

# Poetic Mapping of the Polish Crown at the Turn of the 16th and 17th Centuries and Its Relation to Cartographic Imitation in Renaissance Poetry

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I like maps, because they lie.  
Because they give no access to the vicious truth.  
Because great-heartedly, good-naturedly  
they spread before me a world  
not of this world.

(Wisława Szymborska, *Map*, 2012  
Translated from Polish by Clare Cavanagh)

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In the second half of the 16th century the untrammelled growth of Polish literature began. It was especially visible in lyric poetry. In late Renaissance Poland (ca. 1570-1630) no less than a hundred printed and manuscript lyric books, both in Polish and Latin, were issued. This development of Polish poetry coincided with the growth of using maps among the Polish elites of that time, and probably all members of the highest class were carto-literate (Buczec 1966, Alexandrowicz 2012, Łopatecki 2017). As a result, poets, who were the members of the political and social elite, started to use new methods of writing about space. They were clearly inspired by the map and ways of using cartography (cf. Conley 1997; Padrón 2004; Kivelson 2006; Cachey 2007; Conley 2007; Conley 2011; Piechocki 2015; Putten 2017). In my paper I am going to examine this question.

The described marriage of two arts, poetry and cartography, is a very interesting and not yet well-researched phenomenon that appeared in the culture of the

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Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In the subsequent parts of my paper, I would like to take a look at it from the perspective of the history of literature. I shall attempt to answer the two following questions: how did the cartographic impulse influence Polish literature in the years 1580-1620 and how did contemporary poets map the Kingdom of Poland. To this end, I analysed the output of six Polish poets whose works were popular at that time. They include Jan Kochanowski (1530-1584), Sebastian Fabian Klonowic (1545-1602), Kasper Miaskowski (1549-1622), Sebastian Petrycy of Pilzno (1554-1626), Szymon Szymonowic (1558-1629) and Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski (1595-1640). The poems under analysis were all printed within 41 years, between 1584 and 1625.

The paper consists of three parts. First, I analyse the poem *Flis* by Klonowic (1595) about the Vistula River which I compare with a map of the Dnieper River drawn in the 1590s. In this part, I demonstrate how the authors of each of the text apply tools and *topoi* common for literature and cartography and how the written word corresponds with visual representation typical for cartography. In the second part, I argue that Polish poets created poetical maps using the rules of *imitatio* and *mimesis*. For early modern poets, the act of literary creation was a process of imitation, inspired by the Ancient literary criticism (cf. Sarnowska-Temeriusz 1982: XXXVII-XLIV; Michałowska 1999: 29-30; Fulińska 2000). As a result, poets writing about space could imitate nature (this type of imitation I call *mimesis*) or a map (this mode I call *imitatio*). At the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, the second model of imitation (*imitatio*) is clearly visible in Polish poetry. In the third part of the paper, I show how Polish poets rendered the polycentric character of their vast country.

The first part of the paper answers the question if in Polish poetry of the time there are references to cartography. In the second part, I answer the question about rhetorical tools which helped to forge poetical maps. Finally, the third part reveals the purposes to which imitation of maps was useful for Polish writers of the time.

Research about the impact of cartography on early modern poetry has been carried out since the 1980s. The methodology of my paper is partially based on methodology established by American and Western-European researchers (Padrón 2004; Conley 2007: 401-411; Cachey 2007: 450-460; Roberts 2010: 145-160; Veneri 2012: 29-48; Italiano 2016: 32-50; Engberg-Pedersen 2017; Piechocki 2019). However, I propose some new elements which can enrich previous analysis related to early modern relationships of literature and cartography. First of all, my paper is based on Polish poetry which is not known to Western researchers of Renaissance culture. Secondly, most of the researchers, who investigate the map-literature relationships are focused on prose, drama, emblems or epic poetry (cf. Doroszlaï 1998: 45-72; Bouzrara, Conley 2007: 427-437; Reitingner 2007: 438-449; Safier, Mendes dos Santos 2007: 461-468). Only a few of them are focused on lyric poetry, while this study is based almost entirely on lyric poems (cf. Niayesh 2006; Piechocki 2019)<sup>2</sup>. Thirdly, using these poems I try to show how the authors from

<sup>2</sup> It is worth mentioning that in English lyric poetry at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, references to maps are extremely rare. Cf. "Many of the major Elizabethan poets, however,

Central-Eastern Europe dealt with the problem of defining their place in Europe and the world. They attempted to describe their country: the polycentric Commonwealth, one of the biggest countries in Europe and simultaneously a non-colonial imperium. Fourthly, I turn my attention to the concept of imitation (*mimesis* and *imitatio*). This is a crucial aesthetic category used in the literary production in the 15th-18th centuries. Thus far it has not played a part in the discussion about the relationship between literature and cartography in early modern Europe.

