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# **The Consequences of “The Age of Manuscripts”.**

## **The Reconstruction of an Era**

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# Institutional Contexts of Polish Literary History

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There will always be pedants and archives, and their services, suitably strained, will always be necessary.

René Wellek

**T**he fundamental procedure of the history of literature is always reconstruction: this is a feature of historical studies, which take the chaos of information contained in sources and use them to extract facts, form them into a whole, and insert them into the chain of causes and effects. On the one hand, the concept of reconstruction is linked in an extremely obvious manner with interpretive processes: one interprets sources, facts and influences, and the subject of research is not only not specified once and for all, but by its very nature demands that ever new hierarchies be evaluated and determined. In this sense, every synthesis of literary history that paints a picture of an era or period from the history of literature is a reconstruction. On the other hand, the concept of reconstruction results from the very fragmentary, incomplete and either more or less residual nature of the starting material; just as the form of a building is reconstructed from the remnants of archaeological excavations, the facts preserved in sources are used to rebuild the image of the history of the art of the word. The more distant the era in question, the greater the importance of the fact of recon-

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(1952-2011) – literary historian, he focused on early Polish literature, textual criticism and editing of early Polish literature. He is the author of numerous books (i.a. *Tekst staropolski. Studia i szkice o literaturze dawnej w rękopisach*, and *Staropolska poezja ideałów ziemiańskich. Próba przekroju artykułów*) as well as articles published in renowned Polish scholarly journals. Since 1998 he served as the scientific editor of *Dzieła wszystkie Jana Kochanowskiego*.

struction itself, and, whether we like it or not, the subject of the research must be treated as a fragment of the whole that did not survive. A classic example might be the lyric poetry of ancient Greece, where the work of philologists has made it possible to piece together fragments of the works of Archilochus, Alcaeus and Sappho, while another is the literature of the Middle Ages, also largely reconstructed.

From this point of view, if we look at the history of literature and attach fundamental significance to the ways of perpetuating and transmitting texts, we can cautiously discern a turning point with the invention and popularisation of print. From 1453, when Johannes Gutenberg printed his “42-line Bible,” to the end of the 15th century, European printing presses produced at least 35,000 editions of books. In the 16th century, print became a practically compulsory stage in the life of a literary work. A new chapter in European culture began, that was once called the “Gutenberg galaxy,” and this also changed the scope of reconstructive actions, by providing access to a higher class of material – printed text.

Of course, the mere fact of its printing was not a sufficient condition for a text to be preserved. Printed books too could be destroyed, damaged by overuse or burnt. We often only know of the existence of a specific literary work from external sources. And sometimes luck would have it that one single copy survived, the best example being Mikołaj Sęp-Szarzyński's *Rytm* [*Rhythms*]. Yet the fact remains that printing, reproduction of a number of copies of a work, increased its chances of survival. Printing also meant that, even at the outset, the literary legacy was subject to a previously unknown categorisation. Such elements as the title page, author's name, printer, title, year of publication, technical description of the size, accompanying texts (forewords, dedication), even when they were not all present, transformed the quality of the library, not only reproduced by the edition, but to a great extent systematised and organised. We frequently fail to give due attention to this fundamental difference between the manuscript era and the age of printing, seeing it as somewhat self-evident. But just think what the oeuvre of Mikołaj Rej and Jan Kochanowski would look like today without the support of “printer's oil.” Leaving aside the fact that it would no doubt have a rather different form, it is worth asking what would have survived. Would Kochanowski's *Laments* have been preserved? Would we be able to reconstruct his collections *Songs* and *Epigrams* from the incomplete handwritten sources, not remotely guaranteed by an authorial seal? Would we have the sense of dealing with a fragmentary word, an imperfect reconstruction?

Such questions, though seemingly absurd, take on another, more serious countenance if we look into the depths of the 17th century and attempt an overview of the literature of the Polish baroque, when many writers decided

against printing their works, when many were satisfied with handwritten copies as a means of their dissemination, and when, irrespective of the mass of printed materials appearing, there was also an unprecedented growth in handwritten forms of preserving, reproducing and passing on texts. The 17th century, without any exaggeration called “the age of manuscripts,” is something of a breach in the “Gutenberg galaxy.” This certainly isolated occurrence in the literary Europe of the time has interested several generations of historians and literary historians, from Aleksander Brückner to Wiktor Weintraub, who wrote the following four decades ago:

We are facing a fascinating phenomenon in the sociology of literature which has never been studied in detail, and a grasp of which is necessary for a correct comprehension of Polish baroque literature.<sup>1</sup>

Assuming that we agree with the eminent scholar’s diagnosis, however, we should next ask whether this was indeed just a matter of “comprehension,” and therefore a hermeneutic issue. Or is this not a more elementary degree of cognition of literature, not at the level of interpretation of texts (also cultural), but at that of the very revelation of facts? After all, the relations between literature and the “manuscript culture” are not confined to the sociology of literature. From them derives that which we today call the literature of the baroque era.

