Norwid. De Coulanges's deliberations offered no place for the appreciation of the role of the triumphant, be it an outstanding individual who changes the fate of the state or the political weight of the people. De Coulanges understands the essence of community in the ancient city differently. For him, an ancient city was a community of individual human groups rooted in the original foundations of the family, property rights, and domestic religion. Therefore, he distinguishes the

city as a religious and political community from the city understood as a territory with buildings: "Cité et ville n'étaient pas des mots synonymes chez les anciens. La cité était l'association religieuse et politique des familles et des tribus; la ville était le lieu de réunion, le domicile de cette association."[54] Thus, he does not consider the phenomenon of individual freedom at all; and for obvious reasons, since according to de Coulanges, the inhabitants of an ancient city did not know the concept of individualism, which appeared only with Christianity. Outraged by the supposedly disgraceful theories, Norwid would like to rebut de Coulanges's idea that it is only Christianity that will separate religion from the state. In Norwid's opinion, Christianity naturally filled a place after the discredited pagan religion. The thought of the French researcher is the opposite of Norwid's beliefs because, for a historian, the Greek and Roman religion could not exist without the socio-political context of the functioning of the state. Besides, for de Coulanges it was only an evolution, to which institutions organizing the life of families and cities were subject, and it was the only and the one reliable subject of research. A historian, such as Fustel de Coulanges, did not ask questions about the fate of individual people, because his comparative method imposed on him an optic of evaluating individual historical development models so that he could juxtapose Greek, Roman, and Indian cities. An "individual" human could not appear in such a discourse, which Norwid probably knew but – simultaneously – criticized. We should undoubtedly treat Norwid's polemics as a starting point for the reflection on a different perspectives on the Greek-Roman history, methodologically unlimited and syncretic in character, although at the same time close to the fate of people who went unnoticed in the crowd described in historical works.

Norwid's abundant readings on Greek history and civilization resulted in the crystallization of his opinions on the critical issues of Greek culture, its birth and development. His works contain fragmented and dispersed views on the fate of Greek literature, philosophy, and historiography, which reflect Norwid's vision of the influence of the birth of literature on the formation of Greek identity. Several questions accumulated over the centuries about the figure of Homer, which Norwid notes in detail: "Homer: when did he live? Did he exist? Was he Greek? Asian? An Italian? Was he blind? A beggar? Are both *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* his works? / Some say that these are rhapsodies collected by Lycurgus or Peisistratos. Others that Homer was a companion of Agamemnon and Odysseus" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 301). The uncertainty regarding Homer's origin and life span did

54 F. de Coulanges, *La Cité antique. Étude sur le culte, le droit, les institutiones de la Grèce et de Rome*, Paris 1864, p. 166.

not prevent Norwid from trying to describe the phenomenon that ensues from his epic. In his introduction to the translation of the First Book of *The Iliad*, Norwid explains that Homer's work played such an essential educational role in the life of the Greek because of the transparency of the text itself, which originated from the world of oral culture and described the natural coexistence of people and gods:

> We may say that Homer's *naturalness* has to strong sources. One is technical: because rhapsodies moved from one lips to another and each singer became their owner, thus a popular rhyme became like a handy tool, which after long use becomes part of one man's gestures and hands, so *natural* as if he had another living organ. / On the other hand: the main reason of *naturalness* was the fact that everything coexisted in Homer's poetry. More than one *god* was so human that he could forget himself by dinner (Pwsz, Vol. 3, pp. 673–674).

Norwid notes that Homer played in Greek culture a role reserved for the Holy Book in Judaism and Christianity. In the societies of Greek cities, he served not only as an essential reading that allowed people to gain education, learn the basic rules of law, comprehend civic duties but also replaced the institution of the oracle as the divine voice revealing future fate. In *Rzecz o wolności słowa* (About the Freedom of Speech), Norwid emphasizes the importance of Homer and Hesiod for the history of Greek civilization. While the former created a model of epic poetry based on the heroic deeds of his ancestors, the latter characterized and described the origins and attributes of deities, ordering the world of Greek beliefs:

> *Homer* from afar – valued for ages, in these days
> Lived, but did he touch green laurels?!. . .
> If we still know not where? And in what state?
> Or whether he really was a blind beggar.
> Still, for singing coats of arms,
> He is more famous then Hesiod, who praises altars (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 581).

Apart from Homer, Norwid paid particular attention to the birth of Greek historiography. He was particularly interested in the reason why Herodotus and Thucydides decided to write down past events. The perspective of Herodotus and Thucydides appears to Norwid as a desire to preserve the past in human memory. In Herodotus' case, the writing of history served to gather abundant knowledge of the circumstances that led to the war with the Persians. The meticulous approach of the historian allowed recording priceless descriptions of customs of many tribes from the Mediterranean Basin, not directly connected with the described conflict but interesting from the Greek viewpoint. Thucydides defines

his task differently. Norwid notes that the Peloponnesian War was captured all his attention, so he focused much more on the identification of the causes that led to the war between Sparta and Athens, along with its consequences for the entire Greek world:

> Herodotus – all poetic: Greece is his heroine. He respects others only to the extent to which they have something to do with the Delian League. But he sees: travels and experiences. / Thucidydes to Ammianus Marcelinus – yearbooks, biographies, commentary. / Herodotus says he writes so that the memory of great and miraculous exploits was not lost. / Thucidydes – because he believes that the Peloponesian War deserves memory more than anything before it (Pwsz, Vol. 7, pp. 247–248).

The perspective adopted by Norwid underlines the discrepancy between Herodotus' and Thucydides' intentions. While Herodotus intends to convey memorable events for future generations, Thucydides chooses to influence future political decisions taken in the *polis* of Athens by presenting situations from the recent past, their insightful evaluation, and a characterization of their effects. Marcel Detienne notes that Thucydides' project opposed the traditional discourse of oral tradition, which was extremely susceptible to alterations in a time abundant with extraordinary events:

> Son propos n'est pas de raconter ce qui s'est passé, mais d'atteindre la vérité d'un discours efficace, un discours fait de raisons si bien appareillées qu'il constitue le meilleur moyen d'agir dans l'espace de la cité, aujourd'hui et dans l'avenir. Toutefois, une histoire au présent, comme la guerre du Péloponnèse, doit affronter les problèmes de la mémoire et de la tradition orale, et elle le fait dans ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler l'*archéologie*, en procédant à la critique des récits de la bouche et de l'oreille. La mémoire est faillible, elle a des trous; de plus, elle interprète, elle sélectionne, elle reconstruit; et elle est d'autant plus fragile que les temps sont troublés, que le merveilleux prolifère et que tout devient crédible.[55]

It is probably this reason why Norwid refers to Herodotus much more often in his notebooks, because he appeared to Norwid as a historian not only earlier than Thucydides but also closer to the archaic, mythical nature of the Greek *logos*. Thucydides is a more rational politician who writes from a specific perspective. Therefore, he very often subjects described events to the process of

55 M. Detienne, *Les Grecs et nous. Une anthropologie comparée de la Grèce ancienne*, Paris 2009, p. 50.

selection and interpretation, moulding historical narrative into a coherent story of human motivations and political choices.[56]

In "Milczenie" (Silence), Norwid specifies his views on the history of Greek literature and philosophy. He consideres Hesiod to represent poetic elements, older than those present in Homer's poetry. He also divides Greek philosophy into an earlier, heroic, and later, systemic era, initiated by Aristotle. Norwid consciously corrects the findings of historians of philosophy and considers Tales not to be the first philosopher but Aeschylus:

> However, the planetary worth of the great star of Diogenes is even less valued than its brilliant wit. This wise man ends the vein of philosophy that I call *heroic*. I believe this philosophy does not at all begin from *Thales* but from *Aeschylus's* dramas, which presented the foundations of traditional wisdom and expressed *ideas with characters*, and it ends with nothing less dramatic than Aeschylus's works, that is with *Plato's Dialogues*, so much so that what barely technical art values and cherishes in Sophocles does not belong to philosophy's parade and the development of Greek thought but to the *art history* (Pwsz, Vol. 6, pp. 224–225).

Norwid organizes the development of Greek philosophical thought in a specific way. Initiated by Aeschylus, who describes only the fate attributed to humankind by the gods, Norwid finds the real culmination of Greek philosophy in Platonic dialogs, focused on the man who wants to find truth:

> Meanwhile, Plato's *Dialogue* of ordinary people encountered on the streets of Athens, who search for an unknown God, truth, and virtue among the worldly and archordinary living conditions, which is in a straight line a final reality of those Aeschylus's olimpic dialogs, in which human thoughts and affairs are not available yet, but in which holy and wise *fata* despise man as a rule (Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 225).

Norwid changes the traditional periodization of the birth of philosophy along with its first epochs to underline one of its specific aspects. Norwid emphasizes the role of the philosopher as an educator whose task is to shape proper citizen attitudes and convey knowledge about the right behavior of people toward other citizens and toward gods. The antique philosopher appears to Norwid as a sage, a figure essential in the functioning of the community. The philosopher who acts as an educator and teacher of good life[57] is portrayed by Norwid not as a

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56 D.R. Kelley, *Faces of History: Historical Inquiry from Herodotus to Herder*, New Haven 2008, among others, for differences in the approach to writing history in Herodotus and Thucydides.

57 The studies by P. Hadot are extremely helpful in understanding Norwid's approach to the history of Greek philosophy. See, for instance, P. Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*,

thinker separated from the city but as a man who philosophizes with his entire existence, which often resulted in his rejection by the people. That is why Norwid frequently evokes the figure of Socrates, treated by the Athenians as cruelly as Miltiades, Themistocles, Thucydides, Cimon, Aristaeus, and Phidias, whom Norwid describes in the poem "Marmur-biały."

Let us return to the poem "Z listu (Do Włodzimierza Łubieńskiego)," which may be treated as an accurate synthesis of Norwid's views on the phenomenon of Greek civilization. Speaking in Greek with the Sikulis about philosophy, Cicero appeared to the Greek sage as a symptom of definitive triumph, which deprived Greece of all its spiritual heritage. However, Norwid simultaneously distances himself from the concerns of this Greek and claims that, in reality, it was the tipping point when Greek culture dominates Roman culture, and that Rome's role will be limited only to the imitation of ancient Greece in the field of art, philosophy, and literature. As Norwid notes in a footnote to the poem, few episodes preserved in sources reflect such a profound breakthrough in history:

> Plutarch was so much a *literatti* that he barely mentions this novel, though in Greek, and to Cicero's advantage, *as if it was not one of Roman state's most solemn dramas*; in this shell they call history we find few cracks that let through such grave light (Pwsz, Vol. 1, p. 99).

Generalizing, let us state that Norwid's work makes Greece and its history into a search for many episodes other than the one described in the poem "Z listu (Do Włodziemierza Łubieńskiego);" these episodes were to discover the secret mechanisms that governed the history of humankind. Norwid follows in great detail the history of sovereign Greeks from the pinnacle of their civilization. However, he reconstructs the later history of Greek cultural heritage with no less care, especially the use of the Greek language, Greek philosophical concepts, and literary models.

The post-mortem life of Greece is essential to Norwid for several reasons. First, Greek philosophy was adopted by Christian thinkers and is present in the life of every Christian community. Second, it was the Greeks who created the concepts of history and memory; their changing fates will continuously fascinate Norwid, especially at the later stage of his career. Third, Greek culture is an ideal example of a universal worldview that offers answers to all fundamental questions. Hence probably the origin of the image of Cicero the Roman consul talking in Greek to provincial Sicilian people. For Norwid, it

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trans. Michael Chase, Cambridge 2002; *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, Stanford 2009.

was a parable of a universal language that can play the role of an ideological tool, which hides brutal indoctrination under the mask of education. From Greek *paideia* to the mechanisms of effective agitation; this seems a shorthand of how – for Norwid – looks the process of transformation of the Hellenic spirit through history.

Chapter II. Greek Stories

1. Creating Greece

In Jack Goody's 2006 book *The Theft of History*, he asks the fundamental question why only European civilization has an ancient era in its history, while other civilizations such as Indian, Chinese, or the Middle Eastern do not use this term. The answer is focused on the European tendency to make one's own past a unique phenomenon and make it impossible to compare the "Greek" version of the birth of culture with any other situation. The moment that allegedly determined the radical difference in the creation of Europe was the end of the Bronze Age. From this "moment" on, Goody suggests, in the opinion of all proponents of the uniqueness of Greek model of civilization's development, ancient Greece's path was different from that of all the other tribes of the Mediterranean Basin and Asia Minor.

Goody's observations are a devastating criticism of Eurocentric writing about world history. In particular, these observations strike at teleological thinking that led to the situation in which Greek beginnings of history are judged from the perspective of later events. An example of such approach for Goody is the study of Robin Osborne, whose book *Greece in the Making 1200–479 BC* refers to the myth of Greece as the culture whose discoveries decided about the fate of the whole world:

> It is not entirely a European myth that in the classical Greek world we find the origins of very many features which are fundamental to our own western heritage. Whole modes of thought and expression have their fount and origin in Greece between 500 and 300 BC: self-conscious abstract political thought and moral philosophy; rhetoric as a study in its own right; tragedy, comedy, parody, and history; western naturalistic art and the female nude; democracy as theory and practice.[1]

Goody does not deny the truth of the quoted assertions, but stresses that Osborne's view of the origins of European civilization is incomplete since it disregards the strong links that Greece had with other Mediterranean countries. It cannot be enough to say that Greece has created the modern world, "Just as one could say," Goody quotes Osborne, "that the modern world 'created Greece.' "[2] Among the many phenomena that have influenced the formation of the Greek myth,

1 R. Osborne, *Greece in the Making 1200–479 BC*, London 1996, p. 2.
2 J. Goody, *The Theft of History*, Cambridge 2007, p. 37.

Goody mentions in particular democracy, individual freedom, and the rule of law. Concerning each of these aspects, Goody stresses the difference of degree rather than quality between Greece and other states in the region. Therefore, such uncritical judgments about the uniqueness and ingenuity of Greek culture are not confirmed by the sources. Moreover, even in the case of Carthage and Tyre, there are many analogies to a system close to democratic. It is also impossible to attribute the invention of freedom and the love of the rule of law to the Greeks alone, because these phenomena appeared in different parts of the world independently of assimilation to Greek culture. Goody attributes ultimate blame to European ethnocentrism, which dominated nineteenth-century narratives about Europe's beginnings and forced such a drastic exclusion of all other heterogeneous elements from these stories.

Martin Bernal, the author of the famous *Black Athena. The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*,[3] indicates other reasons for the creation of the Greek myth. Bernal argues that, so far, Greek history has been written in two ways, which he calls "Antique" and "Aryan" models. The former concerns history described by ancient authors of the classical and Hellenistic period, who considered Greek civilization to be the product of Phoenicians and Egyptians. The latter means a series of steps that modern researchers and writers took to clean the image of Greece from any Semitic-Egyptian influence and give it the status of a unique, unrepeatable phenomenon in the history of the world, which highlights the importance of the European civilization that originates in Greece.

> Most people are surprised to learn that the Aryan Model, which most of us have been brought up to believe, developed only during the first half of the 19th century. In its earlier or 'Broad' form, the new model denied the truth of the Egyptian settlements and

3 M. Bernal, *Black Athena. The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization, Vol.* 1: *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785–1985*, London 1987. Bernal's work was complemented by two further volumes: M. Bernal, *Black Athena. The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization, Vol.* II: *The Archaeological and Documentary Evidence*, London 1991; M. Bernal, *Black Athena. The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, Vol. III: *The Linguistic Evidence*, New Brunswick, New Jersey 2006. Bernal's research has provoked numerous controversies and discussion, while polemical voices have been collected in the volume: *Black Athena: Revisited*, eds. M.R. Lefkowitz and G. MacLean Rogers, Chapel Hill & London 1996. Bernal responded to the allegations with his book: M. Bernal, *Black Athena writes back. Martin Bernal responds to his critics*, ed. D.Ch. Moore, Durham & London 2001. A detailed description of the discussion provoked by Bernal's book can be found in the article by W. van Binsbergen, "Black Athena ten years after," *Talanta* XXVIII–XXIX, 1996–1997, pp. 11–64.

> questioned those of the Phoenicians. What I call the 'Extreme' Aryan Model, which flourished during the peaks of anti-Semitism in the 1890s and again in the 1920s and the 1930s, denied even the Phoenician cultural influence. According to the Aryan Model, there had been an invasion from the north – unreported in ancient tradition – which had over-helmed the local 'Aegean' or 'Pre-Hellenic' culture. Greek civilization is seen as the result of the mixture of the Indo-European-speaking Hellenes and their indigenous subjects.[4]

The era of Romanticism plays a unique role in Bernal's deliberations. It was Romanticism that was to contribute to stronger fascination with Greece; although peculiar, separated from the interest in its past, and instead consisting of the sublimation of the object of worship: the ideal world of the Greeks, the perfect people who spoke a language of extraordinary educational values. Bernal stresses that it was thanks to Humboldt's decision that the Greek language became the basis for the education of young people at the reformed university. Bernal also mentions Hegel's history of philosophy and *The History of Rome* (1810–11) by Barthold Niebuhr as examples of an ethnocentric interpretation of the history of ancient Greece and Rome. Bernal finds in Hegel's writings the idea that even if the Greeks took some cultural and religious models from Egypt or other eastern countries, they made such profound changes to them that the Greek should receive the title of the true discoverers, especially in philosophy. Niebuhr is Bernal's example of a reactionary and conservative historian, which did prevent Niebuhr from a sincere fascination with Scottish Romanticism. Bernal highlights Niebuhr's consolidation in the historical sciences of the theory of the racial origin of social groups in the early days of Rome. In reference to Greek history, Niebuhr operated within the "Antique" model and expressed the need for the Greeks to draw inspiration from the East at an early stage in their history, while at the same time emphasizing the intellectual retardation of Egyptians, whose intellectual momentum never reached the rank of artworks.

Bernal indicates four key factors that contributed to the replacement of Egypt by Greece in the search for the sources of European civilization. These were the Christian reaction, the development of the concept of progress, increasing racism, and Romantic Hellenism.[5] As Richard Jenkyns notes, the extreme brevity with which Bernal discusses works of nineteenth-century authors, caused most of his opinions to raise justified objections.[6] Moreover, Jenkyns shows that these four

4 M. Bernal, *Black Athena. The Afroasiatic Roots*, pp. 1–2.

5 Bernal, *Black Athena. The Afroasiatic Roots,* p. 189.

6 R. Jenkyns, "Bernal and the Nineteenth Century," in: *Black Athena: Revisited*, pp. 417–421.

pillars of deliberations can be effectively undermined by revealing their problematic nature. First of all, Christianity never wanted to separate Greece from Egyptian influences. On the contrary, the Semitic origins of Greek mythology have been repeatedly emphasized in the history of culture, so that it could be perceived as a distortion of the authentic Biblical truth. Second, Bernal does not seem to understand the phenomenon of the nineteenth-century fascination with Greece, which should not be linked with the idea of progress, because it was mostly an expression of the Romantic fascination with primeval past and the archaic in culture. Third, it is questionable not that Bernal describes the intensification of European racism, but that he sets the time of its bloom at the end of the eighteenth century. In this respect, Romanticism was not a fundamental breakthrough. Moreover, Romantic fascination with people and folklore did not focus on the issue of race but rather on people's communality and particularism, along with the difference from other ethnic groups. Jenkyns emphasizes that Bernal follows political goals, wanting to enlarge the sphere of the beginnings of European civilization and enable the African heirs of Egyptian culture – in practice, all African cultures – to feel pride in the uniqueness of the work did by their ancestors. However, Jenkyns notes, this emancipatory project transpires to be essentially eminently Eurocentric and only slightly reinterpreting this European viewpoint. Furthermore, the main message that comes from Bernal's work – and the most effective one – is the attempt to liberate Europeans from the sin of cultural arrogance.

Indeed, it is worthwhile to present the difficult fate of "Greek history" shaped in the nineteenth century and to attentively follow modern polemics focused on these issues. These procedures are necessary to understand Norwid's situation, who lived in a time when the pan-European wave of fascination with Greece was over. At the same time, he experienced the avalanche development of specialist sciences focused on the reconstruction and description of the civilizational achievements of ancient Greeks.

From the perspective of Norwid studies, it seems reasonable to state – despite the debatable nature of some of Bernal's statements – he also struggled with two opposing tendencies present in the nineteenth-century culture and science. On the one hand, he was attached to well-rooted judgments – which originated, among other things, in Herodotus' work – about the strong ties between the Greeks and the Egyptian civilization. On the other hand, Norwid struggled with a growing tendency to write about the phenomenon of Greece in the context of a natural born genius that emerged suddenly and without the help of older and more developed Mediterranean civilizations, a view supported by the then developing university fields: classical philology, art history, the history of philosophy,

and religious studies. From these opposing attempts, Norwid creates his own image of Greece and his personal view of Greek history. He also creates his own vision of the history of literature, philosophy, and art, although it is impossible to understand this image without considering the contradictory sources on which it is based.

2. Anecdotes, Notes, and Parallels: Norwid's Views on Greek History

When one collects Norwid's dispersed comments on Greek history, it becomes visible that he had broad knowledge on the subject, and that he willingly referred to Greek examples at various moments of his work and in various forms of literary activity. For Norwid, Greek history was an inexhaustible source of short stories, which he eagerly included in his letters. In this way, he usually showed surprising historical analogies between antiquity and the nineteenth century. Norwid was particularly passionate about the relationship between life in pagan civilizations and the world after the coming of Christianity. He indicated astonishing similarities in human behavior, which justified the fact that Christianity was not adequately assimilated or understood in all spheres of life. In a more elaborate form, themes and figures from Greek history were an essential element of reasoning in his drafts devoted to the history of culture or art. In this way, they appear in *Milczenie*, "Jasność i ciemność" (Light and Dark), and in "Zmartwychwstanie historyczne" (Historical Resurrection).

Norwid's most complete testimony to his interests are his notebooks, especially the long fragment devoted to the Greeks and the various links and episodes in the history of the eastern borderlands that encompass the Mediterranean, beginning from the second millennium BC. The examination of Norwid's notebooks is a risky task, because one must ascribe him with intentions that usually cannot be precisely justified. It is a continuous process of making fragile hypotheses and constructing one's own research narrative on the basis of extremely uncertain material. However, it is worth appreciating Norwid's efforts, who undoubtedly gave his notebooks a specific form, subtly guiding the reader through the meanders of the history of civilization. When reading his notes, we should assume that they are as original as all other works, because when choosing certain information from the past – Norwid each time interpreted and inscribed every fact, phenomenon, or quotation with his own historiosophical vision. It does not design the future but is rooted in analyzing the cyclical changes in philosophical and religious thinking, and their advancement toward increasingly subtle forms, which liberate people from the lack of morality and deficiencies of pagan faith.

There is another reason why Norwid's notebooks should be examined. If we treat notes as an elliptical work on the history of ancient Greece and its influence on the fate of the whole of Europe, we will find it easier to understand that – by reconstructing Norwid's views on Greece – we will better learn the relationship between the individual and history in all Norwid's work. It is no coincidence that similar facts return in his oeuvre, often in different contexts and juxtapositions. In his notebooks, Norwid revolves around several issues, seeking to approach them in many different ways, which indicates that their particular importance. Literary works rarely reveal a path of an artist's intellectual research – especially so complex – so we should take advantage of the opportunities that Norwid left for his readers.

The information collected on Greece is part of the plan for an extensive collection of quotations, dates, names, and foreign-language terms that were to constitute a set needed for the nineteenth-century erudite to better control the complex processes of progress and destruction and their interrelationship, which Norwid believed filled the history of European civilization. The collection created by Norwid makes us aware that – in his opinion – the study of culture is a complex process of observing the phenomenon of accumulating experiences, followed by a squandering of elaborated methods of conceptualizing views on the place of man in the work of creation, along with methods of expressing human beliefs about the existence of suprasensible reality.

In line with this approach, Norwid saw Greek history as a process of the emergence of Hellenic *polis* in the second half of the second millennium, and he dated its existence until Greece became a province of the Roman Empire. However, Norwid's view exceeds history in the strict sense of the word, as he explores in detail the causes of Greece's birth and the origin of its cultural heritage. Moreover, he is interested in how Greek heritage was reborn after the defeat of ancient Greece.

Norwid's interests date back to the oldest history of the Greeks, but they crystallize more clearly in the Trojan War:

> Troy? Where? Was it? – Where Asia Minor meets Europe near the Strait of Hellespont . . .. A city built by gods or Pelasgians. Since 300 years it rules over the whole western Mysia. . . . / Troyans have no horses but with chariots and *aurigas* who also fight. / Ten years, excluding *nights*. / How did this war end? Homer does not tell and neither does any author of the time. Stesichorus (whom Vergil read) claims that Troy was taken and burned. But there is no *votum* or celebration in Greece for that tryumph! Homer only says that Apollo predicts to Hector that his generation will rule over Troy. So what if the protagonists return not as winners, for they wander on the seas or at home encounter other men in their beds (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 300).

Norwid saw the Trojan War as a turning point in the history of Greece, a moment in which, for the first time, there was an awareness that Greece existed as a state separate from others: "The Trojan Expedition (in 1209) makes Greece aware of itself" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 280). Norwid follows the considerations of the first book of Thucydides, who also attaches fundamental importance to the Trojan War: "There is another, and to me a most convincing proof of the weakness of the ancients. Before the affairs of Troy, it doth no appear that Greece (or Hellas) was ever united in one common undertaking; nor had the country that one general appellation."[7] The meaning of the war with Troy was presented by Norwid as ambiguous and widely mythologized, as it left no material traces in Greece itself. Perhaps this is how Norwid wanted to express that between the war and Homer's time there occurred a period of "dark ages," which obliterated the exact knowledge about the world of warriors fighting at the gates of Troy. Furthermore, Norwid emphasizes that the end of the conflict was the complicated fate of the victors, as some died – like Agamemnon and Ajax – while others like Odysseus wandered for many years before returning home. It seems significant to Norwid that Homer's epics provide no information about the conquest and demolition of Troy; for Norwid it seems possible that – by doing so – Homer indicates the existence of many variants of this story. Norwid certainly knew Herodotus' version that Helen never reached Troy, because she was imprisoned with Paris in Egypt, where Menelaus found her.

Norwid's views on the origins of the Greeks and the beginnings of their civilization are much more interesting, as the reader quickly notices that Norwid faced many contradictory versions of the events, from which he additionally tried to draw conclusions that would order the image of history. Norwid compiles knowledge from various ancient sources, but he tries to gain a full picture and considers all the complications. Norwid believes that the original settlers who arrived in historical Greece in the second millennium BC are the Pelasgians. He sought information about them in the works of many Greek authors, including Herodotus, Thucydides, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Pausanias:[8]

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7 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Houston 1836, p. 5.

8 It is impossible to indicate which exact sources Norwid used. He certainly knew the works of Herodotus and Thucydides, both of whom he studied thoroughly. In his notes, he also suggests that he read about the ancient history of Greece from Plutarch, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, Pausanias, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. The manner in which Norwid wrote his notebook (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 281) does not, however, make it possible to decide, or is it just a quasi-bibliographical list of all the authors who wrote about the ancient Greek epoch.

> 223. The Pelasgians from the North, as they initially lived in the Caucasus (today Georgia, Cherkessia, Mingrelia, Abasia, in the mountains that first probably were islands, before the seas did not part and subsided) (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 280).
> 232. They did not enter Greece uninhabited: they fought with its inhabitants: *the Greeks and the Leleges v. the Curetes* . . .. / The Pelasgians – history presents them as a fallen people while other traditions say they had a highly developed civilization. Also known as the Tyrrhenians. / Niebuhr writes that the fall of Troy is the fall of Pelasgian civilization (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 282).

In his notes on the Pelasgians, Norwid combines several different theories of their origin. He hesitates between the variant in which they came from the North and the one which granted them Semitic origin and made them a people related to the Phoenicians, although the latter theory seems the closest to Norwid.[9] He also notes the version given by Niebuhr, who linked the Pelasgians with Trojan history. The mention of Niebuhr's work may be a premise indicating a potential source of Norwid's knowledge. It could have been the book *Histoire des religions de la Grèce antique depuis leur origine jusqu'au leur complète constitution* by Albert Maury – known to Norwid – who in the first volume devotes much attention to the links between the Pelasgians and the Greeks.[10]

The Pelasgians also appear in Mickiewicz's Paris lectures who detects in their mysterious fate the beginnings of Slavic history, as he said during the eighteenth lecture of the first course:

> The Pelasgians that already in Homer's times were known as ancient people – though downtrodden and conquered by the people who formed the Hellenic coalition, which means the Achaeans, the Ionians, and the Dorians – these Pelasgians later disappear from history, though it seems that the tribe continued to exist under different names, tamed by the Hellenic coalition, by city-dwellers and fighters.[11]

Norwid in no way suggests that in the fate of the Pelasgians, any premises could be found to attribute them any Slavic characteristics. Nor does he indicate which interpretation of their origin he ultimately considers to be true. He does not

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9 Let us note that the information on Pelasgians in the sources is often very partially presented by the authors. In the case of Herodotus, he described only the Dorian tribes as the Hellens, so other Greek tribes had to be among the Pelasgians (N.G.L. Hammond, *A History of Greece to 322 B.C.*, Oxford 1986, p. 94).

10 A. Maury, *Histoire des religions de la Grèce antique depuis leur origine jusqu'au leur complète constitution*, Vol. 1: *La religion hellénique depuis les temps primitifs jusqu'au siècle d'Alexandre*, Paris 1857.

11 A. Mickiewicz, "Wykład XVIII," in: *Dzieła. Wydanie Rocznicowe*, Vol. 8: *Literatura słowiańska. Kurs pierwszy*, ed. J. Maślanka, Warsaw 1997, p. 231.

solve this problem, so one may guess, though only by hypothesis, that more than in the complexity of the prehistoric issue of the first legendary inhabitants of historical Greece, he was interested in how ethnically, religiously and linguistically diverse this area was before the Greek population entirely colonized it. "Greece in the sixteenth century B.C." Norwid writes, "was a mix of Egyptian, Arab, Phoenician colonies, when from the North, the race of Japheth with the Heraclids came and determined it to be western" (Pwsz, vol.7, p. 280). A note about Egyptian colonies in Greece indicates that Norwid used the reflections of the Diodorus Siculus, who informed about the Egyptian belief that Athens was an Egyptian colony and that the name of the city was derived from the name of the goddess Astu.[12]

Norwid also notes the regularity with which the invasions of hostile tribes on Egyptian territory affected the fate of the future ancient Greece, because they forced high mobility of large groups in the eastern Mediterranean. In this process of forced contact between the Greek and Egyptian tribes, a significant role was played by the Hyksos warrior people:

> A country that for many generations was visited by the errant generations of Libia and Ethiopia. The Beduin Arabs attack it through the Isthmus of Suez. The Greeks call them *king-shepherds*, while the Egiptians name them Hyksos, that is today's sheikhs. They dominate even Memphis (never the Upper Egipt) to naturally oppress the priestly caste. From this emigration also come the settlers e.g. in Greece (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 272).

In Norwid's opinion, the Hyksos could also be the first people who settled in coastal caves in the territory of the future Phoenicia: "We may assume that, having conquered Egypt as the Hyksos, they settled on the banks of the Mediterranean, in a land called Joppe, later Phoenicia, which in Greek means "a

12 In Terrasson's translation used by Norwid, this passage reads as follows: "On assûre encore que les Athéniens sont une Colonie des Saïtes Peuples de l'Egypte; & les Egyptiens prouvent cette origine en faisant remarquer que de toutes les Villes Grecques Athènes est la seule qui porte le nom d'Astu, pris de la Ville d'Astu en Egypte: Ils ont d'ailleurs emprunté des Egyptiens la division qu'ils sont de la République en trois classes. La premiére est de ceux qui ont eu une éducation distinguée & qui peuvent être admis aux dignités: cette classe répond à celle des Prêtres Egyptiens. La seconde comprend les habitans de l'Attique, qui sont obligés de porter les armes pour la défente de la Ville, à l'imitation des Laboureurs de l'Egypte, d'entre lesquels on prend les Soldats. Dans la troisième enfin sont les Ouvriers & tous les hommes de travail qui sont aussi dans l'Egypte un ordre particulier" (*Histoire universelle de Diodore de Sicil*e, traduite en françois par Monsieur l'abbé Terrasson, Vol. 1, Amsterdam 1743, pp. 45–46).

palm tree" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 277). In the study of relations between Greeks and Phoenicians, Norwid follows Herodotus's story about the kidnapping of Io, the daughter of Inachos the king of Argos, by Phoenicians.[13] In this way, Norwid explains the reluctance that was born between the peoples of the eastern and western Mediterranean: "Phoenician sea excursions during the Trojan War: they kidnapped women and children, sold ornaments and trifles" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 279). An alternative source of knowledge about Phoenician dishonesty could be the fifteenth book of *The Odyssey*, in which Eumaeus tells Odysseus the story of his kidnapping from his native island of Syria: "In *The Odyssey*, Eumée [sic!] tells Odysseus a story (Homer, *The Odyssey*, Book IV)" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 279). Surprisingly, Norwid attributed the story of Eumaeus to the fourth book, and it is impossible to determine for what reasons Norwid incorrectly noted the location of this episode.

Norwid's views on the earliest history of Greece can be reconstructed. In his efforts, he follows the findings of the historians of his time.[14] The Pelasgians were the first inhabitants of Greece, whose existence we may include in one term of historical and mythological provenance. According to Norwid, they were the ones who gave the Greeks their early alphabet, later replaced by the Phoenician script.[15] It was also the Pelasgians who colonized the sites considered fundamental to the history of Greek culture: "The Pelasgian on the hips of Olympus, the Pindus, Helicone! From there come religion, philosophy, music, and poetry of the Greeks" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 283). Some inventions were attributed to the

13 Herodotus, *The Histories Book 1: Clio*, Simon and Schuster 2015, p. 3.

14 In the middle of the nineteenth century, an unprecedented development of studies on the history of ancient Greece occurred. It was connected with the work of, among others, George Grote (1794–1871), author of the work *A History of Greece,* London 1846–1856, and Johann Gustav Droysen (1808–1884), author of the work *Geschichte des Hellenismus* (Hamburg, 1836–1843). For more on nineteenth-century research in Greek antiquity, see D.R. Kelley, *Fortunes of History: Historical Inquiry from Herder to Huizinga*, New Haven 2008.

15 Although Norwid suggests that the role of the Phoenicians, in this case, may be greatly overestimated and that in fact, the Greeks should thank them only for the papyrus: "Kadmus from Phoenicia . . . builds the Cadmea citadel and brings this script that replaces the previously used Pelasgian script" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 295). The issue of the script is a proof for Norwid that, perhaps, the theory of the arrival of the Pelasgians to Greece from the North. Therefore, Norwid seeks their affinity with the Phoenicians: "Their language is hard, closer to the Latin than the Greek language. The whole religious system. A specific type of script until Kadmus. (So it would a branch much separate from the Phoenician one)" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 282).

Pelasgians, hence in Norwid's imagination their presence appears to be crucial because of the later material culture of the Greeks who, coming from the North, could not benefit yet from the natural properties of many materials: "Bees and cheese introduced by Aristaeus, king of Arcadia, of Pelasgian decent" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 302). The fate of the Pelasgians in the second millennium BC was parallel to the advancement of Phoenician colonies and the first groups of Greek population coming from the North. Only around the middle of the second millennium did the situation change rapidly, as the Achaeans arrived in Greece and extended their rule over vast territories to form a centralized state. They were responsible for the destruction of Troy: "Homer names Achaeans the general population because they were the first" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 323). Their civilization, now called Mycenaean, collapsed as a result of conflict with other tribes arriving from the North, the Dorians. The Achaeans originally moved to the Peloponnese, expelling the Ionians, who, in turn, found respite on the coasts of Asia Minor. Norwid mentions this process only in passing, although he mentions Achaea, the seat of the tribe expelled by the Dorians from their original abode.[16]

Among the information concerning the Pelasgians, Norwid notes with particular attention everything that defines the fundamental differences between this mysterious tribe and proper Greeks:

> Argos and Sicyon are two oldest kingdoms, established by the Pelasgians. And their dynasties: of Thebes, Thessalia, Arkadia, etc. / Unhappy!! Orpheus. The wifes of Lemnos slaughter husbands. The Greeks continue to despise this population and civilization. / Thessalia, Lydia, Boeotia are considered magical and homes to witches or secret rituals with fire and human sacrifices (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 283).

The civilization distance between the Pelasgians and the Greeks was particularly relevant in the treatment of women and slaves. The *Bibliotheca* of Pseudo-Apollodorus describes Lemnos as "ruled by women" where occurred a murder of husbands. Then in Argos, according to Herodotus, power was for some time in the hands of slaves and women, who overtook the city in place of men killed during the war.[17] Both situations completely contradicted the Hellenic idea of power in the state and probably reminded the Greeks of the solutions

16 Norwid mentions it in the context of Deukalion's sons: "Aeolians – Dorians – Ionians – Achaeans. / Sons of Xuthus: Ion and Achaeus (Ionia, Achaea) – born in Athens" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 295).

17 P. Vidal-Naquet, "The Immortal Slave-Woman of Athena Ilias," in: P. Vidal-Naquet, *The Black Hunter: Forms of Thought and Forms of Society in the Greek World*, Baltimore 1998, pp. 189–218.

in the barbarian world, presented in a negative light, including the tragedy of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, in which the chorus mentions womens' crime on Lemnos. On the contrary, Norwid places the story of the foundation of Athens and Cecrops' implementation of social order:

> *Cekrops* arrived from Sais to Attica ruled by the successors of Ogyges. He encounters (post-deluge? accidental?) chaos, gives laws, creates society, *abolit la promiscuité des femmes* and blood offerings (of oxes, as he is Egiptian); funerals, so that people sing, drink for the buried and immediately sow on their graves. He announces the fortification of Athens and monarchy. He was followed by a dynasty of seventeen kings, which ends on Codrus (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 296).

Athens was the abode of the Ions, and it was from Attica that they went to their settlements in Asia Minor. As a continuation of the Dorian and Ionian rivalry, the rivalry between Athens and Sparta was of special interest to Norwid. The death of Codros at the hands of the Spartan Dorians – which returns in his *Tyrtej*– marks the beginning of a new era in the formation of Athenian statehood and the beginning of Greek struggle for hegemony.

Norwid pays much attention to these historical facts and probably sought to understand why the Greeks fought the Pelasgians,[18] which resulted in their

18 The phenomenon of Pelasgians has fascinated many thinkers, so Norwid repeats the claims, which may come from many different indirect sources. It was Johann Gottfried Herder, among others, who, in *Philosophical Writings*, noted the role of the Pelasgians as the first inhabitants of Greece and stressed that Greek culture was created as a result of both peaceful and wartime colonization of lands, for which the Greeks had to compete with the Pelasgians (See J.G. Herder, *Philosophical Writings*, eds. Desmond M. Clarke and Michael N. Forster, Cambridge 2007, pp. 117–119). Friedrich Schlegel, on the other hand, described the influence of older civilizations on Greek culture and noted that the Greek alphabet was inspired by the Phoenicians, while some elements of architectural, mathematical, philosophical knowledge and some practical skills from the Egyptians and more ancient Asian tribes. It is possible that in the latter group Schlegel also included the Pelasgians (See F. Schlegel, *Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern*, Vol. 1, Philadelphia 1818, pp. 23–24). Joachim Lelewel devoted to the history of the Pelasgians *Dzieje starożytne*, where he derived their tribe from the areas of Arcadia and the city of Argos. According to Lelewel, the history of Pelasgians shows the tribes that were a combination of the characteristics of Asian and European populations. The Pelasgians accepted the influence of foreign tribes very quickly. Therefore the presence of the Thracian, Phoenician, Phrygians, Egyptian, and, a little later, Hellenic populations could be seen among them. The Greeks quickly began armed rivalry with the Pelasgians, most actively pursued by Deucalion and Minos, who expelled the Pelasgian tribes to Italy and Asia Minor. Over time the Pelasgians became so similar to the Greeks that they accepted the name of

emigration to Italy and Crete.[19] Why was the coexistence of different Hellenic tribes associated with unceasing rivalry? In peacetime, the rivalry was conveyed in the framework of the Olympic Games,[20] but in other times, there often occurred armed battles, invasions, and sieges. Perhaps this is how Norwid understood the characteristic feature of the Greek world as continuous existence in a situation of conflict, which defined the inhabitants of a given *polis* against other Greeks and barbarians. This phenomenon did not fit into the idyllic vision of the Greek South from the works of Winckelmann and Herder. Therefore, throughout his life, Norwid will significantly revaluate and reinterpret the neohumanistic, close to the one of classicism, vision of Greece.

