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## Epideictic *Orationes Familiares* and Customs of the Nobility in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the Seventeenth and the First Half of the Eighteenth Centuries: Some Coinciding Features<sup>1</sup>

Oratory in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth correlated highly with social need, reflecting Old Polish customs and dovetailing with the democracy of nobles.<sup>2</sup> Rhetoric was an effective instrument of politics, so the nobles, as the only group who could participate in regional and general parliamentary assemblies, sejmiks and sejms, took care to learn and teach it well.<sup>3</sup> Public activity demanded dexterity in the art of argumentation and persuasion, which resulted in a profusion of political pamphlets and a growing prowess in parliamentary speechmaking, especially of the *genus deliberativum* variety.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, both printed and manuscript sources bear evidence that the beginning of the seventeenth century saw epideictic speech rise into prominence in family life as well.<sup>5</sup> The fact may have resulted from a shift in perceiving oratory not only as belonging to the public sphere but also

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<sup>1</sup> The present study is to a large extent based on the results of my research that have been presented in a monograph more than half a thousand pages long. Due to the lack of space, citation of source references is limited to a bare minimum. I encourage the reader to reach for my Polish-language publication: M. Ciszewska, *Tuliusz domowy. Świeckie oratorstwo szlacheckie kręgu rodzinnego (XVII–XVIII wiek)* (Warszawa, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> On ancient and modern conceptions of the dependency of oratory forms and their development on the political regime in place, see J. Dąbkowska-Kujko, *Justus Lipsjusz i dawne przekłady jego dzieł na język polski* (Lublin, 2010), pp. 118, 122–123.

<sup>3</sup> See T. Bieńkowski, “Szkolne wykształcenie retoryczne wobec wymogów praktyki (Uwagi o funkcji retoryki w Polsce w XVI i XVII w.),” in B. Otwinowska (ed.), *Retoryka a literatura* (Wrocław, 1984), p. 214.

<sup>4</sup> See E. Kotarski, “Staropolska publicystyka polityczna. Rekonesans,” in *Dziedzictwo i tradycja. Szkice o literaturze staropolskiej* (Gdańsk, 1990), pp. 183–184. See also R. Krzywy, *Poezja staropolska wobec genologii retorycznej* (Warszawa, 2014), pp. 20, 46.

<sup>5</sup> On the development of this kind of speech in the 17th century, see Z. Rynduch, *Nauka o stylach w retorykach polskich XVII wieku* (Gdańsk, 1967), p. 33.

as a private skill strongly related to one's social status. Since proficiency in deliberative rhetoric was a mark of one's belonging to the second estate, then perhaps by extension the rhetorical skill in *genus demonstrativum* acquired the same distinguishing quality. In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, as in other countries, one's belonging to nobility was emphasized by one's clothing, gestures, countenance, tastes, and awareness of rules governing the familial and social life with its ceremonies.<sup>6</sup> It was, thus, a kind of *savoir-faire* that included specific linguistic behavior.<sup>7</sup> The ability to speak formally in any circumstances (and in reference to the nobles of the Crown and Grand Duchy, "any" ought to be understood literally) served a self-presentational function, reinforcing the speaker's belonging to the second estate and manifesting his high social status.<sup>8</sup> Old Polish theoreticians, being astute observers of social life, acknowledged that both in the public and private life of the Commonwealth nothing ever happened without oratory.<sup>9</sup> Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski noted that orators spoke at christenings, funerals, and weddings ("Ad cunas, ad feretra, ad thalamos declamant").<sup>10</sup> But it must be stressed that the three occasions just mentioned by no means exhausted the Commonwealth nobility's oratorical repertoire, as it encompassed also orations on the occasion of taking the veil, jubilees, liturgical holidays, feasts and other social events, and even ordinary neighborly visits.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, both theoretical grasp of rhetoric and practical training in oratory were essential not only for the elites but for all members of the noble class. Just how large a population they formed—counted not in thousands but in hundreds of thousands—is corroborated by statistical data. Polish researchers agree that the nobility comprised about 8 percent of some 7.5 million

<sup>6</sup> See M. Bogucka, "Gest w kulturze szlacheckiej," *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*, 26 (1981), p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Although some scholars—e.g. W.R. Rzepka, B. Walczak, "Socjolekt szlachecki XVII wieku (Próba ogólnej charakterystyki)," in M. Stępień and S. Urbańczyk (eds), *Barok w polskiej kulturze, literaturze i języku. Materiały z konferencji naukowej 25–29 sierpnia 1987 r. w Krakowie* (Warszawa, 1992), p. 181—stress the role of conversation rather than oratory in this respect, my research (based mostly on manuscript materials) indicates that, firstly, the boundary between the two was thin and fluid and, secondly, the nobility of the Crown of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania favored the art of speech, which is attested by the fact that they delivered orations in situations as trivial as an act of borrowing a newspaper.

<sup>8</sup> Similar conclusions regarding the role of felicitations in Old Polish culture have been reached in P. Kowalski, *Gratulanci i wieszownicy. Zarys komunikacyjnej historii wieszowania* (Wrocław, 2010), pp. 110–113.

<sup>9</sup> See "illud iam vivimus saeculum, in quo cum orationibus nihil non inchoatur, nihil non perficitur." M. Radau, *Orator extemporaneus*, as quoted in Rynduch, *Nauka o stylach*, p. 35.

<sup>10</sup> M.K. Sarbiewski, *O poezji doskonałej czyli Wergiliusz i Homer (De perfecta poesi sive Vergilius et Homerus)*, trans. M. Plezia, ed. S. Skimina (Wrocław, 1954), p. 31.