In order to answer the question of what were (and still are) the consequences of the 17th-century “manuscript culture,” we must distinguish two areas of research: the first is the general presence of the handwritten book in society at the time, which we can study above all as a sociological phenomenon, and the second is the handwritten circulation of literary texts as a domain of philological research. Entering the first area, we record the types of manuscripts, types of texts they contain, and the role of literature through widely used genres, as well as the authors who were referred to most often, and so on.<sup>2</sup> Particularly interesting here is the possibility of identifying certain

1 Wiktor Weintraub, “O niektórych problemach polskiego baroku,” in *Od Reya do Boya* (Warszawa: PIW, 1977), 94.

2 Maria Zachara identifies the following types of noble *silvae rerum*: 1) family *silvae*, with very diverse contents; 2) functioning collections connected with the specific activity (public, teaching etc.) of their author; 3) sets of poems, maxims, of very much literary character; see Maria Zachara, “Sylwy — dokument szlacheckiej kultury umysłowej w XVII w.,” in *Z dziejów życia literackiego w Polsce XVI i XVII wieku*, ed. Hanna Dziechcińska, vol. XLVIII of *Studia Staropolskie* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1980): 201-202.

characteristic types of texts that appear in all types of *silvae rerum*, such as literature (also poetry) for specific occasions, political texts, literary games typical of noble circles and excerpts from the work of various authors designed to be useful *loci communes* for various occasions. Equally interesting are the rules governing the way these texts functioned, to a certain extent bringing their lives as manuscripts closer to the traditions of text in folklore,<sup>3</sup> such as: a) anonymity (the author's mark is superfluous, and soon rubs off); b) intensive circulation, due to the overlapping of oral, manuscript and printed tradition; c) the tendency to edit the text (creating alternate forms and variants), which is also linked to the ease of adapting it to the circumstances.

We obtain slightly different perspectives by entering the second area of research, which we defined as the handwritten circulation of literary texts. We continue to remain in the sphere of 17th-century manuscripts, but with a different object of interest: literature using manuscripts as its fundamental environment in which to exist and endure; literature, and thus the most significant works and eminent authors, such as Daniel Naborowski, the Morsztyns, and Waław Potocki. And it is this that I indeed see as the decisive factor for this period of the history of literature, to which I would like to devote this essay.

The questions that we must ask when discussing the "handwritten" character of 17th-century literature can be grouped around two main problems. The first is the origin of the phenomenon, the whole cluster of causes that led to this concentration of manuscripts. The second is the consequences which we continue to experience today when reconstructing, or rather constructing, a picture of 17th-century literature, or simply dealing with the works of this era. In previous research, issues concerning the origin have been very dominant – of course, especially from the perspective of the sociology of culture. Equally obviously, there is no unequivocal answer to the question of why most authors of note did not take advantage of the benefits of the typographical art. What we do have are rather suggestions pointing to a number of circumstances, chief among them being censorship, privatisation of literary life and changes in the mentality of the writers themselves.<sup>4</sup> It is cer-

3 The appearance in research on the literary life of old Poland of such concepts as "noble folklore" and "monastic folklore" is no coincidence. On this subject see Janusz Maciejewski, "Folklor  rodowiskowy. Spos b jego istnienia, cechy wyodr bniaj ce (na przyk adzie «folkloru szlacheckiego» XVII i XVIII wieku)," in *Problemy socjologii literatury*, ed. Janusz S awiński (Wroc aw: Zak ad Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1971), 249-268.

4 See Luigi Marinelli, "O r kopisiminnym i anonimowym charakterze poezji polskiego baroku: cenzura jako hipoteza konieczna," in *Staropolska kultura r kopisu*, ed. Hanna Dziechcińska (Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1990).