### 1. Two maps of two rivers: a case study

In 1613, the first known edition of a wall map of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was published in the printing house of Willem Jansz Blaeu. It was engraved by a well-known map engraver, Hessel Gerritsz (cf. Alexandrowicz 2012: 78; Schilder 2013: 195). Today, it is commonly referred to as the Radziwiłł map of Lithuania because its initiator and patron was a Lithuanian magnate, Prince Nicholas Christopher Radziwiłł “the Orphan” (1547-1616). This remarkable work of Polish and Lithuanian cartography was developed in the 1580s and 1590s by a team led probably by Maciej Strubicz (cf. Buczek 1966: 58-60; Kempa 2006-2007: 425-428).

The Hessel Gerritsz wall map consists of two maps, a big one and a small one (Fig. 1). The main map represents the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, but it also covers those regions that had belonged to the Duchy in the past. Therefore, it depicts the area between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea, that is the territories of today’s Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, part of Poland and Russia, and several other countries.

The other map placed on the Hessel Gerritsz wall map is a representation of the lower course of the Dnieper River, from Czerkasy to its mouth in the Black Sea. This hydrographic map is put into two narrow strips on the right side of the bigger map. This smaller map is indeed very interesting (Alexandrowicz 2012: 83, 86-87; Schilder 2013: 214). It meticulously depicts the reaches of the river, the location of the famous Dnieper Rapids and river islands, cities and military objects along its banks, and the river delta. It might seem that this map is aimed at people who would like to sail on the Dnieper’s waters. Apparently, however, this map of the river was not only designed for practical purposes. It is possible practicality was not its primary purpose at all. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Dnieper was a transport and military route for the Zaporozhian Cossacks, who needed no maps to lead their attacks on the Tartar and Ottoman settlements on the shores of the Black Sea; certainly not such a map as this. Along the banks of the river, the author placed several dozen longer and shorter comments

rarely or never refer to maps, a fact that once again underscores the novelty of elaborate geographical and cartographic conceits in a Jacobean poet such as John Donne: neither Thomas Wyatt nor Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey, nor George Herbert, for instance, ever employs the map conceit”. Turner 2007: 413.

in Latin that described cities and castles, the life of Cossacks, and the Rapids. The following comment placed next to the Cherkasy town, on the right bank of Dnieper, serves as an example:

Czyrkassy

Tradunt plerique Czyrkassos esse reliquias veterum illorum Cymbrorum quia Homero Cymerii vocantur; feruntque eos magna ex parte Machometana religione uti quod ego affirmare non audeo cum omnibus constet eos Ruthenos esse Graecamque religionem profiteri (*Dnieper Map* 1613).

Cherkasy. Many authors write that Cherkasy is a relic of the ancient people of Cimbri because Homer called them Cimmerians. Some also write that most of them are Muslims, which I cannot confirm because everything suggests that all of them are Ruthenians of the Greek faith<sup>3</sup>.

The map also contains references to historical events; mainly wars and battles. This is why the map of the lower Dnieper should be treated as a detailed geographical-cultural study.

In 1595, at about the same time as the Radziwiłł Map was being prepared, a poem entitled *Flis (Rafting)*<sup>4</sup>, by Sebastian Fabian Klonowic, was published in Cracow (Karpiński 1984: 16). Klonowic was a burgher from Lublin who lived in L'viv and Zamość. He was one of the leading Polish poets of his time. His *Rafting* describes a journey on a ship called *komięga*<sup>5</sup> floating down the Vistula River from Warsaw to Gdańsk. Between the 16th and the 18th centuries the Vistula was the main communication route in the Western part of the Kingdom of Poland. It was used to transport grain to Gdańsk, and from there the grain was exported to West-European countries. In the preface, Klonowic revealed the motives for this poem:

Iżem tedy dla szyprów naszych polskich i dla uciechy pływającej po Wiśle napisał tego *Flisa*, pływając też sam po tejże rzece do Gdańska, żeby sobie uczciwy człowiek na szkucie nie tesknął i nie melankolizował (...) (Klonowic 1984: 31).