<sup>11</sup> Ciszewska, *Tuliusz domowy*. Old Polish orations accompanying particular rites of passage are discussed in Part One of my monograph (pp. 21–269); Part Two, spanning pp. 273–409, deals with the oratory delivered on religious holidays; whereas Part Three covers formal speeches on entirely private occasions: at social gatherings, banquets, or visits (pp. 413–539).

people inhabiting the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which puts the total number of nobles at about six hundred thousand.<sup>12</sup> This means that the second estate was much more numerous in Poland than it was in France or England.<sup>13</sup> The proportion varied greatly from voivodeship to voivodeship, with 1.7 percent in the Cracow Land (which is comparable to the percentage of nobles in the whole of France), but as much as 47 percent in the Łomża Land and only slightly less, that is, 45 percent, in the Land of Wizna.<sup>14</sup> There was no official hierarchy differentiating members of the second estate, since the division of gentry into titled nobility, widespread in other parts of Europe, did not exist here,<sup>15</sup> and the regime of the democracy of nobles made all *szlachta* equal before the law. Despite economic disparities between the nobles, whereby members of the same estate, sometimes even bearing the same coat of arms, could be either magnates as rich as kings or petty noblemen as poor as peasants, all of them were equal in the eyes of the law, having, at least in principle, the same rights and obligations towards their country. Hence, the demand for oratorical skill was not restricted to the elites at the royal and magnate courts; it was, instead, something rather common, not to say: popular or for the masses.

The curriculum of Jesuit colleges responded to the popular demand accordingly, as the *Ratio studiorum* heavily emphasized the importance of rhetoric. As Tadeusz Bieńkowski has remarked, the schools of the era, whether they were Catholic or Protestant, were tasked with “supplying rank after rank of ‘eloquent’ citizens able to participate in public life.”<sup>16</sup> The schools tried to fulfill the task as well as they could, even though Ryszard Montusiewicz is of the opinion that they erred in focusing too narrowly on the instrumental aspect of oratorical education.<sup>17</sup> Due to a complex set of factors, such as “laudatory obligations to the benefactors supporting the colleges,” or development of educational practices involving theatrical forms in Jesuit colleges, the schools became “centers of occasional literature.”<sup>18</sup> In other words, they trained their students in praising and congratulating, but did not prepare them for debating essential matters of the state in an informed way.

<sup>12</sup> J. Topolski, *Przełom gospodarczy w Polsce w XVII wieku i jego następstwa* (Poznań, 2000), p. 151.

<sup>13</sup> A. Wyczański, “Społeczeństwo polskie a społeczeństwa innych krajów,” in *Polska w Europie XVI wieku* (Poznań, 1999), esp. p. 75.

<sup>14</sup> J. Choińska-Mika, *Między społeczeństwem szlacheckim a władzą. Problemy komunikacji: społeczności lokalne – władza w epoce Jana Kazimierza* (Warszawa, 2002), pp. 20–21.

<sup>15</sup> O. Halecki, *Jadwiga Andegaweńska i kształtowanie się Europy Środkowowschodniej* (Kraków, 2000), p. 98.

<sup>16</sup> Bieńkowski, “Szkolne wykształcenie,” p. 212.

<sup>17</sup> R. Montusiewicz, “Kultura retoryczna kolegów w XVII i połowie XVIII wieku. Rekonesans materiałowy,” in Otwinowska (ed.), *Retoryka a literatura*, p. 201.

<sup>18</sup> Bieńkowski, “Szkolne wykształcenie,” p. 215.

As can be gathered from source evidence, the contemporaries were aware that school provided some basic education, but did not necessarily equip the alumni with sufficient knowledge or the practical skill that was really needed. One of the handwritten Polish texts on oratory dating from the eighteenth century contains an exceptionally interesting discussion of the significance of oratory in life.<sup>19</sup> The author distinguishes “three levels” at which it functions in society: private life encompassing the circle of friends and neighbors; half-private life, where in one’s own interest, or in the interest of close ones, one is required to speak publicly—for example, in court—and the public, or “republican,” life of politics. Each of these areas involves oratory, and its “matter” ought to be recognized and grasped taking the customs and culture of a given country into account. It is a very important statement, because it demonstrates an awareness of culturally bound aspects of oratory. The author thinks it is important to be able to speak about any matter extempore, because the time and circumstances do not always enable one to prepare a speech in advance. Without such an ability one cannot participate in public life or even take care of one’s own affairs properly. For this reason, it is indispensable to practice regularly, as “practice makes perfect,” since by greeting and bidding goodbye, by pleading, thanking, congratulating, praising, or complaining even in petty matters one gains the skills necessary to speak about more substantial matters. In other words, one’s home and closest surroundings are a suitable place for oratorical practice and training, a place where one can refresh and further develop things learned in school, the purpose being to acquire the ability to deliver a speech in any setting or situation, public or private.

In a similar vein the issue is addressed by the author of a handbook written at the Kamieniec college in 1744, in a chapter headed “De discursu familiari.”<sup>20</sup> According to the author, before a citizen orator can join public life, he should practice at home, speaking before his close ones on topics suitable for such an audience. Therefore, in view of that intent, all the pleasantries exchanged when greeting or parting, as well as the New Year and Christmas felicitations, toasts, and other template speeches collected in that chapter, should be seen as exercises in oratory, and the whole family life with the obligations entailed by hospitality should be considered a school of elocution that prepares for public speechmaking.

<sup>19</sup> J. Nowicki, “Institutiones oratoriae ex veteribus optimisque rhetoribus et potissimum Quintiliano collectae” [1765–1766], MS, Biblioteka Kórnicka Polskiej Akademii Nauk (hereafter: “BK”) 601, ff. 65r–66r. For a transcription of the text, see Ciszewska, *Tuliusz domowy*, pp. 537–539.