tainly easiest to discern the relationship between the decision not to print works and the desire to become independent from censorship. Yet it seems not to have been the censor as an institution that was the cause, but rather a reaction to any interference. This is more of a psychological phenomenon than anything else. Of course we can give a whole host of examples – traces of interference from Church, moral and political censorship (from the index of Bishop Szyszkowski, via the problems with the edition of Wespazjan Kochowski's poetry, to the ruling on the burning of *Władysław IV*, one of Samuel Twardowski's works, for alleged defamation of the good name of the Tsar of Muscovy). But we cannot speak of fears of problems in all cases. Even if the former Arian Waclaw Potocki, for example, might have been justified to have such concerns, this was not the case for Jan Andrzej Morsztyn, Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski, or even Daniel Naborowski, who was easily able to seek refuge from the strong Radziwiłł family. Rather than fear, this was usually a simple aversion towards the "gelding" of poems, as Jan Andrzej Morsztyn put it in his epigram *Do Piotra o swych księgach* [*To Peter About His Books*]. Rather than "printing oil," he suggested leaving the lute "sitting at home" (see *Do swoich książek* [*To My Books*]), so as not to be infected by the derogatory process; in reality, though, people sought other ways for reaching an audience, such as copying out single poems and entire blocks of them.

The second set of causes falls within the boundaries of the social processes that to a certain extent regulated literary life. Most of the authors of the handwritten circulation hailed from the noble or magnate classes. It was they, rather than burghers, who confined themselves to manuscripts. Printing was not a sign of social advancement, but rather was connected to the costs that had to be borne. At the same time, literary life was subject to the same processes as other forms of social life in 17th-century Poland. These processes aimed at decentralisation, rusticalisation, provinciality, and finally privacy. This was aided by the decline of literary patronage. Patrons of art, architecture and theatre could be encountered, but not patrons of literature, which became a private, or at most social pursuit. The Radziwiłłs treated Naborowski as a servant and a diplomat, but never as a writer. Jan Andrzej Morsztyn ceased to be a poet as soon as he became grand treasurer of the crown.

The third set of reasons is linked to the literature itself, which produced certain templates. The model of the "Domestic Muse" was created in noble circles, patronising Hieronim Morsztyn, Daniel Naborowski, Zbigniew Morsztyn, Waclaw Potocki, but also authors from the magnate stratum, such as Jan Andrzej Morsztyn and Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski. This term even appeared in the titles of collections (one of Zbigniew Morsztyn, for example), and meant something more than poetry associated with various

circumstances of family life.<sup>5</sup> In this wide-ranging, catch-all phrase, Jan Kochanowski's "I sing to myself and the Muses" took on its own peculiar meaning. This literary topos was lacking an understanding of art (poetry) as an act of immortalisation, as a conversation through the ages. In return, "Domestic Muse" found a closer perspective – that of friends and neighbours. They had no need for print – a manuscript sufficed, treated the same as a printed book. Here the question of the elitism of this "Domestic Muse" surfaces – with its very small readership in every sense, whether it was the courtly Muse of the author of "The Lute" or Potocki's Carpathian Muse. At the same time, though, we have the sense that the handwritten circulation, which defies any control, makes the fruits of the Muse belong to the reader, in a very broad sense. To the extent that we could speak of egalitarianism. Elitism and egalitarianism here form a knot of contradictions that every researcher of the culture of this era must bear in mind.

Without lingering further over the origins of this aspect of the "manuscript culture," let us now focus on the c o n s e q u e n c e s which we experience today as historians and readers of the literature of the Baroque era. Only then do we become aware of the significance of the "I sing to myself and the Muses" topos, understood almost literally here. Above all we should ask how much survived of the actual output of these times. After all, we are acting almost as if we had all such works in our possession, ignoring the fact that history was not kind to 17th-century manuscripts. And furthermore, only in the 19th century did the literature from this period begin to be discovered. Waclaw Potocki "appeared" with the publication of his *Wojna Chocimska* [*The Chocim War*] in 1850, the poetry of Jan Andrzej and then Zbigniew Morsztyn was discovered, one after the other, in the second half of the 19th century, and somewhat later, towards the end of the century, the figure of Daniel Naborowski became known thanks to the discovery of Jakub Teodor Trembecki's *Wirydarz poetycki* [*The Poetic Garden*]. But what if *Wirydarz* had been lost? The naive and seemingly senseless question "What did not survive to the time of Brückner and Edward Porębowicz?" begins to make sense if we take into account the fact that, with some exceptions (e.g. Waclaw Potocki), by then there were almost no autographs of Baroque poetry remaining. We ought therefore perhaps to perceive the period between the 17th and mid-19th century not only as a time of storing texts in manuscripts, but also as one of their gradual loss. It would be immensely interesting to compile a directory of non-surviving 17th-century works about which we know from third-party

5 On the "domestic muse" in a narrower sense see Ludwika Ślękowa, *Muza domowa. Okolicznościowa poezja rodzinna czasów renesansu i baroku* (Wrocław: Uniwersytet Wrocławski, 1991).

sources.<sup>6</sup> After all, it is impossible to form any other type. The retrieval of baroque literature in the 19th and early 20th centuries was interrupted by the Second World War, which wrought unprecedented devastation on manuscript collections. Suffice it to mention the example of Warsaw's collections. Of 13 200 manuscripts recovered from Russia by the National Library in 1923-1934 (including 11 000 from the collection of the Żałoski Library), fewer than 2000 were saved. Of the 8000 manuscripts of the Krasin'ski Library, only 75 survived. Not much was left of the 4000-plus items in the collection of Warsaw University Library.<sup>7</sup> The majority of these manuscripts were still to be processed.