Norwid's interest in the history of Athens is perfunctory, as he mentions only a few episodes related to Draco's writing of laws and Pericles's rule:

> 624 Draco in Athens. The Athenians wish to have laws like the Spartans of Lycurgus (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 308).
> Pericles supposedly without a title. For a third part of the century he is Intelligence personified. . . . / The people value Pericles for the rule of Inteligence over itselve. Alcibiades also for intelligence (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 311).

The history of Athens – like that of other *poleis* – serves Norwid mainly for the observation of cultural background, especially the transformations in literature, philosophy, and fine arts. He focuses neither on political transformations nor the fate of social strata in the Greek states. He deals exclusively with Hellenic emanations of the Spirit and their extraordinary role played over the years.

Ion and fully accepted the culture and language of the Greeks (See J. Lelewel, "Dzieje starożytne," in: J. Lelewel, *Dzieła*, Vol. 4: *Dzieje starożytne*, ed. T. Zawadzki, Warsaw 1966, pp. 58–61).

19 See the following Norwid's comment on Pelasgians: "Exiles from Thessaly, are confined to Dodona, Arcadia, from here to Italy, from here to Crete" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 283).

20 Interest in the phenomenon of the Olympic Games can also be found in Norwid's notebooks. He stressed in particular that they were not intended for strangers and slaves, and that they were associated with the fame and recognition of all fellow citizens of the polis: "The games. / The Pythian Games – combat, dance, music everywhere, but but more specific are the Pythian ones, for Apollo vanquishing the snake Python. . .. The Nemean Games – during the siege of Thebes, but in decline. Rekindled for the fallen, after the routing of Persians.. . . The Olympic Games – established by Hercules [*sic!*] and forgotten during the Trojan War – later rekindled so strongly that the names of its victors were carved in marbles tables. . .. To partake one had to be no servant, foreigner or evildoer and prove ten months of training under a single master" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, pp. 303–304).

Similarly, Norwid was not interested in Sparta, and he mentions other *poleis* only in episodic interjections, without a thorough analysis of their history.

Norwid does not deliberate on subtle issues like the date of the beginning of individual migratory outbreaks in Greece. However, his notes suggest that he saw the early history of Greece from the perspective of overlapping influences of different tribes, whose most glorious emanation was only classical Greek culture. In turn, Norwid had even less knowledge about Phoenician history. However, he consistently directed his attention toward Egypt, considering Phoenicians mainly as intermediaries in the transfer to the Greeks of the achievements of civilization and philosophical-religious ideas born in Egypt or in the Far East. Norwid stresses that in the biographies of many figures – especially from Greek philosophy – vital episode usually plays a stay in Egypt:

> That Pitagoras was in India or Gaul is uncertain, but that he spent twenty years in Egypt – it is certain (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 242).
> I recall that he still considers *Greek philosophy* as a protestantism of Egyptian philosophy: maybe an accidental epiteth but a deep one (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 243).
> Greece in comparison to the civilization of Asia and Egypt is like Poland in comparison to the Roman state – young (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 255).
> Greek Charon, the Styx, Elysium – all come from Egipt. In a word, Egypt became the limbos of Greece (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 274).
> The inhabitants of Megara deem the Egyptianin *Leleg* as their civilizer (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 295).

In Norwid's times, there prevailed the theory of the eastern origin of philosophy and many other inventions usually associated with the Greeks, at least until the publication of Eduard Zeller's work *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, which refutes most arguments of supporters of the thesis that philosophy was born in China, India, Persia, Egypt, or among Jews.[21] Norwid was less interested in the fate of philosophy, but in the birth of Greek religiosity he tried to draw information from direct sources, especially from the works of Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus:[22]

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21 Among others: E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung. Erster Theil. Allgemeine Einleitung. Vorsokratische Philosophie*, Tübingen 1856, Chapter: *Die Ableitung der griechischen Philosophie aus orientalischer Spekulation*, pp. 18–34.

22 The poet gained his knowledge about ancient Egypt from several works he mentions in his notebooks: J.F. Champollion, *Précis du système hiérogliphique des anciens Egyptiens*, Paris 1828; É. Quatremère, *Recherches critiques et historiques sur la langue et la littérature de l'Egypte*, Paris 1808; and A. Maury, *La magie et l'astrologie dans l'antiquité et au moyen âge, ou Étude sur les superstitions païennes, qui se sont perpétuées jusqu'à*

And the Egyptians are also the first who reported the doctrine that the soul of man is immortal, and that when the body dies, the soul enters into another creature which chances then to be coming to the birth, and when it has gone the round of all the creatures of land and sea and of the air, it enters again into a human body as it comes to the birth; and that it makes this round in a period of three thousand years.[23]

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nos jours, Paris 1860. The first work could have consolidated in Norwid the feeling that Egypt is a fundamental place not only for the Greeks but for all Europeans because it was on the Nile where the history of this part of the world began. Quatrèmere, on the other hand, stresses that Egyptian civilization reached an extremely high level of development when the Greeks were only beginning to leave the state of barbarism: "Dès les premiers temps historiques, à une époque où la Grèce étoit encore plongée dans la barbarie, l'Égypte étoit déjà soumise à une forme de gouvernement régulière les différentes branches des sciences et des arts" (É. Quatrèmere, *Recherches critiques*, p. 2). F. Creuzer also spoke of the Greeks as students of Egyptians in terms of religious concepts (F. Creuzer, *Religions de l'Antiquité*, trans. J.D. Guigniaut, Vol. 1, part 1, Paris 1825, pp. 14–15). Much less likely is Norwid's reading of two other works, the knowledge of which in his case was suggested by J.W. Gomulicki: J.G. Wilkinson, *Manners and customs of the ancient Egyptians, including their private life, government, laws, arts, manufactures, religion, and early history; derived from a comparison of the paintings, sculptures, and monuments still existing, with the accounts of ancient authors*, London 1837 and J. Passalacqua, *Catalogue raisonné et historique des antiquités découvertes en Égypte*, Paris 1826. If Norwid really knew these works, he could have had a thorough knowledge of the state of the ancient Egyptian history and art of the time. However, the poet's notebooks do not allow us to come to this conclusion.

23 Herodotus, *The Histories*, p. 174. Norwid quotes Herodotus in the French translation: "Herodot, II 123: «Les Égyptiens sont les premiers qui avaient professé le dogme, que l'âme de l'homme est immortelle: le corps venant à se dissoudre, elle passé successivement (selon eux) dans de nouveau corps, par des naissances nouvelles – puis, quand elle a aussi parcouru tous les animaux de la terre, tous ceux de la mer et tous ceux qui volent dans les airs – elle rentre dans un corps humain qui naît à point nommé: cette révolution de l'âme s'accomplit en trois milles années»" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 250). The origin of the cited fragment remains unexplained. Perhaps Norwid did not cite directly the translation of Herodotus, but he made his own adaptation. Certainly, it is not the translation of Saliat, Bétant or Larcher. For comparison, we include two popular, nineteenth-century translations of P. Giguet and A.F. Miot: "Or, ils sont les premiers qui aient parlé de cette doctrine selon laquelle l'âme de l'homme est immortelle et, après la destruction du corps, entre toujours en un autre être naissant. Lorsque, dissent-ils, elle a parcouru tous les animaux de la terre et de la mer et tous les oiseaux, elle rentre dans un corps humain; le circuit s'accomplit en trois mille années" (*Histoires d'Hérodote*, traduction nouvelle, avec une introduction et des notes, par P. Giguet, Paris 1864, p. 132); "Ils sont aussi les premiers avancé que l'ame des hommes est immortelle, et qu'après la destruction du corps elle entre dans un autre animal toujours prêt à naître,

For Norwid, the belief in the immortality of the soul, which Greeks drew from the Egyptians, is a fundamental proof that Greek religion stems from the Nile region. Herodotus described in detail the story of these relationships, writing that the Pelasgians were the first disciples of the Egyptians. It was only from them that the Greeks took the names of deities and religious customs ("ceremonial gatherings, processions and supplications").[24] Georg Friedrich Creuzer elaborated on the significance of Herodotus' reflections on the Pelasgian beliefs. In his introduction to the work *Religions de l'Antiquité*, which Norwid probably knows as he mentions it in his notebooks,[25] Creuzer proves that Pelasgians did not name their deities until the Dodona Oracle prompted them to do so. It is a fundamental description for Creuzer, referring to the times when Greek beliefs were crystallized, and the gods acquired human qualities. Only later will come the era of Homer and Hesiod, those who created genealogies of gods and created their monikers.

> [B]ut whence the several gods had their birth, or whether they all were from the beginning, and of what form they are, they did not learn till yesterday, as it were, or the day before: for Hesiod and Homer I suppose were four hundred years before my time and not more, and these are they who made a theogony for the Hellenes and gave the titles to the gods and distributed to them honours and arts, and set forth their forms.[26]

The Oracle in Dodona certainly attracts Norwid's as he notes the exact circumstances in which it was established. The Phoenicians were involved in this whole story. Therefore, the situation was understandable to Norwid, who notices that Greek oracles mostly had foreign origins:

> *The dove* from the top of the column in Dodona's forest prophesies, which is the forest where the holy oak trees prophesy (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 282).
> The priests from Thebes of hundred gates say that *Dodona* and *Ammon* (Libyan) were founded by two poetessas, stolen by the Phoenicians and sold: one in *Libya* and the other in *Greece*. Which refers to "two doves" – when a girl who was the income from her gift calls after the messenger: so probably these two were sold because of that (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 316).

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qu'elle parcourt ainsi successivement tous les animaux qui vivent sur la terre et dans les eaux, ou qui volent dans les airs, et qu'enfin elle retourne de nouveau dans le corps d'un homme naissant. Ce retour a lieu après une période de trois mille ans" (*Histoire d'Hérodote, suivie de la vie d'Homère*, nouvelle traduction, par A.F. Miot, Vol. 1, Paris 1822, p. 321).

24 Herodotus, *The Histories*, p. 145.

25 G.F. Creuzer, *Religions de l'Antiquité*, p. 3–15.

26 Herodotus, *The Histories*, pp. 143–144.

It seems that Norwid does not understand everything from the story described by Herodotus, because in one of his notes, he asks, "What were Cabeiri?" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 265). It was one of the Pelasgian deities, Cadmus, identified with later Hermes, whose cult spread among the Greeks. Tadeusz Zieliński notes that Herodotus's story should not be overestimated, as his informants could have misled him. As a result, Egyptian relations with Greek religiosity are rather unjustly overexposed in the story, which perfectly matches Norwid's problem. As Zieliński claims:

> Listening to stories told by – as it turned out – not very skilled translators with the naivety and eagerness of a child, Herodotus could announce almost the entire Greek Olympus as the model taken from the Egyptian Pantheon. In fact, the relation between Hellada's attitude and the inhospitable land of the pharaohs gave Greeks the papyrus and other useful goods, but not revelations about gods and religious elements of world creation. Ra and Ptah, Neit and Sobak stayed at home.[27]

Besides Greek gods' names, the images of the world of the dead, and the belief in the immortality of the soul, Norwid notes the role of Isis, a deity that assumed from Egyptians by the Greeks. He follows the version noted by Plutarch in *De Iside et Osiride*.[28] Plutarch was probably the source which confirmed Norwid's conviction that a journey to Egypt was the foundation of many Greek discoveries and the source of Greek activities:

> Witness to this also are the wisest of the Greeks: Solon, Thales, Plato, Eudoxus, Pythagoras, who came to Egypt and consorted with the priests and in this number some would include Lycurgus also. Eudoxus, they say, received instruction from Chonuphis of Memphis, Solon from Sonchis of Sais, and Pythagoras from Oenuphis of Heliopolis. Pythagoras, as it seems, was greatly admired, and he also greatly admired the Egyptian priests, and, copying their symbolism and occult teachings, incorporated his doctrines in enigmas.[29]

An essential source of inspiration for Norwid, who considers the relationship between Egyptian religiousness and the birth of Greek philosophy, could have been Jean-Baptiste-Claude Riambourg's work *Du Rationalisme et de la*

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27 T. Zieliński, *Religia starożytnej Grecji. Zarys ogólny. Religia hellenizmu*, Wrocław – Warsaw – Krakow 1991, p. 184. For different ways of interpreting Herodotus' accounts see Ph. Borgeaud, *Aux origines de l'histoire des religions*, Paris 2004, pp. 57–62.

28 See the following remark: "According to Apuleius, what does Isis say to the initiated? / Plutarch *De Iside et Osiride*" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 274).

29 Plutarch, *Of Isis and Osiris*, Createspace Independent Pub 2011, p. 25.

tradition,[30] in which Norwid finds the concept of the singular source of tradition. Following this concept – if we can accurately reconstruct Norwid's thought at all – the archaic origins of every civilization have common sources and originate from the same intellectual foundations, which only later are subject to differentiation, as a result of progress made by the human mind.

> He mentions about his thought that traditions stem from one source. He considers *Buddha* to be an Egyptian priest, especially since this power's such a broad restraint proves in some way that it was imported. There are works of other authors supporting this, quoted there, but more uncertain (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 243).

Riambourg's work provides a better insight into the specificity of Norwid's research curiosity. The book is an extensive dissertation, which discusses the relationship between the revelation of supersensible reality and human rationalist disposition. Riambourg assumes that the justification of reason's independence is one of the thought practices characteristic of the epoch, which causes his strong objection: "La raison du siècle s'agite en vain pour se passer du christianisme. Le rationalisme est par lui-même impuissant: en religion, en morale, en politique, il ne peut rien élever de solide; il échoue quand il veut édifier."[31] Riambourg is interested in the concept of the chain of tradition formed by successive generations. In this generational march of progress, in which language and rationality function as primary means of communication, there can be no lack of natural revelation as certainty about the existence of the divine mind. This revelation is precisely the only possible explanation for the idea of infinity imposed on people. Riambourg carefully considers the existence of a Samaritan Pentateuch, which Norwid notes with interest. For Riambourg, the existence of holy books preserved in an unchanged form since Moses' time is an excellent starting point for comparing works from different cultures, including Persian, Indian, and Chinese. In this way, Riambourg emphasizes the natural tendency of people, who always use their rational skills to legitimize the relationship of a given culture or people with the sphere of the sacred.

As far as religious beliefs are concerned, it is the only case. Norwid excludes the possibility of progress. The passage of time erases the original bond between people and God, hence the degeneration of pagan religions, which each time seek to recover the lost and authentic image of the deity. In this way, Norwid

30 J.-B.-C. Riambourg, *Du Rationalisme et de la tradition, ou Coup d'oeil sur l'état actuel de l'opinion philosophique et de l'opinion religieuse en France*, Paris 1834.

31 Riambourg, *Du Rationalisme et de la tradition*, p. 5.

explains the existence of mystery cults, which he thoroughly follows, among others, in the history of Egypt, Greece, and Rome.

> *Vice-versa*: man does not improve or invent religion but, yes, these things darken and put on a shell with time. *Going back to the sources*, e.g. Orphic – first Italian – primitive Egyptian – Indian – Chinese – he finds them pure and sublime in their concepts of God (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 261).

Norwid treats religiousness as a natural emanation of the sociopolitical sphere of existence of all people. However, he always emphasizes the manifestation of the divine element – also in primitive religions and cults – later formalized and lost in the course of history. It is only Christianity that breaks this dependency by revealing a bond between man and God, which in antiquity was hidden behind the "human" and official side of every religion.

Norwid treats the history of civilization as an advancement of thought that variously incarnates and reveals itself in different cultures. It means that, in his view, the only sensible way to reflect on the state of Europe is to follow the transformations. Throughout the centuries, the creations of human mind have been subject to these transformations. In his notebooks, Norwid scrutinizes the history of forms of power, various variants of revealing religious feelings, and why artworks were created. Norwid is also interested in the history of writing and the birth of this certainty that confirms people's belief in the uniqueness and awareness of own fate. The effect of this conviction was to document own activity and, in the long term, to create historiography. As Włodzimierz Szturc claims, Norwid's approach reflects the ambiguous nature of scientific methods from his time. On the one hand, Norwid faithfully follows the traces of the archaeological and philological attitude, which "compare the present day to the past, looking for material or verbal testimony."[32] On the other hand, he is also familiar with the semiological approach, which revealed that "the past exists in the present as a category of meanings."[33]

Considering the relationships between Egypt and Greece, Norwid faithfully follows Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus to assign Egyptian culture the formative role in the shaping of the foundations of Greek religion and philosophy. However, Egypt was not the inventor of such fundamental discoveries as the belief in the immortality of the soul. Norwid delves into history to indicate the ancient history of Asian peoples as a source of European spirituality: "Today,

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32 W. Szturc, "Zasady antropologii kulturowej Cypriana K. Norwida (o notatkach poety)," in: *O obrotach sfer romantycznych. Studia o ideach i wyobraźni*, Bydgoszcz 1997, p. 143.

33 Szturc, "Zasady antropologii kulturowej."

historiosophers mark Central Asia as the cradle of the human race, sixteen centuries before the Saviour: myths, etymology, languages, traditions, monuments" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 255). Norwid is particularly interested in the figures of legislators responsible for shaping the statehood of key Greek *poleis*, such as Lycurgus, Solon, and Epimenides. In the case of Lycurgus and his law, Norwid notes the important role of combined Cretan, Egyptian, and Asian influences. Norwid uses a biogram of Lycurgus, in this case most probably derived from Plutarch:

> *Lycurgus*, son of Eunomus the King of Sparta, does not want to reign using trickery and infanticide, but rather becomes the guardian of his nephew. He goes to Crete, Egypt, and Asia for the wisdom of the law. He adopts laws which principle is probably *Minos*'s maxim (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 303).

In his readings, Norwid did not stop on Herodotus's works. On the contrary, he mentions an impressive collection of works that contain fragments devoted to Egypt: Plato, Strabo, Plutarch, Philo, Josephus, Eusebius, Arnobius, Macrobius, Augustine of Hippo, and Clement of Alexandria. In this case, as is often the case in Norwid studies, we do not know whether these are the authors he read or just learned about their claims from other sources, or whether he confined himself to the general knowledge of where to look for information about Egypt. Norwid writes that, "In Plato's works somewhere, supposedly in the *Phaedo*, before the conversation begins, there is a reference to Solon and Egypt. Must see" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 287). Did Norwid actually look into *Phaedo*?[34] If so, he certainly noticed his own mistake, or the mistake of the works he read. At the beginning *Phaedo*, there is no reference to either Solon or Egypt. Nevertheless, Norwid could have then returned to his notes to correct this false association. For reasons unknown to us, he did not do so. He left his notebooks in the form of a work that takes shape becoming in front of the reader, an unfinished work in progress of collecting knowledge rather than a complete compendium.

Although Norwid emphasizes the importance of Egyptian influence in the formation of Greece, he also notices that it was the Greeks who played a revolutionary role in the history of the march of the human Spirit:

> From *Pericles* to *Alexander*, the human mind makes a bigger leap forward than India, Egypt, the Chinese and even the Israelis! (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 294).

34 From a letter to Bronisław Zaleski dated 1879, we know that Norwid had *Phaedo*: "Would you agree to lend me Plato's dialogs, all besides *Phaedo* and *Second Alcibiades* that I have in main editions (this is a personal question and I mean the French translations)?" (Pwsz, Vol. 10, p. 134).

> *Greece*. Three epochs of Greek civilization: Pericles, Alexander, the division of the Macedonian State (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 310).

On the one hand, Norwid recognizes that Greece was shaped by intensive contacts with civilizations which, before it was founded, had already reached a high level of development, a civilized world of religious beliefs, rich mythology, and an existing literary tradition. Norwid does not distinguish between West Asian and Egyptian influences.[35] He treats all the Greek-Mediterranean relationships as manifestations of the same process. On the other hand, he firmly believes in the outburst of Greek genius, which in less than a century and a half made a revolutionary change in human thought. In lectures devoted to the work of Juliusz Słowacki, Norwid underestimates the literary traditions of Egypt, which proves that – despite the presence of foreign influences – he considers Greece to be the site of revolutionary changes of the human Spirit:

> I left Egypt aside; we know nothing of its poetry, it is the house of captivity, a nation, in which dead symbolism devoured everything; if a poet had visited there, he could not have been anyone else than Moses; but he only drank Egyptian milk, but through blood and spirit belongs to Israel (Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 409).

The metaphor says that Moses took no significant element from the Egyptian culture, which also refers to a large extent to the situation in Greece, where philosophers and artists – in Norwid's view – used the Egyptian experience to radically reinterpret the intellectual achievements of the East and begin a completely new era in history. Individualism and freedom of thought, no longer subject to ideological limitations of hieratic and formalized Eastern civilizations, appeared in history only thanks to the Greeks. In this case, Norwid leaves no room for doubt.

Norwid considers the mutual relations between Greece and the East in terms of an unresolved conflict with two key witnesses. The first was Homer, the second – Herodotus, who described the Greek world (and not only) from the perspective of the finished war with the Persians. Norwid highlights the age-old rivalry between the Ions and the Dorians to note the phenomenon of Hellenic rivalry, which ultimately led to the weakening of the world of Greek *poleis*: "Ionians and Dorians, throughout all the Greek history. The supremacy of Athens from Cimon to Pericles; Sparta – after the victory of Egis-Potamos Thebes – conceived and deceased with Epaminondas, until Macedonian supremacy" (Pwsz, Vol. 7,

35 For more on the approach of contemporary philology to the distinction between Western Asian and Egyptian influences in Greek culture, see: M.L. West, *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth*, Oxford 1997.

p. 293). The last stage of this rivalry obviously were the conquests of Alexander the Great, which disseminated Greek language, religion, and customs on a vast area. Thanks to it, Greek culture played the role of the unifier of a whole empire:

> Persians descend from the mountains and give the Medes the power to create art and rule the state. A huge country! – but it is supposed to be the beginning of a *young Europe*, feeling its future and development. / As Homer sang the first Asian fight against Europe, so Herodotus was the witness. . . to the Persian. The rivalry between East and West. . . . / But the Orient, pushed away with sword, acts and subjugates. Greece becomes Asian, until again Alexander uses the Macedonian race to stand at the head of the Orient himself and in the middle creates a whole under the star of the Greek element – *Alexandria*! / The heirs, however, become oriental princes (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 294).

Alexander the Great's conquests were the last epoch in the history of Greece, but Norwid interprets the role of the Macedonian king in a particular way: "*He took Greece out of itself and immolated its egoism*" (Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 411).

The defeat inflicted on Greece by Rome ends the history of ancient Greece. One of the symbolic events that took place during the siege of Athens by Sulla was the destruction of the olive grove at the (Plato's) Academy: "When Sulla besieged Athens, he cut down the trees from the Academy for timber to build war machines" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 323). As Jarosław Ławski suggestively demonstrates,[36] Norwid considers the fate of the Eastern Roman Empire to be a denial of the mission of Christianity in history. He does not treat the thousand-year history of Byzantium as an extension of Greek history: "The Eastern Roman Empire – with eunuchs, women, sophists – collapses in such a way that the Greeks renounce their name: they call themselves Romans" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 351).

Greek matters were essential to Norwid for another important reason. The creation of the modern Greek state that rejected Turkish enslavement inspired Norwid to reflect on the possibility of the revival of nations in the reality of his contemporary Europe. He addresses this issue in a commemorative speech, "W rocznicę powstania styczniowego" (On the Anniversary of the January Uprising), delivered on January 22, 1875, in Czytelnia Polska (Polish Reading Room). Norwid recalls the pan-European enthusiasm that contributed to Greece's independence and stresses that this enthusiasm – which captured the minds of people from different states and nationalities – could not be a permanent phenomenon, because it was subject to all the particular rules that characterized the medieval

36 J. Ławski, "O Norwidowskim rozumieniu bizantynizmu," in: *Bizancjum – Prawosławie – Romantyzm. Tradycja wschodnia w kulturze XIX wieku*, eds. J. Ławski and K. Korotkich, Białystok 2004.

crusades and are a characteristic manifestation of European thought. To illustrate European mentality, Norwid uses the image of an artist who emphasizes the desire for the liberation of Greece without actual knowledge about this land and its people:

> Europe's attitude to the Greek case was similar to those great artists at the peak of their genius who happen to make immortal masterpieces in the absence of sufficient knowledge of what they are doing. . . She is the only one (of all the world's parts) to have this beautiful, this great and dangerous inner gift and this need of the heart worthy of *appreciation* and *cognition* (Pwsz, Vol. 7, pp. 99–100).

European behavior was mostly dominated by the uncomplicated and incomplete image of ancient Greece, projected on the Greeks' contemporary situation. Norwid notices the contradiction between these aspirations, simultaneously trying to not deny their good faith.[37] He also constructs a vision of a European public opinion, which must have been disappointed by the result of the clash of an idealized image of Greece with its complicated, post-uprising fate. Norwid profoundly explores European ignorance about Greece which – since the Turkish conquest – has been on the absolute margins of Euroepan political interest. As a result of the creation of a new state, it soon became apparent that modern Greece's population does not implement the ideas of ancient Greece. On the contrary, the heroism of insurgent struggles in no way translate onto the establishment state order.

Hence, Norwid combines European enthusiasm with a propensity for mythologization, which does not simply describe things as they are but as they appear to the European mind, formed by a few superficial readings. This European ignorance is probably a veiled accusation of the possessive nature of Eurocentrism which – widely represented since the Enlightenment – had a habit of emphasizing the uniqueness of European solutions and, under the pretext of introducing universal terms such as "humanity" and "culture," it took believed in the superiority of Europe as the natural consequence of historical processes.

37 L. Droulia writes interestingly about the various reasons for Europeans' involvement in the philhellenic movement, emphasizing in particular two main motivations: worship for antiquity and willingness to support liberal aspirations: L. Droulia, "The Revival of the Greek Ideal and Philhellenism. A Perambulation," in: *Filhellenizm w Polsce. Rekonesans*, eds. M. Borowska, M. Kalinowska, J. Ławski and K. Tomaszuk, Warsaw 2007, pp. 35–38.

Therefore, we may read Norwid's speech as a milder version of the historical revisionism observable in the works of Bernal, Goody, or Said.[38]

In the history of Greece, Norwid distinguishes three extraordinary moments connected with the fate of its heroes, which changed the course of history. Byron is the last in the series as the one who made a sacrifice out of his life so that Greece could be reborn. Although his efforts remained completely incomprehensible both in Greece and throughout Europe, he paid off in some way the debt incurred by Europeans, whom Greece had taught how to create literature and fine arts and what is the freedom of an independent, individual spirit. Byron's death caused national mourning in Greece,[39] but his presence there was not free of conflict. We may even say that he not only repaid the European debt but also reminded modern Greeks about the ancient Greece, which is aptly illustrated by Norwid's anecdote from a letter to Joanna Kuczyńska from 1865:

> I tell him I would not put up a monument to Byron in Messolonghi but where the scaffolding collapsed on the working Greeks and injured others; aware of this, Byron sent his doctors and himself rushed on a horse and told the Greeks to dig. . . as none of them dug, for they *doubted* in the possibility of finding them under the scaffolding. . . so Lord Byron got off his horse, took a shovel, and dug. . . and no Greek came to his aid, because the nation was *vilified with slavery and lost faith*. . . having thrown the shovel away, Byron took a whip and began *lashing their necks so that they would start digging* (Pwsz, Vol. 9, p. 174).

Alexander the Great was certainly a Greek hero before that time. However, he did not make a sacrifice of himself, but of Greece, ending its life in return for the universalization of its language and culture, along with its permanent immortalizing. The series is initiated by a central figure in the history of Greece: a philosopher who, through his voluntary death, announced the sacrifice of Christ and divided the fate of ancient Greece into two epochs, before his activity and the later one, which concerned the completely changed Athens and the world.

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38 E.W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, New York 2014, Chapter I: "Overlapping Territories, Intertwined Histories."

39 See the letter to Konstancja Górska, dated 1859: "When Byron died in a different fatherland, in Greece, the whole Greece was in mourning, even the wild shepherd who drove his oxen under Olympus wore a black rug by his stick" (Pwsz, Vol. 8, p. 379).

3. Socrates's Ways of Civilization in Norwid's Paris Lectures

According to Gregory Vlatos's[40] division of Plato's dialogs, *Phaedo* was one of the latter's middle work and it should not be a representation of the historical Socrates. Nevertheless, scholars widely assume that the last four chapters on Socrates' farewell with friends and his death accurately describe the last days of the famous Athenian. Although the Socrates from *Phaedo* is a wise man who made peace with death, we cannot exclude the possibility that his emotional restraint and persistent defense of the calm stronghold of his mind were a part of a strategy that rejects human fear in the face of death. Having spent his life in a role of an unbearable gadfly annoying the sluggish citizens of his *polis* or a torpedo fish paralyzing his interlocutors – metaphors from *Apology* and *Meno* – Socrates convinces the ones close to him that they should not feel bad about his fate, because when he drinks the poison, he will bid farewell to this world and the suffering will no longer be able to touch him. Socrates does not give up even to Crito, who tries to delay the sad ceremony by explaining that the day is still young. Socrates rejects the possibility of an artificial lengthening of his life, haggling in the wake of awaiting nothingness, or delaying a journey to fortunate lands. After drinking poisonous hemlock and having a stroll conducive to the poison, Socrates slowly loses control over his body which – rapidly left by the philosopher – turns into stone and takes the shape of a timeless monument of rationalism:

> His words made us ashamed, and we checked our tears. He walked around, and when he said his legs were heavy he lay on his back as he had been told to do, and the man who had given him the poison touched his body, and after a while tested his feet and legs, pressed hard upon his foot and asked him if he felt this, and Socrates said no. Then he pressed his calves, and made his way up his body and showed us that it was cold and stiff. He felt it himself and said that when the cold reached his heart he would be gone. As his belly was getting cold Socrates uncovered his head—he had covered it—and said—these were his last words—"Crito, we owe a cock to Asclepius; make this offering to him and do not forget."—"It shall be done," said Crito, "tell us if there is anything else." But there was no answer. Shortly afterwards Socrates made a movement; the

40 See P.W. Juchacz, *Sokrates. Filozofia w działaniu*, Poznań 2004, pp. 34–37. In the twentieth-century research, devoted to Socrates, the groundbreaking significance is assigned to the volume of treatises gathered and edited by G. Vlastos (*The Philosophy of Socrates. A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. G. Vlastos, New York 1971) and to his own books (*Socrates. Ironist and Moral Philosopher*, Cambridge 1991; *Socratic Studies*, ed. M. Burnyeat, Cambridge 1994).

> man uncovered him and his eyes were fixed. Seeing this Crito closed his mouth and his eyes.[41]

Socrates's frozen face reveals to the audience the irreversible nature of the decision and the definite loss of life. Nothingness, pure destruction takes over the scene. As Lévinas writes: "Death is an immobilization of the mobility of the face that denies death in advance; it is a struggle between discourse and its negation . . .. This is a struggle in which death confirms its negative power."[42]

Socrates's last words are a perfect example of the ambiguity of the message he left behind. What Eduard Zeller reads as a proof of Socrates's undoubted religiousness, Adam Krokiewicz interprest as Socratic subversion in the face of death and a culmination of his attitude as eternal ironist. This is what Kierkegaard writes about irony in reference to the intellectual unrest in *Phaedo*: "But what expressly characterizes irony is the abstract standard by which it levels everything, by which it controls every inordinate emotion, thus does not set the pathos of enthusiasm against the fear of death but finds that it is a curious hypothesis to surmise total extinction in this way."[43] According to Kirkegaard's speculation, if Socratic belief in the possibility of existence after death – treated as a support for a fragile mind in a decisive moment – was to turn out to be untrue, the philosopher and his mistake would have to "be totally annihilated,"[44] so the falsehood is not prolonged.

The image of Socrates's suffering accompanies Norwid all his life.[45] In the section "Do Czytelnika" (To the Reader) that precedes the poem "Niewola," Norwid

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41 Plato, "Phaedo," in: *Plato Complete Works*, ed. J. M. Cooper, London 1997, pp. 99–100.

42 Emannual Lévinas *God, Death, and Time,* trans. B. Bergo, Stanford 2000, p. 14.

43 Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony, with Continual Reference to Socrates*, Princeton 1989. p. 79.

44 Kierkegaard, *The Concept*. . ., p. 79.

45 Many researchers commented on Socrates' presence in Norwid's work, however, the issues of Socrates as a rational metapolitician was overlooked. Among others, see A. Lisiecka, "Sokrates chrześcijaninem," in: A. Lisiecka, *Norwid – poeta historii*, London 1973; J. Trznadel, *Czytanie Norwida. Próby*, Warsaw 1978; R. Zajączkowski, *Głos prawdy i sumienie». Kościół w pismach Cypriana Norwida*, Wrocław 1998, pp. 12–15; W. Szturc, "Sokrates Norwida," in: W. Szturc, *Archeologia wyobraźni. Studia o Słowackim i Norwidzie*, Krakow 2001; T. Korpysz, " 'Chrześcijanin' w pismach Cypriana Norwida," in: *Norwid a chrześcijaństwo*, eds. J. Fert and P. Chlebowski, Lublin 2002; T. Mackiewicz, *Sokrates Norwida. Kontekst – recepcja – kontynuacja*, Warsaw 2009.

recalls the image of a restrained sage who – disregarding physical limitations – grew up in the feeling of freedom unattainable for his oppressors:

> In this case, I cannot forget the example set by Socrates, who considered the manacles wound on his leg to be the content and a proof supporting his perspective on pain and the relation of pain to life, thus he clearly controlled the fatality of his position and enriched himself in an insurmountable self-confident freedom (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 366).

The thirty-day period that Socrates spent in prison awaiting the return of the Delos procession became for Norwid a heroic model of following the path of truth that seized the whole man. Norwid rejects the possibility of a Socratic existence in pagan piety, nor does he allow thoughts of the dark disturbing activity of irony that could prevent any enthusiasm for death or, even more so, for life.[46]

In the first of his lectures devoted to the poetry of Juliusz Słowacki and delivered at the turn of April and May of 1860 in Paris-based Czytelnia Polska (Polish Reading Room), Norwid clearly pays Socrates a tribute: "There was also Greece, equipped and stocked more than any other nation, but it could not stand the greatness of the Savior nor even the greatness of Socrates and having given him poison so that the he does not rise above the nation, Greece humiliated itself" (Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 411). The juxtaposition of Socrates and Christ is symptomatic of Norwid's thought, who assumes that the sacrifice offered by the Athenian philosopher preceded the fate of the Son of God in the plan of the divine history of salvation.[47] Norwid evaluates Socrates from the perspective of the end of the pagan era as a martyr for a faith that he did not have time to understand. Norwid mentions it in the draft *Asocjacja, ilość i jakość* (Association, Quantity, and Quality): "Being the last Greek sage before Christianity, and therefore a sage who was ahead of his time, who anticipated Christianity, *Socrates* was also *the martyr of his own hunch*" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 48). In "Zmartwychwstanie historyczne" (The Historical Resurrection), Norwid specifies that Socrates's role was to familiarize people with the notion of the immortality of the soul, when there were no arguments to convince the Athenians. Socrates's demise was a

46 From Norwid's notebooks, we may deduce that he drew his knowledge of Socrates and his philosophical concepts from two fundamental sources: V. Cousin, *Histoire générale de la philosophie depuis les temps plus anciens jusqu'à la fin du XVIII^e siècle*, Paris 1864; G. Grote, *Plato and the other Companions of Socrates*, Vols. 1–3, London 1865–1870. See Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 313.

47 We described this phenomenon more extensively in a different text, see M. Junkiert, "Sokrates w twórczości Norwida – zarys problemu," *Podteksty* 3/2008 (13), www.podteksty.eu, accessed: September 4, 2010.

natural complementation of his reasoning which simultaneously highlighted his sacrifice of life: "In an obscure premonition of Christianity, Socrates proved with all his life the existence of immortality – gathering increasingly stronger evidence – he had to use poison as his last proof and, thus, he almost did not die. . . he just finished his philosophical argument" (Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 609).

However, Socrates as an anticipation of the Passion of Christ is only one aspect in Norwid's understanding of this character and it is not at all the most important one. *Imitatio Socratici*[48] only partially overlaps with the message of *imitatio Christi*. Paradoxically, Socrates did not so much precede as justify the need for Christ's coming and foretell the problems associated with the irrevocable link between salvation history and the existence of the political community and its immersion in history.

I believe that to comprehensively understand Norwid's Socrates, we should treat him as a politician subjecting his activity to his self-characteristics from *Gorgias*. "I believe that I'm one of a few Athenians – so as not to say I'm the only one, but the only one among our contemporaries – to take up the true political craft and practice the true politics."[49] In this fragment, Socrates considers the potential possibility of being brought before the court, as the specific nature of his activity puts him in the position of a character particularly dangerous to the peace of the city exposed to the results of the intellectual ferment aroused by Socrates in the heads of his faithful listeners, which could lead to the questioning of the rules of Athens' statehood. Thus, this confession that places Socrates next to – or, in a sense, beyond – the sphere of Athenian politics and, as Aleksander Ochocki indicates, "clearly links . . . God's service with civil service"[50] was an attempt to designate an alternative "space for public civic discourse"[51] which was occupied by no one apart Socrates himself, due to the nature of democracy, based on a voluntary model of people's rule.

Jean-Pierre Vernant aptly defines the public character of Athens' reality: "We can even say that the polis existed only to the extent that a public domain had

48 The term is a reference to Cezary Wodziński, who uses it to characterize the need to follow behavior of Socrates from the premiere of Aristophanes' *Clouds* when he watched the whole play standing. Unmoved and dignified behavior in the surrounding of stigmatising criticism, which foreshadowed the sinister intentions of the people of Athens, puts Socrates in close proximity to the Passion Christ. *Logo nieśmiertelności. Przypisy Platona do Sokratesa*, Gdansk 2008, p. 77.

49 Plato, "Phaedo," p. 864.

50 A. Ochocki, *Filozofia i burze dziejowe*, Warsaw 2001, p. 105.

51 Juchacz, *Sokrates. Filozofia w działaniu*, p. 88.

emerged, in each of the two differing but interdependent meanings of the term: an area of common interest, as opposed to private concerns, and open practices openly arrived at, as opposed to secret procedures."[52] Vernant stresses that the birth of rational thought was necessarily connected with mental and social structures of the city-state, and taking the debate to the agora to make it public contributed to the increase in the importance of "discussion, debate, polemic"[53] in intellectual and political games. Socrates's active presence in the broadly understood sphere of common interests of the *polis* was a contradiction of the previous concepts, which excluded wisdom seekers from involvement in state affairs. Pythagoras compared a philosopher to a man who goes to the Games with all the other people not for fame and profit but only because of his willingness to look at the phenomena on display, which provide an opportunity to penetrate the essence of things. In his attempts, Socrates appears to be the successor of the sophists, who educated the political elite of *poleis*,[54] which by definition denies the sense of political activity limited to popular gatherings. The space of Socrates's activity were mostly the feast and gymnasium, where he conducted a kind of "soul-shaping" process; that is, he educated young Athenians to become intellectually independent citizens and conscious seekers "of values and of truth, *phronésis* and *aletheia*."[55]

Norwid explores Socrates' unique activity, which was limited to spreading wisdom while avoiding the circle of influential politicians. At the very beginning of his first lecture, Norwid considers the possibility of influencing the public sphere without having to appear in the agora. The few words that Copernicus would say even to a few trusted people would immediately belong to the whole world, while the vain talk, even when shouted aloud in the crowd, will never cease to be a private opinion.

In the third lecture, Norwid returns to the opposition between the private and the public referring to Socrates:

> Socrates did not seek to have his disciples orbit around the sun of *his breast*, thus losing the individual power of rotation around the mental axis of their own minds, as he respected his disciples as free men, as he was a wise man; when someone thanked him

52 Jean-Pierre Vernant, *The Origins of Greek Thought*, Ithaca 1982, p. 55.

53 Vernant, *The Origins*, p. 55.

54 See G. Reale, *A History of Ancient Philosophy I: From the Origins to Socrates*, trans. New York 1987, p. 269.

55 W. Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, trans. G. Highet, Vol. 2, Oxford 1947, p. 39.

> for the shared wisdom, he asked and cursed that they should thank not him but the One who makes them use his words (Pwsz, Vol. 6, pp. 423–424).