Having sailed on this very river to Gdańsk myself, I wrote this *Rafting* for our Polish skippers and for the joy of those who sail on the waters of Vistula, so that an honest man on a punt would not yearn or become melancholy (...).

<sup>3</sup> That is Orthodox faith, J.N. Here and elsewhere, translations are mine unless otherwise indicated. According to ancient historians, Cymbri were a Germanic or Celtic people, inhabiting the peninsula of Jutland, Denmark. Cimmerians, on the other hand, were an Indo-European people living in ancient times in the area of Crimea and Caucasus. The author of the map clearly distances himself both from identifying these two peoples with one another and from stating that the descendants of Cimmerians are Muslims.

<sup>4</sup> Polish *flis* meant to transport goods (mainly grain and timber) on the Vistula River. The title *Rafting* used in English publications (Davies 2005: 415) does not exactly correspond to the meaning of *flis*.

<sup>5</sup> *Komięga* was similar to a raft ship. It used to be a long ship of a shallow draught. It was used to transport grain from the interior of Poland to the port of Gdańsk.

The poem consists of three main parts (Karpiński 1984: 11-13). The first one is about the inconveniences of sailing, the second concerns the necessity of trading all over the world (with all its advantages and disadvantages), while the last one contains a list of municipalities that rafters floating down on the Vistula pass by on their way from Warsaw to Gdańsk. It is not, however, a mechanical enumeration of places. The poet provided elaborate comments, quoted curiosities and generally showed off his erudition, which is specially noted at the beginning of the third part of his poem:

Ukażęć drogę do Motławy prostą,  
 Będę u ciebie wodzem i starostą,  
 Od Warszawskiego aż do Zielonego  
 Mostu gdańskiego.  
 Mianując miasta, wsi, kępy, ostrowy  
 I o rzekach ci dam rozsądek zdrowy,  
 Gdzie która wpada, gdzie w którą się dzika  
 Wisła połyka. (Klonowic 1984: 68-69)

I will show you a straight way to the Motława River, I will be your leader and guide from the Warsaw Bridge to the Green Bridge in Gdańsk. I will name towns, villages, islets and isles, and I will give you wise explanations about rivers: where they flow into the Vistula river and where the wild Vistula swallows each of them.

Like the author of the Radziwiłł Map of Dnieper, Klonowic listed successive localities and river mouths, providing some of them with elaborate comments. For instance, at the bifurcation of the Vistula into the Nogat (one of the delta branches of the Vistula river) he related the legend about the latter's origin (Klonowic 1984: 77-78).

Although at the end of the poem he wrote that "*totus ergo libellus nihil docet aliud quam securitatem navigandi et mercaturam utiliter exercendi in Vistula fluvio*" ("the whole book teaches nothing else than safe sailing and beneficial trade on the Vistula River") (Klonowic 1984: 88), it seems that his chief aim was to provide his readers with intellectual entertainment. Two reissues of the poem indicate that readers appreciated his efforts (Estreicher 1903: 303-304).

Presumably, there is no direct connection between Klonowic's poem and the Dnieper Map included in the Radziwiłł Map. However, the similarity between the two texts is striking: both of them were created in the same period; both speak of the two biggest rivers in the Kingdom of Poland that flow to two main seas between which the country lies (which will be discussed below); and both works are primarily studies of geographical and cultural character and only secondarily should they be treated as texts designed for practical purposes (namely travelling). Even the physical layout of these texts is alike: there are comments and marginal notes placed along the main course (of the river or the text) (Fig. 2a, 2b). And finally, a close relationship between cartography and literature can be observed in both works. The cartographer feels the urge

to annotate his graphic representation, although there is nothing surprising about that since even the medieval *mappae mundi* contained extensive glosses (Woodward 1987: 286-287; Jacob 2006: 189, 238, 249-251). However, the poet's need to map in a poetic work was a relatively new phenomenon in poetry. Klonowic clearly felt the need to compile a sort of topographic representation of what he saw.

Several other Polish poets of this time designed poetical maps similar to that of Klonowic. They belong to the group of many other European poets who did so in the second half of the 16th century and the first half of the 17th century.

## 2. Cartographic imitatio and mimesis in late Renaissance Polish poetry

The literary output of the six aforementioned poets drew my attention to this context because of the ubiquitous presence of geographical references in their works. They are simply littered with geographical names. Works often contain antique toponyms, although until the end of the 16th century contemporary names were prevalent. They comprise names of cities, rivers and geographical regions, mostly from the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. There is such an abundance of place and waterway names that the reader may be under the impression that the poets of that age drew enormous pleasure from using toponyms, as if suddenly a new dictionary appeared before them, one that contained hundreds of words that were previously unknown and that brought new possibilities for poetic language. In this respect, Polish poetry is not alone. A similar delight in using names, particularly oriental ones, can be observed in Christopher Marlow's *Tamburlaine the Great* (Bate, Smith 2005: 13':56"-15':57"). In contrast, Polish poets were mostly attracted by their native geographical names.