<sup>20</sup> “Par[agraphus] 2-dus, De discursu familiari,” in the manuscript “Summa eloquentiae oratoriae ... proposita. In Atheneo Camenecensi Soc. Jesu ex anno D[oni] 1744 in annum 1745...” f. 091-4351, Natsyyanal’naya biblyatéka Belarusi, n. pag. f. r, incipit: “rerum, formanda dexter per medium.”

Granting that any neighborly visit could be seen as a chance for practicing oratory and improving one's grasp of rhetoric with a view to future public service, we are bound to admit that Polish nobles studied the art with great zeal and commitment, and had plenty of teaching materials at their disposal.

Due to severe losses sustained by Polish library collections during World War II, it is now impossible to reconstruct a full picture of oratory in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The losses are, furthermore, impossible to assess, because one of the distinctive features of Old Polish culture was its reliance on handwritten material—most handbooks and speech collections functioned in manuscript form, and hence printed texts should be considered as a supplement to the body of handwritten sources. Examination of the surviving scripts, *silvae rerum*, and hand-written copies along with a dozen significant printed publications from the epoch shows that Old Polish customs had a major impact on both the practice and the theory of epideictic oratory.

As pointed out by Thomas Conley, until the publishing of a textbook by Michał Radau, who taught rhetoric at the Jesuit college at Braniewo, the most complete description of epideictic orations (*genus demonstrativum*) had been given by Nicolaus Caussin.<sup>21</sup> In just one year, 1643, at least six of a host of editions of Caussin's popular work, *De eloquentia sacra et humana*, appeared.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, at Braniewo, Radau was giving his lectures on rhetoric,<sup>23</sup> which would be published a few years later in Amsterdam by one of the students, Jerzy Becker (Beckher), under his own name as *Georgii Beckheri Elbigenesis Orator extemporaneus*.<sup>24</sup> Another of Radau's students, Adam Motkowski, fighting for

<sup>21</sup> T. Conley, *Rhetoric in the European Tradition* (Chicago, 1990), pp. 155–156.

<sup>22</sup> By 1643 the book had been printed at least ten times in four different editions in France and Germany (see Conley, *Rhetoric*, p. 155). In 1643 the book was printed three times in Paris (two editions by Jean Henault and one by a little known printer) and three times in Lyon (published by Nicolas Gay, Jean-Antoine Hugué, and Antoine Valançot).

<sup>23</sup> B. Natoński, "Radau Michał," in E. Rostworowski (ed.), *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. XXIX (Wrocław, 1986), p. 667.

<sup>24</sup> G. Beckheri, *Orator extemporaneus seu Artis oratoriae brevium bipartitum cujus pars prior praecepta continet generalia, posterior praxin in specie ostendit* (Amstel[o]dami: apud Ludovicum Elzevirium, 1650). Karol Estreicher (*Bibliografia polska*, vol. 26 (Kraków 1915), p. 24), listed a Vilnius edition of 1640 as the first one, but even though the bibliographer admitted to not having seen it, scholars often refer to that date. It can be inferred from Adam Motkowski's preface to the properly credited Amsterdam edition (Meurs, 1655) that Radau delivered his lectures in 1641, but Bronisław Natoński questions that assertion, saying that 1642–1643 is a more likely timeframe, so this date becomes the *terminus post quem*. Estreicher did not know any of the two editions by Becker (one credited and one anonymous) that had been mentioned by Motkowski. Currently, the Worldcat database includes three credited editions prior to 1655: Amstelodami: Elzevir, 1650; Amstelodami: Janssonius, 1651; and Lipsiae: apud Christianum Kirchnerum, typis Johann. Wittigau, 1654.

his professor's claim to fame, challenged the false authorship and caused the work to be published under the name of the true author in Amsterdam in 1655. The book was later reprinted regularly in Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Bohemia, Poland, and Hungary until 1741.<sup>25</sup>

Although *Orator extemporaneus* probably owed much of its unexpected popularity to the discussion of Sarbiewski's theory of conceit, which sparked interest of many readers throughout Europe,<sup>26</sup> it is the discussion of epideictic rhetoric that comes to the fore in the study of interrelations of oratory with customs and culture, especially when it is set side by side with Caussin's work. The French Jesuit had devoted the whole tenth book, "Liber X. De epideictica, sive demonstrativa eloquentia," to the topic, allotting separate chapters to the types of oration referring to the cycle of human life: to the genethliacon and two types of wedding oration ("Ars panegyricorum, nuptialium et natalitiarum orationum," Caput VIII, IX, X, XI), to the funerary oration (Caput XII, "De laudatione funebri"), the thanking oration (Caput XIII, "De gratiarum actione"), and to the greeting of princes (Caput XIV, "De salutationibus principum"). In this part of his treatise, and in the chapter on wedding and funerary orations particularly, Caussin summarizes the theory of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (Pseudo-Dionysius), noting its similarity to the theory by Menander Rhetor and adding excerpts from works of authors such as Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, St Ambrose, and others.<sup>27</sup>

The characterization of epideictic orations completed by Radau, firstly, follows closely the contemporary oratorical practice, which it simply describes, and it is, secondly, much richer in quantity than the strictly classical descriptions by Caussin. Epideictic takes up about half of the second part of the treatise, devoted to the demonstrative and deliberative kinds of discourse ("Breviarii artis oratoriae pars posterior. De genere demonstrativo et deliberativo"). In the 1661 Amsterdam edition, for example, it takes up no fewer than 284 pages in 4°, where the author, analogically to *De eloquentia*, describes genethliacons, wedding and funerary orations, greetings, and thanking orations, but goes on to additionally characterize bidding farewell and congratulations. Radau names twenty-six kinds of oration in all (compared

<sup>25</sup> J. Paszenda (ed.), *Z dziejów szkolnictwa jezuickiego w Polsce: wybór artykułów* (Kraków, 1995), p. 122.