We may understand this key fragment of the lectures in three completely different ways, each of them leading in a different direction, yet jointly they allow us to understand the peculiarity of Norwid's extraordinary civilizational project. When dealing with his disciples, Socrates appears to be a political activist involved in the shape of his contemporaneity, who does not necessarily call for specific actions but determines the range of possible choices, potential alternatives contained in the reality of the time and – which is no less important – in the sphere of each disciple's values and ways of thinking.

The first interpretation leads through the concept of knowledge. If knowledge is to become wisdom, it should first overtake life:

> And so, for example, this truth that Wisdom is not knowledge alone, but that it must pass into life and embrace it, and so the second truth that the soul is immortal have long been known: the first one to all the wise men, the second to the Egyptians; but these truths were not valid until the moment when Socrates's chalice gave them the power. This Greek is the seal here: the chalice complemented everything and turned the written statute into a living statue of duty (Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 414).

Norwid remains in the framework of the human origin of knowledge. The death of Socrates de facto opposed the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, because Socrates died in the name of the progress of the human race. The philosopher died proclaiming the conviction of immortality of the soul in order to calm others and show them the direction in which their spirituality should go. However – as Norwid states a little earlier – Socrates drew his knowledge from dead Egyptian symbolism, so the religious significance of his deed remained practically unnoticed. As Stefan Witwicki describes in his commentary to *Phaedo* the story of the life of the soul after death, Plato put the "casual fantasy" in Socrates's mouth only to convince all those who already believed to give hope to weak people who would not stand the vision of life ending definitely with death.

Recalling the *daimonion* without giving any more details of who it really was to Socrates brings Norwid in this and the previous excerpt of the lectures closer to understanding his work in a deceptively similar way as Oswald Spengler did in the concept of "the methods of what is called Euhemerism"[56] based on recognizing characters such as Socrates, Confucius, and Rousseau as priests of reason, attributing all civilization achievements only to the actions of man, who, fearing his power, creates religion to hide his own omnipotence behind the facade of

56 O. Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, trans. Ch.F. Atkinson, Berkeley 1929, p. 306.

non-existent deities. The attack on Athenian religiosity had to be interpreted as a revolutionary demolition of the foundations of the democratic system. Precisely this argument was in the accusation that forced the philosopher to stand trial. From the statement of Socrates's aversion to the rule of the masses, manipulated and absorbed by the constant political struggle, there leads an easy way to present him also as a supporter of oligarchy and tyranny. Norwid abrogates the issue of Socrates' political beliefs. The former keeps silent about the dependence of religious issues on historical background, in which appear the issues of faith and the relationship between acolytes of a given religion and decision-makers among authorities who define the limits of religious freedom.

For Norwid, the mysterious voice that Socrates invoked is proof of the inability to confess faith in the Christian God before the birth and passion of Christ, while feeling his superhuman presence. Paradoxically, invoking an inner voice did not contribute to Socrates's acquittal, because even from the perspective of his disciples – as Norwid straightforwardly states, saying that Socrates was the only whom they thanked for his knowledge – it was a clever trick to underline the modesty of a sage who came to all his conclusions on his own.[57]

It is impossible to ignore the question of the fate of Socrates' listeners, for whom the intellectual independence of the interlocutors remained a key method for shaping their souls. It is important that Socrates – presented by Norwid as the one who did not want to make his disciples a mediocre copy of himself – instead of raising supporters of freedom and loyalty to the gods but supporters of the tyranny of Charmides and Critias, who participated in the criminal activities of the Thirty Tyrants after the defeat in the Peloponnesian War, and the godless traitor Alcibiades, accused of destroying the statues of Hermes on the eve of the failed Sicilian expedition.

In lesson five, Norwid recalls the hidden course of history, its unofficial and undescribed side: "It has finally been observed that in all Semitic hieroglyphs vowels are ommited, which is a great success; and when will they see how many there are ommited tears, wails, cries and torture in the history which are the daily companions of the birth and bringing forth of every truth?" (Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 447). This emphasis on the freedom left by Socrates to his students is an introduction to the considerations about the incompatibility of the theoretical model of every political concept, including the one created by Socrates, although

57 On various interpretation of Socrates belief in the divine voice that controls him, see Jacob Howland *Kierkegaard and Socrates. A Study in Philosophy and Faith*, Cambridge 2006, pp. 59–76.

Norwid does not specify what it would consist of when confronted with the element of authentic existence of a community. Since it is impossible to gather people with similar views who would contribute to improving the situation of the community, since the pursuit of freedom is a straightforward path to godlessness and pseudo-philosophy of the kind that Critias created – "there is only one certain thing: that he who is born must also die, and he who lives cannot escape misfortune"[58] – thus, the role of a true sage like Socrates must be self-limitation to the only sphere on which he can have any influence: the language of his era.

Such conclusions naturally lead to the reading of the last possibility of interpretation present in the fragment of Norwid's lecture. What Socrates and his successors did – no longer philosophers but poets – was to create "the language of social transfiguration" and "the language of phenomena," key concepts in the case of a civilization that abandoned paganism and suddenly found itself in a different reality:

> No people change language overnight; the language, the depth of feelings, and the whole drama of life that changed with the coming of Christianity – especially since the people are made up of different layers; so the priests raised up the people's language from the bottom (Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 412).

For Norwid, Socrates opens up a series of characters trapped between the space of power and the divided people, who put effort in creating innovative formulas. Such formulas that would allow people to communicate and express emotions and beliefs are impossible to verbalize in archaic pagan languages.

Norwid's idea, which precisely constructs the meaning of Socrates in the history of European civilization, perfectly corresponds to the comments of Piotr Juchacz:

> The Socratic search for the strict meaning of certain basic moral concepts is not, as Aristotle would say, a search for general concepts or, as others would like, Platonic ideas, but an attempt to create a language in which citizens can speak precisely about the values desired for individuals (as individuals) and at the same time constitute them as good citizens (*agathos polites*).[59]

Many, including Hegel,[60] treated Socrates as a source of anxiety that destroyed the inseparability of thought and reality and the mental foundations of Athens.

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58 I. Krońska, *Sokrates*, Warsaw 2001, p. 220.

59 Juchacz, *Sokrates. Filozofia w działaniu*, p. 152.

60 Socrates, the liberator of the Athenian spirit, has a lot in common with Hegel's thinking, who perceived the conviction of the philosopher as a breakthrough moment for the City and its inhabitants who tried to oppose the fading inseparability of thought and reality. The Socratic Revolution initiated a state in which the subject using his

For Norwid, Socrates was more of an experimenter creating outlines of a path for the people to follow, which became possible after many centuries. However, in this attitude of Socrates we may also see the danger of an exaggerated appreciation of human reason, which replaced the authority rooted in the past or located outside of the real world with a belief in the human self-sufficiency, who decides the fate of the world solely by means of own intellect. This rational coolness, which Norwid seemed to see in Socrates, did not obscure the latter's fundamental role that he played in the history of civilization. In the eyes of Norwid, this way of perceiving Socrates only made him remain a somewhat vague, sketchy, and seemingly abandoned figure in the work of creation.[61]

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reason and his own beliefs could choose a homeland. Slowly, the world of thought was becoming this homeland, replacing the previous historical one. "In Athens that higher principle which proved the ruin of the Athenian state, advanced in its development without intermission. Spirit had acquired the propensity to gain satisfaction for itself — to reflect. Athens appears majestic, because it manifests itself as the free, the liberal — exhibiting its successive phases in their pure idiosyncrasy — in that form in which they really exist" (G.W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree, Mineola, 1956, p. 289 ff).

61 Socrates, presented by Norwid in his lectures on Juliusz Słowacki, undermines the well-established view in research stipulating that Słowacki saw his work as an undertaking of the hardship and methods of Socrates. This is what Zofia Szmydtowa, among others, said: "The attitude of the masked poet is remarkably reminiscent of the Platonic characteristics of Socrates. The Greek sage feels lonely in the face of his contemporaneity and the prevailing tastes, but at the same time exalted by this distinctness and isolation. He is the only man in the world who does not care about the negligible and fleeting but has an important understanding of being. Moreover, Norwid elevates his loneliness. He, the only one among the crowd of contemporaries, elevated over the arguments of a day, reaches the sources of the highest perfection. Like Socrates in *Apology*, Norwid wanders among his fellow countrymen, asks them and experiences them, in order to confirm his conviction that he is alone in the covenant with the truth, incomprehensible and ridiculous." Z. Szmydtowa, "Platon w twórczości Norwida," in: *Prace historyczno-literackie ku czci Ignacego Chrzanowskiego*, Krakow 1936, p. 379.

Chapter III. Norwid's Christian Platonism: About *Quidam*

1. The Hellenization of Christianity

Since the publication of Adolf von Harnack's *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* in 1887, we observe the development of an influential research trend in theology, which treats Greek philosophical thought as a decisive element in the shape of Christianity, extremely detrimental from the point of view of the future fate of religion.[1] According to the supporters of this thesis, the process of the so-called Hellenization of Christianity was to lead to the contamination of the original nature of Christianity by Greek metaphysics, which played a key role in the process of solidifying Christian doctrine. The influence of classical traditions allegedly distorted the doctrine of Revelation, corrupted Christians with pagan morality and vision of the world, and led to the elevation of reason at the expense of faith. In this way, as Harnack wrote, "the Greek spirit" developed "on the soil of the Gospel."[2]

Anti-Hellenists were especially interested in the turn of the second and third century AD and the events that focused on Alexandria, where since about 180 AD there was a catechetical school[3] led by Panthen of

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1 Christian Nottmeier gives an interesting characteristic of Harnack's method: "If we describe the first two volumes of *History of Dogma* using the slogan "Hellenization of Christianity" on the example of developing dogmas which reflect the structural similarity between Hellenism and the Gospel of Jesus and the synthesis of Christian education and Greek-Hellenic philosophy based on them, then the third volume focuses on the fundamental relationship between religious subjectivity and its cultural manifestation. Harnack establishes a multi-perspective, carefuly interpreting Augustine, the history of religion, institution, and science. Three references from Harnack's *History of Dogma* correspond to this concept: to Protestantism, Catholicism after the Council of Trent, and Socinianism." Ch. Nottmeier, "Adolf Harnack: religia wolności indywidualnej," in: *Filozofia religii. Od Schleiermachera do Eco*, eds. V. Drehsen, W. Gräb and B. Weyel, trans. L. Łysień, Krakow 2008, p. 35. See also A. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, Edinburgh 1901, Vol. I.

2 A. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, Vol. I, p. 17.

3 M. Simon writes about Alexandria as the capital of Christianity at that time in *Cywilizacja wczesnego chrześcijaństwa I-IV w.*, trans. E. Bąkowska, Warsaw 1979, chapter 8.

Sicily,[4] a converted stoic, who played an important role in the process of making Christianity more attractive, turning it into a religion for the intellectual elite. Especially, since their representatives eagerly joined heretical sects. Henry Chadwick describes this phenomenon as follows: "As Christianity penetrated the well-educated society of Alexandria, the choice for the convert seemed too often to be between clever, eloquently defended heresy on the one side and a dim, obscurantist orthodoxy on the other."[5]

Therefore, it became a priority for the Christian community to oppose the growing heterodoxic gnosticism. The strategy of Clement – Panthene's successor as a lecturer at the catechetical school – is aptly characterized by the passage from Stromateis, aimed at those Christians who "as the uncouth comrades of Odysseus promise not to hear the sirens . . ., they clog their ears, foolishly afraid that if they had listened to the sounds of the Greek teachings, they would not be able to find home afterwards."[6] Clement himself thought that the little bits of God's wisdom were scattered in all human works, so a Christian should skillfully draw knowledge from Platonic metaphysics, Stoic ethics, and Aristotelian logic. Moreover, God considered the fate of Greek philosophy when drawing his plans, for it is a story of progressive degeneration and the fall of thought, which acquires the proper meaning only in the Christian perspective. The wisdom of the Hebrews preceded the Greeks, and they simply hid the lack of originality in the Hellenic writings. As Eusebius of Caesarea claims,[7] Clement tried to prove that "Moses and the Jewish race had more ancient origins than the Greeks."[8] Origen used similar rhetoric refuting pagan accusations of the secondary nature of Christianity:

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4 H. Pietras refers to him as "Pantaenus." At the same time Pietras warns him not to mistake Pantajnos's school with the one that Origen will write about half a century later, see H. Pietras, *Początki teologii Kościoła*, Kraków 2007, pp. 129–130.

5 See Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church*, Penguin Books, 1973, p. 95.

6 Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, qtd. after: M. Simon, *Cywilizacja wczesnego chrześcijaństwa*, p. 181.

7 On the conduct of Clement of Alexandria, see Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, pp. 33.

8 Eusebius, *The Church History*, trans. P. L. Maier, Grand Rapids 1999, p. 217. We should note that despite Clement's undoubted links with pagan philosophy, contemporary researchers do not question the orthodoxy of his writings. According to H. Chadwick "Clement is hellenized to the core of his being, yet unreserved in his adhesion to the Church in the sense of being wholly opposed to Gnosticism and bound to the authority of scripture as inspired revelation by which alone he has certitude concerning God's will and purpose." Henry Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition,* Oxford 2002, p. 64.

> There might also be found in the writings of Moses and of the prophets, who are older not only than Plato, but even than Homer and the invention of letters among the Greeks, passages worthy of the grace of God bestowed upon them, and filled with great thoughts, to which they gave utterance, but not because they understood Plato imperfectly, as Celsus imagines. For how was it possible that they should have heard one who was not yet born?[9]

According to the supporters of the theory of the irrevocable distortion of Christianity by Greek thought, there was a chasm between the two spheres, so any process of infiltration of Hellenism into the minds and writings of Christians had to end in disaster. According to Werner Beierwaltes, who reconstructs the views of the anti-Hellenists, Greek thought was rich in generalizations, cosmocentrism, static, ahistorical, and apersonal,[10] which placed it on the absolute antipodes of Christian concepts, immersed in the study of the world's historicity and man's personal relationship with God, hence, defining reality and human nature in a different way.

The same idea may have a gentler form, reached by keeping a more balanced measure when analyzing the divergent nature of Greek philosophy and Christian faith. For example, Richard Heinzmann does so by emphasizing the inconclusive nature of the whole issue:

> The basic structures of Greek and Judeo-Christian thinking let us grasp the initial state and basic arrangement of the problems of medieval philosophy; they also give the right perspective of its vision: in its entirety and in individual matters. Of course, this is not to say that these clear differences have always been seen, nor that from the beginning they were the subject of a dispute between ancient philosophy and Christianity. But there is a subtle yet distinct division between them. Its insurmountability often emerged in aporetical discussions over specific questions. It is impossible to synthesize Greek philosophy and Christian knowledge of faith without losing identity on one side or the other. This is why medieval philosophy, in so far as it is Christian, is more than just a commentary to Plato or Aristotle on important topics.[11]

In the further part of deliberations, we will be interested only in the double role of the first of the mentioned philosophers. The role of an ancient sage, whose writings propagated the views Christianity fought against – this is what researchers claim, among them Heinrich Dörrie when he describes Christian antiplatonism as an effective method of creating a quality separate from paganism[12] – but also the

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9 Origen, *Contra Celsum*, trans. H. Chadwick, Cambridge 1953, b. VI, ch. VII.

10 W. Beierwaltes, *Platonizm w chrześcijaństwie*, trans. P. Domański, Kęty 2003, pp. 10–11.

11 Richard Heinzmann, *Philosophie des Mittelalters*, Kohlhammer 1992, p. 9.

12 Beierwaltes, *Platonizm w chrześcijaństwie*, pp. 14–15 refers to views of H. Dörri.

role of the co-creators of the Christian doctrine and imagination, present in the teachings of, among others, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine of Hippo, and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. The reasons for Plato's popularity stems from many levels. According to Eric Havelock, one of them is the creation of an objective structure of knowledge, which after a slight modification turned out to be a set of ideas contained in the divine mind, determining the character and shape of reality.[13] Seweryn Blandzi describes the phenomenon of Plato's influence on Christianity in a different way. Blandzi characterizes the meaning of Plato's motif of the "way up" as a method of gaining certainty about the existence of God and the functioning of eternal, unchanging rules governing the human mind.[14]

The ambivalent opinions about *Timaeus* illustrate the ambiguous role of Platonic influences in Christianity. Justin Martyr describes the reaction of a Christian sage he once met. But let us not fool ourselves, it is not the words of an anonymous teacher that Justin invokes, but his own. The sage shows disapproval of Plato's concept of the immortal soul. The soul exists only because God allows it to live in the time it considers appropriate. After this conversation, shocked Justin abandoned philosophy and became a Christian.[15] Nevertheless, Justin did not give up *Timaeus* claiming that the true author of the truths contained in it was Moses. Clement from Alexandria spreaded similar opinions. However, convinced of the Hebrew sources of knowledge from *Timaeus*, Clement introduced a significant modification to the Platonic interpretation. According to Clement, "God himself was the demiurge of all things,"[16] therefore, it was creation *ex nihilo*. Such a concept was unthinkable in Greek philosophy, which since the time of Thales focused on the search for the arche, an original principle understood in two ways: the laws that contributed to the emergence of the world and the substance of primacy, without which nothing could have happened. After all, the Demiurge from *Timaeus* forms the world from pre-existing matter.[17]

We would like to show this double presence of Plato and the masked fascination with his concepts – characteristic of the history of Plato's reception – in selected works of Cyprian Kamil Norwid, whose religious thought also fluctuated between authentic Hellenism and its, at least partial, negation.

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13 See E.A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, pp. 266–273.

14 S. Blandzi, *Platoński projekt filozofii pierwszej*, Warsaw 2002, pp. 338–341.

15 See E. Gilson, *Historia filozofii chrześcijańskiej w wiekach średnich*, trans. S. Zalewski, Warsaw 1987, pp. 15–16 and E. Gilson, *Duch filozofii średniowiecznej*, trans. J. Rybałt, Warsaw 1958, pp. 27–28.

16 Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, p. 63.

17 See J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Chrisian Doctrines*, Continuum, New York 2006 [1958], p. 16.

2. Archytas and Paul the Apostle

In the history of assimilation of Plato's thought, Norwid's era was not a key one. Significant readings took place earlier, such as Shaftesbury's theory of the "moral sense,"[18] neohumanism initiated by Winckelmann,[19] and Schleiermacher's activity, thanks to which – as Werner Jaeger writes – people "turned again to [Plato's] philosophy as the deathless prototype of that kind of speculative theorizing about the ontological structure of the universe which was losing ground fast, and which had been gravely impugned by Kant's criticism of the foundations of knowledge."[20]

In Norwid's view, Plato is a sage of the old times and a righteous citizen of Athens,[21] who wrote down Socrates' words, and also – besides his work – became the author of widespread philosophical ideas. Plato is rarely Norwid's main focus of interest, the exception being the epilogue to the poem "Niewola," entitled "Plato i Archita." Written after the defeat of the January Uprising, the poem contains a constructive proposal for intellectual work for society. The epilog that solidifies the message of the piece refers to an issue already present in antiquity as the "Delian problem."[22] Wishing to protect the city from the plague, the Athenians asked the Oracle of Delphi how they could save themselves. In response, they were ordered to double the cubic altar of Athens. So, they asked again, this time the Platonic Academy. The dilemma was about how to double

18 See W. Tatarkiewicz, *A History of Six Ideas*, trans. Ch. Kasperek, Warsaw 1980, pp. 320 ff.

19 See M. Kalinowska, *Grecja romantyków. Studia nad obrazem Grecji w literaturze romantycznej*, Toruń 1994, chapter 1; M. Rudaś-Grodzka, *'Sprawić, aby idee śpiewały.' Motywy platońskie w życiu i twórczości Adama Mickiewicza w okresie wileńsko-kowieńskim*, Warsaw 2003, pp. 47–57.

20 W. Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, trans. G. Highet, Vol. 2, Oxford 1947, p. 78. On methods of interpreting Plato's *Dialogues* in German philosophy from the turn of eighteenth and nineteenth century see. H. Krämer, *Fichte, Schlegel i infinityzm w interpretacji Platona*, trans. A. Gniazdowski, ed. S. Blandzi, Warsaw 2006.

21 Among others see poem *Fulminant* (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 549) and the letter to L. Nabielak from September 7, 1858 (Pwsz, Vol. 8, p. 351).

22 Among works devoted to *Plato i Archita* particularly interesting are Z. Szmydtowa "Platon w twórczości Norwida," in: *Prace historyczno-literackie ku czci Ignacego Chrzanowskiego*, Krakow 1936, pp. 381–382, a book by W. Szturc *Archeologia wyobraźni. Studia o Słowackim i Norwidzie*, Krakow 2001, pp. 187–191, and a study by E. Marczewski and J. Łanowski *O zdegradowaniu kontemplacji. Wokół wiersza C. Norwida Plato i Archita*, Wrocław 1969.

the cube. We know that Hippocrates of Chios was the one to answer the question, while Archytas, Eudoxus, and Menaechmus tried to solve the problem with the method he proposed. Włodzimierz Szturc writes: "Archytas founded his idea on a construction based on finding the point of intersection of the surface of a cone with a curve on the cylinder. However, it required the construction of many movable models."[23] Therefore, the method proposed by Archytas was a practical attempt to solve the Athenian problem. Archytas experimented by changing the proportions of the constructed solids. This approach contradicts Plato's views, who opposed solving geometric issues in a way different from the operations conducted on numbers, from the search in the ideal sphere. This story has an unusual ending, since Archimedes used the idea of Archytas, when defending Syracuse against the Romans: the practical application of geometry brought an unexpected effect.

In a brief dialog, Plato concisely opposes the views of Architas. At stake is the spread of theoretical knowledge among the people who need help from wise men:

> Unaware of geometry,
> I saw simple people laying cobble
> And, like a stone reconciles with a stone,
> I observed, when standing in pillars' shadow
> – I was sad from the *unawareness* of the commons,
> Although it is the eternal *weight of deed* (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 393)!

To be precise, Archytas's approach is the attitude of an intellectual involved in something more than just the fate of his own field and its internal cohesion. Contrary to popular opinions, Plato was less impressive in this context,[24] since he stands in the way of permeating ideas that should become useful at the cost of their abstraction and hermeticism. However, Plato is right to criticize the embodied life of an idea that enhances the strength of the people. Thus, Plato opposes the inappropriately constructed notion of progress, as Norwid mentions at the beginning of the poem:

> The so-called *practical* people, afraid of any ideal, maintain that it is easier to realize truth by bending it. This is a crooked notion of the difference between word and deed,

23 Szturc, *Archeologia wyobraźni*, p. 189.

24 A. Melbechowska-Luty interprets the role of Plato in *Epilog* differently. She claims that Norwid treats the views of both thinkers equally, see A. Melbechowska-Luty, *Sztukmistrz. Twórczość artystyczna i myśl o sztuce Cypriana Norwida*, Warsaw 2001, pp. 276–279.

> between an idea and practice; after all, imperfection itself begins with practicing an idea! *In relation to what could an imperfection be, if it did not have perfection as its goal*?... (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 380).

Therefore, human imperfection – a measure of the development of individuals and societies – promotes the denial of transcendent truth, becomes sophistry that exposes human spirituality to disintegration. Hence, Plato speaks from the perspective of the defender of the supernatural world and of sensuality, thanks to which the certainty of the divine nature of knowledge should be revealed. The philosopher's last words should focus on the multiplicity of ways of manifesting religion: "It shall come – also to you the day of victory – oh *art*!" (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 394).

Archytas, a Pythagorean philosopher and strategist from Taranto, living in mid-fourth century BC, adhered to the principle that true cognition is possible only through dialectics (*he logistike techne*)[25] whose rule was "to formulate initial hypotheses and verify them through evidence, *apodeiksis*, without referring to the results of sensory perception."[26] Therefore, the conduct cited by Norwid meant giving up on cognition as such. By remaining at the level of the senses and studying material solids, Archytas condemned himself to eternal derivative nature, abandoned the path that could bring him closer to being at its fullest, and gave up speculation in favour of acting in the sphere of products of substance. Therefore, one of the meanings associated with Norwid's poem is the conviction that it is necessary to abandon the claims of reason in order to be able to work at the foundations. On the other hand, the Platonic approach suggests that this is a one-off act from which there is no turning back, and that the losses can be incalculable, like with the whole "Delian problem" (at least until the times of Leibniz).

An intuition about the relationship between art and the ways religion manifests itself[27] appears in the work *O sztuce (dla Polaków)* (On Art, for Poles), in which Norwid states "it could be said that in the case of true religion, the form lends the spirit to earthly messages by means of art" (Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 343).

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25 J. Gajda-Krynicka mentions it in *Filozofia przedplatońska*, Warsaw 2007, pp. 189–192. The function of a strategist attributed to Archytas is not a precise definition of the scope of his activity, as the political form of Taranto during this period remains unknown. We do not entirely know whether he was a king, legislator or leader of the people.

26 Gajda-Krynicka, *Filozofia*, p. 191.

27 D. Pniewski is one of the researchers who writes about different aspect of links between art and Christianity in Norwid's *Między obrazem i słowem. Studia o poglądach estetycznych i twórczości literackiej Norwida*, Lublin 2005, chapter 1.

The epistemological order of Norwid's considerations resembles the Platonic motif of "returning to oneself" and points to anamnesis as the rule of acquiring knowledge:

> In the ideal cultivation of beauty lies a certain *feeling of a higher order of things*, toward which we rise up, if at last at the top this truth cannot be *taken*, it is only because man himself cannot take anything by himself that he would not be *allowed to take* first (Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 345).

Translating this cognitive process into the categories of Augustine of Hippo's philosophy, we may state that "the presence of unchanging truths in changing minds is the proof for the existence of God."[28]

For Norwid, the harbinger of Greece's decline was the behavior of the sculptor from the temple of Diana of Ephesus,[29] who, because of his own interests, prevented Paul the Apostle from evangelizing the city (Pwsz, Vol. 6, pp. 344–345). Norwid dedicates the work "Dwa męczeństwa. Legenda" (Two Martyrdoms. A Legend) to Paul the Apostle's stay in Greece. The piece describes a crowd that wanted to proclaim Paul the Apostle's a god. Among the gathered audience there is a speaker, a philosopher, and a former soldier: "There was a barefoot soldier, resting on a djerid, / With his sick hand in a sling of Persian cloth" (Pwsz, Vol. 1, p. 118). These unusual attributes – the piece of Persian cloth that serves as a sling and a djerid replacing a walking stick – must raise serious doubts, especially since the times of Paul the Apostle were several hundred years after the Persian wars. It is worthwhile to make a guess as to how did the shred of an eastern cloth and a djerid came into the hands of a soldier. Quite paradoxically, we can link it to the topography of democratic Athens or, more precisely, to Odeon, a building adjacent to the Theatre of Dionysus. Marek Węcowski writes:

> The shape and construction of this building on a rectangular plan is a manifestation of Athenian successes. First, the tent of the Persian King Xerxes won in the Battle of Plataea was supposed to be used as its pyramidal roof. Second, the roof had a support of several

28 E. Gilson, *Historia filozofii*, p. 73.

29 T. Zieliński pointed out that Diana of Ephesus belonged to a series of goddesses endowed with features of "eternal femininity" just like Mother Earth and Demeter of Eleusia. Diana's barbaric appearance, subjected to partial hellenization, must have been shocking even for the Greeks themselves. See T. Zieliński, *Chrześcijaństwo antyczne*, Toruń 1999, pp. 517–518. Norwid was fascinated by the history of Ephesus temples and Diana's fate. In his notes, Norwid emphasized the archaic nature of the beliefs from which Diana originated. See Pwsz, Vol. 7, pp. 270–271.

dozen internal columns, allegedly built of masts of the Persian fleet won in the Battle of Salamis.[30]

The remains of the victory over Persia originally had their place in the architectural form of monumental Athens, in this way becoming a memorial to the triumph that changed the fate of the city.[31] In the case of Norwid's veteran, they are proof of the functionalization of a museum artifact. Theatricalized signs of memory transform into pragmatic objects, this time deprived of any ideological charge. Hence, the poor soldier triggers associations with the military triumphs of Athens in the fifth century BC. At the same time, the soldier evokes the process of the democratic development, for which victory over Persia became a catalyst that dynamized the solidification of the political system. Therefore, Paul the Apostle speaks directly to the city embodying democratic traditions, experience in the sphere of rhetoric, and dialectical reasoning, whose inhabitants already began to forget about its past glory. Paul the Apostle contrasts the failure of the human project, which aimed to create a state fully belonging to its citizens, with the kingdom not from this world. To the Athenians, rooted in the difficult reality of a policy without autonomy, he shows the true meaning of the transcendental world: "Pagans! – he cries – I am a man, as are you, / Ash of ashes – and on this earth an errant *viator*" (Pwsz, Vol. 1, p. 119).

What is important for Norwid is the fact not directly described in the work, namely the presence in the crowd of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite,[32] whom he mentions in his notes: "Dionysius Areopagite, whom St. Paul converts and who is the first Bishop of Athens (*des Noms de Dieu*), is considered to have all the names (all names find in his principle). Speculative mysticism" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 369).[33] Marsilio Ficino called Dionysius *Platonicus primo ac deinde*

30 B. Bravo, M. Węcowski, E. Wipszycka and A. Wolicki, *Historia starożytnych Greków*, Vol. 2: *Okres klasyczny*, Warsaw 2009, p. 402.

31 Noteworthy, the process of shaping the hegemony of Athens, developed within the framework of the Maritime Union, began after the defeat of Persia. See J.K. Davies, *Democracy and Classical Greece*, Cambridge 1993.

32 Since the days of Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus of Rotterdam, we known that the legend claiming that the author of *De divinis nominibus* was not the student of the Apostle Paul. For the writings of Dionisius date back to the end of the fifth century AD. See B. Altaner and A. Stuiber, *Patrologia. Życie, pisma i nauka Ojców Kościoła*, trans. P. Pachciarek, Warsaw 1990, pp. 648–649.

33 The source of Norwid's knowledge in this case was probably J. Görres, who describes the meeting of St. Paul and Dionysius: "Saint Paul fut donc salué comme le premier initiateur des illuminations divines; et l'on crut reconnaître en Denys l'Aréopagite, que Paul avait converti et consacré premier évêque d'Athènes, celui qui avait donné à la

Christianus,[34] making him a neoplatonic Christian thinker and a masked promoter of pagan metaphysics. The foundations for defining Dionysius' philosophical origins are indeed solid, as he tried to assimilate to Christianity the set of views of Proclus (411–485), calling God the One from which the world emanates, seeking to return to its source.[35] The theory of divine names was particularly interesting for Norwid. Under the name of Dionysius Norwid perceives Platonic ideas, patterns of existing beings. Thus, we can describe the components of the world, things, concepts, thoughts, and existence itself with this term, granting God participation in the functioning of all aspects of reality. This participation is rooted in the mystical path of man, who tries to overcome the hierarchically organized "ladder" of beings – the successive emanations of God – in order to finally return to His vicinity.

Norwid does not try to convey the content of the Greek speech of Paul the Apostle but, instead, only describes the look and reactions of the crowd. However, when Paul the Apostle reaches the Emperor, Norwid summarizes their conversation:

> And, as redemption came through martyrdom
> Of Christ the Lord, he taught, advising the Emperor:
> That he should not fail to convert himself;
> And how is all freedom to the Holy Spirit
> Obedient, who is part of the Trinity, but is
> A third person. These things do not just mean sheer knowing,
> But mean the love for truth, thus inspiration,
> Thus goodwill. This by the Holy Spirit from the Heaven
> Will be blessed (Pwsz, Vol. 1, p. 120).

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mystique sa forme et son développement." J. Görres, *La mystique divine, naturelle et diabolique*, trans. M. Charles Sainte-Foi, Vol. 1, part 1: *La mystique divine*, Paris 1861, p. 77. Görres describes also in detail Dionysius' teaching about divine names: "On peut ranger encore dans cette classe le livre *Des Noms de Dieu*. Dieu, qui, considéré dans la simplicité de son essence, ne peut être nommé d'aucun nom, va prendre, pour ainsi dire, tous les noms. Tous les noms, en effet, ont leur racine en celui qui est au-dessus de tout nom. Bonté essentielle, il est le principe, le commencement et la fin de tout ce qui est; et lui-même est sans commencement sans milieu ni fin. Il est la vie qui vivifie toute chose, et pourtant il est au-dessus de toute vie. . . . Il est un, et il est tout; il est le principe de toute unité et de toute multiplicité; et c'est pour cela qu'on peut l'appeler de tous les noms qui ne répugnant pas à son essence, mais à la condition toutefois de le reconnaître comme n'ayant en soi aucun nom," p. 79.

34 See Beierwaltes, *Platonizm w chrześcijaństwie*, p. 68.

35 On teology of Dionysius see E. Gilson, *Historia filozofii*, pp. 78–82.

Interestingly, Paul the Apostle referred to the Holy Spirit described in accordance with much later terminology. As Henryk Pietras argues,

> Paul the Apostle speaks of Christ as the Jews spoke of Wisdom: mystery hidden for long ages past (Romans 16:25), a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began (1 Corinthians 2:7). The Spirit is so connected to Paul the Apostle that it is sometimes difficult to tell whether he speaks of the eternally living Son of God or of the Spirit.[36]

Norwid uses expressions that show similarities to the conclusions of the Cappadocian Fathers, argumenting for the unity of the Holy Trinity through the reference to the Platonic concept of universal concepts (*to koinon*).[37] Norwid's Paul the Apostle speaks with the language of theology – much later than him – and someone could ask him about the source of his extraordinary knowledge, like they asked his legendary student Dionysius. If the Caesar, with whom he spoke, was a sufficiently educated erudite, he should respond to the words of Paul the Apostle with more calm. Unfortunately, they stirred him deeply:[38]

> Until the Emperor said: "*The content is deep,*
> *And it almost makes me a newborn –*"
> And he had Paul imprisoned – then he cut off his head! (Pwsz, Vol. 1, pp. 120–121).

The search for Platonic traces in Norwid's work leads to the conclusion that when Norwid evokes the ancient history of the Church and Christians, the context of Platonic influences usually appears in the background. This indicates a clear preference of Norwid to see Christian faith through the prism of notions and images from Greek philosophy. However, it is impossible to separate the presence of Platonism in Christianity and Norwid's conscious references. Certainly, faith is no secret neoplatonism for Norwid, but it is possible that he assessed Plato as a hidden Christian converted by Socrates to believe in the only God. Thus, although Plato was wrong about the nature of the world and erroneous in his assessment of matter – "Plato's concept of matter is too objective and too closed" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 340) – we are to still trust his theocentric intuition. Plato was undoubtedly a remarkable figure, listening to the harmony of the spheres

36 Pietras SJ, *Początki*, p. 248.

37 Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, p. 248.

38 A widely accepted opinion is that St. Paul died a martyr's death in 67 AD, which was related to the persecution of Nero against Christians after the fire of Rome. It is possible that Judaeo-Christians turned St. Paul in as the one who incited the riots. See J. Daniélou and H.I. Marrou, *Historia Kościoła*, Vol. 1: *Od początków do roku 600*, introduction R. Aubert, trans. M. Tarnowska, Warsaw 1986, p. 46.

(Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 318) who sought the coming Truth,[39] which does not change the fact that Norwid notices fundamental differences between the Platonic and Christian approaches, especially in the understanding of freedom: "*Plato.* The ancient differ from us primarily in their freedom from God ... and their freedom from community (slaves)" (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 312). Perhaps in this way Norwid followed the Hegelian interpretation of the Platonic understanding of freedom, because he paraphrases the idea that it was not until the modern era that we separated the system from the way of thinking.[40]

3. Judaic Threads in *Quidam*

It is difficult to omit the key work related to Platonic reminiscences in Norwid's work. I mean the long poem *Quidam*, which he located in Rome under Emperor Hadrian. The text may be read as a multifaceted thesis on the posthumous life of Greece in the Roman Empire which, although defeated, according to Cicero conquered Roman literature, educational methods, architecture, and philosophy. This hidden presence of Hellenism in the life of Rome is also connected with another process, namely the dejudaization of Christianity.

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39 Z. Szmydtowa wrote about the significant Platonic influences in Norwid's work, stressing in particular the natural and non-conflicting union between Platonism and Christianity: "Norwid worshiped the Greek philosopher, without violating his faith and individual convictions. Norwid took from his works the confirmation of his metaphysical longings, he shaped moral, social and aesthetic concepts with Plato's help, and he put his dream love under his care." Szmydtowa, "Platon w twórczości Norwida," p. 386.

40 The relationship is probably indirect, but noticeable. As Hegel claims: "With reference to the constitution, there are here two systems. One is the modern system in which the defining conditions of freedom and its entire structure are maintained in a formal way, without regard for the conviction [of the people]. The other system is that of conviction—the Greek principle in general, which we find developed particularly in Plato's *Republic*. A small number of social classes constitutes the foundation for it, and the whole otherwise depends upon the education and cultivation that are supposed to lead on to science and philosophy. / The two elements, conviction and the formal constitution, are inseparable and mutually indispensable. But in modern times there has come to prominence the one-sided view according to which the constitution is supposed to be self-sustaining on the one hand, while conviction, religion, and conscience should on the other hand be set aside as matters of indifference because it is of no concern to the political constitution what conviction and religion individuals commit themselves to." G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. 1, Berkeley 1998, p. 459.

After the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD and the destruction of the Temple, the paths of Judaism and Christianity diverged. This process progressed since the Council of Jerusalem in 49 AD[41] until the outbreak of the Jewish uprising in 66 AD, in which Christians did not participate, distancing themselves from Judaism. In a rapidly developing Christianity, representatives of converted pagans dominated, insensitive to the specifics of Jewish thought and law. As Jaroslav Pelikan argues: "What was offensive about Christianity in the eyes of Gentiles was, to a considerable extent, what it had inhertied from Judaism."[42] The now minor voice of the Judeo-Christian communities[43] began to weaken and the development of Christianity itself went in a direction that marginalized its Judeo-Christian followers. Hadrian's time saw the priming of Christianity, also in the eyes of Greek-Roman pagans. It was also a relatively calm period of political order. According to Jean Daniélou and Henrie Marrou:

> The Reign of Hadrian (117–138) seems to have been especially peacefull for the Christians. A precious document by Justin has been preserved. (I *Apol*. LXVIII, 6, 10), which makes an interesting comparison with Trajan's letter. Hadrian adressed it to Minucius Fundanus, proconsul of Asia; he confirms the previous ruling, saying that there must be no sentence based on mere accusation, and that proceedings must be taken against those who make flase charges, and severe penalties inflicted.[44]

Let us go back to the matter of the poem. It includes a puzzling phenomenon of complete isolation of Christians and Jews. It is difficult to call it hostility, but it is a cool indifference, which is fully manifested especially in Barchob's discussion with Jazon about the imprisonment of Christians:

> "*What happened*?"
> "An event less new
> Than sad," he said, looking as if at a candle
> Into Jazon's eyes that glowed on him.
> "The Christian Gwido said – this and that's it" –
> At which he fell silent and his pale face blushed.
> "What do they *say*?" – Jazon said slowly,

41 Norwid mentions it in *Rzecz o wolności słowa*, see Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 588–589.

42 J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine,* Vol. 1*: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)*, Chicago 1971, p. 41.

43 J. Daniélou SJ writes about the fascinating world of Judeo-Christian beliefs in *The theology of Jewish Christianity*. See also ft. F. Szulc, *Struktura teologii judeochrześcijańskiej. Studium metodologiczne w świetle badań J. Daniélou SJ*, Krakow 2005.

44 J. Daniélou, H. Marrou, *The Christian Centuries*, Vol. 1, trans. V. Cronin, New York 1964, p. 87.

No questioning intonation, no salt.
"*What*?" – said Barchob like a fading echo –
And there was a moment of silence that hurts
Like a loud lie, or the dying truths
At a time when they have everything but the will – (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 139).