Awareness of the fragmentary nature of what we know about the literature of the Polish Baroque no doubt does nothing to improve the mood of historians of Old Polish literature, and yet the losses listed above are only the beginning of the problems. Leaving a major proportion of literary works to the mercy of copyists meant that they began to be subject to the aforementioned rules for texts to function in manuscripts, of which at least two had very far-reaching consequences: 1. The rule whereby the links between the author and the work are loosened; 2. The rule whereby the work is edited and adapted to the will of the reader/copyist, irrespective of the will of the author. For these two reasons alone, we must be sceptical of the inheritance left to us by the 17th century. To understand the scale and depth of this problem we need examples, to which I shall try as far as possible to apply some order. Priority must without doubt go to authorless works. The Baroque era accustomed us to this category of anonymous literary works, which certainly is not the same as saying that we understand all the aspects of the problem. Above all it is important to note that what is of interest to us is not popular or occasional literature, which naturally forwent an authorial mark. The point is that "first-rate" works were also lacking this mark. Let us cite a few. Certainly we must first mention the translation of Giambattista Marino's *L'Adone*, written around the mid-17th century and only recently published from the manuscripts.<sup>8</sup> This is the first

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6 It would be possible to compile such a directory on the basis of already existing bibliographies (e.g. the *Nowy Korbut* bibliography of Polish literature, yet it would be absolutely incomplete without the detailed bibliographies of individual authors' works. In the case of just one, Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski, a list of seven lost works has been established (during work on the edition of his *Collected Works*).

7 See Danuta Kamolowa and Krystyna Muszyńska, *Zbiory rękopisów w bibliotekach i muzeach w Polsce* (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1988), 248, 250, 270 (here too is a bibliography of the contents of collections and losses).

8 Giambattista Marino, Anonymous, *Adon*, published from the manuscripts by Luigi Marinelli and Krzysztof Mrowcewicz (Roma-Warszawa: Università di Roma, 1993), vol. 1-2.



translation of this work in Europe, and, according to the contemporary editors, a high-class one. The anonymous translator was an outstanding poet and an even better Italianist, an expert in Marino's work. He tackled a difficult, extremely complicated work and completed the task with no less aplomb than Piotr Kochanowski as the translator of Tasso and Ariosto. Sixteen thousand lines of *L'Adone* have survived in this version (compared to the 41,000 in the original) in two copies, and we do not know whether the translation was ever completed. The sources did not contain the name of its author. Who was he, how did he learn Italian literature and language, was he a private "hobbyist," or did he benefit from a patron? If so, then where in 17th-century Poland was such an Italophile bred? The Lubomirski circles, or perhaps the Myszkowskis? "Is it possible," ask the editors of the recent edition, "that a poet of this stature literally 'melted' into thin air?"<sup>9</sup> It turns out that this is possible, but this also shows the size of the gaps in our knowledge of the literature of this time.

There are many examples of anonymous works. Sticking with Italian inspirations, it is worth mentioning one of two translations of Guarini's *Pastor fido*, which has hitherto been anonymous, although Wanda Roszkowska seems to have solved this riddle by naming Stanisław Żórawiński as the author.<sup>10</sup> While we are speaking about translators, we should also cite the translation of Mairret's *La Sylvie* by an unknown author who was certainly not a literary novice.<sup>11</sup>

A good example of original work is a series of outstanding poems, from the manuscript of the Czartoryski Library, signature 434, written in the early 17th century by an unknown author to friends in Padua, which Alojzy Sajkowski tried to attribute to Hieronim Morsztyn.<sup>12</sup> Another case was *Oblężenie Jasnej Góry Częstochowskiej* [*The Siege of Jasna Góra*], an exceptional work of Polish epic poetry that has fascinated generations of scholars who continue to search for the author.<sup>13</sup>

9 Ibid., vol. 2, 31.

10 In a paper presented at the session *Polish Literature and Culture after the «Deluge»* (Warszawa, Institute of Polish Literature, University of Warsaw, and Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences, December 1990).