<sup>26</sup> It has been pointed out that *Orator extemporaneus* was the first printed handbook to refer to Sarbiewski's theory. See E. Ulčínaitė, "Tradycja i nowatorstwo w wykładach retoryki w kolegiach jezuickich w XVII-XVIII wieku," in M. Wolańczyk and S. Obirek SJ (eds), *Jezuicka ars educandi. Prace ofiarowane Księdzu Profesorowi Ludwikowi Piechnikowi SJ* (Kraków, 1995), p. 245; see also J. Okoń, "Poetyka Sarbiewskiego i niektóre problemy baroku w dramacie," in *Prace historycznoliterackie* (Kraków, 1968), p. 47.

<sup>27</sup> The last of them mostly in the context of funerary orations. See more on this in M. Skwara, *Polskie drukowane oracje pogrzebowe XVII wieku. Bibliografia* (Gdańsk, 2009), pp. 32–48.

to six kinds distinguished by Caussin),<sup>28</sup> fourteen of which are speeches related to wedding, which is indicative of their key role in Old Polish culture. Insofar as Caussin is happy to follow the authority of ancient authors, Radau most of all concentrates on the orations being actually in use in the life of the society that he is part of.

Wedding-related orations have been grouped in Radau's work in as many as four different sections that refer to the chronology of custom and celebrations (*orationes: sponsalitia, nuptiales, epitalamices, and munerum oblatoriae*).<sup>29</sup> It can be said that Old Polish tradition had a hierarchy of wedding orations: the most important wedding speeches were traditionally the ones that accompanied the official giving of the bride to the groom, but even they existed only as a set of two inseparable orations. These were: the giving of a bride away on behalf of her family (*oratio redditoria sponsae*), and the thanking for the bridesmaid by the groom's family (*oratio gratiarum actoria pro sponsa*). Such a categorization had been known neither to Pseudo-Dionysius nor to Menander, so Caussin did not apply it either.

A study of Old Polish wedding-related orations that I conducted and published in a separate book in 2008<sup>30</sup> showed that the nuptial custom allowed for delivering more than thirty kinds of oration, some of which could be followed by multiple replies. My recent research, however, leads me to conclude that this potential number (as it accounts for various ceremony scenarios) approaches fifty.

Analogically to the hymeneal oratory, it is impossible to talk about a single type of lay funerary oration (i.e., one that is not a sermon) that would exist independently of any other. For in theory (because the practice was

<sup>28</sup> See M. Radau, *Orator extemporaneus seu Artis oratoriae breviarium bipartitum, cuius prior pars praecepta continet generalia, posterior praxin ostendit in triplici dicendi genere praesertim demonstrativo; nec non supellectilem oratoriam, sententias, historias, apophthegmata, hieroglyphica suppeditat.... Nunc secundo emendatius, et tertia parte auctius editum, ac a rapina Georgii Beckheri vindicatum, per Adamum Motkowsky, gratum discipulum admodum R. Patris* (Amstelodami: apud Jacobum à Meurs, 1661): Caput III "De orationibus sponsalitiis": five orations, including one in two versions treated separately depending on whether it is delivered on one's own or someone else's behalf (pp. 189–214); Caput IV "De orationibus nuptialibus": five orations, including congratulations without a reply 5 (pp. 214–229); Caput V "De orationibus epitalamicis": two orations (pp. 229–267), Caput VI "De orationibus munerum oblatoriis": two orations (pp. 267–293); Caput VII "De orationibus funebribus": two orations and an epitaph that I do not count here (pp. 293–364); Caput VIII "De oratione natalitia": three orations, two of which he describes in detail while the third, with an unnamed response, is not quoted in his discussion (pp. 364–379); Caput IX "De orationibus saluatoriis et valedictoriis": four orations (pp. 380–394); Caput X "De orationibus gratulatoriis": two orations (pp. 395–420); Caput XI "De oratione gratiarum actoria": one oration (pp. 426–436).

<sup>29</sup> Generic distinctions made by Old Polish rhetoricians varied greatly, and not everybody accepted Radau's classification.

<sup>30</sup> M. Trębska, *Staropolskie szlacheckie oracje weselne. Genologia, obrzęd, źródła* (Warszawa, 2008). In this study I provide excerpts from 277 wedding orations, out of a collection of more than 2500 researched and catalogued texts.

more complicated), two types of it were distinguished: the speech addressed to the family of the deceased and delivered by the guests (*oratio funebris ab hospitibus ad amicos*), and the reply whereby the family of the deceased thanked the guests (*oratio in qua gratiae aguntur nomine defuncti hospitibus*). Radau said:

Orationum funebrium duplex genus est in usu. Nam aliae dicuntur ab hospitibus ad amicos defuncti, aliae ab amicis defuncti ad hospites.<sup>31</sup>

Characterizations of such orations made by later rhetoricians are nearly identical; some authors, however, stressed the uniqueness and specificity of this division.<sup>32</sup> For example, a hundred years after Radau's lectures at Braniewo, a professor at one of Podolian colleges begins his lecture thusly: "Oratio funebris nostrae gentis duplex est." Only few theoreticians differentiated the kinds of oration even further, but their descriptions followed in fact the basic division into the oration on behalf of the guests and that on behalf of the family. A textbook titled "Orator Tullianus politicus," dated 1649, where an additional category for the oration of the royal envoy was introduced, may serve as an example in point.<sup>33</sup> This characterization also begins with a reference to the "obyczaj ojczyzny naszej" (custom of our homeland).<sup>34</sup>

A variety of approaches can also be seen when it comes to Old Polish theoretical reflection on genethliacon oratory. Citing Polish custom (*iuxta morem Polonorum*),<sup>35</sup> some theoreticians forego classical discussion of the

<sup>31</sup> Radau, *Orator extemporaneus*, pp. 293–294.