The Christian arguments that Gwido used in his conversation with the Romans stumble upon Jazon's ironic disapproval. There must have been at least several reasons for this disapproval. Jazon probably thought of Christians as traitors who did not engage in the liberation struggle, but now, before the next uprising, they are contributing to an unnecessary escalation of the conflict with the Romans. There were probably also non-political reasons, and these undoubtedly concerned a large number of Judeo-Christians in Rome at the time. Jazon must have regretted that some Jews chose to believe in Christ. His greatest objection should be that there were pagans among their fellow believers and – to be more precise – it were probably the poorest of the Greeks. The Christians in the poem were shrouded in mystery. We know nothing about their lives, nor about the troubles which then afflicted the Roman church. Therefore, Norwid portrays the diverging paths of Christianity and Judaism through the behaviour of Jazon and Barchob, who was similarly indifferent to the fate of Christians. Barchob's presence is also a clear signal of broken chronology, as Norwid does not focus on events taken from a particular stage in history. Rather, Norwid shows a synthetic picture of the Christian-Jewish relations after the Bar Kochba revolt. It was not until the demolition of Jerusalem that the Hellenization of Christianity intensified. Noteworthy, this fact emerges in Artemidorus's conversation with Hadrian, who anticipates the severance of hitherto undisputed links between Christianity and places historically linked to Jesus's activities.

During his stay in Rome, Norwid drew attention to the widespread phenomenon of the Hellenization of the empire's elite.[45] However, it was only an illusory continuation of Greece's civilizational achievements. The real triumph was to become apparent in the relationship between Hellenism and Christianity. A reflection of this process is visible in Gwido's defense speech:

None of you believes in Caesar's godhood,
Because neither stands Caesar taller than Apollo,
Jupiter, Bacchus –
Neither that they were people is news!

45 This is particularly true of the tombstone inscriptions in Roman tombs, where Norwid observed an inconsistent use of the Greek alphabet. See Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 411.

> – Since without God you are, so you seek him
> In the superiority of this man or another;
> Hence I have mercy on you (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 117).

Gwido, who criticizes the Roman concept of bodily divinity, uses the arguments of Origen whom he could neither know nor read at the time, and Origen's mockery of Hadrian's favorite Antinous. Celsus,[46] a philosopher drawing from Plato,[47] who lived and worked in the time of Mark Antony, compared the cult of Antinous to the behavior of Jesus' followers. Origen[48] refuted accusations of worshiping a human by emphasizing the divine nature of Christ.

> What is there in common between the noble life of our Jesus and the life of the favourite of Hadrian who did not even keep the man from a morbid lust for women? Against Jesus not even those who brought countless accusations and told enormous lies against him were able to accuse him of having had the slightest contact with the least licentiousness. Furthermore, if the worship of Antinous were to be examined honestly and impartially, it would probably be found that it is owing to Egyptian magic and spells that he appears to do miracles in Antinoopolis even after his death.[49]

Origen's opinion directly attacks the Egyptian cult of the Caesar's favorite, which Hadrian mentioned during his dispute with Artemidorus: "What? – *if* / *Antinous's blood was not consecrated*?" (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 182). Origen deals with this comparison in an uncompromising way, thus revealing the absurdity of the faith imposed on Caesar's subjects on a whim:

> The case of Jesus is very different from this. No sorcerers came together to oblige some king who commanded them to come or to obey the order of a governor, thinking that they would make him a god. But the Creator of the universe Himself, by means of the persuasive power of His miraculous utterances, showed Jesus to be worthy of honour,

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46 The allegations of Celsus concern the antiphilosophical and anti-traditional nature of Christianity, which threatens the universally accepted religious pluralism. See F. Ruggiero, *Szaleństwo chrześcijan. Poganie wobec chrześcijaństwa w pierwszych pięciu wiekach*, trans. E. Łukaszyk, Krakow 2007, pp. 117–126.

47 Origen repeatedly stresses that Celsus was an Epicurean, but probably, Origen confused Celsus with another thinker to whom Lucian dedicated his *Alexander, The False Prophet*. In further books (VI–VIII) Origen corrects an earlier misjudgement.

48 This link with Origen, the creator of the synthesis of Platonism and Christianity in *De principiis*, seems to be crucial for understanding the figure of Gwido. On Origen as a neoplatonic see, among others, E.R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine*, Cambridge 1965, pp. 118 ff.

49 Origen, *Contra Celsum*, trans. H. Chadwick, Cambridge 1953, p. 152.

> not only to the men who were willing to welcome him, but also to daemons and other invisible powers.[50]

This behavior of Gwido and the link between his argumentation and Origen's concepts aimed at preventing Caesar's deification of his lover present Christianity rooted in the Hellenic way of conducting a dispute, in the terminology of Platonism and – last but not least – in the language used also by the Roman Church until the third century AD; that is, in Greek.[51]

We should notice the reactions of *Quidam*'s characters to the trial scene. For when Barchob refers Gwidon's defense speech to Jazon, the former significantly distorts the Christian tone of arguments:

> He was saying – the guest said after a while –
> That the gods are more revered than the Caesar,
> As Apollo and Bacchus, they were people –
> That there are true things and imagined ones (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 139).

Barchob summarizes the trial in a partial manner. He retains the main idea but omits an important premise. His version shows that Gwidon was a supporter of Euhemerism, because he attributed to the pagans the creation of their gods by elevating the most significant figures from the mythical past. However, Gwidon claimed the opposite, he neither focused on the mythical past nor subjected the beginnings of pagan religion to critical reflection. In Gwido's opinion, the key problem was the exaltation and worship of a single human, namely the Caesar with mutual contempt for all other people. Neither did Gwido deny the authenticity of the pagan commitment. He even claimed that the pagans' zeal had not yet found the right object of faith, because the desire to find the true God was instilled in all people. Thus, human deification presenced through the person of the Caesar became a camouflaged condemnation of bodily weaknesses and pushed citizens of the empire to the margins of contemporary intellectual interests. By distorting Gwido's speech, Barchob omits the call for the proper elevation of man by surrounding him with the love of God. Barchob's interpretation rationalizes the Christian message and closes Gwido in the horizon of mythical allegoresis and stoic thinking. In Barchob's opinion, Christian faith turns out to be solely a method of critical destruction of the pagan worldview. Moreover, Euhemerus distinguished two potential methods of deification: through the imposition of faith on the people by a ruler and as a result of the worship of

50 Origen, *Contra Celsum*, pp. 152 ff.

51 See Ch. Dawson, *The Formation of Christendom*, San Francisco 2008, p. 153.

an outstanding human for the good and extraordinary deeds they have done.[52] Gwido inclines toward the second solution, suggesting that the Caesar's cult is a clever exploitation of the natural tendency of the people, present since the dawn of time. Barchob believes that the excessive worship of pagan deities favored the Caesar's position and was supported by him with the seriousness of his office. In other words, Barchob claims that the current religious relations in the empire effect from the work of the one who currently rules the empire. Therefore, Barchob's camouflaged accusation of Christianity concerns Gwido's paradoxical purification and acquittal of the sphere of power, removing it from it the responsibility for the spreading of a cult, which helps keep people obedient. In Barchob's view, Christianity has a natural tendency to maintain close relations with the sphere of power, which sufficiently disqualifies it in the eyes of the future leader of the uprising. Barchob's changes to Gwido's defense speech become even more obvious when we read that the same accusation concerning Euhemerism appears in the context of Origen's reflections on Antinous. In Origen's argumentation, we see the conviction that an unjust and erroneous belief in demons accompanies humanity from its beginnings:

> But there are others who explain their actions with arguments which may not be lightly regarded but which are profound and, as a Greek might say, esoteric and mysterious. They believe a profound doctrine about God and about those beings who through the only-begotten divine Logos have been so honoured by God that they participate in the divine nature, and for this reason are also granted the name. There is also a profound doctrine about the divine angels and the opponents of the truth who have been deceived, and who because of this call themselves gods, or angels of God, or good daemons, or heroes who come into being through the transformation of a good human soul.[53]

Norwid leaves one more trace that allows us to suppose there was a slow process of blurring the differences between imperial power and Christianity, while making the heritage of Greece a clear platform for agreement of the two. This theme appears in Caesar's conversation with Artemidorus.

> In Jerusalem, the place of the resurrection
> Belongs to Jupiter:
> Because he is the one who does not bow,
> A strong god – and next, without contents,
> They make up stories about Christ's death,
> There's supposed to be Venus's place – and slowly

52 See M. Skrzypek, *Oświecenie francuskie a początki religioznawstwa*, Wrocław – Warsaw – Krakow 1989, p. 329.

53 Origen, *Contra Celsum*, pp. 153 ff.

> They will make a custom of it and will get used to it –
> Before I cut, I usually consider how much will it hurt
> And for what? – clever doctors cut this way –
> Well? – Don't I love Hellas? (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 184).

It is puzzling that no one linked the events described by Hadrian to the history of Christianity. The foundation of the city called Aelia Capitolina in the place of Jerusalem, the erection of the temple of Jupiter, and – as we may assume – also other buildings of cult character connected with the imperial administration had all to do with the displacement of Jews from that area, which resulted from the anti-Roman uprising. Hadrian from the poem discusses this issue even before the outbreak of the uprising in Judea and – what is most interesting in this context – sources confirm such behavior of the Caesar. There is a contradiction between the accounts of Cassius Dio and Eusebius of Caesarea. While Cassius indicates the erection of the temple as the reason for the outbreak of the uprising, Eusebius favors the reverse chronology of events. According to Eusebius, first was the uprising and only after its defeat came the cruel revenge of the Romans, the destruction of the city – another after Titus's demolishing of Jerusalem, as we learn from Josephus Flavius – and the ban on Jews settling in the city.[54] The version of Eusebius, less popular among historians, focuses on the controversial leader of the uprising and the cruelty of Roman punishment.

> The Jews at the time were led by a certain Bar-Kokhba, which means "star," a murderous bandit who, on the strength of his name, claimed to be a luminary come down from heaven to shine light on those in misery, as if they were slaves. / In Hadrian's eighteenth year, the war reached its climax at Betthera, a strongly fortified little town not far from Jerusalem. After a long siege, hunger and thirst drove the rebels to destruction, and the instigator of their madness paid the penalty he deserved. Hadrian then commanded that the whole [Jewish] nation be forbidden to set foot anywhere near Jerusalem, so it could not even be seen from a distance.[55]

According to Cassius Dio, the Romans provoked the uprising, as the foundation of Aelia Capitolina "brought on a war of no slight importance." In Xiphilinus's abridged version Cassius adds: "At Jerusalem, [Hadrian] founded a city in place of the one which had been razed to the ground, naming it Aelia Capitolina, and on the site of the temple of God he raised a new temple to Jupiter."[56]

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54 See M. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations*, London 2007.

55 Eusebius, *The Church History*, trans. P. L. Maier, Kregel 1999, pp. 137–138.

56 Cassius Dio, *Roman History*; qtd. after M. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, London 2007, pp. 853–854.

In Norwid's view, Romans made the decision to destroy Jerusalem and establish there a colony before the outbreak of the uprising. Still, Hadrian remains hesitant and leaves the time of the actual action unclear. Paradoxically, the aim was not to punish the Jews for their numerous riots that occured during his reign. This decision was to affect only Christians, which is a puzzling distortion of the information provided by sources. In this context, Hadrian's philhellenism is a key theme of this conversation. The reference to the Caesar's love of Greece is a highly ambiguous point. It turned out that taking away Judea's primary role in the cult of Christians accelerated the process of Christian thinkers coming into contact with the writings of the Greeks. By making critical remarks about Christians and Romans, Barchob the false Messiah emphasizes Christian rationalism, as if he had foreseen that the problem of division between the things that are Caesar's and the things that are God's harmed Christianity. Indeed, the process of "accustomization" and "habituation" went remarkably smoothly. Even to the extent that before two centuries had passed, the whole empire had to surrender to the faith in Christ. The fate of the Church of Jerusalem after the defeat of the uprising is the best exemplification of this process. The Judeo-Christians were forced to leave the city, but in their place appeared a commune founded by converted pagans and headed by Mark, the first non-Jewish Jerusalem bishop.

4. *Quidam* as a Poem about Education

Another important manifestation of the presence of platonism in *Quidam* is the fashioning of the protagonist. As Rolf Fieguth rightly notes, Aleksander's son is:

> the outline of the ideal of a man of a new era that beginning as early as in the ancient times, when it is already unconsciously influenced by young Christianity . . .. The ideal character emerges . . . from a rather complex set of interpersonal relations, from unstressed contrasts and parallels with the creations of other characters in the work. Besides, the protagonist is a very young pupil, a poet, and a truth-seeker, hence a man not yet fully formed. But this is also what makes his idealization easier, because every idealization contains a moment of undefined state.[57]

The key aspect of the phenomenon of the Epirote described by Fieguth is his education during his stay in Rome. However, we should elaborate on Fieguth's remarks that the sketchy quality of the protagonist in *Quidam* indicates the

57 R. Fieguth, "Syn Aleksandra jako projekt człowieka idealnego. »Humanitas« w »Quidamie« Norwida," in: *Humanizm polski. Długie trwanie – tradycje – współczesność (wstęp do badań)*, eds. A. Nowicka-Jeżowa and M. Cieński, Warsaw 2008–2009, pp. 188–189.

educational nature of the story of the young man. Thus, we cannot overlook Plato's influence on the shaping of events in the poem.

In *The Republic*, a work fundamental to the meaning of Plato's *paideia*, he expresses the concept of education as the shaping of virtue: *arete* in man. As Werner Jaeger argues, "In other words, between God and the human soul there is, according to Plato, a long and laborious process of perfection. Arete is not possible without perfectness. The bridge which Plato sets up between the soul and God is paideia. It is growth towards true Being."[58] In an important passage from *Theaetetus*, Plato shows this educational process as one involving the conscious shaping of a man in the image of God, the personification of all perfection.

> But it is not possible, Theodorus, that evil should be destroyed—for there must always be something opposed to the good; nor is it possible that it should have its seat in heaven. But it must inevitably haunt human life, and prowl about this earth. That is why a man should make all haste to escape from earth to heaven; and escape means becoming as like God as possible; and a man becomes like God when he becomes just and pious, with understanding.[59]

Socrates' reasoning consists in extrapolating the rational image of the man seeking truth – the philosopher – and calling this abstract construction a god, which shows significant analogies with the Socratic *daimonion*, an inner voice of supposedly divine provenance, so as not to call it reason. As Władysław Witwicki writes: "This god was born in an intellectual who thought well of himself but was funny in the eyes of practical people. An intellectual who says about himself that he wants to get closer to god, thus usurping the honor that the world used to deny him."[60] Socrates mentions the consequences of this usurpation in *Theaetetus* when he recalls the anecdote about Tales, whofell into a well during his study of the sky, which aroused the laughter of an energetic "Thracian servant-girl."[61] Pierre Hadot notes that Tales's behaviour should be seen as a manifestation of consistent philosophical way of life promoted by Plato. It is not the judgement

58 W. Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, trans. G. Highet, Vol. 2, Oxford 1947, p. 418, fn. 81.

59 Plato, "Theatetus", in: *Plato*, p. 195.

60 Plato "Theatetus," p. 193.

61 Plato "Theatetus," p. 193. For Lev Shestov, the scene with the Thracian girl is the starting point for his deliberations in the book *Na szalach Hioba*, trans. J. Chmielewski, Warsaw 2003. Shestov claims that at this point the first of the philosophers, embarrassed by a simple woman, and then everyone else, started to look around more carefully, forgetting about the matters of heaven.

of "common people, who have been corrupted by the city and recognize only trickery, cleverness, and brutality as value"[62] that matters, for Plato's overriding goal is an all-encompassing gaze that overtakes all reality and does not succumb to the limited superstitions of simple people.

Plotinus differently understood the passages of *Theaetetus* about the pursuit of supreme justice, claiming that it was a call to purify human nature from all foreign elements, separating man from the divine.[63] More importantly, the concept of education by imitation penetrated the writings of the Fathers of the Church and, thus, the Christian doctrine exactly through this path. There are far more differences than similarities between the conviction present in Platonism that the true path to perfection lies in self-destruction and the Christian teaching that imitating divine qualities is the only way to testify to the uniqueness of Christianity, although the extent of the Christian reception of this idea does not indicate this fact. The concept found its fullest expression in the works of Gregory of Nyssa who defined Christianity as the imitation of God's nature.[64] All of the above descriptions deserve further consideration. Since God created man in his own image, the only possible way to return is to mimetically create His qualities within oneself, which initiates a progressive improvement of human nature. We can only know the perfection of God through the contemplation of lofty concepts contained in the name of "Christ" or "king,"[65] such as " 'justice itself' and 'wisdom and power' and 'truth' and 'goodness' and 'life.' "[66] However,

62 Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, trans. M. Chase, Cambridge 2002, p. 69.

63 See Plotinus, "On Virtues," in: *Enneads*, ed. L.P. Gerson, trans. G. Boys-Stone et al., Cambridge 2018, pp. 56–62.

64 Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *Ascetic Writings*, trans. V. W. Callahan, Washington D.C. 1999, p. 85. Describing *Two Martyrdoms*, T. Sinko pointed out the value of the works of the Cappadocian Fathers in reading the Christian image of man in Norwid's writings and the problem of "imitating" God, but for the eminent philologist this context was a proof of the "oddity of Norwid's associations." See T. Sinko, "Klasyczny laur Norwida," in: T. Sinko, *Hellada i Roma w Polsce*, Lviv 1933, pp. 85–86.

65 Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *Ascetic Writings*, p. 86. G.L. Prestige emphasizes that the meaning of "monarchy" in the works of the Church Fathers was directly connected to monotheism: "In practice therefore, the Fathers apply the word nearly always to the absolute monarchy of God, and its primary sense is omnipotence. But since the whole significance of omnipotence is that it can be wielded only by one ultimate power, it really comes to mean monotheism." G.L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, London 1956.

66 Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *Ascetic Writings*, p. 84.

while for Plato, imitating divine justice was a direct outreach to the world of ideas, Gregory of Nyssa proposes the opposite process, which does not aim to distance man from the world but, on the contrary, to root him again in this world and reveal before him the divine element of reality, hidden in the apparent omnipotence of evil. As Saint Gregory of Nyssa writes,

> It does not seem to me that the Gospel is speaking of the firmament of heaven as some remote habitation of God when it advises us to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect, because the divine is equally present in all things, and, in like manner, it pervades all creation and it does not exist separated from being, but the divine nature touches each element of being with equal honor, encompassing all things within itself.[67]

In the nineteenth-century criticism of Christianity, there frequently reappears the motif of an institutional religion that abandoned the idea of following into Christ's footsteps and replaced it with the obligation to participate in ritual ceremonies. Among others, Søren Kierkegaard wrote about quasi-religiousness in this context.[68]

> [T]he difference between a Freethinker and official Christianity is that the Freethinker is an honest man who bluntly *teaches* that Christianity is poetry, *Dichtung*, whereas official Christianity is a forger who solemnly protests that Christianity is something quite different, and by this means conceals the fact that for its part it does actually turn Christianity into poetry, doing away with the following of Christ, so that only through the power of imagination is one related to the Pattern.[69]

A Christianity that separated itself from its roots appears also in the fourth course of Mickiewicz's Paris lectures on *Literatura słowiańska* (Slavic Literature) in the context of a call to action. Mickiewicz refers to the continuation of Napoleon's mission: "It became clear that to do such a work meant to continue the work of Christ. To carry on does not mean to imitate. It became clear that, in order to carry on the work of Christ, it was no longer enough to imitate the ways of the priests of the past, no longer enough to teach, preach about God and show Him in symbols: one must act."[70] According to Maria Żmigrodzka, Mickiewicz's concept concerns the active participation of man in history who – through misunderstanding the idea of *imitatio* – limits his influence on the realization of divine

67 Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *Ascetic Writings*, p. 87.

68 See S. Kierkegaard, *Attack Upon Christendom*, trans. W. Lowrie, Princeton 1968.

69 Kierkegaard, *Attack Upon Christendom*, p. 117.

70 A. Mickiewicz, *Dzieła. Wydanie Rocznicowe*, Vol. 11: *Literatura słowiańska. Kurs czwarty*, ed. J. Maślanka, Czytelnik, Warsaw 1998, p. 185.

intentions.[71] Norwid formulates a similar opinion in one of his letters to Józef Bohdan Zaleski in 1851, in which he refers to the work of Thomas à Kempis:

> [slavery] may be understood as self-denial, contempt for oneself, etc., as, for example, is taught by the *Imitation de Jésus Christ*, which, despite the holiness of the spirit, is still only an *imitation* of Christ, but not a *confession* of Christ. One may, I say, caress one's own sluggishness, until history, which does not know of waiting, will despise all this, kick everything out, and continue on its own (Pwsz, Vol. 8, p. 133).

In the literature on *Quidam*,[72] researchers fail to notice the fact that the main character's conduct – his efforts in the process of self-education – were precisely defined by Master Jazon during their conversation in chapter XIII:

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71 M. Żmigrodzka, "Mit – podanie – historia," in: M. Żmigrodzka, *Przez wieki idąca powieść. Wybór pism o literaturze XIX i XX wieku*, eds. M. Kalinowska and E. Kiślak, Warsaw 2002, pp. 87–88.

72 Among *Quidam*'s interpretations to date, some of the most important are: W. Dobrowolski, "Norwida opowieść o wiecznym Rzymie i wiecznym człowieku Quidamie," *Pamiętnik Literacki* 24/1927, pp. 291–308; Z. Zaniewicki, "Rozmyślania nad 'Quidam,'" in: *Norwid żywy*, ed. B. Świderski, Londyn 1962, Związek Pisarzy Polskich na Obczyźnie; S. Pigoń, "Na tropie zatraconego poematu Norwida," in: S. Pigoń, *Miłe życia drobiazgi. Pokłosie*, Warsaw 1964; M. Jastrun, "'Quidam' i sobowtóry," in: M. Jastrun, *Gwiaździsty diament*, Warsaw 1971; E. Bieńkowska, *Dwie twarze losu. Nietzsche – Norwid*, Warsaw 1975; Z. Łapiński, "'Gdy myśl łączy się z przestrzenią'. Uwagi o przypowieści 'Quidam,'" *Roczniki Humanistyczne* 1/1976, pp. 225–231; A. Cedro, "Przypowieść, historia. O kierunkach lektury 'Quidama,'" *Studia Norwidiana* 7/1989, pp. 83–103; M. Śliwiński, "'Roma pogana' Norwida – retrospektywna utopia totalitaryzmu," *Filomata* 415/1993, pp. 215–228; K. Trybuś, *Epopeja w twórczości Norwida*, Wroclaw – Warsaw – Krakow 1993; E. Kiślak, "Cień arcydzieła," in: *Trzynaście arcydzieł romantycznych*, eds. E. Kiślak and M. Gumkowski, Warsaw 1996; A. Cedro, "'Rzecz, której w literaturze naszej całej nie ma.' 'Quidam' wobec tradycji epickich. Preliminaria," *Roczniki Humanistyczne* 1/1998, pp. 231–246; D. Pniewski, "Antyczna szata 'Quidama.' Starożytne rzeźby, reprodukcje 'etruskich' waz i obrazy poetyckie w 'Quidamie' Cypriana Kamila Norwida," in: *Antyk romantyków – model europejski i wariant polski. Rekonesans*, eds. M. Kalinowska and B. Paprocka-Podlasiak, Toruń 2003; A. van Nieukerken, "Osobowość a anonimowość w 'przypowieści' o 'rzymskim bruku'" *Teksty Drugie* 5/2006, pp. 136–148; K. Trybuś, "Romantyczna Europa – rodzinna i obca," *Polonistyka* 6/2006, pp. 6–10; R. Fieguth, "Syn Aleksandra;" A. van Nieukerken, "'Quidam' – Miasto a perspektywa Objawienia," in: *Długie trwanie. Różne oblicza klasycyzmu*, eds. R. Dąbrowski and B. Dopart, Krakow 2011, pp. 147–174; K. Trybuś, "Pamięć Norwidowej alegorii," in: K. Trybuś, *Pamięć romantyzmu. Studia nie tylko o przeszłości*, Poznań 2011, pp. 178–221; *'Quidam:' studia o poemacie*, ed. P. Chlebowski, Lublin 2011.

Then he said:
"The *Caesar*! – with quite a firm voice –
Rules wisely over the wide country,
In which there are peoples of *one* fate,
Different ones of *different* customs – –
But with one custom in common – it lasts six or three hundred years;
Another one eight hundred years – a man
Serves the custom as he can,
He'd do something! but he's *fleeting*." –
Which he backed this up with a head movement –
"So you have to appreciate when a child, following a *pattern*
Writes and adds to these barren efforts!" (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 140).

The words of Jazon must have been important for Norwid, because he used a similar metaphor – of following in the footsteps of masters – in a poetic letter "Do Walentego Pomiana Z." (To Walenty Pomian Z.):

Youngster? who falls pale
Among the crowd, he had it all for a hero!
But the truth he wanted and, following masters in their footsteps,
He wanders around – and some fatal element walks with him (Pwsz, Vol. 2, p. 154).

In the words of Jazon one can find a hidden polemic with the Platonic conviction that the effort of education and work on oneself can, and even should, lead to intellectual perfection, making a man more like a deity. Jazon, being a cunning wise man, mentions opinions that are close to the conventionalism of sophists – in opposition to which Plato created his concepts – which deny the universal value of natural law.[73] Protagoras, a fundamental and key figure, attributed the permanence of tradition to the gifts sent by Zeus. *Aidós* was to be shame

73 A valuable context for Jazon's deliberations is the famous fragment of the third book of Herodotus' *Histories* about the permanence of custom, which cannot be chosen because it is inherited from generation to generation: "If one were to order all mankind to choose the best set of rules in the world, each group would, after due consideration, choose its own customs; each group regards its own as being by far the best. So it is unlikely that anyone except a madman would laugh at such things. / There is plenty of other evidence to support the idea that this opinion of one's own customs is universal, but here is one instance. During Darius' reign, he invited some Greeks who were present to a conference, and asked them how much money it would take for them to be prepared to eat the corpses of their fathers; they replied that they would not do that for any amount of money. Next, Darius summoned some members of the Indian tribe known as Callatiae, who eat their parents, and asked them in the presence of the Greeks, with an interpreter present so that they could understand what was being said, how much money it would take for them to be willing to cremate their fathers'

understood as consideration for others and respect for someone else's opinion or beliefs, while *Díke* meant a custom, righteousness, justice, order, and the rule of law. Both contributed to the fact that people made an agreement with each other within the framework of community to prevent the spread of conflicts. This way, it became possible to build a complex state organism, such as the *polis*. Therefore, the arbitrariness of human law should not raise anyone's doubts.[74] In other words, the seeker of wisdom exposed himself to infinite attempts to grasp the whole of human achievements, which did not have supernatural legitimacy. Therefore, they could undergo constant transformation, while the pupil undergoing educational procedures had to involuntarily resemble a craftman's work; in Platonic terminology, a copy of an idea. It is impossible to imagine that man can discover any rules that govern reality and that the nature of all things will become open to everyone, for as Protagoras claims, "of all things the measure is Man, of the things that are, that they are, and of the things that are not, that they are not."[75] For Protagoras, the state's objective became to prepare its citizens to fulfil their public duties responsibly. Therefore, appropriate education become a measure of the state's ability to survive. As Cyprian Mielczarski understands the association of the Protagoras' great speech with ancient educational concepts: "The aim of *paideia* is to prepare for the acceptance of social life principles. The individual should submit to the state, understanding that it is based on certain principles which are common to all. Man must give up for the community his natural qualities, such as mutual aggression."[76]

However, the concept of Protagoras that founded the phenomenon of political pluralism changes its tone in relation to Jazon's comments. Jazon emphasizes the utilitarian necessity to submit to the force of violence, which deprived conquered peoples of the possibility to decide about their own fate. In the context of the political situation from the second century AD, this removal of natural

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corpses; they cried out in horror and told him not to say such appalling things. So these practices have become enshrined as customs just as they are, and I think Pindar was right to have said in his poem that custom is king of all." Herodotus, *Histories*, p. 185.

74 On Sophists' views see among others J. Gajda, *Sofiści*, Warsaw 1969; Z. Nerczuk, *Sztuka a prawda. Problem sztuki w dyskusji między Gorgiaszem a Platonem*, Wrocław 2002; C. Mielczarski, "Społeczna i polityczna myśl sofistów – Protagoras, Prodikos, Hippiasz i Antyfont," *Archiwum historii filozofii i myśli społecznej* 2006, Vol. 50–51, pp. 25–50.

75 Qtd. after C. Mielczarski, *Idee społeczno-polityczne sofistów. U źródeł europejskiego pluralizmu politycznego*, Warsaw 2006, p. 22.

76 Mielczarski, *Idee społeczno-polityczne sofistów*, p. 34.

features could only mean giving up all state-forming aspirations. Since Jazon interprets political relations of that time so accurately, the question arises as to how the idea of an uprising could have been born, with such hopeless prospects of an effective liberation from the Roman rule. Jazon's erroneous hopes related to the figure of the Messiah, mistakenly found in Barchob. Barchob was responsible for the fate of the chosen people, he was to restore political freedom to the "state of Israel." This is how Simon bar Kokhba described the existence of the authentic being on coins, minted by the authority independent of the Romans.

Jazon did not intend to share this fact with Aleksander's son, anticipating that this young man would eventually follow Artemidorus. For Jazon, Greek philosophy was merely an art of justifying his own finiteness and the skilfully leading of people to suicidal death. Jazon mentions this on another occasion:

> Well – philosophy too, blooms
> A bit! – The Greek stoics add some light to it,
> Aiming their swords toward the disciples' breasts (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 168).

Nevertheless, Jazon understands the reason for the arrival of Aleksander's son in Rome. He sees a young man who attempts to raise himself and, thus, shape his worldview and character. However, the young man does not decide which role model he should follow. "I tasted different helms" (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 140) answers Aleksander's son when asked about his earlier education. Therefore, Jazon may draw only one conclusion. A man who wants to be a lover of wisdom, and who wants to embody with his life its constant insufficiency, cannot learn anything from a Jewish thinker, because God – who silences the morbid desire for knowledge – will remain hidden from him. Thus, Jazon asks only about the origin of Aleksander's son. The question is difficult, because one spreading a vision of the variety of customs, with which Jazon suggests that he deals with a man with no roots, deprived of his native language, and distant from the land of his ancestors, who wanted to become someone other than he is, because he renounced his traditions.

As Eric Voegelin indicates, since the times of Tertullian the consent to modify the tradition in the name of independent thinking of an individual belongs to the canon of behavior usually associated with the development of heresy. As Voegelin notes, when reconstructing the thought of Bossuet from *Histoire des variations des églises protestantes*: "Once the authority of tradition is broken by the individual innovator, the style of individual innovation determines the further course of variation."[77] Tertulian and later Bossuet represent the way of

77 E. Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, ed. J. H. Hallowell, Durham 1975, p. 14.

thinking that opposes any change and notices the danger of the authority of tradition falling under the guise of progress and improvement of the intellect. The individual should not seek freedom in the unlimited use of the possibilities of reason. By overturning the hitherto established order of beliefs about the world, one will only initiate a series of subsequent arbitrary modifications. As a result, one will find himself at a spiritual crossroads, so that one will never again find the means leading to a revival of authentic faith. We might have the impression that Norwid shows in the words of Jazon a double danger of the situation of the young Epirote, threatened by the impermanence of the socioreligious system, which could have been similar to the situation in the times of the end of the pagan era, as it happened in the post-Enlightenment situation of secularizing Europe.

A secret opponent of Jazon's speech is certainly also Christianity. It is no coincidence that the arguments invoked remind us of the pagan opinions on the superstition of Christians whose faith is fragile and new. Christianity, described by Suetonius as "superstition" (*superstitio*), appears in this perspective as a mistake and an effect of "seducing" the uneducated naive people by a bunch of manipulators who reject the established stable political and religious order. Jazon evokes the fundamental rule for the Roman world of subordination of an individual to the power of tradition in order to effectively discredit it, to show the influence of a permanent and rooted custom as a burden on the minds of imperial citizens. In Jazon's view, Christianity reproduces Roman mistakes, because it established in the place of pagan tradition its own hierarchy of values based on the exclusion of everything that is different and incomprehensible. Christian certainty that only the followers of Christ are in possession of the truth leads to the establishment of yet another empire that demands exclusive spiritual control.

The deepest description of education as a mimetic formation of personality "along the lines of a pattern" appears in the poem in the context of Artemidorus and his school: "You wish to learn the worth of school or legend, / Check their most recent editions" (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 92). In the version of the eclectic school of philosophy, *paideia* meant an unavoidable caricature of the Platonic model, because in the place of the intellectual divine model it positioned the figure of spiritual guide who was to show this model to lost unenlightened people. We should remember that, in *Theaetetus*, Socrates refrains from assuming the position of the wise man; hence, the comparison to a midwife who helps others bring the truth to light, although he himself cannot boast of knowledge of any subject. In practice, as in the case of Artemidorus, this has often resulted in the spread of rival charlatans who proclaimed their wisdom and knowledge to achieve spiritual perfection.

In scrolls accidentally read by Zofia from Knidos, Aleksander's son describes the search for wisdom as an endless process of acquiring the knowledge he learned in childhood, which definitively determined his cognitive horizon and defined the notion of wisdom, which he began to demand from himself after reaching maturity:

> Would a man who sees so wide
> Every second of his life
> As the pupil of his eye allows
> Reach the gates of all-wisdom? –
> Meet the finest wise men of them all
> Where he should and not where it would be?
> Or must he walk the whole broad field
> Not with his eye but that of mankind,
> Designed for him when he was still young
> And dreamed on the steep threshold,
> And look where the horizon ends,
> He thought that when one reaches its end
> Will grasp it with his hands
> And drinks the nectar, lying like Bacchus?

Throughout the whole poem, there is a clear tension between orality and writing. The former definitely belongs to the attributes of Hellenism and plays a key role in the process of raising young Romans. Artemidorus should serve as an exemplary realization of the principle of the oral transmission of knowledge. While all the key people in the poem admit that they read willingly and much, only the living word plays an important role in the process of reaching the truth. However, in the case of Artemidorus, Norwid presents the act of following the path of knowledge through speech as a decline in thinking, limited to the coherence of reasoning and rhetorical efficiency. Such a manifestation of apparent mastery of the word was particularly evident in Artemidorus' oratorial show during a public gathering with Zofia:

> After the *example* a subject is taught,
> When *examples* join to form the subject.
> – An example is the whole of a subject, when models
> Are defects, features, or moments,
> Taken sometimes in such a way that the goal becomes unclear,
> Because one uses an *example* when examples are *selected* –
> However else – by a youngster eager in expression,
> Who was right to say: "Let's take the example of Alexander!" (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 160).

This eclectic philosopher definitely follows Platonism, and he is concerned with the fundamental meaning of the "example" as the basis of all manifestations of being. Moreover, Artemidorus attaches great importance to unwritten sciences,[78] which are the only way to shape young souls. In the poem, the only man of writing is Jazon, the "great philologian" (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 126), who during each contact with strangers shows the ambiguity of spoken words and the mystery of the very phenomenon of formulating opinions with a medium as deceitful as the human voice.

The Epirote's philosophical search focused on the idea of ethnic and cultural diversity of contemporary Rome. In the comments, Norwid presents him as a continuator of the work of old travelers who sought wisdom:

> Forces pulled him out of home,
> Such forces that one barely speaks about them today –
> Although an orphan – but who doesn't have his people! –
> He went into the world to seek truth and wisdom.
> Today you don't go looking after *both* of them anymore.
> *Together* – no one wants them – no one envies –
> As it happened in the old days,
> For one thought, from famous to famous,
> From Greece under the shadows of the triangular pyramids
> Traveling – from China to Greece, in deaf silence
> For loud lessons, for secret whispers,
> For initiations both dark and shadowy (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 188).

What once constituted the cultural unity of the Mediterranean and the Middle East – the exchange of experiences among the intellectual elites – Norwid observes on the example of the peregrination of Thales of Miletus and Pythagoras of Samos to Egypt, which resulted in the birth of philosophy, geometry, and astronomy in Greece. However, at the end of antiquity, old methods proved insufficient. Achieving spiritual perfection became no longer possible in historical reality. To achieve spiritual perfection, one had to go beyond the visible. In Christian terms, *paideia* – and especially its interpretation by the Cappadocian

78 On the importance of the unwritten sciences for the reading of Plato in the twentieth century see E.I. Zieliński OFMConv, "Giovanniego Reale nowa interpretacja myśli Platona," in: *Platon. Nowa interpretacja. Materiały z sympozjum KUL 30 listopada – 2 grudnia 1992 r.*, eds. A. Kijewska and E.I. Zieliński OFMConv, Lublin 1993, pp. 9–25. Noteworthy, despite the fact that the fundamental role of the unwritten sciences was not described until the scientists from the Tübingen school did it, there were much earlier attempts to reconcile the content of dialogs with the indirect tradition, for example in the writings of A. Boeckh, Ch.A. Brandis, F.A. Trendelenburg, C.H. Weisse.

Fathers – sought to reform the Greek methods of education in a different reality of faith in the one God. The formal procedures that Greek youth underwent were always accompanied by readings in philosophy and literature, especially Homer. Without denying the usefulness of pagan writers, Gregory of Nyssa supplemented the educational program with the reading of the Bible, which he treated as a key authority to shape a good Christian. In this context, Werner Jaeger notices the following:

> If *paideia* was the will of God and if Christianity was for the Christian what philosophy was for the philosopher, according to Plato – assimilation to God – the true fulfillment of the Christian ideal of life was one continuous and lifelong effort to achieve that end and to approach perfection, in so far as that was possible for man. As the Greek philosopher's whole life was a proces of paideia through philosophical ascesis, so for Gregory Christianity was not a mere set of dogmas but the perfect life based on the theoria or contemplation of God and on ever more perfect union with Him.[79]

The unusual thing about the Epirote from *Quidam* is that he did not cross the border between "philosophical life" in the pagan sense and its Christian counterpart, circulating among two key but at the same time different educational concepts oscillating around the ideas of *imitatio Dei* and *imitatio Christi*. The Christian world of the first three centuries after Christ's death was far removed from the Epirote's ideas, because he did not see direct relationship between the existence of the world and human faith that sustained its existence. And this was the case with the beliefs of the first Christians, if we trust the summary of their rules of faith by Adolf Harnack:

> (1) Our people is older than the world; (2) the world was created for our sakes; (3) the world is carried on for oursakes; we retard the judgment of the world; (4) everything in the world, the beginning and course and end of all history, is revealed to us and lies transparent to our eyes; (6) we shall take part in the judgment of the world and ourselves enjoy eternal bliss.[80]

Thus, they used a different concept of perfection than Alexander, emphasizing the formation of morality rooted in God's love for the world and the contemplation of his divine qualities. The Epirote does not take up the challenge of accepting the transcendental character of meaning, which determines the shape

79 W. Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia*, Cambridge 1985, pp. 89–90.

80 A. Harnack, *Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, trans. J. Moffat, London 1908, p. 240.

of reality. He derived his opinions from the observation of Christians, but he did not begin to follow them.

Devoid of institutional support in the form of spiritual and intellectual authorities, the Epirote's attempts are reflected in his notes. They are a trace of the philosophical dialog that a pupil should have with his masters, as happened at the Academy. As Plato claims in *The Sophist*: "Aren't thought and speech the same, except that what we call thought is speech that occurs without the voice, inside the soul in conversation with itself?"[81] In this *soliloquium* that employs a medium as unreliable as writing, the aim was to crystallize a view of the world, objectify partial observations, and subject them to the power of reason, the dialectic method, and the ability to construct abstract formulas and concepts. The Epirote journal conceived in this way became an equivalent of the Socratic dialog in the unfavourable times of confusion and the twilight of the era, as Pierre Hadot explains:

> Thus, the Socratic dialog turns out to be a kind of communal spiritual exercise. In it, the interlocutors are invited to participate in such inner spiritual exercises as examination of conscience and attention to oneself; in other words, they are urged to comply with the famous dictum, "Know thyself." Although it is difficult to be sure of the original meaning of this formula, this much is clear: it invites us to establish a relationship of the self to the self, which constitutes the foundation of every spiritual exercise. To know oneself means, among other things, to know oneself *qua* non-sage: that is, not as a *sophos*, but as a *philo-sophos*, someone *on the way toward* wisdom. Alternatively, it can mean to know oneself in one's essential being; this entails separating that which we *are not* from that which we *are*. Finally, it can mean to know oneself in one's true moral state: that is, to examine one's conscience.[82]

The Epirote attempted to confront himself in all the fields characteristic of the Socratic dialog. However, the unusual shape imposed significant limitations on him. Aleksander remained his only interlocutor, so, in writing, he had to divide his arguments and views into several independent voices that could imitate and present an authentic conversation between lovers of wisdom.