11 This translation was incorrectly published as a work of Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski by Z. Skarbińska-Wierzcowska: "S. H. Lubomirskiego przekład 'Sylwii' Maireta," in *Archiwum Literackie X* (1966), 255-317.

12 Alojzy Sajkowski, *Włoskie przygody Polaków. Wiek XVI-XVIII* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1975), 38-43.

13 This issue was covered by Renarda Ociecek, "Oblężenie Jasnej Góry Częstochowskiej." *Dzieło i autor* (Kraków: Secesja, 1993), who hypothesised that the author might have been the little-known preacher Stefan Damalewicz (died 1673).

Incidentally, the interest in *The Siege of Jasna Góra*, an anonymous work, is exceptional, since as a rule a piece of literature without a signature does not break through to the top. At best it tends to exist in the margins of the mainstream of the history of literature, which is in practice above all the history of authors. Would the cycle of erotic poems once found by Brückner in the manuscript of the Zamojski Library (signature 1049) arouse such interest if not for the possibility of linking it with the name of Mikołaj Sep-Szarzyński? Would the translation of *Orlando Furioso* have the same value for literary historians if it had remained anonymous? And yet only by chance do we know that it was Piotr Kochanowski who was responsible for this translation, thanks to a fortunate note by an unknown hand on an internal card of the Jagiellonian Library manuscript. So many lucky coincidences!

The lack of name is something like the first level of – unconsciously negative – interpretation. We might go further and formulate a certain regularity in our view of literature, still inherited in the 19th century – one that we could call the author's imperative.

The imperative, whose presence we are not always aware of, works in two directions. We have already mentioned the first. It is the need to possess a name in order to be incorporated in something that we call the process of literary history, the history of the era.

The second direction is more subtle. Since the work managed to survive without a writer's name, we must give it one. At this point a problem of a particular type of attributions arises, which one can easily question but not refute. The best-known example (although perhaps not the best example here, as it is a printed work) is *Antypasty małżeńskie*, attributed to Hieronim Morsztyn. There is almost universal agreement that this was not written by Morsztyn's pen, and at best we can put a question mark next to *Banialuka*. So what?

Another example – the poems from the Kórnik Library manuscript, signature 488, once discovered by Roman Pollak, who attributed most of the works found there to Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski on very shaky evidence: the initial transferred from *Orfeusz* [*Orpheus*], an authentic work by this author also recorded in the Kórnik manuscript. And today these poems function and are published as the works of Lubomirski, although he was probably not their author. But there is no way of proving this without being able to responsibly point to another name. After all, one cannot exclude the possibility of Lubomirski's authorship. Just as it was impossible to rule out that these might be the works of, say, Samuel Twardowski. The marvellous cycle *Somnus. Fortuna. Invidia* owes its life to Lubomirski's name, and gains a new interpretive field within his oeuvre. Which begs the question of whether it is worth laying waste to this? Another work in this manuscript, the aforementioned translation of

Mairet's *La Sylvie*, is again an interesting example of how suggestion becomes certainty. Roman Pollak suggested Lubomirski as the author (of course without proof); the work was published as one of Lubomirski's with a question mark, and by the next phase, in studies of the Polish pastoral, it had become just another of his works. The question mark was removed – who needed it anyway?<sup>14</sup>

The effects of the author's imperative seem to be rather broad. One cannot fight this imperative, although it is perhaps worth being aware of its consequences. In fact, it was already in operation in the 17th century, when for various reasons the authors of manuscripts attributed literary texts to famous names. In extreme cases, handwritten tradition even created an author practically out of nothing. The example of Jerzy Szlichtyng (c. 1600–1644) illustrates this well. His authentic oeuvre was written in the 1630s and comprised three works: *Pieśń o królu Władysławie* [*The Song of King Władysław*] (1635), *Wjazd do Gniezna Jana z Lipia Lipskiego* [*Jan Lipski's Arrival in Gniezno*] (1639) and probably *Żart piękny o tabace* [*A Beautiful Joke About Snuff*] (1650, as a supplement to *Nauki do dobrego używania proszku tabakowego* [*Lessons in the Good Use of Snuff Powder*]). Historians of literature judge these works as rather mediocre, and this seems a fair verdict. Yet Szlichtyng became a poet of renown thanks to Jakub Teodor Trembicki's *The Poetic Garden*, where we find a separate anthology of his poems beginning with the above mentioned *Joke About Snuff*. It is followed, however, by poems by Kasper Twardowski (*Lekcje Kupidynowe* [*Cupid's Lessons*]) and Hieronim Morsztyn. Only today are we able to strip them all from Szlichtyng, whose name is mentioned scrupulously by *Nowy Korbut* as a competitor to these other authors. We are thus witnessing the near deletion of one of the "inhabitants" of the Old Polish Parnassus.<sup>15</sup>