<sup>32</sup> MS, Biblioteka Jagiellońska (hereafter: "BJ") 8965, "Institutiones suadae scholastico-civilis," Sectio VII. De orationibus funebribus, f. 71r; MS, Biblioteka Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich (hereafter: "Oss.") 1169, "Compendium eloquentiae in gratiam egentium traditum opere admodum R[everen]di Patris Francisci Kowalicki, manu scriptum Mathiae Zagurski, auditoris eiusdem eloq[uentiae]," on the verso of the title leaf: "Anno D[omi]ni 1700 die 1 Octobris transcriptum anno D[omi]ni 1704 die 24 Novembris pridie s[an]ctae Catharinae," f. 99r; MS, BJ 8965, "Institutiones suadae scholastico-civilis," Sectio VII. De orationibus funebribus, f. 71r; MS, L'vivs'ka nacional'na naukova biblioteka Ukrainu imieni V. Stefanyka (hereafter: "LNNBU") f. 4 op. 1/474 (18th cent.), f. 74r; MS, LNNBU f. 4 op. 1/476 (17th cent.), f. 190r.

<sup>33</sup> For more on this manuscript see E. Ulčinaité, *Teoria retoryczna w Polsce i na Litwie w XVII wieku. Próba rekonstrukcji schematu retorycznego* (Wrocław, 1984), p. 179.

<sup>34</sup> MS, BJ 6092, "Orator Tullianus politicus ... 1649," f. 118r.

<sup>35</sup> Thus, i.a., Stanisław Jawor in his lectures from the second half of the 17th cent., written down in "Liber 2-dus Rhetorices seu Orator practicus Polonus patriae politiei accommodatus ac propositus anno Domini 1674 die 24 Januarii traditus a Re[vere]ndo patre Stanislao Jawor scriptus vero a me Jacobo Joanne Mamiński auditore eiusde[m] rhetorices." (MS, Biblioteka Narodowa 6411, pp. 221–222), discussed "ceremonies accompanying the birth of a child" (*circa natales puerorum nascentium*), performed according to the Polish custom (*iuxta morem Polonorum*), and stated that the oration accompanying the act of handing the christened child over by godparents back to the parents was a completely new kind of oration (*novum genus*). Cf. M. Trębska, "'Oddajemy szczęśliwy depozyt z przydatkiem imienia nowego,' – oratorski i epistolograficzny aspekt świętowania chrzcina w rodzinie szlacheckiej w Rzeczypospolitej XVII i XVIII wieku," in A.M. Wyrwa (ed.), *Miejsca chrztów, urzędzenia baptyzmalne i ceremonial chrześcijański od starożytności do soboru trydenckiego* (Poznań–Dziekanowice, 2016), p. 381.



genethliacon and divide it into separate categories (including the replies, of course): congratulating on a child's birth (*gratulatoria genethliaca*, *peroratio genethliaca*, *oratio genethliaca*, *oratio gratulatoria natae prolis*, etc.), baptismal felicitation (*oratio lustrica*, *oratio post baptismum*), and patron felicitation, often identified in Old Polish culture with jubilee felicitation. Rhetoricians did not agree on this division, though: some treated the orations as varieties or types of genethliacon oratory, while others insisted that they comprised completely separate groups; there were intermediate positions on the subject as well.

What I would like to draw attention to now is the terminology used by Old Polish theorists of oratory. In view of such an abundance of "wedding orations" and "funerary speeches," the traditional generic names had ceased to be sufficiently precise. Hence, descriptive names, identifying the circumstances and general action that the speech type accompanied, came to be used instead. Orations on taking the veil may serve as a good illustration. The ceremony of taking the veil by a maiden entering the convent included an oration of thanking for the candle on behalf of the maiden (*oratio gratiarum actoria pro cereo nomine virginis*), but the ritual also involved an oration extending thanks to the maiden's parents for her upbringing as well as an oration accompanying the act of handing her over to the abbess (*oratio gratiarum actoria parentibus pro educatione et redditoria virginis superiorissae*). Some textbooks, assuming the reader's knowledge of the topic, shortened the names to: the oration of thanking for the candle (*oratio gratiarum actoria pro cereo*), and the oration of thanking for the maiden (*oratio gratiarum actoria pro reddita virgine*). Even though they were used in his times, Radau did not characterize these orations, as at the time he was giving his lectures, they did not enjoy as much popularity as in the second half of the seventeenth century and, even more so, in the following century. Later textbooks, especially manuscripts, contain numerous precise descriptions of specific arrangements of taking-the-veil orations, defined as a whole by different rhetoricians as "oratio epithalamica sacra"<sup>36</sup> or "orationes in nuptiis sacris" in the plural,<sup>37</sup> "orationes circa tonsuram monialium,"<sup>38</sup> or "orationes in auguratione monialium,"<sup>39</sup> and so on.