Jarosław Płuciennik notes that, since its creation, *soliloquium* was a genre oriented toward the responsibility and conscientiousness of the speaker: "As a model discourse leading to self-knowledge and thus deepening the autonomy of the individual, soliloquium becomes the genological starting point of this vision of culture which, emphasizing politeness and gentleness, opposes the culture of

81 Plato, "Sophist," in: *Plato*, p. 287.

82 P. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault,* London 1995, p. 90.

fanatic and sometimes violent religious enthusiasm."[83] Thus, the path chosen by Aleksander excluded the possibility of religious involvement, since deliberating with himself and constantly negotiating meanings made it impossible for him to move toward religious clarity of the truths under investigation. Indeed, *soliloquium* turned out to be a spiritual exercise – yet a non-conclusive one – because its completion was impossible.

An important motif that could have influenced the Epirote's record was probably the biographical looping of this figure, inscribed by Norwid in three incompatible life patterns: of an official, philosopher, and believer. The first of these patterns appeared in the words of the Grammarian:

> A friend of sorts
> Of Artemidorus, a young man from the province,
> Whom I introduce to any and all knowledge,
> Preparing him a toga, an office, or a wreath maybe (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 107).

This mention of *cursus honorum* marks the horizon of the search that young Aleksander had been pursuing at the beginning of his stay. The next step, also quickly abandoned, was the will to join the followers of Artemidorus's philosophical school. The last possibility was to fully assimilate the teachings of Christians and abandon the pagan worldview. The fact that the Epirote did not devote himself fully to any of these models that came his way shows that, in his case, Norwid suspends the need to be assigned to a specific social group, placing particular emphasis on the innovative dimension of his identity, constructed by choosing and oscillating between extreme solutions.[84] In this way, Norwid

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83 J. Płuciennik, *Literatura, Głupcze! Laboratoria nowoczesnej kultury literackiej*, Krakow 2009, p. 98.

84 Unrealized plans outlined at the beginning of the poem by the Grammarian is perhaps Norwid's reference to the Enlightenment and Romantic educational concepts that were reflected in the educational novel Bildungsroman. *Quidam* is a veiled polemic with the ideas of self-education and self-discovery. Therefore it aims directly the idea of Bildung. As M. Janion and M. Żmigrodzka claim: "it means the formation of a full humanity by developing the mental and moral dispositions of a child and a young person, and by assimilating the patterns of moral behaviour proper for a given society. ... Bildung does not rely on passive action, on acceptance of the influence of teachers and educators, nor does it limit itself to the period of life in which a young person is entitled only to the status of a pupil. It assumes the necessity of self-education, gaining experience, but also self-fulfilment in the course of getting to know the world and checking oneself by undertaking various social roles. The existence of positive educational patterns should not create their reflection. Bildung is supposed to create a mature, individualized personality, spiritually independent, and thus also

highlights the single and invariably unique character of the spiritual transformation that should be inscribed in the life of modern man, a transformation with neither obvious methods nor certainty of achieving an internal order.

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The mention of Plato himself also appears in *Quidam*. It happens in a short passage about the philosopher's unclear premonitions, which he could not precisely name:

> What Plato felt with a need in the once quiet sky,
> Looking through the laurel leaves,
> And *heard* – and *grasped* – he couldn't *give*,
> And he could put in words even less than he was amazed (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 178)!

Norwid's problem with Greek philosophy concerns the abyss between the ancient wise men seeking the truth and contemporary man engaged in an attempt to experience the past. On the other hand, Plato returns in Norwid's writings many times, although most often in a mediated or hidden manner. As Jaroslav Pelikan notes,

> "[H]ellenization" is too simplistic and unqualified a term for the process that issued in orthodox Christian doctrine. Nevertheless, it is true that in its language and sometimes in its ideas orthodox Christian doctrine still bears the marks of its struggle to understand and overcome pagan thought.[85]

Norwid's work left relatively easily visible traces of this struggle, thus proving the existence of a multi-faceted and ambiguous fascination with the Greek thinker that accompanied him throughout his life.

Finally, an important fact deserves a special recognition. It is Christianity that is the key character of *Quidam*. After all, this fact must be read in the context of other important nineteenth-century works devoted to Christianity. The emphasis on the historical background of the establishment of the influence of the new religion indicates that the hidden opponent with whom Norwid argues in the poem was the work of philosophers and historians such as David Strauss and Ludwig Feuerbach.[86] Norwid shows a different model of Christianity's

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socially useful." M. Janion and M. Żmigrodzka, *Odyseja wychowania. Goetheańska wizja człowieka w 'Latach nauki i latach wędrówki Wilhelma Meistra'*, Krakow 1998, pp. 55–56.

85 Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, p. 72.

86 See K. Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche. The Revolution in Nineteenth Century Thought*, trans. D. E. Green, San Francisco, New York, Chicago 1964, pp. 327–389.

historicity in order to justify that the human factor determining its dogmatic and organizational shape at its root did not discredit Christianity as the creation of a calculating reason. Moreover, in this dispute with thinkers from the Hegelian left, Norwid uses arguments about the role of Christianity that appreciate the process of self-improvement of the individual, following his own path to perfection through the following of Christ. Hence, Norwid tries to waive the criticism that struck Christianity, but at the same time he is forced to seek arguments in line with both Christian and Greek thought.

Chapter IV. The Birth of Memory

1. Norwid and Greek Memory

The issue of memory plays a particularly important role in the works of Norwid. The poet refers to it both in his literary and critical texts. From the perspective of studies on the role of memory in culture, Norwid's view on history and the presence of the human element therein becomes significantly more complicated. It is for this reason that we should turn our attention to two pieces: *Epimenides* and the tragedy *Kleopatra i Cezar* (Cleopatra and Caesar). Each expresses a different approach to the subject of memory which, in Norwid's work, is responsible both for the construction and deconstruction of the sense of community. In *Epimenides*, Norwid focuses on memory understood as a cumulative collection of experiences,[1] useful in critical, decisive moments. *Kleopatra i Cezar* touches upon the issue of memory that we may instrumentalize and use in a certain ideologization of society. We may use this instrumentalized memory to construct an artificial understanding of the past, which determines the views of a nation or a state on its present position in history.

As Aleida Assmann concludes, there exist two methods of approaching the subject of memory in literary studies. The first is memory as an art; she defines the other one as "identity-forming character of memory."[2] Interpreted with the use of the first model, memory is best illustrated by the metaphor of storage: one collects the necessary information and recalls it at any given moment. The second model bases on the conviction that there exist significant relationships between remembering and forgetting, as Assmann claims:

> Remembering is basically a reconsctructive process; it always starts in the present, and so inevitably at the time when the memory is recalled, there will be shifting, distortion, revaluation, reshaping. In the period between present action and future recall, memory does not wait patiently in its safe house.[3]

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1 For the application of different metaphors describing memory, see D. Draaisma, *Metaphors of Memory: A History of Ideas about the Mind*, Cambridge 2009.

2 A. Assmann, "Memory as *Ars* and *Vis*," in: *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives*, Cambridge 2011, p. 122.

3 Assmann, "Memory as *Ars* and *Vis*", p. 21.

Friedrich Nietzsche is undoubtedly the forefather of this understanding of memory, and its characteristics perfectly correspond to the phenomena we encounter in Norwid's work.

In his work *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, Nietzsche juxtaposes memory and history, claiming that the latter is an obstacle in life's way and have no use for a creative view on the past. Distinguishing between three types of history, Nietzsche highlights that only critical judgment, which does not succumb to the weakness of object collection, long-forgotten tradition cultivation, or absolute faith in the possibility of emulating historical models can return to the past its function of an active factor that creates the present:

> If a man who wants to create greatness uses the past, then he will empower himself through monumental history. On the other hand, the man who wishes to emphasize the customary and traditionally valued cultivates the past as an antiquarian historian. Only the man whose breast is oppressed by a present need and who wants to cast off his load at any price has a need for critical history, that is, history which sits in judgment and passes judgment.[4]

Nietzsche notes the isolation of a person incapable of attaining the objectives of the historical era in which one lives. Burdened by the necessity of knowing every subject, the person loses the ability to live their life and becomes an encyclopedia collecting useless information on "foreign ages, customs, arts, philosophies, religions."[5] On the opposite end Nietzsche places the Greeks and their attachment to the unhistorical world, connecting this "unhistorical sense"[6] with the times of Hellenic culture's highest excellence. We should draw conclusions from Greek wisdom, since – as Nietzsche claims – they managed to resist foreign influence solely through maintaining their instinct to return to their own historical sources. It was only their origin and specific life events, recalled at the appropriate moment, that allowed them to preserve their identity. For institutions, such as the Delphic oracle, knowledge of the past was key, with the past judged by the mediums in line with the present needs and a specific plan for the future.

The issue of memory plays a crucial role both in *Epimenides* and in *Kleopatra i Cezar*, which surprisingly connects these two texts created almost twenty years apart, thematically and genologically very distant. Norwid wrote *Epimenides* in

4 Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, trans. I. Johnston, Richer Resources Publications 2010, p. 11.

5 Nietzsche, *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life* p. 16.

6 Nietzsche, *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, p. 16.

1854, probably while he was staying in England;[7] while his tragedy *Kleopatra i Cezar* dates back to 1872: he created it for a drama competition in Krakow.[8] What also connects the two pieces is Norwid's unquestionable fascination with the sources and origins of memory, which he places in ancient Greece, and whose potential he tries to identify in two different moments in history. *Epimenides* is a parabolic image from the present, not devoid of satirical characteristics, and an outline of the fate of post-uprising Greece and the development of archaeology. *Kleopatra i Cezar*, directly alluding to Shakespeare, concerns the reign of the last Egyptian queen and is a vivid image from the times of the decline of the Roman Republic.

2. Memory of Greece: Different Faces of Epimenides

Norwid devotes little attention to the title character of his short poem. We may be under the impression that Epimenides serves as a pretext, allowing Norwid to describe the phenomena he considers significant; among these appear the difficult beginnings of Greek statehood in modern history and the plundering hunts for treasure, taken from the then Greek lands and sold to European collectors. Norwid devotes to Epimenides the preface, in which he outlines his achievements and influence on the world of the then Hellenic Republic, and the closing scene, crowning the entire parable. Since Norwid mentions this predecessor of philosophers several times in his work, we should take a closer look at his figure. Despite the apparent "concealment" of Epimenides behind the interest shown in Byron and Norwid's own experiences inscribed in the piece,[9] the presence of Epimenides brings to the text a disquieting and fascinating ambiguity.

The portrait of Epimenides, outlined in the preface, shows his actions as the anticipation of an evangelical attitude. Norwid states that "the moral figure of this man has something certainly evangelical in every aspect that we know of today." In creating the character of Epimenides, Norwid refers to ancient

7 See Z. Trojanowiczowa and Z. Dambek, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, Vol. 1: *1821–1860*, Poznań, 2007, p. 574.

8 See Z. Trojanowiczowa and E. Lijewska, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, *Vol.* 2: *1861–1883*, Poznań 2007, pp. 519–520. Norwid was working on the tragedy in 1869–1871 and resumed the work in 1878, but never finished the piece.

9 I elaborated on this issue in a different publication (See M. Junkiert, "'Epimenides' Cypriana Norwida a ciągłość kultury greckiej." In: *Filhellenizm w Polsce. Rekonesans*, eds. M. Borowska, M. Kalinowska, J. Ławski and K. Tomaszuk, Warsaw 2007, pp. 284–296.)

sources. Noteworthy, these only constitute a pretext, allowing Norwid to portray Epimenides as a prefiguration of Christ, but also as a person having a personal relationship with his pagan roots. This ambiguity of Epimenides forces us to present the sources Norwid used and to indicate the erudite and rhetorical devices to which he resorted in creating the figure of Epimenides.

Tadeusz Sinko clearly indicates Norwid's source of information on Epimenides: Chapter Ten of the first *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* by Diogenes Laertius.[10] Juliusz W. Gomulicki shares this opinion, although he notices that there are two details Norwid could not have taken from Diogenes:[11] "Much information on Epimenides has been collected by Diogenes Laertius, whose *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (I 109–15) were also the main source of information provided by Norwid (except for the information on the nymph Balt and "it was Aeacus")."[12]

The first of the dubious fragments concerns the wise man's origins, which – according to the *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* – "as Theopompus and many other writers tell us, was the son of a man named Phaedrus, but some call him the son of Dosiadas; and others of Asegarchus."[13] At the same time, we learn from the preface to *Epimenides* that, "curiously, he was thought to be the son of the nymph Balte" (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 57). Apparently, Norwid did not like the genealogy indicated by Diogenes Laertius, so he included the information which he probably found in the *Parallel Lives* by Plutarch of Chaeronea, and – more specifically – in the life of Solon:

> Under these circumstances they summoned to their aid from Crete Epimenides of Phaestus, who is reckoned as the seventh Wise Man by some of those who refuse Periander a place in the list. He was reputed to be a man beloved of the gods, and endowed with a mystical and heaven-sent wisdom in religious matters. Therefore the men of his time said that he was the son of a nymph named Balte[14] (!) and called him a

10 T. Sinko, *Hellada i Roma w Polsce. Przegląd utworów na tematy klasyczne w literaturze polskiej ostatniego stulecia*, Lviv 1933, p. 70.

11 On Norwid's reading of Diogenes Laertius, see G. Halkiewicz-Sojak, *Byron w twórczości Norwida*, Toruń 1994, pp. 81–82.

12 J.W. Gomulicki, "Objaśnienia," in: C. Norwid, *Pisma wybrane*, Vol. 2: *Poematy*, Warsaw 1968, p. 412.

13 T. Dorandi, *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers,* Cambridge 2013, p. 120.

14 Norwid most probably used Amyot's translation of Plutarch's works and therefore stated that Epimenides was the son of the nymph Balte. The fragment on Epimenides in the French version *Œuvres de Plutarque* says the following: "A ceste cause fut envoyé querir jusques en Candie Epimenides le Phaestien, que lon Compte le septieme des sages, au moins ceulx qui ne veulent pas recevoir Periander en ce nombre. C'estoit

> new Cures. On coming to Athens he made Solon his friend, and assisted him in many ways, and paved the way for his legislation.[15]

The last detail from Solon's life allows us to clarify Gomulicki's view, since Norwid's statement on Epimenides as "the one who worked, along with Solon, to solidify the laws" (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 57) is most probably also taken from Plutarch. We should also note that the entire first paragraph of the preface is an amalgamation of details from both sources, shaped in order to authenticate the biography of Epimenides, a prophet playing a key role in the development process of Athenian – and not only Athenian – community. Thus, the motif of seeking the lost sheep and the years-long dream clearly speaks to the nineteenth-century reader and is easier to interpret as the execution of the evangelical message expressed in the parable of the Good Shepherd, caring for all those with whom he is connected through the bond of faith. This probably explains Norwid's silence on the alternative version of the legend, according to which – in connection with Epimenides's activity in Athens – two young men were slain as propitiatory sacrifice.[16]

Another inconvenient detail from the preface concerns the belief that Epimenides is a reincarnation of Aeacus. Norwid states that "he was believed to be Aeacus and to disappear at times, only to rise again, fed with his mother's holy nourishment in his slumber" (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 57). We should correct Gomulicki's remark, since Norwid could have also found the information of Epimenides's incarnations in Diogenes Laertius, according to whom Epimenides "at first called himself Aeacus."[17]

> un sainct homme religieux, et sçavant ès choses celestes par inspiration et revelation divine: à raison de quoy les hommes de son temps l'appeloient le *nouveau Curete*, c'est à dire, prophete, et tenoit on qu'il estoit filz d'une nymphe nommée *Balte*. Estant donques venu à Athenes, et y ayant contracté amitié avec Solon, il luy aida beaucoup, et luy prepara le chemin à establir ses loix: car il accoustuma les Atheniens à faire leurs sacrifices en leur dueil plus supportables, en retrenchant certaines austeritez et cerimonies barbaresques, que la plus part des femmes observoit en portant le dueil, en ordonnant certains sacrifices qu'il vouloit que lon feit incontinent après les obseques d'un trespassé" (*Les Vies des hommes illustres de Plutarque*, traduites du grec par Amyot, avec des Notes et des Observations, par MM. Brotier et Vauvilliers, Nouvelle Édition, Revue, corrigée et augmentée, par E. Clavier, Vol. 1, Paris 1801, p. 305).

15 Plutarch, *Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin, Vol. 1, Cambridge 2007, p. 433.

16 Dorandi, *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, p. 121.

17 Dorandi, *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, p. 121.

We should consider the meaning of this information on Epimenides – "an old sacral figure, perhaps Minoan."[18] It shows the protagonist of Norwid's poem in a slightly different light, as a figure that knows the story of his soul and lives in solitude since – according to Erwin Rohde – "we hear of ... his intercourse with the spirits of the darkness, his severe fasting, the long ecstasy of his soul, and his final return from solitude to the light of day, much experienced and far-traveled in "enthusiastic wisdom."[19] All sources agree that Epimenides

> journeyed through many lands, bringing his health-giving arts with him, prophesying the future as an ecstatic seer, interpreting the hidden meaning of past occurrences, and as Kathartic priest expelling the daimonic evils that arose from specially foul misdeeds of the past.[20]

There are similarities between Diogenes's and Plutarch's account of Epimenides's activity: both refer to the events of the prophecy on Munichia and the risks that this harbor would pose to future Athens, where, in 403 BC, took place a battle lost by the oligarchs. Noteworthy, Norwid omits this part of Epimenides's biography. Moreoer, he stresses the fact that, upon awakening, the wise man was completely unaware of how long he slept, until he saw the aged people and an unknown environment, along with roads charted differently than before. From Norwid's preface, we cannot conclude if Epimenides was indeed a prophet; however, we can certainly notice the domination of the memory element and an understanding of Epimenides's activity expressed in the third volume of Artistotle's *Rhetoric*:

> Political oratory is a more difficult task than forensic; and naturally so, since it deals with the future, whereas the pleader deals with the past, which, as Epimenides of Crete said, even the diviners already know. Epimenides did not practise divination about the future; only about the obscurities of the past.[21]

Proof of Epimenides's exceptionalism was to be his extraordinary memory, spanning the past events of Greek history. The life of this messenger of the gods was devoid of biographical details; we may even have the impression that Norwid

18 E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 1973, p. 144.

19 E. Rohde, *Psyche. The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality Among the Greeks*. London, New York 1925, p. 301.

20 E. Rohde, *Psyche*. . ., p. 301.

21 Artistotle, *Rhetoric,* trans. W. Rhys Roberts, The Internet Classics Archive, Web Atomics, b. III, part 17.

tried to deindividualize the character of Epimenides. Many opinions on his origins support this view – Norwid himself uses statements that indicate uncertainty like "it was thought" or "it was believed" – and the lack of information preceding the episodes of his years-long dream and stay in Athens. Epimenides's life was subjected to the "institutional" dimension of sacral and prophetic activity, as he became the incarnation of memory of distant events. Thus, his existence became inextricably linked to Hellenic past: Epimenides became its voice, cumulating the experiences of ancestors and the fate of the community. As traveled, his knowledge needed to be sufficient not only for aiding the residents of Knossos or Athens but also all those who admitted to having Greek roots. However, he must have been a particularly important figure for Athens, also appearing in the *Laws* of Plato in the context of advising the city at a particularly critical moment, mentioned by Cleinias:

> You have probably heard how that inspired man Epimenides, who was a family connexion of ours, was born in Crete; and how ten years before the Persian War, in obedience to the oracle of the god, he went to Athens and offered certain sacrifices which the god had ordained; and how, moreover, when the Athenians were alarmed at the Persians' expeditionary force, he made this prophecy: "They will not come for ten years, and when they do come, they will return back again with all their hopes frustrated, and after suffering more woes than they inflict."[22]

It is probably for this reason that Norwid recalls the fact that Epimenides also considered himself as Aeacus.[23] Epimenides needed an authority figure from the mythical times, one who could become a symbol of the idea to recover episodes that history omitted and retrieve the forgotten background to historical events, and to uncover the process of the shaping of human thought, particularly when mankind was abandoning the sphere of magical explanation and embarked on the uncertain path of logical speculation.

In his life, Epimenides became a key figure in this fundamental role for society; he also played a crucial role in expanding the space where people could feel safer, annihilating unnecessary cruelty and ordering the laws.

In Norwid's view, this favorite of the gods, endowed with the ability to explain the unexplained, was the first to see the role of memory as an active presence of past events in the present life of a community. He also discovered that referring

22 Plato, *Laws*, Vol. 1, trans. R. G. Bury, Cambridge, London 1961, p. 61.

23 Artistotle's conviction may be linked with the presence of Aeacus' incarnation in the legend of Epimenides by Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, p. 143.

to the past made it possible to solve present conflicts. This phenomenon of treating the past as a reservoir of potential solutions to current issues is particularly evident when Norwid presents the method with which Epimenides helped the Athenians tormented by the plague. As Norwid writes:

> A man named Epimenides of Crete, counted among the Greek wise men, creating poetry and worshiping the gods, the one who worked to solidify the laws along with Solon; who, with the sacrifice of white and black lambs, freed, immolated, and laid to rest, purifies the people and halts the plague (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 57).

Norwid notes that Epimenides's behavior was not the result of an accident, as he used the conviction rooted in Greek mentality that the voice of a deity can manifest itself in the behavior of animals. This reference to tradition, along with the intense legislative activity, was to Norwid a turning point for civilization so significant that, in his lectures on Juliusz Słowacki, he puts Epimenides in line with biblical prophets. The similarity must have seemed striking to Norwid, as both Epimenides and the prophets rebuilt the integrity of their community and put human relations in order by establishing new laws, all along referring to the past.

A significant element of Epimenides' activity was to shift the focus of solving fundamental, essential issues – in this case, how to free the city from the plague – from the present to the past. The reasoning based on the discovery of an undisclosed event or an erroneous interpretation of a past fact that contributed to the deformation of the current fate of a given group of people connected by blood ties and shared territory.[24]

This phenomenon concerned communities united in cultivating common cultural memory;[25] that is, those elements of human group activity that are responsible for identification with the fates of common ancestors and the recognition of inhabitants of other *poleis* as their allies or enemies, which could often be decided by facts from a distant mythical past. As Jan Assmann asserts:

> Cultural memory, then, focuses on fixed points in the past, but again it is unable to preserve the past as it was. This approach tends to be transposed into symbolic figures to which memory attaches itself – for example, tales of the patriarchs, the Exodus, wandering in the desert, the conquest of the Promised Land, exile – and that are celebrated

24 On the retrospective character of Epimenides' method, see. J.-P. Vernant, "Aspects mythiques de la mémoire." In: J.-P. Vernant, P. Vidal-Naquet, *La Grèce ancienne*, Vol. 2: *L'espace et le temps*, Paris, 1991, pp. 33–34.

25 We use the concept of "cultural memory" in the sense proposed by Jan Assmann (See J. Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination,* Cambridge 2012).

> in festivals and used to explain current situations. Myths are also figures of memory, and here any distinction between myth and history is eliminated. What counts for cultural memory is not factual but remembered history. One might even say that cultural memory transforms factual into remembered history, thus turning it into myth. Myth is foundational history that is narrated in order to illuminate the present from the standpoint of its origins.[26]

For this reason, it is noteworthy that Norwid twice stresses the fact that Epimenides was not only seen as a figure of a quasi-divine character but also remembered as a poet and, therefore, a person of fundamental importance to the community. This predecessor of Christianity, who simultaneously embodied cumulative Greek memory, was to Norwid the perfect example of the inability of Christian morality to come into existence before the coming of Christ. It was not until the arrival of Christianity that a teleological perspective of salvation was established, which reinterpreted the past from the perspective of God's presence in the history of the world. Until then, the only chance to make sense of the present was to refer to mythical beginnings and foundational events. This is probably the source of Norwid's conviction about the revelatory role of memory in the history of culture, which until the birth of Christ made the past present in the space of the Greek collective imagination. The pessimistic overtones of the long poem *Epimenides*, especially the last scene, indicate an evident lack of care for memory in the nineteenth-century Europe, which means losing the perspective of authentic human presence in history, marked by the lives of real people, their suffering, and efforts.

In the fifth of his lectures on Słowacki, Norwid draws attention to the need to restore memory, which was to have dissipated as a result of changing times:

> The history of civilization is so young that it has not yet reached adulthood. It is waiting for certified documents from Egyptian mummies and Asian monuments, whose writing and words can barely utter a comprehensible sound so far. But, in my opinion, what is most lacking is the memory of the heart! For it is good to interpret ideas in the form of algebraic equations, one after another, but who will think how much pain, how many schisms, the birth of each ideology needed? We have finally noticed the omission of vowels in all Semitic hieroglyphs, which is already a great victory. But when will we see how many tears, cries, and grievances history has omitted, as those always accompany the birth and crystallization of each truth (Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 447)?

Norwid contrasts memory with the historical sciences, attributing the former to the singularity and uniqueness of human fate, which is an accumulation of

26 J. Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*. . ., Cambridge 2012, pp. 37 ff.

experiences of ancestors in each individual. Written history blurs the uniqueness of human experience, so memory should play a role equivalent to history, bringing to the surface and revealing what history has overlooked. In this case, we should emphasize the ambiguity of the term "history," which may mean both the science and the historical process itself, the effect of the passing time and the world transforming under its influence. Norwid honors memory by describing it on the example of individual people, such as Epimenides from the end of the piece, but, at the same time, he multiplies the spheres to which their memory reaches. Thus, the fate of the wise man of Crete encompasses the whole of Greek history, and his admonition resounds as the voice of history itself. This is the paradox of Norwid's notion of memory; on the one hand, related to an individual fate and, on the other hand, appearing to be an abstract construct opposing history, as it goes back to the distant past and is deeply rooted in human experience, not in the deceptive medium of writing.

In the preface, Norwid himself provides the reason for his interest in Epimenides: an admiration for memory that exceeds the constraints of an era: "When I visited this area, I imagined that when the Apostle-prisoner passed nearby, he thought of Epimenides" (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 58). The meeting on the shores of Crete united the ancient prophet, the imprisoned apostle, and the nineteenth-century exile to become a private history of the island, which emerged from readings, reflections on the role of Christianity, and Norwid's own experiences.[27]

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27 We should note that the figure of Epimenides and his fate are conducive to reinterpretation of history through the prism of individual memory. This happened in the case of J.W. Goethe, who dedicated to Epimenides the piece *Awakening of Epimenides* (*Des Epimenides Erwachen*), officially performed on the occasion of victory over Napoleon. As Hans Blumenberg notes: "Even while it celebrates the victory over Napoleon, the play lets one perceive Goethe's sorrow that, for him, the wish to sleep through the dominion of the demons, in the role of the priest in the temple, and to avoid the traumatic threat to the identity of the Promethean ego, had not been fulfilled . . .. Finally, Epimenides has to declare that he is ashamed of his hours of leisure and that it would have been profitable to suffer with the others, who have now become greater than him, as a reward for their pain. The poet pays tribute to his triumphant contemporaries." (H. Blumenberg, *Work on Myth*, trans., R. M. Wallace, Cambridge 1983, p. 514). Many years earlier, Goethe used Epimenides' awakening to show his own "sense of alienation from the Weimar world" after returning from his trip to Italy, in a letter of October 25, 1788, addressed to Karl von Knebel (Blumenberg, *Work on Myth*, p. 495).

Concerning the poem itself, we should note that the recovery of memory assumes therein the concrete shape of a discovery made by the working "Maniots:"

> – The Mainotes are digging. – Our travelers from far away
> Sat down, with scientific symbols in their hands,
> When sand, ash, debris – flowed like a river
> Of time. – A few urns, a medal, brown links,
> Here and there appeared a week after we opened the ground,
> And in two weeks, a chamber with a huge door
> And an underground edifice emerged, set on a rock
> With caves inside, cloisters and halls.
> – And unknown fumes of great air
> Belched out, and for four days went up like columns
> Of white smoke, with no coffin-like smell
> But like a silent wind that shakes white trees.
> So the Mainotes said in their parables,
> Applying Laconian epithets to the fumes (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 65).

We should consider why the discovered edifice made such an impression on the "Maniots." The accidentally found place may be a reference to the legendary "cave of Zeus,"[28] a grotto near Knossos on Mount Ida, where Minos and Epimenides – let us recall that, as one of the Curetes, he had a strong connection to this place – were to meet Zeus. Thus, in the parables of the "Maniots" could resound, even if only residually, words taken from the old songs of their ancestors, who participated in many-days-long mystery plays at the Ida, preceded by prescribed rituals of purification. The ruin, observed by the poet, seems to have unleashed the power of ancient ideas, which are perhaps remnants of Pythagorean beliefs, in the inhabitants of Crete. From the poet's notebooks emerges a concept that comes from the legendary Pelasgians, the inhabitants of Greece who preceded the Hellenic tribes. Pelasgian history is the subject of one of the passages of *Notatki z mitologii* (Notes on Mythology): "Banished from Thessaly, they go to Dodona in Arcadia, from which some go on to Italy, while others to Crete" (PWsz, Vol. 7, p. 283). The link between the fate of Pelasgians and the "Maniots" also appears in the first course of Adam Mickiewicz's Paris lectures. In the eighteenth lecture, Mickiewicz tries to prove that the "Maniots" inhabited areas located near the dwellings of Laconians, attributing Pelasgian origins to the latter:

> The Pelasgians, who already in Homer's time were considered to be an ancient but fallen people, conquered by the peoples forming the Hellenic Union, that is, by the Achaians,

28 See Rohde, *Psyche...*, p. 81.

> the Ionians, and the Dorians – these Pelasgians disappear later in history. However, it seems that this tribe still existed under different names and was subjugated by the Hellenic Union, by the warring people who settled in cities. The most puzzling of these Pelasgian tribes, the Laconians, were subordinate to the Spartans in the famous republic of Sparta, survived their masters, and in the middle ages still existed in the same area, also occupying the same dwellings around the Taigete mountains and on the famous river Eurotas. Near the Laconians lived the Maniots; they also settled in the same areas, but there are no more Spartans.[29]

Contrary to Mickiewicz's views, who sees pre-Slavic attributes in the Pelasgians,[30] Norwid is rather fascinated by the archaic nature of this people and the phenomenon of the coexistence of various human groups on a common territory, allowing for the mutual interpenetration of elements of religious beliefs and civilizational discoveries. Perhaps Norwid, in the meeting of the "Maniots" and Epimenides, found an echo of this distant process when the Greeks coexisted with foreign peoples of Pelasgians, Phoenicians, and Egyptians, and created the framework of their own culture using their knowledge and skills.

The last scene with the Epimenides is directly related to Norwid's times. Epimenides appears among ruins, participating once again in a ritual of integration, which is to bring him again back to existence, must go to Greece as soon as possible. The contemporary inhabitants of Greece have forgotten the recommendations he made when the propitiatory sacrifice was performed to cleanse Athens. Dozens of centuries passed, and history paradoxically misappropriated Epimenides's solutions. Philhellenes, fighters for Greek independence took the place of sacrificial sheep.

"The latter," claims Norwid, thinking of the uprisers from the whole of Europe, "have but one right – the right to immolation" (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 67). This time, Epimenides bids farewell to the poet he encounters; undoubtedly, his time has passed, and the offenses of contemporary Greeks will be neither forgiven nor forgotten.

The end of the poem recalls authentic events that Norwid must have learned about from the European press. It was a peculiar paradox of the philhellenic movement that the centuries-old tradition of Hellenic culture ceased to be present in the areas that brought it into existence. Thus, it was the newcomers from northern and western Europe who once again tried to instill into Greeks the ideas widely recognized as the foundations of civilization. William St. Clair notes that

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29 A. Mickiewicz, *Dzieła*, Vol. 8: *Literatura słowiańska. Kurs pierwszy*, ed. J. Maślanka, trans. L. Płoszewski, Warsaw 1997, p. 231.

30 Mickiewicz, *Dzieła*, p. 232.

the origins of this process date back to the eighteenth century, with an increase in the number of travelers who visited Greece as enthusiasts of all that is ancient:

> An increasing number of travelers from the West found their way to Greece. They were rich and educated and it was principally their interest in ancient Greece that brought them. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the traveling gentlemen, with the pocket versions of the classics, became a permanent feature of the Greek scene. These confident and successful men were amazed at the ignorance they found. They began to lecture the Greeks about their ancient history and established a regular circuit of famous sites to be visited. The Greeks picked up scraps of history and legend and repeated them back to subsequent visitors.[31]

The Europeans who decided to take part in the war with Turkey were convinced that they would fight in the name of the ancient Hellenic Republic. The reality they found upon arrival must have been a shocking clash with reality, with the mythical veil lifted. Soldiers from Germany, France, Italy, and Denmark who constituted a great proportion of the first group of volunteers, were terrified by the Greek propensity for cruelty and murder of defenseless civilians, but what surprised them most was the indifference and ingratitude of the Greek people, who refused to allow the Philhellenes access to their villages. There were also frequent cases of robbing or assaulting European volunteers in the fight for Greek independence.[32] Lulled by false promises and treated without the respect they expected, European soldiers and officers quickly became vehement critics of all aspects of modern Greek life. However, their return to Europe was not easy, hindered by both the lack of resources and the reluctance of governments in the countries they left behind, so they were often condemned to continue their destiny in the land where they wanted to fight for freedom, but where they were not welcome.

Thus, Norwid's comments relate directly to the historical reality of around 1822, and his Epimenides is as ashamed of the thoughtless and entertainment-seeking archaeologists as he is of his own people. He returns to recall the heroic past, to oppose contemporary human degeneration, and once again to design the future, to become its architect, because only a man who is experienced and knows the past can predict the course of events. In this respect, Norwid could entirely agree with Nietzsche that the true prophet looks into the past to see only what is to come.

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31 W.St. Clair, *That Greece Might Still Be Free. The Philhellenes in the War of Independence,* London 1972, p. 14.

32 See St. Clair, *That Greece Might Still Be Free*, pp. 83 ff.

3. Greeks in Alexandria: Memory and History in *Kleopatra i Cezar*

The interpretative tradition of the tragedy *Kleopatra i Cezar* (Cleopatra and Caesar) is dominated by the view that the drama deviates in form from the known and applied patterns of the time. Elżbieta Żwirkowska, the author of a monograph on the drama, states that "Norwid undoubtedly moves away from the plot pattern of the classical tragedy ... but he also does not follow contemporary patterns."[33] As for the tragedy's structure, Żwirkowska notes that the most critical role is played by Act II, with the scene of the royal wedding. Cleopatra, whose will is equated with the needs of the whole nation, experiences a tragic conflict, resulting from the progressive understanding of her situation. In this way, the process of learning the whole truth about the non-autonomous nature of human fate leads to uncovering the tragic consequences of an event; that is, the death of Julius Caesar revealed by Shechera. It is only at this point that takes seed the hamartia of Cleopatra, who will attempt to annihilate the hated Rome. This issue, in turn, will be the focus of Act III, showing the end of an era of tragic conflicts based on different and irreconcilable worlds of values.

In order to properly understand the peculiar nature of this work, we should try to understand Norwid's approach to historical events and the method of depicting them in *Kleopatra i Cezar*. An explanatory example of what image of Cleopatra the poet may have encountered is a passage from an anonymous publication *Starożytny Egipt pod względem historyi, religii, cywilizacji i obyczajów* (Ancient Egypt: History, Religion, Civilization and Customs) from 1893. The author of the book – a popular introduction to the history of Egyptian civilization and culture – relies on publicly available sources and compiles the works of Cassius Dion, Appian, and Plutarch in a passage about Cleopatra. As a result, he forms an image of a fascinating and, at the same time, completely unrealistic figure:

> the charm of the Egyptian mermaid lay in her lips and figure, the intoxicating, unspeakable sweetness of her voice, which enchanted the ears with eternal caress, and – last but not least – her incredible flexibility and wealth of intellect. She had a fluent command of all languages – Latin, Greek, Egyptian, Ethiopian, Syrian, Hebrew, Arabic, and like all Lagids, she could discuss the most abstract issues of philosophy and science. With Julius Caesar, she knew how to be lofty and proud, full of serious, truly royal allure, and before him, she employed the most sophisticated words, speaking about the fine arts,

33 E. Żwirkowska, *Tragedia kultur. Studium o tragedii historycznej C.K. Norwida "Kleopatra i Cezar"*, Lublin 1991, p. 52.

> politics, and philosophy like a daughter of the Hellenic Republic; on the contrary, with Mark Antony, who was fond of vulgar jokes and soldierly customs, she drank all night long, sang erotic songs, and ran in disguise on the streets of Alexandria at night; she offended him, quarreled with him and attacked him with her fists, and in her cynical jokes and defiant expressions she used a language not dissimilar to that of guardhouses and the most indecent shelters of the capital. At the same time, she was very skillful and unbridled, and used all her womanly charms to achieve one goal: she wanted to stay on the Egyptian throne, and she managed to do so twofold, under the most unfavorable circumstances.[34]

The description of the Egyptian queen is marked by an uncritical belief in the details provided by the sources, without any consideration of the distortion of Cleopatra's image by the Octavian's propaganda after the defeat at Actium. The paradox of the above publication is that the author attempts to use this extremely critical attitude to Cleopatra to create an image of a ruthless manipulator who subjugated to herself two great Roman leaders. However, he does not lose the opportunity to show this figure in the most favorable light. In this approach, Cleopatra is not only a superficially beautiful woman who speaks almost all the languages of the world known at the time but also a unique realization of the myth of a philosopher on the throne. She is a ruler who simultaneously contemplates subtle metaphysical issues and cynically uses every circumstance to strengthen her influence and destroy her opponents.

This approach inevitably led to contradictions. How else can we interpret the behavior of Julius Caesar who, like a lover blinded by lust, loses his temper and renounces his extraordinary leader and statesman abilities at the whim of Cleopatra, persecuted by her siblings, to unleash "this war, so unnecessary for his reputation and so contrary to the interests of Rome, that it was rightly called the "war of Cleopatra?"[35] The unnecessary war meant unnecessary interest in Egypt, to which Julius Caesar should probably not have devoted so much attention. However, a few pages later, the author mentions that in times of the Empire, the Egyptian province quickly became "the granary of Rome."[36] Therefore, we may say that Julius Caesar's interest lay in the irrational desire to satisfy the whims of a beautiful Hellenic despot, and that the importance attached to Egypt by all Roman emperors, beginning with Octavian, was proof of their wisdom?

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34 *Starożytny Egipt pod względem historyi, religii, cywilizacji i obyczajów przez W. z W.J.*, Lviv 1893, p. 164.

35 *Starożytny Egipt pod względem,* p. 165.

36 *Starożytny Egipt pod względem,* p. 174.

The author's approach to the lost sea battle at Actium is no different, as he once again blames the capricious behavior of Cleopatra, who abandoned the Roman allies and sailed with her ships toward Egypt. It is hard to see why the sources treated the strategic goal of Mark Antony and his army as a shameful defection, since escaping encirclement was the goal of the endangered fleet. The interpretation was probably due to the outcome of the conflict, in which Octavian proved to be victorious. In this interpretive scheme, we can easily see the significance of the trivial truth that the defeated are never right.[37]

Norwid's approach is located on the two extreme ends of this attitude toward historical material. He also uses the above sources and implies his ability to make use of Cleopatra's fascinating image left behind by ancient historians. This is why his Julius Caesar suggests to Cleopatra that she should use her extraordinary linguistic talents:

> Oh, Queen of sphinges! – You, who
> Speaks nine languages, speak in Roman,
> Or use the Hellenic speech (Pwsz, Vol. 5, p. 52).

However, Norwid does not take this image at face value; Julius Caesar produces an utterance which has no justification in the present moment, as if he did not know what answer to provide to the queen's astonishing monolog. Julius Caesar does not yet know the woman who mysteriously entered his palace. Therefore, he uses the knowledge that he acquired from the stories about Cleopatra; he allows to speak the sources that will later form her historical portrait. Later, Julius Caesar will abandon this way of commenting on Cleopatra's actions. Norwid does the same: he implies that he knows the sources and facts, but he treats them with high mistrust and creates his own version of Alexandrian events, which went down in history as the Egyptian war.