Old Polish manuscripts could lose the poet's name, or create the poet, but they could also lose the work, leaving just the name. Again, we can mention a number of examples of this type, and the history of literature has extremely rich traditions of it. We may retreat to the Renaissance, recalling Stanisław Porębski, author of the now unknown *Skotopaski* [*Pastorals*], praised by none other than Kochanowski. The most spectacular case in the Baroque era are the

14 I discuss the issue of works from the Kórnik manuscript more broadly in a separate article, "Somnus. Fortuna. Invidia". *Problemy tekstu i autorstwa*, which appeared in quarterly *Ogród* 1 (1994).

15 The misunderstanding concerning the work of Jerzy Szlichtyng was discussed by Radosław Grześkowiak in his paper *Czy Hieronim Morsztyn napisał swoje wiersze? Kwestia jedności autorskiej 'Summariusza wierszów'*, delivered at the session "Problems of editorship of 17th-century Old Polish literature" (Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences, November 1992).

authors mentioned in Jan Andrzej Morsztyn's *Nagrobek Otwinowskiemu* [*Epitaph to Otwinowski*] (verses 393–402):

May the body be lifted by poets' toil  
 To put this noble burden to rest in the soil [...]  
 Two Kochanowskis, Morsztyn Jarosz, Naborowski,  
 Simon Simonides, Rej, Smolik, Karmanowski,  
 Orzelski, Żórawiński, Grotkowski, all we have known  
 Poland rich in sons can find her own.

Of the list given here, Jan Andrzej Morsztyn must have particularly valued Jan Grotkowski (d. 1652), the court writer of Władysław IV and Jan Kazimierz, royal secretary, diplomat, and an educated man who knew Italian and German. It was to him that Morsztyn wrote (*Do Jana Grotkowskiego, pisarza pokojowego jego królewskiej mości* [*To Jan Grotkowski, Court Writer to His Royal Highness*]):

Like owls to Athens, to the forest wood  
 Sending thee a verse will do no good:

and further:

You are first for me and to thee I explain  
 That in Polish verse thine truly I remain

And in another poem (*Do Jana Grotkowskiego, internuncjusza jego królewskiej mości w Neapolim* [*To Jan Grotkowski, Internuncio of His Royal Highness in Naples*]):

Mayhap in thy verse to joke fertile and rude  
 In the present and the fallen Rome,  
 But thou, forgetting how the homeland is crude  
 Speakest in a rhyme not foreign, but of home...<sup>16</sup>

Reading these words, we must surely expect a great deal from Grotkowski's works, if only... precisely, if only anything had survived. We have an author, we have testimony to his talent and output, yet we have no texts.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Quotations according to Jan Andrzej Morsztyn, *Utwory zebrane*, ed. Leszek Kukulski (Warszawa: PIW, 1971), 8–9, 81.

<sup>17</sup> There is a good chance of linking the translation of *L'Adone* with Grotkowski's name, which the editors of this work (following the path of Brückner) are inclined to do; see Giambattista Marino, Anonim, vol. 2, 40.

Alongside Grotkowski, Morsztyn also mentioned another name, Stanisław Żórawiński, the Castellan of Bełsk, whose talents are mentioned on several occasions elsewhere, such as in Waclaw Potocki's *The Chocim War*. In this case too we do not know his work, as we can hardly count the two poems in Trembecki's aforementioned *The Poetic Garden*. Or in fact not two, but one poem and one title. The first work, *Judicium Imci pana Żórawińskiego, kasztelana bełskiego o Naborowskim* [*The Judicium of Mr Żórawiński, Castellan of Bełsk, on Naborowski*], is a homage of a poet to a poet:

Not my venture is it with thee to duel,  
For a layman am I, and thou of Polish poets a jewel.<sup>18</sup>

The second poem bears the title *Elogium na śmierć pana Myszковского, złożone przez pana Żórawińskiego, kasztelana bełskiego* [*Elogium on the Death of Mr Myszkowski, Submitted by Mr Żórawiński, Castellan of Bełsk*].<sup>19</sup> And here it appears that the inscriber made a mistake (moving the page?), as under this title is a poem (Hieronim Morsztyn?) known from several copies as *Nagrobek Pisi* [*Epitaph to Pisia*], to which (for symmetry's sake) Jan Andrzej Morsztyn later added *Nagrobek Kusiowi* [*Epitaph to Kuś*]. It may be that the translation of Guarini's *Il pastor fido* will permanently be attributed to Żórawiński, and perhaps this will be the beginning of finding his further oeuvre.