<sup>36</sup> J.M.A. Mierzwiński, "Princeps orbis eloquentia ... anno Domini 1724," MS, BK 620, (*Pars 3-tia. Roboris 1-mi. De sacro epithalamio seu de oratione sacra epithalamica*), pp. 572–573 (Mierzwiński's notes from Kazimierz Stanisław Pałaszowski's lectures of 1724–1734); "Athenae Polonae Karnkoviano S.J. in collegio ... anno 1678," BJ Przyb. 95/51, (*Sectio 3-tia. De oratione epithalamica sacra*), f. 55v ff.; "Iason fortunatus ... 1737," MS, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Poznaniu (hereafter: "BUP") 537, (*Articulus sextus. De orationibus sacro epithalamicis*), f. 121.

<sup>37</sup> MS, BUP 524, "De orationibus in nuptiis sacris seu in tonsura monialis vulgo na postrzyżynach," (second half of the 18th cent.), p. 75.

<sup>38</sup> MS, Biblioteka Czartoryskich (hereafter: "BC") 1884 (17th cent.), pp. 217–225. On this manuscript, see Ulčínaitė, *Teoria retoryczna*, p. 185ff.

<sup>39</sup> "Ars oratoria," MS, BC 3567 (18th cent.), (*Articulus de orationibus in auguratione monialium*), p. 89.

Characterizations of oration types in manuscript textbooks are very often in line with the classical kinds (*genera*) of rhetoric. Epideictic oratory (*genus demonstrativum*) is discussed separately, and so are deliberation (*genus deliberativum*) and judicial rhetoric (*genus iudiciale*). Or so it seems at first glance. In reality, however, the authors wrote not with classical kinds but with “occasional” categories in mind, which means that they distinguished types of oration based on what ceremony they served: orations delivered during weddings (understood as a whole process from courtship to the giving of gifts—which is how it was understood by Radau and many others—and sometimes even to the removal to the groom’s home) were dealt with separately; speeches at funerary ceremonies constituted another group of orations, and so on. As a result, chapters devoted to epideictic oratory do in fact cover the deliberative kind of rhetoric as well, because deliberative speeches were also customarily delivered at such ceremonies. Oftentimes texts belonging to completely different generic orders, such as genres of poetry or letters concerning a given ceremony, were included as well. For example, a section on genethliacon may contain a description of an epistolary invitation to the christening, and a part dealing with funerary oratory may discuss the invitation to the funeral.

Such generic heterogeneity affects not only the contents of textbook chapters but some of the orations as well.<sup>40</sup> Thus, describing “additional orations at a betrothal” (*aliae orationes (...) ad sponsalia*), Radau characterizes an oration type defined as “significatio de adventu sponsi,” which is translated in headings of some well-known rhetorical models coming from other sources as “O przyjeździe Pana Młodego dwaj dają znać”<sup>41</sup> (Two announce the Bridegroom’s arrival) or “Mowa, oznajmując o przyjeździe P[ana] Młodego”<sup>42</sup> (Oration announcing the arrival of the Groom). The Braniewo professor emphasizes that the oration refers to a greeting, on the one hand, and to a plea, on the other: “utique spectat partim ad salutatoriam, partim ad petitoria,”<sup>43</sup> since after the awaiting host has been greeted by the envoys of the guest of honor, they ask that he be well received. Moreover, this type

<sup>40</sup> Heinrich Lausberg discussed this phenomenon in H. Lausberg, *Retoryka literacka. Podstawy wiedzy o literaturze*, transl., ed. and foreword A. Gorzkowski (Bydgoszcz, 2002), p. 63. Polish scholars, e.g., Mirosław Korolko and Roman Krzywy, discuss it as well. See M. Korolko, *Sztuka retoryki. Przewodnik encyklopedyczny* (Warszawa, 1998), pp. 57–58; R. Krzywy, *Poezja staropolska wobec genologii retorycznej* (Warszawa, 2014), p. 31.

<sup>41</sup> “O przyjeździe Pana Młodego dwaj dają znać,” MS, Lietuvos valstybes istorijos archyvas f. 1135 op. 2/40, f. 12r.

<sup>42</sup> “Actus ceremoniales. Przy zalotach, weselach i pogrzebach cały sposób odprawiania ich,” MS, LNNBU f. 5 op. 1/4502, f. 10v, (first half of the 18th cent.).

<sup>43</sup> Radau, *Orator extemporaneus*, pp. 202–203. A much more detailed analysis of the dispositio can be found in “Svada Sarmatica tironibus eloquentiae proposita, potissimum vero ad formandos in omni foro equites Polonos, ordinata in Collegio Posnaniensi SJ anno D[omi]ni ... 1668,” MS, Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, 96, (*Forma 2-da. Significatoria orationis de*

of speech was not reserved just for weddings; it was used more frequently<sup>44</sup> and originated in diplomatic protocol.<sup>45</sup> It is a very telling example of the “extrageneric” way of thinking of Old Polish rhetoricians.

Another peculiar feature of Old Polish theoretical descriptions is a large number of replies that accompany every oration, which are treated as separate kinds of oration and characterized in detail. In most cases, the reply is a kind of thanking (“*oratio gratiarum actoria*”) for congratulations, a gift, for the maiden on behalf of the husband-to-be, for condolences or for the presence of guests at the funeral, and—among parliamentary ceremonial speeches—for a ceremonial mace or staff of office, and so on. Hence one could question the necessity of describing the same kind of oration repeatedly. Yet a closer reading of the orations reveals that the arrangement of the reply is in fact similar to the speech it responds to, so the composition differs every time and so do *fontes inventionis*.