It is easy to imagine that the main source for this new dictionary was cartography. To date, no extensive research into the knowledge of maps among the intellectual elites of the 16th and 17th-century Commonwealth has been conducted because scholars have focused on the production of maps rather than on their distribution and use (cf. Buczek 1966, Alexandrowicz 2012). However, based on the fragmentary data we have, it is possible to say that, as in other European countries, the use of maps was becoming ever more common.

This process was particularly intense between the 1570s and 1580s, partly thanks to King Stephen Báthory, who displayed great interest in cartography. In 1580, one of the correspondents of Abraham Ortelius reported to him that he knew "presently the Polish King Stephen often looks at *Theatrum orbis terrarum*" (Ortelius 1883: 233; Alexandrowicz 2012: 59). Maps and atlases were noted in inventories of contemporary book collections. In 1541 and 1551 the professors of Cracow University ordered a terrestrial and a celestial globe from Gerardus Mercator to be used as teaching aids. A couple of decades later (1599 and 1603) they purchased two other globes made by Willem Blaeu in Amsterdam (Waltoś

1999: 86-87). In the university library there was a collection of atlases, among them a portolan by Battista Agnese (Agnese 1540)<sup>6</sup>.

Contact with maps, direct or indirect, changed the contemporary Polish poets' way of thinking. This was reflected in the need to translate maps into literary texts. A cartographic translation could have been analysed with the application of several categories available to the humanists of the second half of the 16th century. The most important ones are imitation and mimesis.

The question of imitating was widely discussed in 16th century literary theory. It was a fundamental category in literature, painting, sculpture, music, and so forth. This is why the notions of imitation and mimesis can also refer to cartographic creation and to those literary texts in which a relationship with cartography can be discerned. A broader discussion of cartographic imitation requires an independent study. In this paper, I would like to present a differentiation proposed by a Polish scholar, Barbara Otwinowska (Otwinowska 1998: 344; Fulińska 2000: 21).

In Renaissance literary theory, the terms *imitatio* and *mimesis* were often used interchangeably. Otwinowska notes that the terms could mean both imitating nature and imitating the artefacts of culture (*imitatio auctorum*). Therefore, she suggests that today the term *mimesis* refers to the imitation of nature, and the term *imitatio* to the renaissance authors' imitation of antique texts. This model is, of course, a simplification, since imitating nature always takes place within a certain literary genre. This implies that imitating nature requires the application of illustrative figures of thought, such as description or hypotyposis, and established genres, such as *isolario*, *hodoeporicon*, *sonnet* etc.). The use of rhetorical figures means that an imitation of nature is also an imitation of already existing texts. Nevertheless, it is possible to differentiate between such literary-cartographic works in which the emphasis is placed on the creation of the effect of reality (*l'effet de réel*), and other works of the same kind, in which intertextuality is more important.

Let us take a look at two examples of a lyrical representation of the world: a mimetic one by Kasper Miaskowski and an imitative one by Jan Kochanowski. The poem *Urania* by Kasper Miaskowski (published in 1612) describes regions that pay tribute to newly born Jesus. Here, the mapping can be compared to photographic zooming. Depicting the same piece of land from different perspectives on one map became possible due to the reception of Ptolemy in the 15th century and the development of cartography in the next. Humanist poets began to imitate this solution in literature, and Miaskowski was one of them. The poet begins with a large-scale map of the world on which only whole continents are recognizable (Africa, Asia and Europe).

O Nim się dowie  
Murzyn, Indowie  
I Atlas z Maury

<sup>6</sup> The book belonged earlier to the royal library of king Sigismund II Augustus. It is worth to mention that the image of the globe is represented on one of the arras from his famous collection of tapestries. Cf. Hennel-Bernasikowa, Piwocka 2017: 424-431.

Przyjmie Go z gaury,  
I Tagus złoty  
Przyjmie z ochoty. (Miaskowski 1995: 58, 17-22)

A Negro and Hindu | Will learn about him | And Atlas from Mauritania |  
Will receive him together with the giaour, | And the golden Tagus | Will receive  
him gladly.