Mark Antony displays a similar awareness of the importance of historical sources; he is sure that the victorious propaganda of his enemies will not give justice to his excellent leadership talent:

> So I decided, although decisions are but a game!. . .
> I decided so: that, whatever happens
> With the Queen's purple galley or the forces
> That crown her tent – should return here,

37 According to A. Łukaszewicz, "Cleopatra's alleged cowardly escape from Actium should rather arouse admiration for the bravery and presence of mind of this extraordinary woman, who in such a dramatic moment proved herself a worthy successor to kings." *Kleopatra. Ostatnia królowa starożytnego Egiptu*, Warsaw 2005, p. 338.

> If but one man was left with a broken oar!. . .
> – I decided so... and one day they'll say about the loser
> Oh, Antony, he was careless leader,
> With no stable plans for all the possibilities!. . . (Pwsz, Vol. 5, p. 152).

Mark Antony makes a bitterly ironic comment on the nonsensical interpretations of his behavior during the Battle of Actium, which led to theses similar to those of the popular publication from 1893. A leader who failed to prepare a proper plan and then abandoned his army to escape to Egypt certainly deserves contempt – this is how the sources discredited defeated Mark Antony. And yet, a much more likely conclusion than a cowardly escape of a leader who did not want to pursue fighting is the actual weakness of Mark Antony and Cleopatra's army. It was Cleopatra who cemented the failure of the campaign as a whole even before the battle. Mark Antony was defeated, but when he was leaving the battlefield, he was trying to save what was left of his strength with the help of Cleopatra.

Should the critical mind not verify the opinions that circulate and express one's own only after a meticulous analysis of the sources? This is how Norwid proceeds; in order not to tend toward Nietzschean monumental-antiquarian history, he attempts to depict the emotions and intentions that drove the protagonists in the key moments of the war. To Mark Antony, Norwid grants the characteristics of a great leader, although one not favored by fate, which frequently determines the success of a campaign as a whole. Still, Norwid simultaneously avoids stereotypical assumptions about his characters and eliminates caricatural and profoundly unjust facts. However, we should abandon any false impression of Norwid uncovering the undeniable truth about those times. His vision is purely literary; we may find its seed in the historical sources, but the exact execution lies in Norwid's imagination. Nevertheless, we should not forget that the literary characters of Julius Caesar, Cleopatra, and Mark Antony date back to the 1880s and, as such, are historicized drama characters. The characters perceive themselves from a distance, which more often than not creates the impression of split personality, provoked by a reference point that transcends history and a centuries-old interpretive scheme that reinterprets all the facts through the prism of a universalizing lens. Cleopatra certainly has the most insightful view of history; she celebrates her place in history and laboriously constructs her image, underneath which we can see carefully hidden emptiness and the illusory nature of her reign:

One servant
Advised that a diver hidden under a wave
Should apply salted fish to *Mark's* fishing rod –
A concept that went well and which posterity
Will ascribe to Cleopatra, not the servant!
(History is ungrateful to noble ideas. . .)
. . .
– – The veil! – The veil! –
The veil – – – *I invented the veil*! –All that
I still can create with my own power (Pwsz, Vol. 5, p. 118).

We share Elżbieta Żwirowska's view that Act II is particularly significant in *Kleopatra i Cezar*. However, we should consider the combination of various reasons that result in the special role of Act II. This role is certainly directly related to the tragic relationship between the two title characters. As Stanisław Brzozowski states:

> Cleopatra and Julius Caesar are swept away by the great frozen alien bodies of Egypt and Rome; they experience their relationship in this pale interplanetary vacuum. They feel and see that their destiny has been fulfilled; this destiny sweeps them up and drags them along; they can only exchange thoughts and feelings over which they have power as long as they establish a connection between them; as long as they stand above life, as long as they stop at this pale ghostly existence, gliding over life like a lunar light over granite. As living people, they are subject to dark destinies that forced out their personal lives. Rome and Egypt clash like two blocks in a world alien to thought and soul. Pale thought only sees that its individual life is implanted once and for all in these blind, clashing, silent blocks.[38]

Brzozowski highlights the fatalism of both characters, who find themselves trapped in intellectually lifeless and culturally non-creative structures of two nations that played a significant role in the history of civilization.

However, we do not share one of Brzozowski's views. While accumulating his suggestive metaphors, he needlessly suggests that a thought exchange happened only between Cleopatra and Julius Caesar, while this exchange was lacking between the representatives of the two nations. One can easily refute Brzozowski's assertion. Moreover, the contrary argument seems much more reasonable: the exchange of thoughts and feelings between Cleopatra and Julius Caesar forms only a faint background for the events that happen beyond them, of which they are not entirely aware. In a dialog between the representatives of

38 S. Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski. Studia o strukturze duszy kulturalnej*, Vol. 1, Krakow 1997, p. 155.

Egypt and Rome, it is the tension between memory and history that plays a fundamental role, since Norwid builds an unprecedented tragic conflict through this opposition.

Let us consider the subplot about the Roman companions of Julius Caesar, who came with him to Alexandria. Norwid focuses Act II on Cleopatra's wedding and the depiction of entertained crowds in the background. The Harpist's song is a critical moment in the celebration. It constitutes a simple, concise, ideologically consistent three-stanza outline of Egyptian civilization, with an astonishingly conservative overtone. The Harpist's song portrays Egypt as a country which draws its power from constant calls to tradition, as all that proves Egyptians' singularity has its roots in the distant past. However, now the Egyptians can only uphold the results of former glory:

> Egypt gave the amazed eye Heaven
> And it discovered the earth, and the shallowness of minds
> In those who learned from other places. . .
> – Finally, so that the possessions of all the treasures
> Preserve for generations with balm:
> It invented *writing* (Vol. 5, p. 75)!

After the Harpist's song, which presents Egypt's merits to the world, appears the Chorus of Villagers, along with the Chorus of Virgins, with whom they perform a frivolous song that bases on a mutual provocation. The first two performances are constructed with the strophe-antistrophe schema and end with an epode, which alludes to the theme and generic characteristics of an epithalamium.[39] The happy song about courtship ends with an unambiguous gnomic remark about the necessity of ending such jesting after marriage, when two people unite in their desire to work arduously together. The girls' chorus slightly disrupts this tripartite composition: they refer back to the idea of alternation of play and work. However, when choral voices go silent, the three following characters present utterances that are rooted in the issue of memory. The memories of Her (the Polish name of Norwid's character) begin this series: he recalls an episode from his youth, when he was on the Cyclades, sold by the Phoenicians as a slave. Eukast follows and expresses his regret due to the declining ability of composing songs like those of old; then, the reader's attention turns to two centurions sitting

39 On the ancient epithalamium and contemporary references to Greek-Roman standards, see K. Mroczek, *Epitalamium staropolskie: między tradycją literacką a obrzędem weselnym*, Wrocław 1989.

at the table. In this cultural discourse, after Egyptian and Greek memories comes the time for the Romans:

> FIRST CENTURION
> Hey, brother Centurion!
> Why do you look at harversting girls through your fingers,
> As if you found in your eye a leaf of grass or a cold dew!
>
> SECOND CENTURION
> A drop fell into my hand, similar to the one
> That I threw to the wind on the banks of *Tiber*,
> On the threshold of a cottage – since veterans
> Were given plowshares and lands. . .
>
> FIRST CENTURION
> Indeed,
> Something strange is in the clang of sickles. . . it has
> Something that you can't silence with a shiver of shield,
> Of a cup, or of bones – my friend! *mehercle*! (Pwsz, Vol. 5, p. 79).

These utterances (Her's, Eukast's, the Romans') end the feast and are followed by a significant "heavy" silence. They introduce to the tragedy three different meanings of memory and three different ways of coping with the passage of time and the necessity of interiorizing history, making it one's own and unique. Jan Assmann notes that, to discern different methods of treatment of the past, we should make use of the ideas of Claude Lévi-Strauss and his division between "cold" and "hot" societies. Lévi-Strauss claims that cold societies "seek, by the institutions they give themselves, to annul the possible effects of historical factors on their equilibrium and continuity in a quasi-automatic fashion; the latter resolutely internalizing the historical process and making it the moving power of their development."[40]

In his comments on the work of Lévi-Strauss, Assmann highlights that we should define the opposition between "cold" and "hot" societies differently if we are to make use of this terminology. Moreover, he warns against using these terms when we oppose primitive, oral, and history-less societies and civilized, literate societies with a developed approach to history. Assmann suggests that we should consider the difference in social-cultural options and the societies' different approaches to memory. Thus, we can use both "cold society" and "hot society" when we refer to civilized societies with sophisticated and highly

40 C. Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind (La Pensee Sauvage)*, London 1966, pp. 233–234.

developed cultures. For Assmann, Egypt – alongside medieval Jewish culture – is the epitome of a "cold" society, which emerged despite Egypt's high level of civilizational development. On this basis, Assmann concludes that we will find it helpful to discern two types of memory which serves the aforementioned cultural options:

> In the light of the distinction between cold and hot in relation to history, our question concerning the stopping and starting of historical consciousness becomes a little clearer. The tranquilizing element serves the cold option, whereby change is frozen. The meaning that is remembered here lies in recurrence and regularity, as opposed to the unique and the extraordinary; and, in continuity, as opposed to change and upheaval. The stimulant serves the hot option, in which meaning, importance, memorableness are in service of the reversal, of change, growth and development, but also conversely of deterioration, corruption and decline.[41]

If we approach the above passage from *Kleopatra i Cezar* from Assmann's perspective, we will see that both the Harpist's song and Eukast's statement fall within the tranquilizing element category. In other words, this is memory that tends to repeat received content and reconstruct forgotten consciousness, understood as an organic entity, which underwent decomposition as a result of unwanted historical transformations. However, Eukast questions the possibility of maintaining this detachment from the historicity of the world:

> Eheu! Theories are gone
> The classic ones, those sincere-Egyptian ones: for example, "*About crocodile in tears out of love*,
> In twenty-seven strophes, with chorales and gestures."
> Who could do that today (Pwsz, Vol. 5, pp. 78–79)?

Eukast produces his utterance after he hears the Harpist's song and the joint choruses of youngsters and female harvesters, questioning their unhistorical tone. He highlights the existence of a canon that once organized literature and notices its dramatic absence in contemporary Egypt; he perceives the traditional singer's voice as a death knell for Egyptian culture, which on its own is now only a collection of memories, accessible to but a few.

When we subject it to a different logic of remembrance, Her's utterance perfectly corresponds to the category of stimulant, as it concerns a single, unique event from Her's biography only. To him, it is a significant indicator of his current life condition:

41 Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*. . ., p. 53.

> In the spring of life, when I was on a distant island,
> Where a Phoenician sold me (for my charm)
> To the Cyclades, I knew a poet,
> Exiled, who wrote iambs
> Pastorals – splendid – anyway
> I always felt drawn to the rhythm of war (Pwsz, Vol. 5, p. 78).

In Her's utterance, we may hear an echo of the episode that still troubles him and constantly returns as a memory of his seven-year-long period of silence and the people who proclaimed him a god for "one generation." Her was raised in a culture that glorified individuals; therefore, he is used to memory as a foundation of his existence and the decisive factor of his value as the keeper of memories. Her claims that there is only as much existence as there are collected memories, and the pressure of memory can significantly distort the present. He realizes the astounding power of this tool and will not hesitate to use it:

> A thought that many times
> Hit me on the head, when I was on the island
> Distant, where a Phoenician traveler sold me
> For my strange charm, in the spring of my life.
> – It was there that I met overseas people and others. . .
> There I learned priestly meanings. – Today,
> As if through a dream or a fog, I remember (Pwsz, Vol. 5, p. 37).

On the one hand, both Her and Eukast approached the same subject and felt inspired to share their thoughts on their literary experiences. On the other hand, we should observe the enormous gap between the two protagonists, aptly summarized by the Knight's comment. The Knight makes a comment on the Harpist's words about the preservation of intellectual and artistic property through the invention of writing: "It is the more hermetic that he reads these words out loud!" (Pwsz, Vol. 5, p. 75). He provides this critique from a specific cultural position, as it is a clear allusion to Plato's remarks on Egypt in *Laws*:

> It appears that long ago they determined on the rule of which we are now speaking, that the youth of a State should practice in their rehearsals postures and tunes that are good: these they prescribed in detail and posted up in the temples, and outside this official list it was, and still is, forbidden to painters and all other producers of postures and representations to introduce any innovation or invention, whether in such productions or in any other branch of music, over and above the traditional forms. And if you look there, you will find that the things depicted or graven there 10,000 years ago (I

> mean what I say, not loosely but literally 10,000) are no whit better or worse than the productions of today, but wrought with the same art.[42]

The Knight's remark signals a significant issue that touches Egyptian culture in the tragedy. This dilemma concerns the reluctance to submit to historical transformation and active modification of established patterns, typical of Egypt; at the same time arise events that do not allow the characters – such as Eukast, Kondor, and Psymach – to remain indifferent to the disappearing excellence of the cultural output of their country. Those members of the Egyptian court who are most aware of it can observe the decline of the era with their own eyes; along with this decline, Egypt will lose the smallest trace of its political independence and the basis for its citizens to think highly of the country's achievements.

It is only now when we outlined the context that we can return to the conversation of the two centurions. Their utterance does not fit into the tranquilizing-stimulant schema of memory. The situation is not entirely clear, as we do not know what exactly evoked these memories. Was it the flowing tear that reminded the Roman of a similar moment that he experienced, or was it the sudden recall of a distant memory that moved him so greatly? The only irrefutable fact is the past situation that he recalled at the feast in the distant land. It was the distribution of Tiberian land among veterans. This apparently transparent situation becomes more complicated when we attempt to relate it to historical reality.

We should now ask a question concerning the centurion who recalled the land he received for his years-long servitude. Whose soldier was he? We can provide an answer to this question, as during the decline of the Republic, the army was strongly connected to its leader and there was in place a procedure that allowed to reward soldiers through land distribution. Moreover, not many such land distributions happened. The last such operation before the events of *Kleopatra i Cezar* was conducted around 40 BC, as we learn from Suetonius. Julius Caesar was then distributing land among his veterans, but in the centurion's case, one fact does not correspond to these events: the settlement took place almost completely beyond the borders of Italy; that is, on the then lands of Carthage and Corinth.[43] However, the centurion clearly mentions a land in Italy. Therefore, we need to delve deeper: up until 59 BC and the agreement between the triumvirs, Julius Caesar and Pompey. The former passed the law *leges Iuliae agrariae* as a

42 Plato, *Laws*, pp. 101 ff.

43 See A. Ziółkowski, *Historia Rzymu*, Poznań 2004, p. 353.

consul, whereby Pompey's veterans and twenty thousand "parents of three or more children"[44] received land in Italy.

Therefore, the centurion who feasts in Alexandria was not Julius Caesar's soldier until the latter entered Italy after the beginning of the civil war. The retreating Pompey did not have enough time to gather all of his troops: we can say that Julius Caesar "inherited" a considerable number of soldiers. Can we really suggest that this is the meaning of the passage from *Kleopatra i Cezar*? We undoubtedly can, as Norwid left more traces to demonstrate the great importance of the centurion in his role as the revealer of a more significant issue. In Act I, Julius Caesar makes a remark that should reinforce our impression of an atypical relation between the commander and the soldier: "You did not carry your weapon," highlights Julius Caesar, addressing the centurion (although we do not know which?), when the astounding scroll with the Queen arrived – "when we were crossing the Rubicon" (Pwsz, Vol. 5, p. 49).

When we analyze the feast, we should remember that in this case, Pompey's funeral accompanies the wedding ceremony. This fact does not appear in the sources and is Norwid's innovation: in reality, Cornelia Pompea was awaiting her husband's body in Italy and it is there that Pompey was buried. This detail also sheds light on the characters of the two centurions, who notice Pompey's wife when they finish feasting. In the context of the above facts, their behavior is entirely understandable: they both rise and greet Cornelia with "Salve!" (Pwsz, Vol. 5, p. 80). This greeting is probably the expression of their respect toward their former leader whose body is burning; they could not remain faithful to Pompey, as fate decided otherwise, and they had to persecute him as a traitor.

Returning to the different executions of the concept of memory in Act II, we should note that the centurions' memories do not fit into the schema of tranquilizing-stimulant memory, because they are a complex amalgam of the characteristics of Egyptian and Greek memory. On the one hand, they do not negate the importance of an individual, unique experience, which became the driver of changes in their lives; therefore, they display the characteristics of the "hot" approach to history. On the other hand, they reinterpret their reception of land and their reaction in the context of broader processes. In their view, Roman culture has an agrarian character, concealed behind the external, military reservoir of gestures. Therefore, their behavior is an example of the most ancient set of meanings related to land cultivation, primary to Romans. Their god is then Mars; not as the god of War, but as a chthonic deity, related to fecundity and

44 Ziółkowski, *Historia Rzymu,* p. 345.

abundance, as he was in the beginnings of Roman religion.[45] As a result, both centurions represent the "cold" cultural option, which skillfully negates any possibility of change.

The Roman soldiers are important for two reasons. Their significance emerges in relations to the endeavors of Julius Caesar and in the context of mutual relations between Egypt and Rome. Julius Caesar is a leader that can be abandoned by his allies, like Pompey; in any case, all the events of the tragedy lead to this conclusion. However, Julius Caesar is not a slave to the antiquated structure of his nation on which he has no influence, as Brzozowski wanted. When Julius Caesar contributes to Pompey's death, he mostly seals his own fate: he forces the Romans to turn against each other in the civil war, based on the decision and whim of an individual, which goes against the political nature of Roman citizens.

However, in the issue of Roman-Egyptian relations, Her plays the key role. Norwid cleverly uses him as a manipulator who operates on the living organism of Egyptian conviction about the cultural continuity of the State on the Nile. These operations are aptly illustrated by his behavior when the Harpist's song goes silent and the voices of delighted crowds and cries of legion soldiers erupt:

> A CROWD OF VOICES
> The singer has finished, because there would be no other end to the song!
> Praising the wonders of Egypt – hence of the world!. . .

45 For the history of the image of Mars in Roman mythology, see M. Grant, *Myths of the Greeks and Romans*, London 1962. Originally, Mars was a deity of the Roman Latin municipality located on Palatine Hill and performed both functions, simultaneously related to abundance and war. "The figure of Mars," notes Tadeusz Zieliński, "is linked to our idea of war; Mars was the god of war wherever the character of his cult is more or less clear to us; therefore, we should assume that it was also the case for the Palatine municipality, from its very beginnings. Italy had a common custom in case of a national disaster: the people dedicated the entire harvest of the following spring to Mars. This was the so-called *ver sacrum*. Animals and plants were sacrificed immediately; as for people, the people waited until the children grew, and then, under the leadership of Mars, they had to collectively leave their homeland and look for new abodes; of course, this process exposed them to endless war adventures. This is a highly possible explanation for the creation of the municipality on Palatine Hill. Originally, the community had two tasks: defend itself and feed itself; one was a necessary condition of the other. . . . This necessity explains the double nature of Mars: he is both the god of war and the god of abundance. This dual nature was due to his identification with both war and land cultivation; moreover, both activities were centered around the eight summer months, from March to October – the most ancient Rome did not know winter expeditions." T. Zieliński, *Religia Rzeczypospolitej Rzymskiej*, Toruń 2000, pp. 151 ff.

AT THE CENTURIONS' TABLE
Victory to the Legions! from the British Isles to the Nile. . .
Long live *divine Julius*!

HER
A prophet who preached the truth
To the people, for the richness of content rightly fell silent.
But he is not the only one who drinks from the holy spring –
Psymach's student! Take him with your dithyramb to the Greeks
And equal him to *Homer* (Pwsz, Vol. 5, p. 75).

The lyre player misunderstood Her's intentions; it was not at this moment that he began creating *Hereida*: an account of the brave pursuits of his employer. He seemingly alluded to the works of Homer to accompany the sublime Egyptian song with an accurately chosen Greek piece. The meaning of Her's statement is ambiguous, but the dithyramb was most probably meant to praise the Egyptian lyre player. Demonstrating a common source, i.e. similar origin and pedigree of Egyptian and Greek culture, is massive deceit on Her's part, since for both cultures took their mutual difference for granted, as they emphasized in texts of different types. Norwid also must have been aware of this fact, since in *Tyrtej,* Kleokarp asserts a difference between Egyptian and Greek homes: "Indeed, this is not the entrance to an Egyptian house: where men are occupied with feminine matters in the backyard, and the activity and language of women reverberate all around" (Pwsz, Vol. 4, p. 482).

Her delicately silences the unruly pupil and the convenient situation goes to waste. At the time, Her's task was to redefine the concept of Egyptian permanence. Taking advantage of the Hellenic roots of the ruling dynasty, he wanted to show that the Greek and Egyptian cultures had common roots. By speaking after the legion soldiers' cries, he seeks to demonstrate that a new strong state will emerge from this permanent relationship under the auspices of Rome. Thus, in Act II, he is shown as an advocate for the Roman order on the Nile; he is supposed to fulfil the function of an organizer of social imagination and to introduce several significant shifts in the Egyptian imaginarium of cultural memory in the process.

In *Kleopatra i Cezar,* Norwid raises an issue that results from the striking relationship between art and religion. At the heart of his interest lies the idea of the immortality of the soul, which accompanies the characters at every turn in the form of different props. Norwid is particularly fascinated with Egyptian art, and he expresses this fascination in works such as the essay on the National Exhibition:

> But here is the granite gate of the ancient Egyptian Temple that I know very well. Having walked through the gate, one encounters two rows of lying Sphinxes, with talipot palm trees interspersed between them – then, the stairs of the temple, surrounded with Sphinx columns on four sides. The whole temple, on the outside and the inside, abounds with hieroglyphs. We are accustomed to seeing worn out, faded hieroglyphs – and this fact makes the view even more special, for the wisdom of the main lines and the great seriousness of the whole are so brightly and comprehensively specked with hieroglyphs that one may guess that three thousand years ago, when the hieroglyphs were fresh in color, only the great size of the temple could mitigate the garish effect (Pwsz, Vol. 6, p. 206).

Norwid emphasizes that he was impressed not so much by the temple itself, as he knew its shape and size before, but rather by the hieroglyphs painted before the exhibition. His deliberations touch upon two issues: he analyzes the temple building and the hieroglyphs as an architectural-symbolic whole and connects the unusual proportions of the building with the fact that the hieroglyphs fill it completely. After a moment, Norwid discovers that the hieroglyphs are contemporary, but this discovery does not contradict his earlier findings. After all, he began by stating that usually, Egyptian writing can only be admired in its obliterated, damaged version; paradoxically, this mystification allows Norwid to lose himself for a moment in this quasi-authentic intensity of Egyptian architecture.

The above remarks were necessary to understand a certain phenomenon present in *Kleopatra i Cezar*. Norwid's tragedy has no real conclusion: the closer we are to the ending, the less we know. However, we may note that Norwid portrays Egyptian culture in detail – especially in Act I – with focus on the relationship between material culture and the belief in the immortal soul. We observe a relationship of equivalence among various types of props that accompany the life of the court and those that accompany eternal life. The more attention the Egyptians devote to cult objects, such as mummies that appear at the Queen's meals, the greater the chances of preserving the continuity of the nation's existence. In *Kleopatra i Cezar,* immortality is understood as an uninterrupted chain of matter in which the living constitute a natural extension of the mummified bodies of their dead ancestors. The future is an extension of the series of deaths, with pretenses at life, such as painted faces and bright colors on sarcophaguses.

We may hypothesize that these meticulous descriptions served to show the weakness of Egyptian culture, namely how the Romans, who used the skills and knowledge of people like Her, tried to remodel the world of Egyptian convictions and beliefs. In other words, it is the story of a nation that is slowly losing its soul and spirituality, as it is constantly being deprived of its cultural essence.

Norwid observes a phenomenon that Jan Assmann calls "monumental discourse," which concerns the characteristics of Egyptian writing:

> The first written monuments were political manifestos in service of the emerging state, and one might categorize them as "prospective memory." They relate to the present as if to a "future past," formulating a record that is meant to preserve the present in the cultural memory to come. This clearly had two main purposes: the first, to guarantee the durability of the outcome of these actions by capturing them in stone and housing them in a sacred setting that would be permanent and would be open to the world of gods; the second was to create a means of chronological orientation by recording the main event of a year, and then naming the year after it.[46]

Assmann focuses on the absence of holy or canonical texts in Egypt, in the sense that we know from Judean and Hellenic cultures. Judean books or Homeric epics, which constituted the rules of conduct and legal norms for these communities, in Egypt were replaced by the temple: it was the "visual medium"[47] – hieroglyphic scrypt filling the inside of the temple – that underwent canonization. After Jacob Burckhardt, Assmann foregrounds that the older and weaker the Egyptian state was, the more importance it attached to the permanence of the rules which determined the transmission of information for the future, especially those of a sacred and political nature. Thus, it was the temples that provided the continuity of Egyptian culture, while the texts written on their walls ensured that the Egyptians would never forget their identity. Assmann calls this phenomenon a ritual coherence. While in the Hellenic and Judean cultures, there occurred a shift from ritual to textual coherence, and the primary texts received supplements in the form of commentaries – see the Alexandrian Philological School – in the Egyptian culture, the institution of commenting on once created texts did not appear at all. Former genres continued despite the passage of time, in such a way that the dating of many inscriptions still remains extremely problematic.

In his *Notatki z mitologii,* Norwid describes the tomb of Ozymandias. We can easily see that he was particularly puzzled by how the Egyptians functionalized the tomb space by linking the interior design with symbolic contents, especially those that concerned different views of the world, moral precepts, and accounts of past events.

> Nearby, ten stadions away from the first graves of virgins devoted to Jupiter etc., etc. The size of a colossus (image). A generalized inscription referring to the enormity of the image by means of a metaphor about moral greatness. . . . / Atrium: victories over

46 Assmann, *Cultural Memory*. . ., p. 149

47 Assmann, *Cultural Memory*. . ., p. 151.

> rebellious Bactria – a multitude of armies – the monarch conquers – his *lion* beside him: it fights along with him and helps him – prisoners, prisoners of war *without hands* v. fought with fear – a passage. . . . / Then a hall with the king in vivid colors and with edible exquisiteness, and the inscription of the feast expenses. / Next – the Holy Bible with the inscription: cures for the soul. / The king shows Osiris that he has completed everything (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 286).[48]

From the perspective of Plato's *Laws*, the vitality of ancient formulas was to the advantage of Egypt, which was constantly immersed in the past and did not lose the knowledge about its past self. The modern age evaluated this phenomenon differently. Despite the discovery of Champollion, who decoded the hieroglyphic inscription on the Rosetta Stone[49] and, thus, helped to understand Egyptian

48 Norwid took this description from Diodorus Siculus. In the Amsterdam edition of Diodorus' works, which the poet most probably used, the key fragments of this description are as follows: "Ils rapportent que le tombeau du Roi surnommé Osimandué, étoit placé à dix stades de la clôture des premiers tombeaux qu'on dit être des concubines de Jupiter. L'entrée du tombeau dont nous parlons est un vestibule bâti de pierres de plusieurs couleurs; sa longueur est de deux cens pieds, & sa hauteur de quarante-cinq coudées. Au fortir delà on trouve un Peristile quarré dont chaque côté a quatre cens pieds de long; mais ce sont des animaux chacun d'une seule pierre taillée à l'antique & de seize coudées de haut qui tiennent lieu de colomnes. (. . .) De ce vestibule, on passe dans un autre Peristile bien plus beau que le premier. On y voit gravé sur la pierre l'Histoire de la guerre d'Osimandué contre les révoltés de la Bactriane. On dit qu'il avoit mené contre eux quatre cens mille hommes d'Infanterie & vingt mille chevaux: cette Armée étoit partagée en quatre corps, commandés chacun par un de ses fils: On voit donc sur la muraille du devant le Roi qui attaque les remparts dont le Fleuve bat le pié, & qui combat contre quelques troupes qui se sont avancées, ayant à côté de lui un Lion terrible qui le défend avec ardeur. Quelques-uns disent que le Sculpteur a suivi en cela la vérité, & que le Roi avoit apprivoisé & nourri de sa main un Lion qui le soutenoit dans les combats & qui avoit mis souvent ses ennemis en suite: mais d'autres prétendent que ce Roi étant extraordinairement fort & courageux avoit voulu marquer ces qualités dont il étoit fort vain, par le symbole du Lion" (*Histoire universelle de Diodore de Sicile*, traduit en François par M. l'Abbé Terrasson, Vol. 1, Amsterdam 1743, pp. 81–83). If Norwid had accessed the work of J.G. Wilkinson, as suggests Gomulicki, and which seems doubtful, he could have acquainted himself with a critical discussion of Diodorus' account and a thorough explanation of the monument's symbolism. See J.G. Wilkinson, *Manners and customs of the ancient Egyptians, including their private life, government, laws, arts, manufactures, religion, and early history; derived from a comparison of the paintings, sculptures, and monuments still existing, with the accounts of ancient authors*, Vol. 1, London 1837, pp. 109–113.

49 Norwid knew about this discovery, and in his notebooks, he included the names of Cleopatra and Ptolemy decoded by Champollion. Pwsz, Vol. 7, pp. 258–259.

texts, their culture was long regarded as "mute" and one that did not leave any important texts behind, which did not allow its spirit to become visible and verbalized. Hegel states:

> We must recognize the superiority of a people that has consigned its spirit to works of language over one that has only left mute works of art behind it for posterity. But we must at the same time bear in mind that no written documents were yet in existence among the Egyptians because spirit had not yet clarified itself but had consumed all its energy in what was indeed an external strife, as is apparent in the works of art.[50]

Hegel already knew about the existence of the translated texts, but he notes that the scrolls found beside the mummies contained mainly inventories of the estate of the deceased. Therefore, these were surprising finds for contemporary people, who saw in them something completely different. For a long time, they did not manage to understand that Egyptian writing was an element of visual art, and the writings on papyri belonged to the sphere of economy and everyday life.

Norwid shares Hegel's fascination with the Egyptian notion of soul's immortality, taken from Herodotus. However, Norwid directs his interest toward the temple space, where the character of Psymach plays a key role. We easily notice in Norwid's notebooks that he knew about the existence of Egyptian episodes in the biographies of figures such as Thales and Pythagoras. Norwid is probably close to acknowledging the theory of the eastern origins of philosophy, or at least some of its features, such as attachment to the study of the natural world. He uses his knowledge to shape Psymach's biography, as it reverses the natural order, in which one traveled to the Nile to acquire specialized knowledge or wisdom. Contrary to this natural order, the philosopher and architect Psymach received his education in Athens and now, at Cleopatra's court, he can complete his key project.

Norwid connects several significant issues in threads involving Psymach. First, he depicts an Egyptian philosopher who received his education in Greece and is subject to the rules of rational thought. Second, he refers to an episode recorded by Plutarch, which concerns the last days of Cleopatras spent in a tomb. Through the character of Psymach, Norwid reinterprets this fact by making him build a syncretic building that combines the features of an amphitheater and a tomb. Third, this rebuilt tomb is a key reference to the issue of cultural memory. It also constitutes the ultimate proof of the Hellenization of Egypt and the subjection of its specific understanding of continuity to the rules of the Greek-Roman character of the spectacle, which will make Cleopatra's defeat public and show

50 G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 325.

her death to the Alexandrian crowd. This gesture schematically transplants the structure of *polis* into the temple and tomb space, thus showing the consequences of manipulations experienced by Egyptian memory.

At the end of Act II, before the climax, in which Shechera reveals the truth about Julius Caesar's death, Psymach rescues his student from the guards, maybe the same student that found himself in Her's company. The student experiences the torment of love's disappointment. Psymach tries to console him with philosophy, understood in a peculiar Hellenic manner:

> Allow me!
> I will lift this mind with a strong thesis – with a healthy
> Content I'll support it, I'll take it home or raise it,
> And put it to a training worthy of a philosopher (Pwsz, Vol. 5, pp. 98–99).

Psymach uses architectural metaphors to refer to the human mind; using philosophical sophisms, he intends to eradicate the weakness of a man who has no control over his emotions after experiencing a rejection from his beloved. With the use of rational arguments, Psymach seeks to strengthen the man's reason, which he imagines as a logically constructed edifice. In Psymach's view, human nature is an unhistorical entity, which should aim to completely free itself from the constant fluctuations of history. Therefore, according to the architect's view, "man" is paradoxically different from all other creatures, because only he can avoid the transformations of the historical world, although he is its main creator. Psymach appears to operate on dualistic terms, accepting only what he can rationally explain, while rejecting the rest. He does not reveal who was his teacher in Athens, but he seems to have just finished reading Descartes, Spinoza, or Leibniz. In fact, Psymach is the blueprint for a parody of a modern rationalist philosopher, with Spinoza's words as his motto – *non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intelligere* ("do not laugh, do not cry, do not hate, but understand") –Psymach exposes himself to criticism similar to the one Lev Shestov aimed at the aforementioned philosophers. The fundamental error of rationalism is not that it seeks truth at all costs, but that it tries to justify the claims considered to be true only through reason, transforms them into timeless rules to govern the whole world, and subordinates God himself to these rules.[51] Such a character is well-suited to discredit Cleopatra's cultural project, in which she

51 On the criticism of rationalism in Lev Shestov, see, among others, C. Wodziński, *Wiedza a zbawienie. Studium myśli Lwa Szestowa*, Warsaw 1991 and A. Sawicki, *Absurd, rozum, egzystencjalizm w filozofii Lwa Szestowa*, Kraków 2000.

planned to transform Egypt into the center of the world, while abandoning its specificity and centuries-old tradition.

By presenting Psymach in a short passage of the middle act, Norwid can grant him a much more significant role in the final part of *Kleopatra i Cezar*. In the passage, Psymach pursues Cleopatra's great architectural project:

> PSYMACH
> Happy are those who may speak to the descendants,
> But we should gain recognition among the contemporary:
> The amphitheater will welcome in Egypt
> Envoys from the whole world who will return home
> And worldwide Fame with them
> (For Egypt never stood like today. . .)
>
> CONDOR
> Indeed!
> This is what I'm saying – but there are some who believe
> The opposite, and say that we await wars from all directions. . .
>
> OLYMP
> Cleopatra is the ruler of the world!. . .
>
> PSYMACH
> It's more dignified
> To understand a monument than recognize truth in some stories.
> One day! they won't know the difficulties overcome
> That the magician encountered. . .
> The goal was to,
> Like a newborn, subtract
> The amphitheatre from the necropolis hall:
> Here – the grave's door, there appears a front –
> A thing I will prove to you with a gesture (Pwsz, Vol. 5, pp. 129–130)!

So eagerly undertaken by Psymach, Cleopatra's project constitutes a denial of the achievements of Egyptian culture, which based on a permanent separation of the sepulchral and temple sphere from everyday life. The incorporation of an amphitheater within the sepulcher would lead to the transformation of Egyptian tradition's permanence into a show for deputies from the entire world. Psymach wants to abandon the rule of construction in line with the canons of Egyptian architecture; instead, he seeks solutions within the universal laws of eternal reason, of decidedly Hellenic origin. Therefore, the queen's plan attempts to break the continuity of Egyptian culture in the name of a new order: the Hellenistic empire ruled by Mark Antony and Cleopatra.

From the very beginning, Cleopatra questions the values associated with Egypt's continuity. In this respect in particular she is an equal partner to Julius Caesar, as they both seek to subject Rome and Egypt to thorough reforms that will completely transform the habits of their inhabitants. This dilemma is the source of Cleopatra's internal conflict. Can one destroy with impunity the world of beliefs and traditions, developed through thousands of years of application, in the name of restoring Egypt's authentic glory and imperial power? The answer can only be negative, and yet Cleopatra realizes that she is at the point of no return, even though her efforts will inevitably lead to the decomposition of the Egyptian concept of permanence. The queen tries to transform the pretense of greatness into genuine power – after all, the definition of "pretense" is the topic of the discussion between Kondor and Eukast – but her efforts are doomed to failure. Therefore, she can now only maintain her image and create a memory of herself other than the one that haunts her:

> Married to a child with whom I shared my bed,
> Like a tiny gazelle,
> But deprived of a *brother* when he became a *husband*,
> And knowing neither of them!. . .
> – Neither a *father*, for he was in exile
> (At Pompey's, the one who's walking here to his death. . .)
> – A *mother*, because the memory of her dissolved in a fog –
> A *sister*, because she became my rival to the throne –
> *Girlfriends*, because the Ptolemaic name
> Of Cleopatra hates virgins of equal standing...
> Never – nowhere – nobody at heart (Pwsz, Vol. 5, p. 26)!

As Agnieszka Ziołowicz notes,

> [in] the historical tragedy *Kleopatra i Cezar*, Norwid crosses the boundaries of history, while respecting the requirements of historicity associated with this genre. He constructs a historiosophical synthesis of European civilization, situated on the borderline of drama, treatise, and essay, by primarily focusing on the phenomenon of cultural confrontation.[52]

Ziołowicz also refers to Żwirkowska and emphasizes the diversity of matter Norwid used to create a complex account of the relations in the ancient world which affected the history of European culture. To the above remarks, we should add that memory plays a highly significant role in this account, since for Norwid it becomes a sphere into which he transfers the tragical nature of the presented

52 A. Ziołowicz, *Dramat i romantyczne 'ja.' Studium podmiotowości w dramaturgii polskiej doby romantyzmu*, Krakow 2002, p. 316.

events. No conflict happens during the action of Norwid's drama: the fundamental dimension of the story's tragic nature manifests itself in the world of the characters' mental images. It is a theater of memory performed before the readers' eyes, which allows us to reach far back into history and, at the same time, take a step toward the nineteenth century.

In *Kleopatra i Cezar*, Norwid changes the meaning of a tragic conflict, as he transposes an ancient pattern to adapt it to the historicization of characters' consciousness. As Paul Ricoeur observes,

> The tragic properly so called does not appear until the theme of predestination to evil – to call it by its name – comes up against the theme of *heroic* greatness; fate must first feel the resistance of freedom, rebound (so to speak) from the hardness of the hero, and finally crush him, before the pre-eminently tragic emotion – φόβος – can be born.[53]

Norwid's adjustment strips the freedom away from the characters by making them aware that their fate has already been decided. This device simultaneously deprives these characters of a chance to achieve greatness by embracing the suffering for which they are destined. This mechanism is especially true of Julius Caesar, Cleopatra, and Mark Antony. As Reinhold Niebuhr claims, true tragedy is only born when unearned suffering befalls the character as a result of his or her own action. Niebuhr notes the following: "In pure tragedy the suffering is self-inflicted. The hero does not transmute what happens to him but initates the suffering by his own act."[54] Instead, in Norwid's work emerges a passive submission of protagonists to the whims of fate: therefore, the tragic nature of their story is incomplete and does not in the slightest concern their future. Hence, the domination of the element of memory, contemplation of past events from the protagonists' lives, or of the distant past of whole peoples. By looking back, the characters in *Kleopatra i Cezar* seek an answer to the question of why their fate was marked by an irrevocable shortcoming.

Cleopatra recollects her past deprived of home and subordinated to the interests of the dynasty. The character called Her recalls the time spent in captivity that shaped him as a thinker who devotes his life to knowledge. The Roman centurions reflect on the land they left in Italy. Psymach remembers his Athenian experiences, while Eukast constantly recalls the memory of the power of ancient Egypt.

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53 P. Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of the Evil*, trans. E. Buchanan, Boston 1969, p. 218.

54 R. Niebuhr, *Beyond Tragedy: Essays on the Christian Interpretation of History*, New York 1937, p. 180.

In fact, the tragic dimension of the events depicted in *Kleopatra i Cezar* relates to the different dimensions of individual protagonists' memory, who find themselves in constant confrontation with their visions of the past. No new whole emerges from this tangle of memories, due to the lack of historiosophical order that could reasonably interpret these diverging stories. And when different "memories" assume a similar form, they lead to an instrumentalization of the past, imposed as a specific worldview.

Thus, Norwid asks a subversive question: how can one cope with tragic conflict when it is anchored solely in the past and is a potential for behaviors from which no future can emerge? We may conclude that Norwid wrote *Kleopatra i Cezar* to show the disintegration of the original form of ancient tragedy, which offered a chance of experiencing a catharsis. In the Christian world, the patient acceptance of suffering is decidedly insufficient.

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Norwid consistently returned to Greek history whenever he tried to conceptualize the issue of collective, supraindividual memory. His aim was to find the primary, historical reasons that determined the current state of certain aspects of European life. This approach agrees with Nietzsche's remarks on experiencing history, including his rejection of monumental and antiquarian executions.