The symmetry is even more pronounced in the case of replies to salutations (*orationes salutatorie*, or *salutationes*) or valedictions (*orationes valedictoriae*, or *valedictiones*) as they mirror them almost perfectly. It might be noted that according to classical conceptions, the generic classification of poetic valedictions is predicated upon the speaker bidding farewell: the *propemptikon* is delivered by a person staying behind to someone about to embark on a journey, whereas the person who is leaving delivers the *apobaterion*.<sup>46</sup> In Old Polish textbooks and examples of speeches, the relationship between the person bidding farewell and the one being bid farewell influenced the length of the speech and the intensity of its panegyricism, yet it did not affect generic ascription.<sup>47</sup>

At least indirectly, the symmetry of orations evinced by model examples of speeches and theoretical characterizations in reference to nearly all types of oration might have been due to the tradition and *savoir-faire* of the second estate. First of all, the inability to deliver an eloquent reply to a salutation or valediction and not knowing the appropriate oratorical forms characteristic for ceremonial culture “would betray a plebeian” [“zdradzałby plebeja”].<sup>48</sup>

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*adventu sponsi*), f. 53r–v. Two model examples of this kind of oration can be found there as well: (*Oratio significatoria de adventu sponsi*), f. 33v, and (*Oratio brevior in eadem materia*), ff. 33v–34r.

<sup>44</sup> M. Bogucka, “Gest w kulturze szlacheckiej,” *Odrodzenie i reformacja w Polsce*, 26 (1981), p. 11.

<sup>45</sup> A. Przyboś and R. Żelewski (eds), *Dyplomaci w dawnych czasach. Relacje staropolskie z XVI – XVIII stulecia* (Kraków, 1959), p. 50.

<sup>46</sup> For classical and Old Polish theories of salutations and farewell addresses, as well as a bibliography on the subject, see M. Trębska, “*Vita iter est* – oratorskie pożegnania i salutacje XVII i XVIII wieku,” *Barok*, 40/2 (2013), pp. 187–202.

<sup>47</sup> Headings of model rhetorical orations that illustrate a specific point include details concerning the situation and the participants of the dialogue.

<sup>48</sup> The phenomenon is discussed in general terms in Bogucka, *Gest w kulturze*, p. 9.

Thus, not only great ceremonies but also events of everyday life taking place among family and neighbors provided constant occasions for confirming one's social status and belonging to the second estate.<sup>49</sup>

Secondly, lack of a reply, or of reciprocity, and even a reply inappropriately short and therefore impolite,<sup>50</sup> would disturb the equilibrium existing between the interlocutors of similar status, or on the contrary, it would sanction the hierarchy already in place.<sup>51</sup>

I have found only a few orations that do not require a reply, and even that small number can hardly be considered final, since my research experience suggests that replies lacking so far may still be discovered. Of course, oratorical practice might have diverged from the theory, but based on the huge body of oratorical production of the day that I know, I can say that these several cases are just exceptions that prove the rule. Naturally, the development of oratory had two coexistent threads: practice and theory. The former was extremely flexible, since it had to adapt the genres existing in theory to the needs of *hic et nunc*; as a result of this, we can find texts of delivered orations that substantially modified their source, for example, through a contamination of two different types of oration. The latter thread, somewhat derivative, attempted to capture reality with its categories and classifications. Yet at some point of its development, the theoretical description of oratorical usage no longer seemed enough. On the one hand, the rhetoricians vied with each other in characterizing oration models for every situation in life; on the other hand, they were prone to innovation to an astounding degree, especially in the eighteenth century. Not only did they aim to meet the rhetorical demand; they also tended to stimulate it by suggesting other, less obvious occasions for an orator to speak out. Scholars have drawn attention to the theorists' pragmatic approach to generic descriptions on more than one occasion.<sup>52</sup> The act of collecting as much and

<sup>49</sup> B. Szleszyński, "‘Ważna Cześćnika nauka o grzeczności.’ O grzeczności, prawie i porządku w sarmackich światach *Pamiętek Soplicy* Henryka Rzewuskiego i *Pana Tadeusza* Adama Mickiewicza," *Napis*, 10 (2004), p. 142.

<sup>50</sup> On the correlation between speech length and the degree of its politeness, see P. Brown and S. Levinson, "Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena," in E.N. Goody (ed.), *Questions and Politeness* (London, 1978), after: E. Tomiczek, "Z badań nad istotą grzeczności językowej," in J. Anusiewicz and M. Marcjanik (eds), *Język a kultura*, vol. 6: *Polska etykieta językowa* (Wrocław, 1991), p. 22. According to the principles of politeness, speakers should engage in a kind of game where, due to the rules of etiquette, one should praise the other as being superior, even though both of them recognize their social status to be equal. What is important, however, is that in the end, the degree of panegyricism ought to be balanced out. See M. Siuciak, "Sztuka konwersacji w tekstach z XVII i XVIII wieku," *III Internetowa Konferencja Naukowa Historia Konwersacji*, the University of Silesia, Katowice, January–February 2005, p. 6: <http://dialog.us.edu.pl/siuciak.pdf> (accessed on June 30th, 2015).

<sup>51</sup> Kowalski, *Gratulanci i winszownicy*, p. 20.

<sup>52</sup> Ulčínaité, *Teoria retoryczna*, pp. 170–171; R. Krzywy, *Sztuka wyborów i dar inwencji. Studium o strukturze gatunkowej poematów Jana Kochanowskiego* (Warszawa, 2008), esp. p. 13.

as diversified “material” relating to a particular type of celebration served a single overarching purpose: to make the textbook as useful to the reader and practitioner as possible. The creativity and innovativeness of Old Polish rhetoricians expressed itself in the attempt to cover each and every situation in life, no matter how petty it was, in order to prepare the orator not only for every ceremony but even for every imaginable scenario, no matter how unlikely it would be.