In the subsequent stanzas the poet focused chiefly on four regional maps. They covered Poland, the Balkans, Byzantium conquered by Turks, and Rome. Describing Europe, Miaskowski uses metonymy: the names of European regions were replaced with rivers and seas: the Tag, Vistula, Danube and Tiber, and the Black Sea (Miaskowski 1995: 59, 29-46).

A different means was employed by Jan Kochanowski, who in song II 24 (published in 1585), drew a more precise map of Europe:

O mnie Moskwa i będą wiedzieć Tatarowie,  
I różnego mieszkańcy świata Anglikowie,  
Mnie Niemiec i waleczny Hiszpan, mnie poznają,  
Którzy głęboki strumień Tybrowy pijają. (Kochanowski 2008: 102-103, 17-20)

Moscow and the Tartars will find out about me  
And the English who live in a far-off country,  
Germans, brave Spaniards will hold me in high esteem,  
And those who drink water from the Tiber's deep stream. (Kochanowski 2018:  
142, 17-20)

At first glance, it appears that the poetic maps of Miaskowski and Kochanowski are mimetic in a similar way: they repeat a finger's journey on a map. Seemingly, both of them are a reflection of the 'real' Europe. But it is not the case in Kochanowski's map. The stanza quoted above comes from a poem that is a faithful imitation of the famous ode II 20 by Horace (*Non usitata nec tenui ferar*), in which Kochanowski replaced the names of ancient regions (cf. Ziomek 1989: 103-105; Niedźwiedź 2016: 253-260):

me Colchus et qui dissimulat metum  
Marsae cohortis Dacus et ultimi  
noscent Geloni, me peritus  
discet Hiber Rhodanique potor. (Horatius 2008: 66, 17-20)

The Colchian shall know me, the Dacian too,  
Who hides in dread of Marsian cohorts, and  
Remote Geloni; learned Spaniards,  
Rhone-drinkers likewise, will be my scholars. (Horatius 1983: 208, 17-20)

Therefore, I would like to treat Miaskowski's poem as a model of mimetic literary mapping and Kochanowski's poem as imitative literary mapping.



When I distinguish these two ways of mapping (*mimesis* and *imitatio*) I do not only intend to classify poetic cartographical representations because I am convinced that these two terms refer to two different strategies of speaking of space. The first one may be termed exploration, and the other one – counter-mapping. In both cases we deal with cartographic persuasion. The authors of these poetic maps strive to make the reader warm to a particular view of the world. Scale, order and hierarchy are used here. Some elements were enlarged, some reduced, some completely omitted. These poetic maps have their own hidden assumptions and their own rhetoric, which was described by J.B. Harley with reference to ‘realistic’ maps (Harley 1991a: 65-71; 1991b: 57-76). The main function of the other type, namely imitation, is polemic. Here, counter-mapping consists in rebelling against notions of the shape of the continent commonly used in Western and Southern Europe. Kochanowski’s counter-mapping is directed not against Horace, but against 16th-century European metageography (cf. Niedźwiedź 2016: 269-272).

The new representation has the form of a palimpsest. The poet redraws an already existing map. Remembering the old map is essential to understand the new one. Song II 24 gains full meaning if the reader knows Horace’s ode II 20. In Kochanowski’s case, the most important thing is not the result: the opus, the map, but this gesture of drawing the map anew. It is a gesture of opposition to existing cartographic representations as well as the hierarchy of European states and literatures. This gesture has a more significant effect, that is, the highlighting and self-fashioning of the poet-cartographer (cf. Greenblatt 1984: 8-9; Conley 1997: 2). Kochanowski thus says: look, I and my poetry, written in Polish, also exist on the map of Europe. At the same time, a new map is being created, one on which the centre and the outskirts are located in a new way.

### 3. Centres and peripheries of the Polish Crown

In poetic cartography practiced in 1580-1625, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is often depicted as the centre of Europe. This is most evident in Kochanowski’s poem, but such shifts are also discernible in the poetic output of Maciej Strykowski, Miaskowski, Petrycy, Klonowic and Sarbiewski. They did not necessarily intend to show that the Polish-Lithuanian state was the most important of European countries, but rather to accentuate its presence on the continent. Polish poets knew that to be on a map, especially in a central place, means simply to exist. To some extent, in their eyes, the map gained the function of a fetish, which political maps retain even today, together with hierarchisation.