> Thus, the person of experience and reflection writes history. Anyone who has not lived through something greater and higher than everyone else will not know how to interpret anything great and lofty from the past. The utterance of the past is always an oracular pronouncement. You will understand it only as a master builder of the future and as a person who knows about the present. People now explain the extraordinarily deep and far-reaching effect of Delphi by the particular fact that the Delphic priests had precise knowledge about the past. It is appropriate now to understand that only the man who builds the future has a right to judge the past.[55]

Epimenides and *Kleopatra i Cezar* find their roots in Norwid's and Nietzsche's common fascination with the unhistorical quality of Hellenic thought. The eponymous protagonist of *Epimenides* is the Cretan prophet Epimenides who embodies the times before the prominence of the Delphic oracle. Thus, Epimenides constitutes a study in archaic memory, which defines social order through an undefined mythical past. As for *Kleopatra i Cezar*, it concerns Greece as a Roman province, whose intellectual and artistic excellence now only belongs to a centuries-old past. In this case, Greek memory acts as the paradigm for a

55 Nietzsche, *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, p. 71.

universal matrix, which allows one to freely shape the sphere of social imagination and perform complex operations on the understanding of the past. This memory is completely rationalized and strongly rhetoricized: therefore, it is a dangerous tool of indoctrination.

Noteworthy, Norwid focuses on two aspects of Greek memory: the earliest one and the most recent one. Thereby, he shows all the key consequences of this phenomenon for contemporary human spirituality and its relations with history. Norwid does so, because he considers history devoid of memory as a great threat. Therefore, he shows that history without memory is sterilizing and harmful; instead, he present the opportunities that stem from the skillful use of the potential of memory and history combined.

Chapter V. Athens and Sparta in Norwid's *Tyrtej*

1. Sparta in the Athenian Mirror

In his deliberations regarding the nature of a historical fact, the modern historian Edward Hallett Carr summarizes the current state of knowledge at our disposal, when considering the topic of ancient Greece from the time of the Persian Wars:

> History has been called an enormous jig-saw with a lot of missing parts. But the main trouble does not consist in the lacunae. Our picture of Greece in the fifth century B.C. is defective, not primarily because so many of the bits have been accidentally lost, but because it is, by and large, the picture formed by a tiny group of people in the city of Athens. We know a lot about what fifth-century Greece looked like to an Athenian citizen, but hardly anything about what it looked like to a Spartan, a Corinthian, or a Theban – not to mention a Persian, or a slave or other non-citizen resident in Athens. Our picture has been preselected and predetermined for us, not so much by accident as by people who were consciously or unconsciously imbued with a particular view and thought the facts which supported that view worth preserving.[1]

Carr mentions the unusual situation of historians studying antiquity and the Middle Ages, who take comfort in "the illusion of having all the facts at (their) disposal ... because the few known facts are all facts of history."[2] However, this illusion is balanced with a conviction of the immensity of irretrievably lost information. These facts regarding the past – gathered and passed on to future generations – constitute the specificity of historical discourse which, as Hayden White observes, "wages everything on the true, while fictional discourse is interested in the real."[3] While a historian is forced to investigate relations of facts and truth, a writer requires them only to create a potential world that could occur. Between classic historiography – with which Norwid could have contact – and ancient historiography, there exists a fundamental codependency explicated by Frank Ankersmit, both founded on the basis of a conviction that one can describe history without a bias:

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1 E. H. Carr, *What is History?*, London 1990, p. 13.

2 Carr, *What is History?*, p. 13.

3 H. White, "Introduction: Historical Fiction, Fictional History, and Historical Reality," *Rethinking History*, Vol. 9, no. 2/3, June/Sep. 2005, p. 147.

> Since antiquity, historians have recognized that the historian's political and moral convictions strongly determine the nature of his accounts of the past. In the second century, Lucian urged the historian, just as Ranke would do some two millennia later in exactly the same words, "to tell the past as it has actually been;" again like Ranke, this primarily meant to him that the historian should write like an impartial judge and avoid all partisanship.[4]

Each historical representation[5] focused on antiquity stems from a conviction that facts which serve as a foundation for substituting the past are not only the singular basis for reaching past events but are also absolutely necessary and could not be different. After all, ancient historians selected them following Lucian's rule of objectivity. Unlike Carr, White judges the situation of medievalists and historians of antiquity as that of "too few sources,"[6] which nonetheless does not change the fact that – along with writers – they cope with a similar problem of a surplus of processes and phenomena in need od description. This phenomenon of material selection, often marginalized by the nineteenth-century historiography, succinctly depicts Norwid's efforts which resulted in *Tyrtej* (Tyrtaeus). In the case of Sparta, both of the abovementioned issues – the illusion of possessing the entirety of knowledge and the necessity of selecting historical processes when constructing a fictional world – appear to be of the utmost importance.

Carr's opinion that underlines the ideological engagement of ancient authors and the influence of their sympathies and political convictions on the image of ancient communities particularly applies to Spartan history, accessible only thanks to later indirect descriptions. The modern image of Sparta appeared when the Athenian democracy degenerated: this state of affairs was fought with by means of juxtaposing the egoism of contemporary Greeks with the bygone ideal of citizens who subject their lives to state interest. This view refers to the works of Plato and Xenophon, who noticed in the state created by Lycurgus, as Werner Jaeger claims, "the work of a single educational genius, with the authority of a dictator and the foresight of a philosopher."[7] In Plato's thought, laws codified by Lycurgus and treated as a foundation for Spartan statehood, contributed to

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4 F.R. Ankersmit, "In Praise of Subjectivity," in: *Historical Representation*, Stanford 2001, p. 75.

5 On the notion of representation and its difference from depiction, see M. P. Markowski, *Pragnienie obecności. Filozofia reprezentacji od Platona do Kartezjusza*, Gdańsk 1999.

6 White, "Introduction: Historical," pp. 150–151.

7 W. Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture,* Vol. 1: *Archaic Greece. The Mind of Athens*, trans. G. Highet, Oxford 1946, p. 84.

the implementation of the philosophical ideal of education by ensuring Spartans with safety based on constant readiness to fight for their fatherland's wellbeing.

The key role in creating Spartans' image as people treating courage as the only virtue played the poet Tyrtaeus, the author of exhortative-military elegies[8] that call for resistance atainst Messenian rebels. At the foundation of the ancient tradition that ascribes to Tyrtaeus Athenian provenance and an Apollo-ordained mission during the Second Messenian War, we may notice tendencies opposite to Plato's lofty education – significantly tendencies anti-Lacedaemonian – foregrounding the decline of Spartan individuality, militarism, and imperial goals. According to this tradition, a lame and half-blind poet commanding the Spartan army ridiculed the idea of a hierarchical and punitive nation, devoid of influence on the state's fate.

As Elizabeth Rawson – the monographer of Sparta in the history of European culture – informatively shows, the zenith of ancient reception of the Spartan regime happened in the times of Plato and Aristotle. The former presents an insightful characteristic of Sparta in *Laws* and the latter in *Politics*.[9] Plato traces all the regimes back to two basic modes of governance: monarchy and democracy. For him, Persia and Athens embody the degeneration of these two primal forms of political systems. In particular, he contrasts Athens' demise due to its citizens' blind faith in own wisdom and the resulting rejection of laws with reasonable regimes of Sparta and Crete, which retained proportions in selecting elements from both regimes. As Rawson observes, "[h]ere too we see Plato's refusal to distinguish between ancient and modern Sparta."[10] The presence of public speeches proved help Plato differentiate between Athens and Sparta: "you'll find every Greek takes it for granted that my city likes talking and does a great deal of it, whereas Sparta is a city of few words and Crete cultivates the intellect rather than the tongue."[11] Some elements of the Spartan system allow Plato to construct a project of laws for a colony on Crete, whose regime was to be founded on property equality and limited contacts with the outside world. This colony's citizens were to receive identical allotments with no right to sell them. The possession of gold and silver was to be prohibited as well. Moreover, Plato proposes that the

8 See K. Bartol, "Tyrtajos," in: *Literatura Grecji starożytnej*, Vol. 1: *Epika – liryka – dramat*, ed. H. Podbielski, Lublin 2005, pp. 329–330.

9 See E. Rawson, *The Spartan Tradition in European Thought*, Oxford 2005, ch. 5.

10 Rawson, *The Spartan Tradition*, p. 69.

11 Plato, "Laws" in: *Plato Complete Works*, ed. J.M. Cooper, Indianapolis – Cambridge 1997, pp. 1335–1336.

state would elect who can start a family and then take over the entirety of care over their children.

The times of Aristotle greatly informed his opinions, because he could not experience the period of Spartan greatness and domination. Thus, he perceives its history from the perspective of Sparta's defeat in the Battle of Leuctra in 371 BC and the later epoch, which saw the demise of the once powerful state. Plato's works are the main point of reference for Aristotle, who usually presents his concepts as a polemic with his master. Due to the disappearance of his later work, *On the Lacedaemonian Constitution*, its image in Aristotle's works remains fragmentary and difficult to verify. Aristotle's *Politics* challenges the balance of Spartan regime praised by Plato and based on institutions analogous to the forms of governance characteristic of monarchy (kings), oligarchy (Gerousia), and democracy (ephors). Aristotle targets what he considers the false idea of a system that does not precisely determine the legal situation of helots and women and, since women constitute half of the *polis*, a good "lawgiver must therefore bear them in mind."[12] By that phrase Aristotle means limiting women's influence on the government; he also firmly opposes the issue of inheritance, which leads to a situation in which "nearly two-fifths of the whole country are held by women."[13] The philosopher devotes a considerable amount of attention to political institutions in Sparta and underlines the inappropriate way of selecting ephors from among poor representatives of the peasantry, as he deems them susceptible to bribery. He also emphasizes the peculiar method of choosing the members of the Gerousia by the power of citizens' shouts. Aristotle criticizes hereditary kingship since the competition and conflict between the two kings – assumed by the lawgiver – was to foster no durability of the system. He praises the fact that the state assumed duties connected to citizens' education but, nonetheless, claims that true bravery should be shaped reasonably, since neither wolves, cannibals, nor thieves are labeled as brave, and this is the only kind of bravery he views important for Spartan people. Aristotle is fundamentally preoccupied with a question of how a state constructed to achieve military goals can effectively function in times of peace. In this he notices the fundamental dysfunctionality of the Spartan regime.

12 P. Vidal-Naquet, *The Black Hunter. Forms of Thought and Forms of Society in the Greek World*, trans. A. Szegedy-Maszak, Baltimore – London 1986, p. 206.

13 Aristotle, "Politics" in: *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. J. Barnes, Princeton 1991, p. 37.

Just these few facts show that there exist irremovable discrepancies in the image of Sparta preserved from the ancient times. There were many attempts in history to resolve these issues in various ways. Due to the proposed topic, I will limit myself to a few selected examples of such solutions, linked to the growing interest in Sparta and commencing with the pan-European Hellenism at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

For Winckelmann, both Athens and Sparta – the latter to a lesser extent – became the source of inspiration for creating an image of the Greek beauty founded on "a noble simplicity and sedate grandeur."[14] Rawson writes: "[Winckelmann] describes the Spartan youth descended from heroes, undeformed by swaddling clothes, brought up to sleep on the ground, to swim and wrestle; and how they had to attend naked every tenth day before the ephors, who ordered them to diet if they were getting fat."[15] In Herder's writings, despite numerous reservations about the closure of the Spartan world toward anything not covered by Lycurgus' rules, we find a differentiation between two poles of human development, that is the "Thermopile principle," which he links with patriotism, and the "Athens principle," which he links with self-conscious and enlightened citizens. However, Herder could not accept Lycurgus's rejection of natural growth and change. Moreover, when criticizing Greek states that requested too much of their citizens and resorted to controlling and forming their lives, Herder probably means Sparta.

Only Friedrich Schlegel significantly recognized the Spartan culture, for whom the Doric and, in consequence, the Spartan constituted, as Maria Kalinowska claims, "the older, purer, and truly Hellenic branch of the Greek culture, in which two most significant creations of a Greek spirit had shaped: music and physical exercise."[16] In Schlegel's view, the inhabitants of Laconia cherished not law but beauty, noticeable not only in lyrical poetry and sculpture but also in the functional self-organization of society expressed through the care for system's durability, which was to be the distinctive heritage of the Dorians. Nevertheless, we should not forget that for Schlegel only Athens achieved a combination of Ionian and Doric elements, whereas Solon's legislature was considered "the most human and wise."[17] However, appreciating Athens instead of Sparta was a phenomenon

14 J.J. Winckelmann, *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks*. . ., p. 34.

15 Rawson, *The Spartan Tradition*, p. 309.

16 M. Kalinowska, *Los. Miłość. Sacrum. Studia o dramacie romantycznym i jego dwudziestowiecznej recepcji*, Toruń 2003, p. 139.

17 Kalinowska, *Los. Miłość*, p. 140.

characteristic for the nineteenth-century notions that considered the ancient Greece to be a land of the harmony of nature and culture, perfect beauty expressed in art, and a symbol of freedom opposing any oppression,[18] which evidently did not fit into the image of Sparta, particularly due to the repressive character of authorities who usurped the inhabitants' freedom.

In 1811, the publishing of François René de Chateaubriand's *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem et de Jérusalem à Paris* had a breakthrough impact on the shaping of the nineteenth-century image of Sparta; the author considered the discovery of Spartan ruins the crucial result of his journey. The French traveler observing remnants of an ancient state underlines the durability of memory rooted in the European mentality thanks to the influence of the Spartan struggle to achieve glorious fame:

> If the ruins to which illustrious memories are attached make clearly visible the vanity of all things here below, we can still agree that the names which survive from those empires, and which immortalise those times and places, mean something. After all, let us not show too much scorn for glory: nothing is more beautiful, except virtue. The height of happiness would be to unite the one with the other in this life, and that was the subject of that unique prayer the Spartans addressed to the gods: '*Ut pulchra bonis adderent!* Let virtue be added to beauty!'[19]

Led by Pausanias' and Barthélemy's descriptions, Chateaubriand confronted his knowledge with the visited sites. He attempted to measure the area where the Spartan fortress once existed and reconstruct the city's topography of four districts, having chosen a characteristic hill and a theater below as points of reference. However, he soon deserted a geometrician's meticulousness to seek places of worship among the few remains of Spartan buildings. The reconstruction of destroyed Sparta yielded to the conviction of the necessary creation of a long-gone spirit by a union of imagination and erudition. Especially fond of Alcman's poetry, Chateaubriand freely took advantage of the ample past of Sparta and people connected to it in order to find inside himself admiration for the desolate ruins. Chateaubriand beholds the imagined city with the awareness of Sparta's irreversible loss and the fact that the only connection between the noble history and contemporaneity is the civilizational need for finding one's roots and

18 See M. Kalinowska, *Grecja romantyków. Studia nad obrazem Grecji w literaturze romantycznej*, Toruń 1994, pp. 107–136.

19 F.R. Chauteaubriand, "Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem et de Jérusalem à Paris," trans. A.S. Kline, *Poetry In Translation* 2011, p. 73. https://www.poetryintranslation.com/klineaschateaubrianditin.php, retrieved on 29 Jan 2020.

creating cultural continuity. Sparta in Chateaubriand's words is the cradle of beauty, even if it comprised a marginal aspect of militarized city's functioning:

> Since I might choose, I named one of these piles of debris the Temple of Helen; another, the tomb of Alcman. . . I was thus determined on fable, and as history recognized only the Temple of Lycurgus. I confess that to the black broth and the Crypteia. . . I prefer the memory of the only poet Sparta produced. . . and the wreath of flowers the girls of Sparta gathered for Helen on the 'island' of the Planes.[20]

Looking from over the banks of the Eurotas at the faraway remains of Sparta, Chateaubriand once again considers the impermanence of empires and the necessity of restoring their memories, even if it would connect to pondering on the "hate(ed) . . . moral code,"[21] which prevailed in the past.

Comparing Chateaubriand's journey to his contemporary excursions to the East, Olga Augustinos claims that he deeply sensed the problems of his contemporaries who could not experience the times they lived in fully and appropriately. Chateaubriand was to label this phenomenon as a rupture of organic triad connecting the present to the past and the future. Modern man lives only in the present without connection to the bygone time and cannot contemplate the coming future, for as soon as it solidifies as the present moment, it immediately escapes to the past. Thus, Chateaubriand underlines the gravity of memory, the only medium that enables perceiving reality with all complexities of its temporal aspect. Only memory may become the principle that allows us to overcome the isolation of the present and transcend this temporal barrier to unify the temporal *continuum* in the human perspective on the world. This positions Chateaubriand at the borderline between the Enlightenment and Romanticism. Augustinos claims that,

> [t]he significance of memory as an organizing force of personal and historical experience was clearly perceived during the eighteenth century. For the Enlightenment thinkers, memory establishes the continuity between past and present. For the Romantics, on the other hand, memory was the consciousness of the barriers between these two chronological planes as well as an instrument of surmounting them.[22]

Augustinos interprets Chateaubriand's stay in Sparta in accordance with his views on the role of memory. Basing on writings of previous travelers, Chateaubriand positions himself in the same line as the famous explorers of Greece, from

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20 Chauteaubriand, "Itinéraire de Paris," p. 75.

21 Chauteaubriand, "Itinéraire de Paris," p. 78.

22 O. Augustinos, *French Odysseys. Greece in French Travel Literature from the Renaissance to the Romantic Era*, Baltimore 1994, p. 177.

Pausanias to Choiseul-Gouffier, in order to verify their former findings. Chateaubriand treats previous texts not only as a source of useful information but also as proofs of human memory's durability, which constantly returns to certain particularly important places. In this reserve of panhuman memory, he spots a place for his journey, since he considers it an explorer's endeavor who, once again, would remind people of the existence of important cities or lands and approximate their current state through his artistic vision. Augustinos claims that from that place comes Chateaubriand's behavior in Sparta, when he attempts to recreate the made-up image of the city and regain Sparta for the European memory, even if it would require subjecting it to advanced artistic operations which, according to him, adequately depicted the ancient Greek idea of beauty.[23]

The key phenomenon for understanding Chateaubriand's journey to Sparta is his self-fashioned sense of solitude and the silence of the place he visits. Augustinos writes:

> In the peace of his solitude, he could give free rein to his imagination contemplating and exploring the surrounding world, trying to penetrate its mystery and capture its essence. When he visited Sparta, he tells us, he left his janissary alone tending the horses while he probed its ruins in an effort to envision its past. Silence acted as a psychological shield, excluding all undesirable intrusions. It focused attention on the author, and his surroundings for a time became his world.[24]

Silence introduced a negative aspect to the image of the admired place, because it expresses the complete destruction and absence of bygone people; it indicates vacuum and death. The sleepy stillness of the Spartan landscape is one of the key motifs dominating Chateaubriand's journey, who consequently negates any foreign intervention on the Greek soil.[25] In his framing, the history of Greece – growing in the ancient period and later diminishing – is a proof of the permanent negative presence of foreign cultures, especially the Byzantine and Turkish, which cause that land's degradation and forsake the old civilizational output. That is why Chateaubriand refers to rubbles and ruins rather than living people: only the former witnessed the lost world.

23 Augustinos, *French Odysseys*, p. 197.
24 Augustinos, *French Odysseys*, p. 204.
25 Augustinos, *French Odysseys*, p. 205.

2. Sparta in Norwid's Notebooks

The lecture of Norwid's notebooks does not suffice to form an unambiguous opinion on the poet's views regarding Sparta's regime and its role in Greek history. The first elicited observation must refer to Norwid's lapidary style, who devoted just a dozen-or-so brief fragments to Sparta while writing significantly more about Pelasgians and Egypt. However, we should emphasize that there are even fewer notes on Athens. This fact should startle, taking into account the poet's interest in the classical period of the Greek history but, once again, we can notice that Norwid investigates sources not to gather as much knowledge as possible about a topic but to immediately problematize an issue and develop his knowledge in just a few themes that interest him and appear in source material just incidentally. In the case of Sparta, it is worthwhile to quote all the available notes by Norwid:

> 30. Gnotiseauton. / Solon – Lycurgus – Socrates – Aeschylus (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 245).
>
> Leleges – Peloponnese, Sparta. / Kouretes – Epimenides (but this Spartan king that writes to Jews!!) (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 282).
>
> Always the Ionians and the Dorians, throughout the entire Greek history. Athens' supremacy from Cymon to Pericles; Sparta's – after Thebe's victory of Aegospotami – conceived and deceased with Epaminondas, until Macedonian supremacy (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 293).
>
> 312. Homer: when did he live? Did he exist? Was he Greek? Asian? An Italian? Was he blind? A beggar? Are both *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* his works? / Some say that these are rhapsodies collected by Lycurgus or Peisistratos (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 301).
>
> 866. Lycurgus, son of Sparta's king Eunomus, does not want to rule by guile and infanticide, but instead becomes a tutor to his nephew. He travels to Crete, Egypt, and Asia for the wisdom of law. He gives laws, probably based on Minos's maxims (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 303).
>
> 325. Greece: the First Messenian War. / Messenia – part of the Peloponnese, they want the Spartans' province. Guise. Twenty years, Aristodemus offers his daughter, but Messenians are defeated (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 304).
>
> Greece: 624 Draco in Athens. Athenians want written code of laws, as Spartans under Lycurgus. The Second Messenian War. Messenians defeated, despite Aristomenus' victory in 684. . . . / 345. Tyrtaeus leads the Spartans . . .. / 346. Tyrtaeus – around 716 BC, 8 vel 10 after the First Messenian War. / 347. 1. Lacedaemonian citizenship. / 2. He praises Theopompus; suggests envoys to the kings. / 3. Helots for citizens and for war. / 4. Extinguishes revolt with famine (Pwsz, Vol. 7, p. 308).

Norwid had to know plenty about Sparta, although some of his notes surprise. For instances, the first one, in which he positions four quite unexpected figures next to the sentence "know thyself" from the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. Why

does Lycurgus appear there? Most probably since the Delphic oracle initiated the laws he formulated. Even so, why does Norwid write that Lycurgus wrote down Homer's works? I am unable to answer this question. Regarding the origins of the Spartan state, Norwid accurately depicts the process of Doric and Ionian rivalry; he also pinpoints that Athenian hegemony ended with the defeat in the Peloponnesian War and the period of Spartan might finished by the hand of the Theban general Epaminondas in the Battle of Leuctra.

We notice that Norwid devotes special attention to Messenian wars and Tyrtaeus's activity. Two Norwid's translations of Tyrtaeus's works survived; thus, it is worthwhile to pay heed to them, since they aptly reveal the image of Tyrtaeus present in fantastic tragedy. First, this historical Tyrtaeus called for engagement in war efforts, even if it would cost one's life. Second, he presented battle hardships as aesthetically tempting and considered masculine strength and hoplite's bravery as a marker of human worth. Third, he proclaimed the glory of those fallen for the fatherland as rewarded with everlasting fame. Fourth, he claimed that there is no humiliation worse than exile. Fifth, which may appear to be especially interesting in the context of further deliberations, he declared faith in gods but claimed that victory depends singularly on the effort of combatants:

> The gods did not turn their eyes away;
> Whatever the enemy, number, or fate,
> Your fate is already decided by the sword,
> So put on the armor, reject the love of life (Pwsz, Vol. 1, p. 394).

It is impossible to establish why Norwid notes below his translations from Tyrtaeus that the poet valued king Theopompus. Did he want to remember that Theopompus – according to Plutarch – limited the power of the *apella*, the assembly of free citizens? During his rule, the ephors received the power to withdraw their requests in case of an unfavorable vote. And maybe it was the invention of the ephorate itself, also ascribed to Theopompus? Probably not, so maybe the reasons can be found in his victory over the Messenians, which mythologized and immortalized his name? But, if it were so, why did Norwid omit him in his tragedy? These are questions posed by scholars who find themselves in a particularly troublesome position because – barring fact comparison – no hypothesis sounds convincing. In the case of the tragedy *Tyrtej*, we will have at least a few such questions.

On the margins of deliberations about Theopompus, we should notice Norwid's note that helots were allowed to receive citizenship and participate in the war. It is directly connected to the generation of the Partheniae, which commences *Tyrtej*: "When they finally lacked blood for hecatomb, when

their phalanxes dulled under Messenian scythes, then they withdrew soldiers to widowed chambers of the Fatherland" (Pwsz, Vol. 4, p. 469). According to the tradition, the generation of men exiled from Sparta sailed to Italy and established the only Spartan colony, Taranto, around 706 BC.[26] However, there exist some discrepant versions of this event. Tadeusz Sinko indicates Justin's *Epitoma historiarum Philippicarum* in Pompey Trogue's work[27] as the source of Norwid's knowledge. This text shows that, as Pierre Vidal-Naquet writes,

> [t]he Spartans were at war with Messenia and had sworn not to return home until they were victorious. But the war dragged on and the next generation could not be born. It was decided that the young men, who had not taken the oath, should return home to Sparta and all of them should have intercourse with all the young women (*parthenoi*) . . .. It was the offspring of these promiscuous unions, *who knew their mothers but not their fathers*, who received the name *Partheniai*.[28]

We should notice that Sinko imprecisely provides the source of Norwid's knowledge: we know Parthian history thanks to Ephorus, while Justin constitutes an indirect source. Moreover, Sinko omits a key aspect: there were some differing opinions regarding who the Partheniae were. Next to the act of sending young hoplites back to the fatherland, there is an opinion that they descended from soldiers who did not fight during the First Messenian War and were considered helots; thus, they were just as well a generation of bastards descending from Spartan women and slaves. The most complicated tradition treats the Partheniae as those who allied with Sparta during the helots' revolt and replaced Spartans not in bedchambers but on the battlefield[29] against the Messenians. Hence, maybe Norwid's note regarding the eventual citizenship of helots and their participation in war efforts proves his hesitation between various realizations of the Parthian theme? It is possible that Sinko is right, when he notices a place for the issue of helots' citizenship in the later, lost part of Norwid's drama. Sinko writes: "According to Tyrtaeus's announcement, he had to come out to enliven the Spartan torpor by enlisting helots and promising civil rights to victors, only to encounter rejection."[30]

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26 See B. Bravo and E. Wipszycka, *Historia starożytnych Greków*, Vol. 1: *Do końca wojen perskich*, Warsaw 1988, p. 217.

27 See Sinko, "Klasyczny laur Norwida," in: *Hellada i Roma w Polsce. Przegląd utworów na tematy klasyczne w literaturze polskiej ostatniego stulecia*, Lviv 1933, p. 42.

28 Vidal-Nauet, *The Black Hunter*, p. 213.

29 See Vidal-Nauet, *The Black Hunter*, pp. 212–214.

30 Sinko, "Klasyczny laur," p. 56.

3. *Tyrtej* According to Critics

In the nineteenth century, Sparta became a crucial point of reference for the situation of Poles, particularly the figure of Tyrtaeus who, as Maria Janion and Maria Żmigrodzka claim, constituted for Romantics "the highest ideal of humanity connecting "creation" and "deed."[31] The direct rendition of this phenomenon appears in Władysław Ludwik Anczyc's poem *Tyrteusz* from 1861, in which the Greek poet urges the Polish society to fight and proclaims opposition to conciliatory moods and the acceptance of enslavement.

Cyprian Norwid's fantastic tragedy originated later, already after the January Uprising (1863–1864). Its concept of observing the modern era from the viewpoint of Sparta's history of the Messenian War probably gathered Norwid's considerations about the role of a poet in the process of shaping nations' fate, already present in his lectures on Juliusz Słowacki from April 1860. This reckoning contributed to the creation of Tyrtaeus different from the one known before, devoted to the matter of war in a way condemning Spartans to a defeat, which had to be experienced in the name of overcoming the previous lifeless forms of social life. Stefan Sawicki interprets Norwid's *Tyrtej* as follows:

> Thus, Norwid's *Tyrtej* would undermine the Tyrtaeic myth present in the European culture and vivid in the Polish tradition, it would polemicize with the symbolic meaning of this myth about a poet-leader. Norwid contrasts the model of a good leader, with the capability to vanquish any enemy, with a leader who, while losing battles or even wars in the frame of established state structures, is victorious for the future, for the logic of historical processes, for new and more noble structures, for all-encompassing moral values, for freedom, and for the universal progress of man.[32]

Sawicki treats Tyrtaeus as a figure polemically targeted at the Romantic Tyrtaeic poetry. Such Tyrtaeus decidedly undermines the idea of a poet engaged in mobilizing the languid society to fight. Sawicki emphasizes that the visible opposition of Athens and Sparta in *Tyrtej* is worth discussing with relation to their polyvalent meanings in Norwid's text. After all, we should perceive the ambiguity of Sparta's image as a hermetic and war-oriented nation contrasted with the image of Athenians, enabling culturally and ethnically alien people, gods, and customs to assimilate in their *polis*. Sawicki claims that *Tyrtej* is a drama with an autonomous meaning, independent from the second part of the dramatic diptych,

31 M. Janion and M. Żmigrodzka, *Romantyzm i historia*, Gdańsk 2001, p. 387.

32 S. Sawicki, "Tyrteusz Wielki Norwida," in: *Norwida walka z formą*, Warsaw 1986, pp. 127–128.

Za kulisami (Behind the Scenes). As Sawicki remarks, "Anti-Tyrtaeus"[33] fulfills Norwid's method of questioning general opinions that eclipse a figure or phenomenon that is the foundation of these opinions. From a poorly known figure considered an embodiment of the ideal patriotic and militaristic literature, Norwid creates a poet-historiosopher who, like Epimenides and Socrates, actively participates in the creation of history.

Grażyna Halkiewicz-Sojak notices the similarity of Tyrtaeus and other Greek poets to sages or prophets. For the sake of her interpretation, she mentions the considerations of Irena Sławińska – classic in Norwid studies – who labeled some of Norwid's dramatic texts as mystery plays or white (non-violent) tragedies.[34] As Halkiewicz-Sojak claims, "following Sławińska's considerations, one can assume a hypothesis that Norwid's diptych is a "Christian drama" with the first part analogous to the formula of a mystery play and the second to the category of white tragedy."[35] The scholar perceives Tyrtaeus as a figure of innocent victim emulating Christ's fate still before his birth. Elżbieta Lijewska argues in a similar vein and underlines an almost evangelic message of Tyrtaeus's history: "Despite the lack of an ending about Tyrtaeus's fate, we may extrapolate from former declarations: he is sent among people with hearts of stone, he would be rejected, despised, he would fight "an inner fight," "grow lonely by defeat in battle," become a wanderer."[36]

An especially important voice in the discussion on *Tyrtej* is that of Maria Kalinowska, who considers Norwid's text in the context of pan-European nineteenth-century fascination with Sparta and compares it to Juliusz Słowacki's *Agezylausz*. From Kalinowska's perspective, the interpretation of antiquity in *Tyrtej* signals the overcoming of the Romantic horizon of creating images of an ancient past. For Norwid withdraws from the simplistic analogy of Polish history and ancient Greece. The image of Athens is crucial in his work, with the city embodying features close to his civilizational. Kalinowska claims that,

33 Sawicki, "Tyrteusz Wielki," pp. 128, 130.

34 I. Sławińska, " 'Chrześcijańska drama' Norwida," *Studia Norwidiana*, 3–4/1985–1986, pp. 57–74.

35 G. Halkiewicz-Sojak, " 'Chrześcijańska drama' na styku kultur. O dyptyku Norwida 'Tyrtej, Za kulisami'," in: *W przestrzeni komunikacyjnej. Szkice z historii i teorii dramatu, teatru i komunikacji społecznej*, ed. J. Skuczyński, Toruń 1999, p. 63.

36 E. Lijewska, "Liryka w dramacie Norwida. O muzyczności 'Tyrteja' i 'Za kulisami'," *Studia Norwidiana* 20–21/2002–2003, p. 92.

> "the wild power" of Sparta is contrasted in *Tyrtej* with the image of Athens as a realm of freedom, alluring and adopting foreigners in lieu of rejecting them, the land of familial bonds and deep feelings, service to gods and prayers for poets' inspiration. . .. At the same time, Norwid's Athens in *Tyrtej* is completely free from idealization; it does not fit in any known utopian depictions of Athens prevalent in the nineteenth century; instead, it is a polyphonic and diverse place.[37]

4. *Tyrtej* and the History of the Greek *Paideia*

We must agree with Krzysztof Trybuś, who developed Stefan Sawicki's opinion regarding the autonomous aspect of *Tyrtej*'s functioning apart from *Za kulisami*: "The masquerade fantasy scenes of *Za kulisami* not only reinterpret *Tyrtej*'s reception. These scenes open the traditional form of a spectacle and, simultaneously, nullify its autonomy. The ironic tone of these scenes destroys the Greek world of harmony."[38] Trybuś suggests that Norwid in *Tyrtej* rejects his former distanced approach to depicting the Greek civilization and challenges the foundation of its existence, forgotten by civilization: with the language no longer used by contemporary Europeans. Trybuś shows that this world of Greek history aims at rehabilitating Sparta, because Norwid uses it to represent the deconstruction of old forms and birth of new civilizational incarnations, although based on existing connections to the archaic foundation of the Spartan society:

> Let us not be deceived by Norwid's diagnosis expressed in this text that the time of ancient Sparta and its people in particular "became all iron." The drama about Tyrtaeus strongly accentuates the conviction about the possibility of overcoming dead forms that hinder civilizational development. Norwid proclaims the birth of another world in which a man will come to be. Each epoch has its transition from the old to the new. The old world in *Tyrtej* is a world that remembers "the elderly Lycurgus," the world in which one hears "fragments of the old Argonauts' hymn."[39]

While remembering the many voices about Norwid's drama, we should ponder on the function of *Tyrtej*'s Prologue and Dedication. We notice that, besides the reveal of nineteenth-century civilization's superficiality and inauthenticity – in particular its art – there appears a thread that combines thought about the fate of

37 M. Kalinowska, "Romantyczni Spartanie i Majnoci. W kręgu filhellenizmu wielkich romantyków polskich. Rekonesans," in: *Filhellenizm w Polsce. Rekonesans*, eds. M. Borowska, M. Kalinowska, J. Ławski and K. Tomaszuk, Warsaw 2007, p. 216.

38 K. Trybuś, *Stary poeta. Studia o Norwidzie*, Poznań 2000, p. 100.

39 Trybuś, *Stary poeta,* pp. 98–99.

Poland and ancient Greece. In the background, are falsified quasi-masterpieces of architecture; meanwhile, Podróżnik (the Traveler) reflects on the dissimilarity of Poles and other European nations:

> One might say that Poles *are not born to be servants*: they are always *esquires, comrades, camp followers, and second-rate knights* who, without the experience of lower feudal chivalric practice, pass you a staff and a hat, just as one used to pass stirrups and sword. . . Hence they are great in great moments, while neglected in mundane daily service. . . often confidential raconteurs, despising neither a sentimental tear nor a glass (Pwsz, Vol. 4, p. 454).

The suggestion of Podróżnik that he comes from a country where one can hardly find sculptures similar to these admired in the south of Europe – "these multicolored African marbles of lean Lombardian columns?" (Pwsz, Vol. 4, p. 454) – directs our attention to the fact that the most ancient monument in Poland is the nation and, as such, it requires special reflection and careful observance. Podróżnik asks: "Did you consider how much of an ancient nation is our Fatherland?" (Pwsz, Vol. 4, p. 454). The analogy is exceptionally simple, yet it should puzzle. In Italy, it is easy to find places to marvel at ancient art (often merely imitations), but there are no people who would corroborate the power of the land's bygone greatness. In Poland, one has to direct their eyes directly to its inhabitants, since in their nature hides the long-gone noble past of the land.

Podróżnik's words certainly have a lot in common with *Tyrtej* since a tale about the knights of olden Greece is its main topic: the knights-citizens of two city-worlds, Athens and Sparta. Naturally, this does not mean that *Tyrtej*'s characters approximate the Polish reality. Such a hypothesis could be more easily proved in the case of Słowacki's *Agezylausz* than *Tyrtej*. For it is a tale of two different ancient nations and their fates. This tale refers to a relation connecting modern people with the past, in which their ancestors participated. However, it mostly relates to the impossibility of recalling old experiences, remembered by members of a community as an unconscious potential, which could result in both victories and defeats. The functioning of both Athens and Sparta communities holds features that would contribute to their crucial successes, but which will eventually lead to the demise of the world of the Greek *poleis*.

The overcoming of the model of the Tyrtaeic poetry, which dominates in the text, is not the only worthwhile theme. The problem of Athens and Sparta as opposing paradigms of shaping the city model plays an equally vital role in *Tyrtej*. It seems productive to appreciate the background, which here are ancient city-states depicted in a breakthrough moment of history. The figure of Tyrtaeus, the

Athenian sent to Sparta with a mission of leading to battle a people endangered with defeat constitutes a link that allows us to witness Norwid's sensibility to the ancient world's history, important for modernity as well, in particular in these historical moments that foreshadow a radical change or relate to historical breakthroughs and crises constantly overcome by civilization. Thus, *Tyrtej* continues deliberations from *Quidam* and the image of Rome from the times when paganism started to withdraw under the influence of Christianity.[40]

Norwid completes a kind of a synthesis of Greek history. Describing a historically defined situation, Norwid lets himself anticipate events that could not occur during the Second Messenian War in 640/630–600 BC. This refers to Athens in particular and two references to Solon,[41] 640/635–561/560 BC, and Thales, 640–548/545 BC. Norwid chose these figures deliberately, since both appear soon after the described events. From the perspective of the Chorus and Kleokarp, who allude to their achievements, both Solon, the lawgiver and poet from Salamis, and Thales, the philosopher from Miletus, embody the roles of sages with enormous authority. In Athens, Solon balances the activity of Lycurgus and is a lawgiver who orders the relationships between the will of the people and the prerogatives of the Areopagites. Whereas Thales functions as a founder of Athenian innovativeness, which enabled the use of the entire nature's potential. Thus, Norwid presents a multidirectional panorama of a fragment of Greek history.[42] In this way, he encompasses the important process of these times, such as the solidification of Sparta's might which reached the zenith of its territorial gains after the war with the Messenians, along with the beginning of Athens' difficult way leading to monarchy through aristocracy's governance, tyranny, and a democratic system. Certainly, it is not without meaning that we find in *Tyrtej* many references to the Pnyx, a hill in Athens, which would play a particularly vital role after the emergence of the democracy. Therefore, history presented by Norwid is full of symbolical allusions to other historical moments and finds itself

40 On *Tyrtej* alluding to *Quidam*, see T. Makowiecki, I. Sławińska, "Za kulisami Tyrteja" in: K. Górski, T. Makowiecki and I. Sławińska, *O Norwidzie pięć studiów*, Toruń 1949, p. 39.

41 It was observed by T. Sinko, "Klasyczny laur."

42 The issue of an allegoric reading of the poem *Quidam* in which depicted events may be interpreted in a few temporal perspectives and which relate to different symbolic orders was exhaustively discussed by R. Fieguth who claims that Norwid constructed his epic works in way enabling reading them in accordance with the rules of tropological reading of the Bible. See R. Fieguth, " 'Nie znałem was – Żydy' ". Powstanie judejskie i postać Barchoba w 'Quidamie' Norwida," *Studia Norwidiana*, 26/2008, pp. 49–68.

at the threshold of the great civilization competition of Athens and Sparta, which determined the history of the Greek part of the Mediterranean Sea.

The Athenian world of *Tyrtej* fits into the model of a city open to people, values, and languages, embodied in the character of Leon, who gained a fatherland by rescuing the Areopagite Kleokarp. The message constituting the basis for Athenian thought is most fully presented by the Chorus:

> Indeed, brave is in its simplicity the noble power and substance of Laconian language!. . . Brave indeed!... But the customs of people around the world are far more numerous, both their utterances and sayings. Hence, the Athenians prefer to embrace all beauties of each language, for no one builds a temple with one column (Pwsz, Vol. 4, p. 477).

The power of Athens appears in the speech of the Right Chorus in the metaphor of surface and depth, as a self-limitation of the people trusting its representatives who, enjoying common approval and using their experience, can control the threats that endanger the city:

> For that Solon of Salamis managed to enforce the ancient columns of the Areopagus, for where self-rule of people's voice is not in the least hindered, they limited itself like a sea, moving to the center, and covering its surface with light foams. / The Areopagus's silent circle sat at night under the stars, which is its depth, whereas street rumbles, feeble news, and popularity rustling in the sun are the rainbows on the surface (Pwsz, Vol. 4, p. 474).