This tendency can be illustrated with lay oratory accompanying the ceremony of taking the veil. Study into the topic has shown that Old Polish oratory of noblemen was a rapacious element. Some taking-the-veil ceremonies were held in areas of the convent that were accessible to laymen, while others were not, so a lay orator was banned from participating in them. Yet I have been able to identify thirteen different orations pertaining to the ceremony, and several of them could only be delivered during the part of the ritual that was closed to the public.<sup>53</sup> What poses a problem here, then, is the quantitative and qualitative overabundance of theoretical propositions and model examples provided by the rhetoricians, who did not always make it sufficiently clear which of the propositions, and in what circumstances, really had a chance to be put to real use. The ceremonial hair cutting, for instance, was usually performed behind the cloister, being thus inaccessible to lay orators, who were men. Despite this fact, I have been able to find a manuscript textbook that contains not only a model oration for the occasion, but also an extensive theoretical characterization of it. In reality, such an oration could only have been delivered in strictly defined and unusually rare circumstances, so the type of oration could not have been in general use.<sup>54</sup>

All participants of Old Polish culture were aware that scenarios of family celebrations could be adapted to varied circumstances. Therefore, hand-written copy collections include texts that take into account different variants of the same event. For example, when the bridesmaid was journeying

<sup>53</sup> They include: the oration accompanying hair cutting (*oratio dici solita penes crinis detonsionem*), the oration on the occasion of giving a candle to the maiden (*oratio redditoria cerei, facis, candelae*), the oration thanking for the candle on behalf of the maiden (*oratio gratiarum actoria pro cereo nomine virginis*), the oration accompanying the giving of the ring (*oratio redditoria annuli*), thanking for the ring (*oratio gratiarum actoria pro annulo*), the oration accompanying the giving of the wreath (*oratio redditoria coronae*), thanking for the wreath (*oratio gratiarum actoria pro corona*), the plea for admittance to the convent (*oratio petitoria admissionis ad religionem*), thanking for admittance (*gratiarum actoria pro admissione*), the oration accompanying the act of handing the maiden over to the prioress or abbess (*oratio redditoria virginis; oratio redditoria virginis ad monasterium; oratio redditoria virginis ad religionem nomine parentum vel consanguineorum*), the oration of thanking for the maiden on behalf of the abbess or prioress (*oratio gratiarum actoria pro virgine nomine monialium abbatissae vel priorissae; oratio gratiarum actoria parentibus pro educatione et redditoria virginis superiorissae*), bidding farewell to the maiden (*oratio valedictoria nomine parentum vel consanguineorum religionem virgini ingrediendi*), and the oration of the maiden (*orationes quibus se ipsae virgines dicant obsequio divino*).

<sup>54</sup> It is also one of the few cases where we do not know a reply to it.

to the house of her new husband, her procession ought to be welcomed “in the field,” but the husband could either accompany her or await her at home. Prudent copyists reproduced model orations for both of these eventualities, just in case.

The situation is analogical when it comes to orations relating to neighborly visits. The salutation welcoming the guest (*oratio salutatoria*), along with the correspondent replies, exists in dozens of versions: whether it is to be delivered in the morning, at noon, or in the evening, in spring, summer, fall, or winter; whether the visit is expected or accidental and surprising. Similarly, they take into account the *status personarum*: whether the guest is educated, eloquent, or particularly esteemed, when he is the host’s equal in social status and when he is his host’s better. One of the manuscripts even anticipates a situation where a nobleman greets a king who has just happened to visit his manor.<sup>55</sup> We know model orations for negotiating who should sit where at the table and model orations to be delivered while taking off one’s hat as a sign of respect, just as we know orations aimed at budging *przynuka*, that is, the practice of forcing the guest to drink and eat, which followed from the Old Polish hospitality. The list could go on and on; but all the examples have one thing in common: they are closely linked to Old Polish customs.

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The utilitarian aspect of oratory and its ever increasing ties with everyday life brought about a reinterpretation of classical generic divisions. As a consequence, new, hitherto unknown types of epideictic emerged. In my opinion, the orations accompanying the ritual of taking the veil are the most interesting of them, because as closely related to hymeneal oratory as they were, they developed alongside and to a large extent independently of it.

The practicality of both the rhetoricians and the potential orators, though often criticized by contemporary Polish scholars, was justifiable, and perhaps even inevitable, as far as social needs were concerned. Instead of producing brilliantly abstract theoretical constructs that would perhaps constitute a value in itself, Old Polish theorists focused on the needs of a specific group of readers: in the seventeenth century they answered the popular demand by providing detailed characterizations of orations being in frequent use, and in the eighteenth century they went on to arouse it further by suggesting new models, examples, and theories.

The types of classical oratory, confronted with customs of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, underwent a process of multiplication,

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<sup>55</sup> “Rostra Sarmatica 1693,” MS, BC 2365) (*Impetus salutationes regum in comitiis audies de rostris curiae...*), p. 224.

which was caused, firstly, by the symmetry and dialogical character of Old Polish oratory, where nearly every speech required an appropriate reply, and, secondly, by new generic divisions that cut across the classical definitions: a description or a collection of orations for a particular occasion could be practical and easy to use only if it provided information on all kinds of oratory associated with that celebration or situation. It meant that the scope of discussion had to be extended so as to cover other kinds of oratory beyond the epideictic simply because they were required by ritual, or more broadly speaking, by custom. For the same reason, the rhetoricians chose to include in their handbooks examples of letters, although those clearly belonged to quite another order of things.

Further study of epideictic oratory in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth requires comparative analyses. Comparing the rich body of Old Polish occasional oratory with its European counterparts would enable us to answer the question of whether it is something truly unique, as some Polish scholars assert without backing their opinions with any statistics, or whether the work of our seventeenth- and eighteenth-century orators and rhetoricians fits into a more general tendency.

*Translated by Jan Hensel*