Hierarchy is also visible in the mapping of the Commonwealth. Usually, poets shaped its territory using a binary opposition: centre–outskirts. The representations of the latter are not particularly surprising. The peripheries were determined mostly by references to wars on the frontiers of the Commonwealth. Cartographic metonymy was frequently used in such cases. The names of rivers replaced the names of regions where military action had taken place. There-

fore, the Daugava River is in the north, the Dnieper River is in the west and the Dniester River is in the south, effectively mapping the respective conflicts with Sweden, Muscovy and Turkey. This is how Szymonowic, Petrycy and Miaskowski, among others, defined the outskirts.

Representing space in such a way, based mainly on references to the river system, is a procedure typical of early modern cartography and chorography (Niedźwiedź 2019: 69-73). In Polish literature, it was initiated as early as in the 15th century by a chronicler, Jan Długosz (1415-1480). At the beginning of *Annales* (1480) the historian included an extensive chorography of the Kingdom of Poland, in which, interestingly, he was the first Pole to refer to Claudius Ptolemy's treatise on drawing maps. Długosz's main point of reference was rivers (Niedźwiedź 2019: 71). His chronicle was very popular and through numerous adaptations, influenced the manner in which later authors wrote about Polish history and geography. It is possible, then, that apart from ancient authors, it was Długosz who contributed to such a hydrographic way of mapping the territory of Poland in the poetry of the 16th and 17th centuries. However, such mapping was applied not only to Poland.

In his Ode IV 1 *Ad equites Polonos cum montem Carpatum redux ex Italia inviseret* (*To Polish knights, when the poet looked out from the Carpathians during his return journey from Italy*) written around 1625, a famous neo-Latin poet, Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski presented himself as a prophet looking on both sides of the Carpathians (Sarbiewski 1980: 298). It is a work concerning the contemporary political situation. On the south side of the mountains, Sarbiewski sees Hungary and Transylvania devastated by the constant attacks of the Ottoman Empire:

Hic inde laevos despice Carpato,  
Polone, campos, quos pecorum ferax  
Dravusque Savusque et bicornis  
Frugifero secat Ister amni. (Sarbiewski 1980: 300, 29-33)

Take a look, Pole, from the Carpathians | Onto the vast fields cut by | The wild Drava and Sava and by the fertile stream | Of the double-branched Ister<sup>7</sup>.

On the northern side lies the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. According to the poet, if it only remains united in the one Catholic faith and not divided in terms of creed like Hungary, it will defeat the Muslim Turks charging from the South and the Protestant Swedes attacking from the North:

Noster nivoso Vistula Carpato,  
Nosterque ab ipso fonte Borysthenes,  
Labentur in Pontum, nec Austrum  
Aut Gothicum metuemus Arcton. (Sarbiewski 1980: 300, 57-60)

<sup>7</sup> Ister – the Danube river.

Ours is Vistula from the snowy Carpathians, | Ours is Borysthenes<sup>8</sup> flowing  
from its spring | To Pontus. We shall fear | Neither Auster<sup>9</sup> nor Arctos<sup>10</sup>.

The geographical (or cartographic) symbols of the Kingdom of Poland here are the Carpathian Mountains and two huge rivers, mentioned at the beginning of this paper<sup>11</sup>.

The centres, however, are more interesting than the outskirts. In 1612, Sebastian Petrycy of Pilzno, a philosopher and physician, published a volume of over 130 poems in which he patterned his poetry after Kochanowski's method of imitation (as in Song II 24). All of Petrycy's works were translations or paraphrases of odes and epodes of Horace's. In his paraphrase of Ode III 30 (*Exegi monumentum*), the poet polonized all the toponyms and realities from Horace's poem:

Dotąd u ludzi potomnych ma chwała  
W wymownych uściech będzie stała,  
Póki na Wawel w trzechset osób radny  
Wstępuje lachów dządzca wielowładny.  
Chwalić mnie będą: kędy Wisła bieży,  
Kędy zaczętych Lachów Gniezdo leży,  
Gdzie Dniepr, gdzie Odra, gdzie Don dna niemiany,  
Nie będę w uściech lackich zapomniany. (Petrycy 2006: 164, 7-14)

My fame shall last among the future generations, | Until the mighty ruler of  
the Lachs<sup>12</sup> enters the Wawel Castle | Together with three hundred senators. | I  
will be praised: where the Vistula runs, | Where Gniezno, the primary Nest of  
the Lechs lies, | Where the Dnieper, the Oder, and the bottomless Don, | In the  
Lachs' mouth I won't be forgotten.