Works without an author, authors without works, works with incorrect attribution – this is not the end of the list of the problems associated with the author–work relationship that came from the handwritten circulation of literature of the Baroque era. There was also the question of the complete dispersal of a writer's oeuvre.

The nub of this issue is shown by the state of research on the works of the epoch's most important poets, of whom Waclaw Potocki is in the best position fortunately on account of surviving autographs. Jan Andrzej Morsztyn was lucky enough to find a consummate researcher and editor of his legacy in the form of Leszek Kukulski. Kukulski's work, incidentally, is an excellent documentation of the phenomenon of dispersal of the poetic oeuvre. He was unable to find the autographs, but did have 29 manuscripts at his disposal, containing copies of poems of various sizes and qualities, including nine "collective" manuscripts with larger blocks of works (the largest set consists of 241 texts). Kukulski's consolidation of such a dispersed output, conducted

18 Quoted in Jakub Teodor Trembecki, *Wirydarz poetycki*, ed. Aleksander Brückner, vol. 1 (Lwów: Nakł. Towarzystwa dla Popierania Nauki Polskiej, 1910), 313.

19 Ibid., 95–97.

with admirable scrupulousness and enviable skill, resulted in the edition *Utwory zebrane* [*Collected Works*], which is and shall always remain only a reproduction, a reconstruction of Morsztyn's poetry, always open to new finds and new philological knowledge.<sup>20</sup>

Another example is the work of Hieronim Morsztyn. Here too there is a lack of autographs, and the surviving evidence suggests that an original author's collection existed of which the *Summariusz wierszów Morsztyna* [*Summary of Morsztyn's Poems*] we know is an extract. Although the source work is not finished, we can indicate its general direction. Scholars have so far been interested in proving the authorship of the works in *Summary*, and now, as this seems obvious, the research is reaching the original collection of which *Summary* was an extremely meagre extract. While an editor of *Summary* from not long ago based his work on six collective sources,<sup>21</sup> the author of a later work on its authorial unity had 11 at his disposal.<sup>22</sup> To this we must add a further three now located at the National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv. That makes 14 collective sources, and the list does not end there. These numbers speak of the scale of the dispersal, as does the number of sources with single works, none of which beats *Szlachecka kondycja* [*The Noble Condition*], of which over 30 copies are known. Compared to those of Jan Andrzej, Hieronim Jarosz's texts have more of a handwritten tradition, and they were also changed more. A complete detachment of the works from the author also took place. When he composed his *Poetic Garden* around 1674, Trembecki no longer knew Hieronim Jarosz, and divided his poems between other authors: Naborowski and Szlichtyng.

Daniel Naborowski, the next "victim" of the "age of manuscripts," was perhaps the least fortunate of all the authors mentioned. Several autographs have survived, but there is no trace of the existence of an individual collection. The only collective source (*The Poetic Garden*) gives 148 works, of which some (i.e. 27) are doubtless epigrams by Hieronim Morsztyn. In *The Garden*, after copying *Dafnis świętojański* [*Midsummer Daphnis*], Trembecki notes "the end of Naborowski. Naborowski's caetera of this opera videantur in my Quodlibeta."

20 Leszek Kukulski discussed the sources of Morsztyn's poems in depth in *Komentarz edytorski* (Jan Andrzej Morsztyn, 655-727). I attempted to interpret the handwritten traditions of Morsztyn's poems in my paper *Morsztyn odnajdywany. Wokół edycji Leszka Kukulskiego*, presented at the academic session "Reading Jan Andrzej Morsztyn" (Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences and Institute of Polish Literature, University of Warsaw, December 1993).

21 Marian Malicki, "Summariusz wierszów przypisywany Hieronimowi Morsztynowi i odmiany jego tekstu," *Archiwum Literackie* XXVII (1990), 119-478.

22 Grzeškowiak, *Czy Hieronim Morsztyn napisał swoje wiersze?*

Yet this collection has not survived. Outside of *The Garden*, Naborowski's poems were written down separately, and it is extremely hard to consolidate them. Each individual work requires a separate testing procedure. The first attempt to publish the poems of this poet, by Jan Dürr-Durski, can hardly be counted as a success. It is unclear whether this will ever be possible, and if so when.