Kleokarp underlines the maturity of Athenians, who subjugate the forces of nature, attempt to comprehend the world to learn its rules, and utilize practical knowledge of everyday life especially to gain an advantage over other peoples, to reach a higher level of civilization development:

> Let *juvenile nations* trust in the flinty force of their arms and let their swiftness and agility take an example from deers and become joyous to clapping spectators or those who pay them during the Olympics. But a mature citizen, but a free mind replaces *wild power* with an element; and it does not make civil welfare dependent on its boisterousness. / Indeed, what is more similar to divine matters over this starry ability of our sweet leader-statesman Thales, whose research is accused of futility (Pwsz, Vol. 4, pp. 485–486)?

However, let us look carefully at the thesis about the image of Athens allegedly open to foreign elements of the world, which are to be smoothly assimilated. One has to wonder to which form of governance the quoted fragment of the Right Chorus refers. Norwid, in this case, commits a far-reaching modification in the area of historical reality. The words of the chorus suggest the existence of people's rights to define their own and the entire city's fate. However, in times of the described events, only a narrow group of aristocracy governed Athens, and there was no possibility of any form of people's governance. Solon's reforms

did not change that fact; after all, he was an aristocrat from the royal line of Medon's descendants. He only changed that the influence on the political fate of the *polis* was to be decided by the capital held and not by colligations and positions in the frame of the dynastic system.

Norwid probably wanted to underline that in Athens there existed a budding rivalry between the natural center of government connected to the aristocracy, the Areopagus, and the people's assembly, that is the assembly of free citizens on the hill of Pnyx, nonetheless deprived of the right to propose laws and most of the judiciary rights. Norwid presents Athens as a city in which a narrow group of people holds power, even if the official position of the chorus emphasizes the existence of people having their own aspirations and needs. People themselves appear to be weak and changing in their opinions; as a result, the most wealthy and highest born citizens visibly dominate in the issue of establishing the political status.

Thus, the Athenian tolerance in assimilating foreign elements was, in fact, barred with many stipulations. It is not an accident that Norwid includes in *Tyrtej* several figures of women and slaves. In their case, the Athenian openness had no application, since they belonged to two groups deprived of any rights. As Pierre Vidal-Naquet claims, "The Greek city in its classical form was marked by a double exclusion: the exclusion of women, which made it a "men's club;" and the exclusion of slaves, which made it a "citizens' club."[43] We do not know how women slaves found themselves in Kleokarp's household, but maybe they were simply less lucky than Laon?

Perhaps Tadeusz Sinko is right when he interprets Chorus's utterance as a quality of the Athenian dialect, which emerged thanks to assimilating features of various Greek dialects.[44] And this Athenian openness simply means a particular disposition toward drawing on foreign experiences and assimilating valuable persons to strengthen one's might, which can be described neither as a selfless curiosity, in the case of philosophers and scientific discoveries, nor compassion in the case of people.

Laon is certainly an ambiguous figure; his parts are dominated by judgments comprising unequivocal praise of Athens: "Nevertheless, the Athenian slave may obey only his master and consider himself equal to every man outside his household" (Pwsz, Vol. 4, p. 476). His attitude certainly contains the zeal of a neophyte

43 Vidal-Naquet, *The Black Hunter*, p. 274.

44 See Sinko, "Klasyczny laur," p. 47.

who strives to serve his new fatherland; even if he it is Laon who first undertakes dialog with the chorus:

> LAON
> Minerva's helmet shines joyfully, and the words of an apt man are not impetuous. Tragic are the minds of choruses, promenading at the edge of life's scene, they can swiftlier speak of tempests and judge a sea storm by lifting shapely shells from the sand than this helmsman under a falling mast seen from a distance. He appears to them so feeble as a shard of coral, here and there stuck in the sand on a seashore.
> CHORUS
> You! who with a vapor of a slavish Asian parable embraces the bright core of truth and who has gesture and posture and the attire of an Athenian citizen, do not narrate but tell (Pwsz, Vol. 4, pp. 472–473).

Laon is a Phoenician, but his provenance is revealed not by his attire but his startling words. His utterance is, even if subtle, an apparent critique of the chorus from a Greek tragedy, which – focused on pondering on absolute issues and relations of men and gods – overlooks the individual. The eastern man cannot think in terms of social life, as he is always solitary and isolated. He is not a subject of Aristotle's words regarding the state, whose existence precedes human life in the order of thought as its prerequisite:

> The proof that the state is a creation of nature and prior to the individual is that the individual, when isolated, is not self-sufficing, and therefore he is like a part in relation to the whole. But he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god: he is no part of a state. A social instinct is implanted in all men by nature, and yet he who first founded the state was the greatest of benefactors.[45]

From the chorus's perspective, Laon's words are those of an Asian slave, who can speak only as un unimportant individual, lost in the expanse of the universe. For the chorus, truth comprises the combined voice of many individuals but does not mean the elimination of individual voices. Truth is common but – when uttered by different people – sounds differently; this message expresses Norwid's view about the essence of Athenian distinctiveness.

The phenomenon of Norwid's Athens relies on the fact that opinions of particular characters regarding the functioning of the city diverge and cannot be reduced to a single accurate general judgment. The Chorus disagrees and emphasizes the will of the people self-limiting by the controlling influence of the Areopagus. Kleokarp means something different when he notices in Athenians

45 Aristotle, "Politics," p. 5.

their pragmatic approach toward the world they subjugate. Eventually, Laon describes the Athenian *polis* as a world of citizens provided with equality before law.

Thus, Norwid makes Athens a sphere of dialog where we witness the process of constant "becoming" of the city in the frame of discussions and confrontations of various opinions. This phenomenon is aptly characterized by Epod's words: "So it happened, that the Chorus's answer is to include in itself also this voice, which just now inquired the Chorus and almost impetuously disagreed with it. Similar victories of truth far outnumber sand particles on the lips of the sea!" (Pwsz, Vol. 4, p. 475). Thus, according to Norwid, this phenomenon constitutes the most durable feature of the Athenian essence, present at all stages of historical development. Athens is a city existing thanks to the constant exchange of views and an eternally unfolding discussion, the city of word, where truth is not reduced to any particular opinion. However, we should remember that Norwid divides the history of Athens into two epochs: before and after the death of Socrates. Hence, Athens also is the place where Socrates could influence through his words, which eventually lead to his sentencing to death.

In relation to the issue of the Athenian society, whose functioning is based on the formula of dialog, we should recall an excerpt from the introduction to the poem *Promethidion*, in which the Greek dialog serves as a proper form for disputing art: "In similar dialogs, the questions most crucial to humanity were resolved among these nations, that is the Greeks, without whom, I say, at least when it comes to *the knowledge of form*, we cannot do anything and nothing decisive happened" (Pwsz, Vol. 3, p. 439). However, the Athenian dialogs from *Tyrtej* are an unusual realization of the genre as – in opposition to Norwid's words from *Promethidion* – they do not relate to fundamental issues for humanity but merely are partial impressions of specific characters, which do not comprise a separate whole. Kleokarp mentions: "The feebleness of people's convictions and judgments, similar to sea waves, should only trouble these who perceive elements in their external form and not in the law which governs them." It will continue to be Kleokarp's secret how the "*ultimate-first* truth" is present in the Athenian community, as it remains unspoken, beyond dialog, and everyone awaits its revelation from the Delphic oracle.

Tyrtaeus gives a shattering opinion about Sparta; he perceives the Spartans only as a petrified nation, deprived of the ability of metamorphosis, limited to the world of Lycurgus's laws, the lifeless rules that order the lives of subsequent generations until the historical moment of the "*Laconian stop*" (Pwsz, Vol. 4, p. 497), the end of creation. The rejected generation of Parthenae (bastards) may support such an image of Sparta, as they had to leave their fatherland. Grażyna

Halkiewicz-Sojak notices that Tyrtaeus announces his own death and inscribes his fate in the template of a mystery play:[46]

> The whole nation became *iron*... the last word of Lycurgus's testament was conceived in a generation made by the lawgiver... All is finished, and god *creates nothing more there*... and there is no place for him, like a foundling or a new-born cripple, condemned to death by law before he crawls out of the cradle. / And so, a *Laconian stop* occurred in Laconian history, just as in their language!... And – I am sent... I, before there is a place for father's gods (Pwsz, Vol. 4, p. 497).

However, Tyrtaeus not only claims that death would become his fate, the one Spartans inflicted on children too weak or born out of wedlock. This fate already came upon the Spartan god who, through Lycurgus's activity, lost access to the minds of that nation. Tyrtaeus perceives Sparta as a result of the old Lycurgus's idea; it proves what are the results of human endeavors when there is no place for gods: "Old Lycurgus was Pygmalion and, having inflicted a mysterious embrace with the monument of his beloved idea, he fathered masses of harsh sons, whose shins, foreheads, and most noble parts of hearts reveal carved marble" (Pwsz, Vol. 4, p. 497). Thus, Spartan people are accused of atheism; they independently escaped gods' plan.

Thus, we should consider in what sense are Spartans deprived of divine presence. Is it possible that Tyrtaeus's opinion relates to a phenomenon similar to the one described by Strabo, who recalls a tribe that was allegedly *atheon*, even if he considered this opinion to be false?[47] Or is it rather an allusion to the situation of Athens and religious trail from the times from the beginning of the Peloponnesian War until the end of fifth century BC? The trails resulted in the banishment of Athenagoras and Diagoras, which, as a consequence, also influenced Socrates. As Bruno Snell notices, the Greek understanding of impiety primarily referred to faults in the realm of worship customs,[48] so it was not an accurate point of reference for Tyrtaeus's ponderings. Certainly, his words solidify the opposition of Athens and Sparta; the former based on the strict connection with a caring deity, the latter deprived of any signs of divine intervention in its history. Kleokarp mentions a religious sanction that proves the exceptionalism of Athens: "Not in vain!... Not in vain did I repeat, oh! Laon, that *the great Jove's daughter* looks

46 Halkiewicz-Sojak, "'Chrześcijańska drama'" p. 65.

47 See W. Burkert, *Creation of the Sacred: Tracks of Biology in Early Religions*, Cambridge 1996, p. 1, fn. 2.

48 See B. Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, trans. G. Rosenmeyer, New York 1960, pp. 23–25.

at Athenians with her eyes and reminds them of the blue seas" (Pwsz, Vol. 4, p. 485). We should underline that Daim's words directed to Athenian people hold no reference to the divine will. He speaks only of readiness for the war effort and waiting for a leader. Priests appear only once: "The priests own one hundred fat wild hogs, if they so desire, and they keep up a fire just in case while sitting and brooding" (Pwsz, Vol. 4, p. 475). One hundred animals, most likely prepared with sacrificial offering in mind, indicate that Spartan impiety does not mean the lack of worship but the lack of the need to experience religious ecstasy. In Daim's mind, the planned hecatomb occupies a position similar to bucklers and food portions; it is only one of the many ways for war preparations, nothing more. In this regard, Athens pays much more heed to the message from the Delphic oracle, even if it is not their fate at stake at the moment.

Tyrtaeus's ponderings focus on the critique of the Spartan people and their first lawgiver direct attention to a connection between care for tradition and the state's vitality:

> Oh! history – if you ever were?... Oh! history... look: did from these elements the Athenian Republic emerge? The great Codrus, the last king, does he not reign even today with his panconscious absence?... He, seeking death from Doric pikes, on which he leaned his kingly breast... he, dressed in a peasant's sukmana... he, falling with a designedly brittle scythe in his hand, when he yelled: "The end of the Athenian Kingdom!..." – do you comprehend?... Eginej!... he – became the cornerstone of the nation's metamorphosis and, thus, Athens's deep mourning for him settled into a republic (Pwsz, Vol. 4, p. 498).

Tyrtaeus recalls the sacrificial death of Codrus to strengthen the conviction of a complete disparity between Athens and Sparta. While the Athenian republic – regardless of what Tyrtaeus means by the republic, as in the case of Athens this notion is particularly inexact – was based on the foundation of a heroic deed of its last king, Sparta appears as merely a craftsman's creation, who cared to faithfully reproduce following generations in an identical shape with no ability to change. Therefore, Tyrtaeus differentiates two conceivable approaches to tradition: the Athenian one, based on the annihilation of the former system, enabling the emergence of a self-conscious nation, and the Spartan one focused on constant repetition of the same gestures and utilizing definite rules that strictly delimit social life. However, we may doubt whether Tyrtaeus assesses the Spartan society accurately. Is his diagnosis not a complete mistake?

We should emphasize that Tyrtaeus's deliberations omit the Spartan understanding of people's continuity, derived from immemorial times and embodied by the figure of a blind Old Man who delivers rhapsodies to young Spartans; in this regard the man reminds us of a Homerida, an heir to the blind man from

Chios.[49] The old man makes the past present and constitutes a source that conveys heroic tradition, even though he holds poets, including Tyrtaeus, in contempt.

> FIRST
> One more small *rhapsody* – one more!... Let us all sit at your knees like goatlings – like goatlings under oak branches, when the moon rises. . .
>
> CHORUS
> We will tell you and point to each of the living who passes by – just promise us one more *rhapsody*. . .
>
> FIRST
> And we will give you stolen bread, as none has ever stolen better.
>
> CHORUS
> Here rushes a sandy gale from far away, and in its sweep one sees a Lacedaemonian runner as he leaps on his staff.
>
> BLIND OLD MAN
> *It is Daim*. . . Oh! my boys, barefoot and lightly dancing boys. It is Daim! a friend of my son, a war runner – indeed, he certainly brings red rhapsodies from the mountains to the city with a less coagulated blood. . . (Pwsz, Vol. 4, pp. 502–503).

The old man lost his sight in the twentieth year of the First Messenian War, about 721 BC; thus, there are at least thirty or forty years that passed until the described events. In Jan Vansina's terminology, this period can be labeled as "recent past." Jan Assmann claims, that this notion refers to events "that could typically be captured by a contemporary memory through experience and hearsay."[50] The old man narrates the past but withdraws in the face of Daim returning from the battlefield. Thus, the more distant events smoothly change in the consciousness of listening boys into the present, while the connection with history remains.

According to tradition, Tyrtaeus was supposed to arrive at Sparta to accomplish the reformulation of the notion of *arête* and contribute to the creation of an image of fame stemming from heroic death in fatherland's defense. Werner Jaeger describes this phenomenon in detail:

> If we subtract from Tyrtaeus's work all the ideas, words, and metrical turns that he borrowed from Homer, there will seem to be little of his own left. Yet we are bound to grant his real originality as soon as we study him from the standpoint of the present investigation, and realize that his conventional scenery and his archaic ideals of heroism are revitalized by his faith in a new moral and political authority – the city-state, which

49 See R. Flacelière, *A Literary History of Greece*, London 1962, p. 63.
50 J. Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*. . ., p. 35.

> transcends every individual citizen, and for which every citizen lives and dies. He has recast the Homeric ideal of the single champion's arête into the arête of the patriot, and with that new faith, he strives to inspire his whole society. He is endeavouring to create a nation of heroes. Death is beautiful, if it is a hero's death; and to die for one's country is a hero death. That is the only thought which can exalt a dying man, by making him feel that he is sacrificing himself for a higher good than his own life.[51]

In his elegies, Tyrtaeus expresses a new relationship between individuals and the state. In lieu of the former, aristocratic rivalry know from Homer's works, Tyrtaeus placed a struggle for memory with which society would reward its faithful defenders, equally and adequately commemorating the returning victors and the fallen in battle. Thus, the state became the guarantee of human immortality; one could either survive in descendants' memory or allow for a complete annihilation of one's existence; the *polis* from Tyrtaeus's works leaves its citizens no other choice.

What is particularly important, Sparta in Norwid's tragedy had already reached this level before Tyrtaeus's arrival, and it constitutes a community of warriors believing in the possibility of survival in the memory of fellow citizens and the durability of the state enveloping fates of all individuals. It is proven both by the laurel wreath awarded to Hieroplit's son and the Old Man's attitude scolding Daim who – instead of reporting the course of the battle – wishes to alleviate fatherly distress of the Spartan:

> Be cursed and feel my strikes on your neck, you! similar to any traitor. . . The rightful Spartan does not ask you of his only son, no! / Speak of the common thing at first, in the first exhale of the word. *Of the leader*! not of someone's son do speak. . . (Pwsz, Vol. 4, pp. 504–505).

Thus, Tyrtaeus's depiction is actually incompatible with previous tradition, as Sawicki suggests. Nonetheless, Norwid faithfully recreates in the image of Sparta the didactic results of Tyrtaeus's activity, in a way depriving him of the responsibility for establishing a novel understanding of *arête*; he suggests that there should emerge a force capable of raising morale and provide new strength in battle in the community itself. Meanwhile, the cult of the state's durability and its military efficacy appears to be the key aspect of the Spartan image in *Tyrtej*.

The Delphi oracle plays a vital role in the tragedy, as Tyrtaeus fully identifies with its verdicts. Athens and Sparta react surprisingly different to his choice and its consequences. The Athenians radically change their attitude toward Tyrtaeus,

51 Jaeger, *Paideia*, pp. 90–91.

previously a despised cripple and ridiculed poet. The divine voice of the oracle transformed the volatile convictions of the people, which startles the son of Charikles:

> Not many days ago, I remember as if it were today, when I had written this verse for the sake of lesser Bacchanalia (for which Tyrtej's rhyme was unanimously disdained). Who? then in the whole city could dare to consider that, even as the least probable thing, this very man, this freshly hissed rhyme-maker, would stand in the Apollo's wreath at the threshold of great Theseus! . . . / Not long ago and here, in front of the household of the noble Pentakonark – I remember as if it were today – who did not speak of lame Tyrtaus that he is a "hobbler?" – who did not label him "one-eyed" in human language? . . . Today, it was noticed that the swinging walk of gods' joyful favorite is not without its charm! That similar wavering walk characterizes men used to reigning over sea waves or those reluctant to seek things which should await them. Indeed, today, they notice how the sheer obscurity of left eye signals swift sight, which aptly aims. . . Today. . . the divine voice became the people's voice. . . (Pwsz, Vol. 4, pp. 487–488).

Trusting the unerring oracle, the Athenians concluded that they were mistaken about Tyrtaeus. However, the metamorphosis of their convictions is superficial – if it were not so, Laon would not follow Eginea suspected of having secret meetings with Tyrtaeus. Thus, Norwid suggests the immense power of religious sanctions in Athens since it could so diametrically change moods and views of citizens.

Underlining the unusual influence of the Delphic oracle in ancient Greece, Eric R. Dodds explains its phenomenon with peculiar origins of the Greek culture, which sought a higher-than-human authority, especially needed in the moment of historical chaos:

> In a guilt-culture, the need for supernatural assurance, for an authority transcending man's, appears to be overwhelmingly strong. But Greece had neither a Bible nor a Church; that is why Apollo, vicar on earth of the heavenly Father, came to fill the gap. Without Delphi, Greek society could scarcely have endured the tensions to which it was subjected in the Archaic Age. The crushing sense of human ignorance and human insecurity, the dread of divine *phthonos*, the dread of *miasma,* the accumulated burden of these things would have been unendurable without the assurance which such an omniscient divine counsellor could give, the assurance that behind the seeming chaos there was knowledge and purpose. . . Out of his divine knowledge, Apollo would tell you what to do when you felt anxious or frightened.[52]

The decision of the Delphic oracle, incomprehensible for the Athenians, caused a great commotion of minds only in Sparta, after they suffered defeat in battle

52 E. R. Dodds, The *Greeks and the Irrational*, p. 75.

against the Messenians. Then, the Old Man formulates two potential answers[53] to the question of its causes: "Oh! Three times *Barathra*!... oh! a betrayal of the Athenian nation. . . or the end of divine voices in the holiest Delphi. . ." (Pwsz, Vol. 4, p. 505). The alternative expressed by the Old Man pertains to a situation in which the defeat could be decided by Athenian betrayal, who falsified or willingly misread a divine verdict to weaken the Spartan spirit and trigger a scandal by sending a crippled leader. However, it is not a definite resolution, since, when the possibility of the Athenian betrayal is rejected, there remains only the scenario of Sparta being deceived by Apollo and the embarrassment of the Delphic authority. If one treats the Athenian unfaithfulness as an explanation of the political aspect of the situation, then the undermining of the traditional role of the Delphic oracle would belong to the realm of deep transformations of the Spartan mentality who then rejected explanations of religious nature. Then, we would witness the budding rationalization of human life which – by excluding the existence of divine support – indicates reason as the only authority for people who seek knowledge about how to act.

Old Man's idea expresses outrage and horror, but it also contains a project of the uncompleted Spartan "enlightenment," based on belief in people and the durability of state stronger than belief in gods. The verdict given by the Senate and the Polemarchs negotiates between two potential solutions explaining reasons for the suffered defeat. The Athenians are burdened with guilt, although not for betrayal but for cunctation of the decision, and Tyrtaeus is considered an absent leader with no influence on the final result of the lost battle. The role of the Delphic oracle is omitted; thus, its authority is not compromised, even if it partly expresses the Spartans's alienation; they are deprived of gods' help and condemned to rational thought in the face of defeat.

> SENATE
> The senate does not oppose in the least to such a justly sonorous murmur but primarily pays heed to *judgment*: since it is right to remember and think that the hour of the *man-of-judgment*'s arrival in Lacedaemon relates to the Athenian people, not to Tyrtej's person who is an envoy.
>
> SENATE KINGS
> For we did not hear from the newly-arrived *man-of-judgment* to proclaim anything foreign, but he certainly proclaimed submission to Lacedaemon's holy authorities – that he advised worshiping the illustrious memory of bygone kings – thus no exception can be prematurely made right in relation to his person (Pwsz, Vol. 4, p. 508).

53 On meaning of the old man's shout see Halkiewicz-Sojak, "'Chrześcijańska drama,'" p. 64.

The sequence of events from the last preserved scene is meaningful: Tyrtaeus approaches the Kings, the Senate (most likely the Gerousia), and the Ephors, and after he is acquitted withdraws with his entourage and heads toward a "secluded place" (Pwsz, Vol. 4, p. 508). This behavior of the representatives of the Spartan authority seems to contradict the thesis of the sacrifice made out of one's life, which would be the poet's share. Nothing betokens that a terrible fate could await him, provided that we do not deem terrible the shadow of history usurping the following history of Tyrtaeus, both the real one and the one from Norwid's drama.

While the image of Athens depicted in the tragedy *Tyrtej* does not diverge from traditional schemes, in the case of Sparta, Norwid does not limit himself to interpreting source material and repeating the story derived from Justin's *Epitoma historiarum Philippicarum*.[54] He created an image of the Spartan culture different from the previously-known, the one underestimated by the divine envoy from the text and ambiguous in its meaning. It was most likely conceived as an attempt to fill this jarring historical gap mentioned by Carr and to create an alternative history of Sparta.

We cannot rule out that, in Norwid's view, Athens and Sparta constituted a dialectical system that ensured the civilization's lasting existence. In the case of Athens, Norwid was probably fascinated with the durable religious bond that solidified society and guaranteed people's governance. The bond which often revealed itself to be an ideological tool in the hands of cynical politicians, who could use it to eliminate their own enemies as in the case of Socrates. Nonetheless, Norwid notices that the Athenian nation quickly reflected and banished Socrates's accuser and erected the philosopher's monument, thus he appreciated Athens's exceptional role in introducing the intellectual revolution of the birth of a modern individual. In one of his poems, Norwid places Saint Paul the Apostle in the Athenian agora, correctly assuming that this meeting, even if unfortunate and deprived of will to understand each other, preordained the fate of civilization.

In the case of Sparta, Norwid underlines the resilience of its tradition, exceptionally focused and cultivating cultural continuity. In *Tyrtej*, Norwid suggests that Sparta's weak point was its foundation of rationality. It was Lycurgus who enclosed Sparta in the prospect of a godless history, thus condemning its citizens to live in constant struggle with the disobedient matter of history. Should the whole world follow Sparta's model, time would stop. After all, at least according

54 See Sinko, "Klasyczny laur," p. 42.

to Norwid, it was a state opposing any change and combating every situation of potential change. That is why Sparta's defeat contributed to the Old Man's ominous shout threatening the god whose advice ended in calamity. Hence, the noticeable Spartan abjuration of the Delphic prophecy, which loses the right to shape human fate due to its insight in the meanders of *fatum* and, thus, ceases to be a superhuman authority caring for people. Norwid did not finish *Tyrtej*, but in the existing fragment of the third act he clearly underlines the rational aspect of the Sparta's actions, which draws its strength to overcome the defeat only from the society itself. After all, we should forget that Sparta would eventually triumph over the Messenians, and about a century-and-a-half later, it would constitute the main source of resistance in the Greek-Persian conflict. Even so, this Spartan strength had its own troubles, mentioned by Norwid in the commentary to *Album Orbis*:

> Two centuries of Persian wars and the long Peloponnesian one – that is the main epoch. There develops and establishes the social class (*equality before law*), transparency, responsibility, public obligation, the army, the navy, the industry. . . masterpieces. . . But the share of Doric Sparta in all this is almost *none* – it is all Ionian! / Eventually, Sparta overcomes Athens, but it disappears completely and without a trace, while the Ionian Hellenism lasts and still develops, even after Athens is overtaken by Lysander (Pwsz, Vol. 11, pp. 398–399)!

As a result of historical processes – including these from the time of the Second Messenian War – Sparta's power became the end of the Doric activity in fields of literature, philosophy, and art, and their victory over Athens only accelerated the complete catastrophe of the Greek world. Spartan tendency toward isolation became a negative mark pressed into the image of Sparta. Norwid accurately depicted its consequences.

Despite some suggestions, Sparta is not Poland from the times of the January Uprising, even if some elements of the represented world seem to favor such a view. For instance, the Spartan shout "*prevail or perish*" appears in Norwid's letter from 1863 addressed to Karol Ruprecht in relation to mistakes of falsely understood patriotism, which conditions the nation's existence with the repetitive struggle for national liberation. In this context, Norwid mentions the fundamental difference between the ancient world and the Christian one. The difference based on the mystery of redemption renders the repetition of past mistakes a reprehensible fault of modern times, especially when it is revealed that the ancient implacability and human insight into history – fully devoid of hope – distorted the perspective of perceived events, including these tragic for the Polish nation. Norwid opposes material research of history with an "*archeology*

of feelings;" that is, such an interpretation of history that allows viewing the birth of Christianity as a breakthrough moment that transformed not only everything that occurred after Christ's death but also what existed beforehand, because the world history acquires a new meaning in the perspective of his sacrifice. Thus, Norwid forces us to see history as a whole and – let us add in the context of former deliberations relating to *Tyrtej* – including the Spartan episode from the Greek history, by seeking under the veil of a conflict between two Hellenic nations the principles of historical development fundamental to modernity. Therefore, the final defeat of the Spartan order and governance over subjugated nations based on the constant generating of conflicts and perceiving reality in terms of a hostile world surrounding the Spartan enclave may prove to be a valuable lesson for nineteenth-century Poles:

> The whole *archeology of feelings* depends at least on not wanting to do after Christ what had already been fulfilled and emptied before him – and thus not to miss the mark by nine hundred years. / I would say and write that *if the Poles do not have and want to cultivate abilities to elevate the Fatherland's enemies to the rank of bearable neighbors, then it is all in vain*. . .. / Who does not see this and to church, administration, or social question replies with merely two words, otherwise very noble, that is "blood" and "prevail or perish" – – to him I will say nothing, I will only weep before time answers him itself – before time answers him (Pwsz, Vol. 9, p. 114)!

Norwid shaped this Spartan-Athenian system of relations with significant care for historical probability – to refer to White's reflections once more – but not to establish a simple analogy between Polish and Greek history. Norwid provides his readers with a large dose of an archaically distant world, but he does so precisely to describe a world different from the one known in the present moment. This enabled him, for instance, to question how the ancient democracy emerged? What is the difference between the individualism of the old Greeks and the one known to modern people? What were the characteristics of primitive human religiosity? And, why could it link loose interpersonal bonds and morph them into strong social connections? Thus, Norwid's Tyrtaeus may be merely a false prophet, excluded from both worlds, and condemned to endlessly redefine his role as the prophet of the future whose time never comes.

Herodotus's Side. Conclusion

The primary goal of this work was to reconstruct and describe the method used by Norwid to interpret through his oeuvre the figures, events, and works connected to the fate of Greek culture. I tried to show that his way of gathering and collecting knowledge pertaining to the ancient world significantly diverged from what his literary predecessors did. Norwid focuses on deep reflection about ancient literature (Homer, Tyrtaeus), philosophy (Plato), history (Herodotus, Thucydides, Plutarch), and geography (Pausanias, Strabo), with the support of later authors like Vico, Creuzer, or Maury. On the basis of the gathered knowledge, Norwid builds his own concepts that actually lead to the emergence of many different images of Greece which, from his perspective, offered humanity Socratic dialogs and tragedy, contributed the birth of individualism, and was the first to allow the people to participate in governance. The very same Greece contributed to the fall of the Roman Empire; in this regard Norwid does not hesitate to treat Hellenism as an important historiosophical factor, separating language and culture from the fate of "ethnic" Greeks.

Norwid's interest in ancient Greece concentrates on a few aspects. *First*, how Greece came to be and how the sociopolitical order determined its fate. Norwid focused on the phenomenon of complicated relations between ancient Greeks and Pelasgians, Phoenicians, Egyptians, and Babylonians. The image emerging from his diaries suggests that Norwid perceives the period from Persia's defeat to the triumph of Alexander the Great as an intellectual revolution, crucial for European history. The revolutionary quality of Greek history decidedly referred to the transformation of human relationship with the world and supernatural powers. The institution of political community fascinated Norwid in how it made people subjects of philosophical deliberations, particularly thanks to Socrates. For Norwid, Plato also was a figure of the utmost importance. Norwid notices an interdependence of creative continuity between the Greek sage Socrates, sentenced by the Athenians to death, and his genius student Plato. In Norwid's opinion, it was Plato who formulated thoughts of crucial importance for the development of Christianity. One of Plato's crucial notions referred to life as a process emulating the Demiurge. The issue of religious *mimesis* appears in *Quidam*, especially in parts devoted to its priestly figures: Artemidor, Jazon, and Gwido.

Second, Norwid notices the Greek "invention" of memory understood as a method of using the past in resolving contemporary problems of a community.

Utilized by Norwid to create an analogy connecting antiquity to modernity, Greek memory assumed the necessity for a cyclical interpretation of time. According to Norwid, modern history is characterized by the supremacy of forgetting over remembering. In consequence, this process contributes to the cancellation and instrumentalization of history. Meanwhile, the past should support the living and not enable their manipulation. This process is one of the central themes of the tragedy *Kleopatra i Cezar*. The work presents the past as a magazine gathering props redundant for the functioning of a community. The degree to which the past burdened the present lives of the Egyptians caused the inevitable consequence of the erosion of its meaning. Hence, the Romans could attempt to subjugate the Egyptian cultural memory to their imperial ambitions.

Third, Norwid problematizes the issue of interconnections between the poet and citizens of the *polis*. The history of Tyrtaeus allows Norwid to present the archaic, religious consciousness of the Greeks. The process of rationalization connected to the fate of Delphic oracle became the basis for presenting contradictory models of Greek statehood. On the example of Athens and Sparta Norwid characterizes two separate modes of poetic language. Tyrtaeus's poetry is a product of divine inspiration, which no one wants to hear, while Spartan poetry appears to sprout from the struggles of the community that desires to uphold the knowledge of its past. The Athenian *polis* stems from constant modifications of the regime, which is a project developing in time. Meanwhile, the Spartan *polis* prefers repetition and passive recreation of citizen and state models formulated by Lycurgus. This juxtaposition shows two ways of shaping ethnocultural identity. As we may assume, Norwid considers both these rules to be a necessary part of social bonds, particularly those characterized by longevity.

The tendency to present different images of ancient Greece often leads Norwid astray; his notebooks are full of details excerpted from sources that never appear again, as they captured his interest only once and did not play any vital role in his reflection. This erudite journey commences with Winckelmann, who taught Norwid how to admire the aesthetic perfection of Greek artworld. With time, Norwid will abandon his conviction about the rightfulness of the regressive anthropological utopia, which allowed Winckelmann to perceive Greece exclusively as a native land of freedom and beauty. Instead, Norwid's attention will focus on connections between Hellenism and Christianity and their complicated relationship, in which the latter would simultaneously destroys and protects the remains of Greek philosophy, literature, and architecture. This coexistence of pagan and Christian elements is aptly reflected in the figure of Socrates, for whom Norwid reserves a special place in his work, positioning Socrates in the role of the link between Christian and Greek wisdom. However, this idea never

achieves full cohesion, because Norwid cannot ignore the fact that Socrates's life and views are part of rationalistic philosophy. God who simultaneously is a *daimonion* does not fulfill Norwid's expectation.

What does Norwid seek in ancient Greece? He certainly deems Greece the birthplace of European history. According to him, Greek origins contributed to the emergence of mechanisms that allow us to diagnose the spiritual condition of modern times by analyzing its approach toward the Greek myth of the "golden age." Norwids considers the ideological manner of presenting Greek achievements – characteristic of both the Enlightenment and Romanticism – to prove that Greece's image was permanently falsified. Treated as a human need for retaining bygone events and generations in memory, the process of experience accumulation was disrupted and marginalized. Norwid strives to unify the spiritual fate of Europe and protect it from oblivion. However, the Hellenic way of conceptualizing reality offers not only advantages but also serious perils. Norwid gathers knowledge so as to more precisely diagnose problems inherited by the Western people with the Greek origins of civilization.

Norwid's interest in Greek history probably links to his unfaltering conviction of the role played by the Greek "miracle" in the birth of literature, philosophy, and democracy. Once settled, civilizational foundations undoubtedly influenced European history and, in Norwid's opinion, the unusual connection between Hellenism and Christianity solidified the presence of the Greek spirit in the nineteenth-century world. Norwid's erudite query proves that he paid particular attention to knowledge about ancient Greece and gathered facts, quotes, and ideas that emerged in these historical conditions. In Norwid's case, we should consider not just his affirmative approach to the Greek heritage. Following Hayden White, we should consider the burden of Greek history[1] and its sterilizing influence on the European way of thinking about human nature and the past:

> The historian serves no one well by constructing a specious continuity between the present world and that which preceded it. On the contrary, we require a history that will educate us to discontinuity more than ever before; for discontinuity, disruption, and chaos is our lot. If, as Nietzsche said, "we have art in order not to die of the truth," we also have truth in order to escape the seduction of a world which is nothing but the creation of our longings.[2]

1 On the categories of "heritage" and "burden," see M. Bugajewski, *Brzemię przeszłości. Zło jako przedmiot interpretacji historycznej*, Poznań 2009, pp. 11–28.

2 H. White, "The Burden of History," *History and Theory*, Vol. 5, 2/1966, p. 134.

In the context of Norwid's work, the last sentence from this excerpt may be especially useful. Norwid's goal is to showcase that – despite our dependence on the Greek civilization – this influence may be detrimental, and that it is rather a projection of the European history's continuity than an indisputable foundation for our thinking about the world and ourselves.

Under the veil of the commonly accepted conviction that sources of thought stem from Greece – understood as speculative reflection about the world – and that the European model of spirituality (or, as Bruno Snell describes it, the birth of the spirit)[3] emerged in Greece in the fifth century BC, Norwid probably notices the danger resulting from the unreflective connection of universal and Greek histories. Two issues interest Norwid in particular: rationalism and the tendency to repaganize and fight with a religious worldview. Both these aspects of Hellenism link to the propensity for making man the measure of all things.

The way how Norwid treats the relationship between Hellenism and the past in *Quidam*, *Epimenides*, *Kleopatra i Cezar*, and *Tyrtej* shows that the road covered by the European civilization was, in fact, to a large extent determined by its Greek origins. For Norwid, however, this does not mean that the Greek foundation of civilization effectively secures civilization's durability. Norwid notices that ancient Greeks contributed the inventions of history and memory. In his works – *Epimenides*, *Kleopatra i Cezar*, and *Tyrtej* – he pays attention to the fact that Greeks wanted to retain the knowledge of the past in order to control it. Images from the past presented in historical and poetic works eternally solidified the specifically Greek perspective, favorable only to them. After all, the Greek worldview concentrates on considering the present as the future past, thus reducing its meaning. Hannah Arendt notices the same mechanism and underlines that the essence of Greek thought relied on the resistance of a negligible human world against dissolution in cosmic eternity:

> In the beginning of Western history, the distinction between the mortality of men and the immortality of nature, between man-made things and things which come into being by themselves, was the tacit assumption of historiography. All things that owe their existence to men, such as works, deeds, and words, are perishable, infected, as it were, by the mortality of their authors. However, if mortals succeeded in endowing their works, deeds, and words with some permanence and in arresting their perishability, then these things would, to a degree at least, enter and be at home in the world of

3 See Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*. Snell's original title is *Die Entdeckung des Geistes* (The Discovery of Spirit), which, of course, alludes to Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. In English, Hegel's *Geist* is also rendered either as "Spirit" or "Mind" [editor's note].

> everlastingness, and the mortals themselves would find their place in the cosmos, where everything is immortal except men. The human capacity to achieve this was remembrance, Mnemosyne, who therefore was regarded as the mother of all the other muses.[4]

Mnemosyne, the mother of all muses, allows one to prevent the destruction human works from decay. However, it is only possible in relation to works, deeds, and words of utmost importance, ones who cannot be forgotten. Thus, Norwid would probably agree that the European culture received an especially perilous gift from the Greeks. Along with the ideas of history and memory, it also inherited the uniqueness of the Greek fate, the unrepeatable template of greatness.

In *Quidam,* Norwid emphasizes that the Greek thought and education relied on the will to reign over the human mind and subjugate individuals to intellectual patterns of philosophy, which render conceptualizations of knowledge from a non-Greek perspective impossible. Thus, Norwid links the fall of Rome with this very aspect of the Greek *paideia*; with the reign the Greek culture achieved over the Roman minds. Meanwhile, the history of the protagonist Epirote proves the ominous influence of Greek thought on the identity of individuals who seek truth and beauty. Hence, Norwid notices that the use of ingenious Greek "inventions" should be mindful of the dangers which Greeks implemented in our lives.

As Donald R. Kelley remarks, the European approach to the Greek birth of historiography is aptly showcased by one of the herms of the Neapolitan National Archeological Museum that depicts a two-faced visage of Thucydides and Herodotus looking in opposing directions. This opposition reflects the array of interests we inherited from Greeks:

> Clio has shown more than two faces, of course; but the paradigms established by these first two devotees of the muse of history have persisted, in a complex and kaleidoscopic way, for almost twenty-five centuries. On the one hand is the tradition of what by the eighteenth century was called "cultural history," which concerns itself with all aspects of human experience, spiritual as well as material, private as well as public, female as well as male, and with the myths and mysteries of remote antiquity as well as current crises. On the other hand is the concern for the headline events of political and military history, questions of material interests, agency, and power and the causal factors underlying conspicuous changes in public affairs. On one hand, history as a broad and open-ended field of human "inquiry," and on the other, history as a process to be enclosed in, or reduced

4 H. Arendt, "The Concept of History: Ancient and Modern," in: *Between Past and Future. Six Exercises in Political Thought*, New York 1961, p. 43.

> to, familiar explanatory factors, and perhaps even (if the lessons were well learned) to be controlled.[5]

Norwid would probably define the scope of historical passions allotted to Europeans thanks to the Greeks in another manner. However, the fundamental issue remains unchanged for centuries: you cannot simultaneously follow routes marked out by Herodotus and Thucydides. In Norwid's oeuvre, the former plays a more significant role as the patron of anthropologizing history[6] focused on presenting broad perspectives of various peoples, religions, and cultures and as a supporter of writing down narratives of the past based on stories (*logoi*), in which fantastic events are described with full engagement, even if they say nothing of the past, because they certainly report the process of human mind's transformation. Far less gullible than Herodotus but similarly fascinated with the meaning of each detail illuminated by the light of time's passage, Norwid visited the Neapolitan National Archeological Museum when he was in Italy. If he stumbled upon this herm, he could notice in the face of the historian from Halicarnassus a somewhat distorted but familiar countenance.

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5 D.R. Kelley, *Faces of History. Historical Inquiry from Herodotus to Herder*, New Haven – London 1998, p. 3.

6 On two types of historiosophy initiated by Herodotus and Thucydides see D. Ratajczakowa, "Grecki dar" in: *O historyczności*, eds. K. Meller and K. Trybuś, Poznań 2006, pp. 23–41.

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