Although in this, and in other poems by Petrycy, a special place is given to his beloved Cracow and its University, he did not strive to emphasise this city as the only central point. He mentioned Gniezno, the oldest capital of Poland, which he linked with the origins of the Polish nation; and he did make an allusion to the biggest city of the Commonwealth, located at the Vistula outlet in Gdańsk. In other authors' poems this polycentrality is even more evident.

<sup>8</sup> The Borysthenes – the ancient Greek name of the Dnieper river.

<sup>9</sup> Auster – the ancient name of the south wind (= the wind blowing from the Ottoman Empire).

<sup>10</sup> Gothica Arctos – in the 15th-17th centuries the Goths were considered to be the ancestors of the Swedes. The Arctos – the Greek name of the Ursa Maior constellation (= the North).

<sup>11</sup> It is interesting that in the Time of Troubles and the Polish military interventions in Russia, two poets, Petrycy and Miaskowski, moved the outskirts deeper into Muscovy. For a short time, the Don and the Volga became the border of Polish ambitions. It was connected with a colonial episode in Polish literature at the beginning of the 17th century and the Polish mapping of Russia, discussed by Grzegorz Franczak in one of his recent studies (Franczak 2010: 43-67).

<sup>12</sup> The Lachs – the Poles. According to the 16th-century Polish ethnogenetic myth the first legendary ruler of Poland was Lech. His descendants were called Lechici or Lachs.

Kasper Miaskowski came from Greater Poland and maybe this is why in his poetry there is virtually no mention of Cracow (the capital of Poland), but he does mention the capitals of voivodeships and bishoprics: Poznań, Włocławek and Sandomierz. Sebastian Fabian Klonowic devoted most of his (already quoted) poem, *Rafting*, to Warsaw and Gdańsk. Another famous geographical poem by Klonowic is even more telling. Here, I refer to *Roxolania* written in Latin and published in Cracow in 1584. In this poem, Klonowic mapped the Eastern parts of the Crown, most of which is in modern-day Ukraine. For him, the main city of this region was L'viv, but he also remembered the former capital of Ruthenia, that is, Kyiv (Klonowic 1996: 96-98), just as in the piece quoted above, Petrycy had remembered Gniezno. Additionally, Klonowic presented a detailed description of his home-city, Lublin and Zamość. For Szymon Szymonowic, another poet from that region, who like Klonowic, was a professor of the Zamojski Academy, there were several centres and they included L'viv and Zamość.

Reading the poems of these poets *en bloc*, one can see the multitude of centres. There is no single point on the map that would be evidently indicated as the main one. There are several places important from the authors' point of view. This considerably weakens the tension between the centre and the periphery and creates a different type of relation: the interior and the outskirts. In the following epochs from the 19th century onwards, these outskirts are referred to as *Kresy*, that is borderlands. The most important issue, however, is that this polycentric character of poetic maps reflects the federal system of the Commonwealth. This 'federality' concerned not only the Polish-Lithuanian union, but also the structure of the Polish Crown.

It was a vast country, one of the largest in Europe. Internally, it was deeply diverse in respect to politics, law, ethnicities, religions, languages and histories. Many regions (e.g. Greater Poland, Lesser Poland, Royal Prussia or Vohlyn) had their own political and juridical autonomy and their local centres. The national and ethnic composition of these regions was also complex. These places were populated by Poles and Ruthenians (ancestors of contemporary Ukrainians), Jews, Germans and Armenians who all used their own languages. The geographical landscape of the Polish-Lithuanian state was no less diverse than the social or political landscape. The scale of differences is rendered by contemporary maps, especially the Radziwiłł map and the most notable map of Renaissance Poland by Waclaw Grodecki (Grodecki 1561; cf. Buczek 1966: 41-44)<sup>13</sup>. The written maps of each of the poets reflect this feeling of the federal and polycentric character of the Polish Crown.

<sup>13</sup> However, it is impossible to point out any particular maps the poets consulted while writing their poems. This lack of the evidence of referring to particular cartographic sources is also visible in other literatures, e.g. Spanish, cf. Pinet 2007: 475. There are only a few instances when Polish early modern writers point out their sources, e.g. Lubomirski who consulted atlases by Ptolemy and Ortelius when he wrote his poem about Tobias in 1683 (cf. Lubormirski 1995).