One might cite further examples – Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski, Zbigniew Morsztyn – illustrating how literary history copes with consolidating a poetic oeuvre, and at which stage of the reconstruction of these works we find ourselves today. I also think that each of these examples would bring other observations, show a different history of works recorded in manuscripts, one that is not closed, but only delivers the material from which we build a “picture of an era.”

So far I have been trying to point to some of the effects – and the most important ones, I think – caused by the departure of 17th-century authors from the printed tradition. These were issues concerning the author–work relation. And it would be truly wonderful if this were the extent of the consequences of Baroque literature's involvement in the handwritten circulation. Yet even if we assume that all the pieces of the puzzle fit, that the authors found their works and the works their authors, we are still stuck with the problem of the form of the texts that we have left. We know from experience that copyists' invention is unlimited, and no doubt some authors would not have recognised their texts in the edited versions of Old Polish manuscripts.

We are more or less familiar with the mechanism of the handwritten circulation, and are able to predict what kinds of transformations a text could be subjected to. Not much has changed here since ancient times. A separate discipline of philological sciences known as textual criticism has been dealing with these problems for centuries, and today we have both an adequate number of examples and the tools for researching the traditions of texts.

A discussion of the types and means of the changes made by copyists and self-taught editors here would be a set of examples and anecdotes. Yet it would be a very limited set of examples, confined to those literary works where all sources were actually tested and their errors identified. That is to say that one can only give an example of transformation when it has been corrected. In most cases this is only possible if all available sources are tested, which is a laborious, albeit usually effective, pursuit. Let us take one example, Lubomirski's *Orpheus*. It was possible to take 11 copies and arrange them in the form of a “family tree,” arriving at a form of the text which was the original source for all the versions available to the

editor.<sup>23</sup> But this certainly does not mean that we now have Lubomirski's text. The problem is that there is a difference between the "encyclopaedic" definition of the work and that of the text of the work available to us. In the history of literature it is the former that functions; in the form of an encyclopaedic entry, it might read: "S. H. Lubomirski's *Orfeusz*, paraphrase of G. Marino's *L'Orfeo*, written probably in the 1660s." In the latter case we mean the work that we in fact have at our disposal, and this is by no means the *Orpheus* written by Lubomirski, but a text in the form of a copy. Comparison with the original text can in extreme circumstances be something akin to comparing the bones of a mammoth with the mammoth itself, as we can at best recreate the original form according to the hints we receive, that is carry out a process of research which leads us to a certain form of the text. By eliminating some of the distortions and comparing variants we can reconstruct the archetype of *Orpheus* available in tradition. And this is the form of the text that the philologist delivers to the reader. Nothing more. And this is still not Lubomirski's *Orpheus*. We received a similarly constructed archetype (often in the form of variants) of the text of the Polish *L'Adone* in the edition of this work cited earlier.<sup>24</sup>

The age of manuscripts sharpens the distinctions between the work itself and copies thereof, the work and its archetype existing in tradition, and the literary historian should perceive this and to a certain extent respect it. Because the distance between the original and the proposed archetype may be considerable. In the same way as the difference between the literature of the Baroque era and the image of this literature that we have today.

By a circuitous route through examples demonstrating the consequences of 17th-century literature's "handwritten" nature, we have again arrived at the problem from which this essay began – that of reconstruction of an era in the history of literature. This might appear to be a self-evident fact accepted by all, but do readers of a synthesis of literary history have this awareness of reconstruction when in measured-out compartments they find a ceremonially adopted selection of authors with classified and formally adorned works?

23 The tradition of the *Orpheus* text is discussed in detail in Adam Karpiński, "Tradycja tekstu w wieku rękopisów. Uwagi o rękopiśmiennym funkcjonowaniu dzieła literackiego," in: *Staropolska kultura rękopisu*, 27-42. For other examples from Lubomirski's oeuvre see Lubomirski, "Problemy edycji dzieł poetyckich Stanisław Hieronim Lubomirskiego (wybrane zagadnienia z krytyki tekstu)," in *Problemy edytorskie literatur słowiańskich*, vol. 1, ed. Janusz Pelc and Paulina Pelcowa (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1991), 203-221.

24 See editor's comment to Giambattista Marino, vol. 22, 65-69.



This is not a simple matter. On the macro scale, processes of literary history, ideas permeating the epoch, and aesthetic formations dominate. And it is neither easy nor necessary to question the order that has been worked out. What is required is an awareness that the baroque era as we see and present it is – to use a term from textual criticism – an archetype and only an archetype, a figure of the era that we are slowly reconstructing.

*Translation: Benjamin Koschalka*