

**A RESPONSE TO MARTIN FABER'S POLEMIC
WITH THE REVIEW OF HIS BOOK *SARMATISMUS.
DIE POLITISCHE IDEOLOGIE DES POLNISCHEN ADELS
IM 16. UND 17. JAHRHUNDERT*, WIESBADEN, 2018,
HARRASSOWITZ VERLAG**

My review of Martin Faber's book published in the 121st issue of *APH* (pp. 286–95) I find critical, but certainly not 'crushing' (*sic!*). I have no intention to write yet another text on Sarmatism due to a change in my research interests. For the last time, I have presented my views on the subject, sharpening some of the old theses, in the *Polityka's Pomocnik historyczny* (no. 6/2019), to which I refer my polemicist. I consider the topic exhausted and now leave it to scholars capable of making some refreshing contributions or taking the thing to the next level, leaving the traditional historical methodology aside.

I find it impossible to engage in an honest polemic with a researcher who offends the reviewer, making allegations of personal nature, implying that she is ignorant of the books she cited in her review and is in collusion with a Lithuanian researcher having similar objections about his book. Nevertheless, I feel obliged to explain the controversy that may have arisen from Faber's misunderstanding of my review, be it the English version published in *APH*, or the Polish one, which I kindly sent him.

My main objection to the book *Sarmatismus. Die politische Ideologie des polnischen Adels im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* is not the secondary nature of its findings in relation to those made by Polish historians, but that it reduces (following the subtitle) Sarmatism – being a cultural formation covering phenomena in the field of axiology, culture, customs and morals – to a political ideology. It is not without reason that the luminaries of Polish historiography referred to in the polemic: Konopczyński, Czapliński and Kersten, dealt with the issue of political ideology (*sic!*), without overusing the term 'Sarmatism'.

The second objection is Polonocentrism, reflected in the assumption that the Sarmatian ideology was shared by the entire nobility of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. I find it unfair to accuse me of an approach to the Sarmatian ideology analogous to Mr. Faber's approach to the Sarmatian ideology, based on one sentence taken out of context from the textbook written 13 years ago. I do not deny having said that "For internal use, there developed a Sarmatian political and social ideology¹ that was consolidating

¹ Nowadays, I would probably use the term 'state ideology'.

the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural noble estate around a shared axiological system”.² Immediately afterwards, however, I explain that not all nobility was indoctrinated by the Sarmatians, and I am writing about the different value systems of the Crown and Lithuanian nobility (p. 368) and the moral and artistic dimensions of Sarmatism. On the other hand, the Lithuanian historians mentioned by Faber, “who, like [him], believe that the Sarmatian ideology was common to the Polish and Lithuanian nobility” is Artūras Vasilauskas.³ The author simply omitted or marginalised the opinions of those Lithuanian historians who did not agree with his views.⁴ While maintaining my critical assessment of the concept of the reviewed book, I have no doubts now that it will gain popularity not only among German readers but also among those Polish researchers and readers who advocate the apologetic vision of Sarmatia’s history, with its uniqueness compared to other European countries. I am just not sure whether this would be the Author’s intention.

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² Urszula Augustyniak, *Historia Polski 1572–1795* (Warszawa, 2008), 366.

³ Artūras Vasilauskas, ‘Antyk i Sarmatyzm’, in Vytautas Ališauskas (ed.), *Kultura Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego: analizy i obrazy* (Kraków, 2006).

⁴ Alfredas Bumblauskas, *Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštija ir jos tradicija* (Vilnius, 2010), transl. into Polish by Anna Majewska, *Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie. Wspólna historia, podzielona pamięć* (Warszawa, 2013) does not use the word Sarmatism at all when writing about the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the Baroque era (pp. 106–7). The works of Jūratė Kiaupienė and Darius Kuolys are included in the bibliography but are not cited in the text.