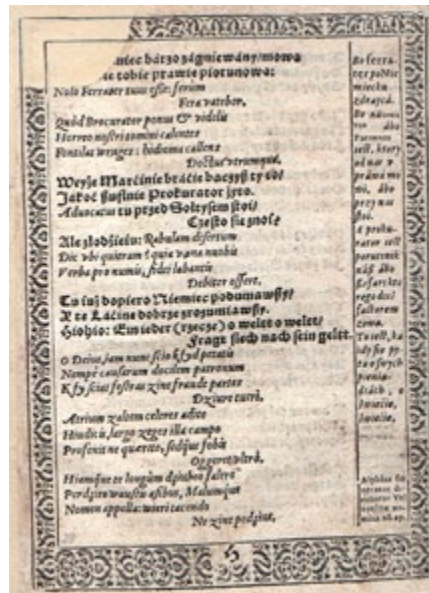
## Conclusion: a self-made map

The literary output of the poets discussed reflects well the phenomenon that Tom Conley termed as a self-made map (cf. Conley 1997: 1-22). Not every educated man in the 16th century had the proper tools to draw his own two-dimensional maps. But almost every humanist had the skills necessary to create literature and it was in literature that the wide-ranging experiments with cartography took place. For it turned out that cartography provided humanists with a new way of imagining space and their place within it. What is more, it enabled them to express or to shape their identity not only through history but also through geography. So, when Kochanowski, Petrycy and Klonowic talk about space, that is, create a poetic map of Poland, this map is their own in a twofold sense. Firstly, they use it to define the territory of the community to which they belong; so, they are Poles or Ruthenians. Secondly, and more importantly, they fashion themselves as poets who control the space. This is the position assumed by Sarbiewski in the poem cited above. He examines Europe from a Carpathian summit and maps its Northern and Southern parts. However, Sarbiewski was not only a poet, but also an author of numerous poetic treatises, e.g. *De perfecta poesi sive Vergilius et Homerus*, 1626 (*About the Perfect Poetry, or Vergil and Homer*, cf. Sarbiewski 1954). This is why his mapping, together with other gestures applied by the poets discussed here, may be related to Renaissance poetics. A well-known 16th-century theoretician of poetry, Julius Caesar Scaliger wrote in his *Poetices libri septem* (often referred to by Sarbiewski), that to create poetry is to imitate the divine act of creation; hence a poet is “like a second god” (Scaliger 1561: 3). And this is how it works in cartographic poems. The poet sees with the eyes of a cartographer, but at the same time looks at the world from God’s perspective: a God’s-eye view (Pickles 2004: 80).

Illustrations



Figure 1. The Radziwiłł Map. *Magni Ducatus Lithuaniae caeterarumque regionum illi adiacentium exacta description*, ed. Hendrik Hondius II, Amsterdam 1636, <<http://www.lithuanianmaps.com/Maps1624-51.html>> (access: 30.11.2020; Creative Common). On the left side a map of the Dnieper River is depicted.



Figures 2a and 2b. A fragment of a map of the Dnieper River on the Radziwiłł Map and a fragment of the first edition of Klonowic's *Flis* (*Rafting*; Klonowic 1595: Hr1). Both prints represent two *descriptions* (Lat. 'descriptions' or 'representations') of rivers from the upper reaches to the mouth. Both 'rivers' (expressed by cartographical and poetic means) are accompanied by meticulous comments on the margins.

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## Abstract

The paper is devoted to the problem of imitation of maps in the late Renaissance Polish poetry (between 1580 and 1630). At the beginning of the paper, the author writes about the unprecedented growth of Polish lyric poetry at the time. He reminds that in that period the Polish elite – among the poets – was especially interested in cartography. In the next paragraphs, he reveals his sources and methodological approach. The main thesis of the paper is that the poets widely used map-based technics in constructing their poems. Imitation (Latin: *imitatio*) played a crucial role in this process. To illustrate the ways of map imitation, works of six poets were chosen: S.F. Klonowic, J. Kochanowski, K. Miaskowski, S. Petrycy, M.K. Sarbiewski and Sz. Szymonowic. The paper consists of three parts. In the first, a similarity between cartographical representation of a river in poetry and on a map is shown. On this example, the author shows the *topoi* used both in poems

and maps. In the second part, the concept of imitation of a map is discussed. In the third part of the paper, the author shows how the late Renaissance poets described the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The author argues they tried to render the polycentric character of their vast country. In conclusion, he draws a similarity between controlling space in poetry and maps. He suggests that the idea of ruling over space might be related to the 16th-century idea of a God-like poet.

**Keywords:** Renaissance Polish poetry, cartography, maps, imitation, mimesis.