

## PREFACE

The compilation of Ioannes Dantiscus' itinerary, just completed by Katarzyna Jasińska-Zdun, along with the forthcoming publication in both print and digital formats, served as the impetus for the fourth gathering of the “*Respublica Litteraria* in Action” series, focusing on the theme of “Travels—Maps—Itineraries”. Continuing its tradition, the meeting coincided with the discussions of the International Scientific Council of the Project “Registration and Publication of the Correspondence of Ioannes Dantiscus (1485–1548)”, inviting historians and literary scholars specializing in the early modern period, both collaborators and friends of the project.

This volume emerges as a result of this collaborative effort. Its first part features contributions from session participants, while the second extensive part presents the itinerary of Bishop Piotr Tomicki, Vice-Chancellor of the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland from 1515 to 1535, crafted in response to our conference invitation. Consequently, the content of the book boasts a diverse array of topics. Alongside source studies and historical analyses, there are reflections on the map and the verbal representation of geographical space as a literary motif and symbol, as instruments and practices of power/knowledge or as expressions of political and civic ideas and values.

The book opens with an article by Jerzy Axer, who interprets the message of the show that Cosimo II Vecchio staged in Florence in 1548 during the visit of Pope Pius II (formerly known as the eminent humanist Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini) and Galeazzo Maria Sforza. Alongside wild animals, including surprisingly peaceful lions, the spectacle featured a giant wooden giraffe with armed men inside. Considering the giraffe as the key to understanding the entire show, Axer argues that what we have here is not an unsuccessful attempt at staging Roman-style *venationes*, as evidenced by the fact that the lions refrained from attacking animals or people. Instead, he suggests that Cosimo's intention was to demonstrate Florence's position

against the papal plan for an anti-Ottoman crusade and to present his own policy toward the Turks and the Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt, and he conveyed his message to the show's most important spectator with symbols drawn from the mythological and poetic geography of classical antiquity, which can also be found on maps of the time

The next paper, authored by Arne Jönsson, is devoted to a wall map compiled by Swedish diplomat and humanist Olaus Magnus (like his brother Johannes belonging to the circle of Dantiscus' friends and correspondents) and printed in Venice in 1539. This work, entitled *Carta marina et descriptio septentrionalium terrarum et mirabilium rerum in eis contentarum* [Marine chart and description of the northern lands and the wondrous things contained therein], was the first so accurate map of the North of Europe and the first to show the correct shape and positioning of the Scandinavian Peninsula. Its author, as a Roman Catholic clergyman, from 1524 until his death remained in exile, including in Gdańsk, where he worked on the map. With its very abundant and condensed pictorial information, complemented by accompanying textual descriptions both on the map itself and in separate booklets in Italian and German, the *Carta marina* was a cartographic compendium of multifaceted knowledge of the North, encompassing geographical, ethnographic, natural, historical, and political dimensions, while also indulging in the marvels promised in its title. Alongside Magnus' major work, the comprehensive narrative titled *Historia de gentibus Septentrionalibus* [History of the northern nations], published in 1555, it illuminated a North previously unknown to Europeans, arousing their curiosity about the region. Arne Jönsson presents the circumstances of the map's creation and examines its iconographic and verbal components. He also highlights some aspects of the reception of both Magnus' works, especially the *History*, which, translated into vernacular languages, abridged and reworked, helped shape the image of Scandinavia to meet the expectations of non-Scandinavian readers and contributed to the phenomena that today's researchers refer to as the "Apotheosis of the North" (Bernd Roling) and "orientalism" (Erling Sandmo).

Marcin Bielski's *Kronika wszystkiego świata* [Chronicle of the whole world], Jan Kieniewicz writes about in his essay, stands as the earliest universal history written in the Polish language (first edition: Cracow, 1551). Both the author and the recipients of this work constituted the political entity

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known as the *Rzeczpospolita* [Commonwealth]. It is their beliefs, ideas, and perceptions that were reflected in Bielski's narrative of the global history and geography, making the *Chronicle* akin to a map plotting their collective "identity coordinates". Looking at the horizon of their world, Kieniewicz directs his attention not to its temporal or spatial dimensions, but to one of its key determinants—the participation of the *Rzeczpospolita*'s citizens in the then-emerging European system of values by constructing their own distinct version of this system, into which they incorporated some common, pan-European elements while omitting others. Kieniewicz calls this system Euro-Sarmatian.

As an increasingly precise tool for navigating geographic space, a source of increasingly reliable knowledge about it, and an (increasingly) aesthetically appealing object, the map could not fail to stimulate the imagination of artists and had to enter the world of literature and art as a theme, motif or metaphor. In the text "Mapmakers among the Lions: From Medieval Romance to the Idol of the Map", Małgorzata Grzegorzewska deals precisely with the symbolic dimension of early modern maps as revealed in the literature of the period, analysing, among other things, scenes from Christopher Marlowe's dramas and excerpts from Edmund Spenser's poem *The Faerie Queene*. As she shows, the maps, without completely abandoning medieval allegory, depicted the expanding world in increasingly abstract ways, but still, albeit in a different way, seduced the observer's imagination and encouraged him to explore the unknown space, which turned out to be not fantastic or imaginary but as real as possible. Reflecting that space, they also reflected "the conqueror's inquisitive look and haughty mien". Simultaneously, Grzegorzewska references the words of the English humanist Thomas Elyot, claiming that a map, contemplated for pleasure, serves as both an inspiration and a tool for reflection on the breadth of God's creation within the confines of one's home. Consequently, the map transforms from a mere impulse to a substitute for risky endeavours. While Elyot's words can be interpreted as a broad, universal reflection, it is pertinent to note that their immediate recipient was Henry VIII. Elyot not only persuaded Henry of the map's capacity to provide pleasure but also underscored its utility in governance and territorial expansion.

John Gillies' paper addresses the geographical paradigm that took shape in the Age of Great Discovery. Gillies identifies its similarities with concep-

tions articulated by Giambattista Vico in his notion of poetic geography, a component of *scienza nuova*, when describing the “world’s childhood”. The New Geography, practiced by Europeans, commenced with the naming of the New World territories through, in the words of Vico, “semblances of things known or close at hand”, i.e., with recreating the Old World, and led to the removal of their indigenous inhabitants from both physical and cognitive landscapes. Gillies characterizes this phenomenon as “counter-geography”, considering it a deliberate strategy of *not knowing* the newly discovered world. By adopting it, explorers were able to lay claim to lands that had previously been unclaimed or seemingly non-existent, and therefore belonged to no one. The inherent violence of poetic geography is well evident in the cartography of the sixteenth century.

On Ioannes Dantiscus’ travel map, Borisov on the Berezina River in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania marked the easternmost point of continental Europe. During his time accompanying King Sigismund I with the Royal Chancellery, Dantiscus witnessed a report to the monarch on the victory of the Lithuanian-Polish army over Moscow forces at Orsha on 8 September 1514. Shortly thereafter, his Latin poem commemorating the victory, *Sylvula de victoria inclyti Sigismundi regis Poloniae contra Moschos*, was printed in Cracow, contributing to the conviction spread by Jagiellonian propaganda and diplomacy regarding the battle’s significance for Europe. The victory at Orsha, as well as the motif of Moscow’s barbarism and perfidy, Dantiscus also included in his later poem, *Ad Herbersteinium soteria*. Both the *Sylvula* and *Soteria* represent rare instances of Dantiscus’ engagement with “Moscow affairs” alongside his diplomatic endeavours, as discussed by Hieronim Grala in his article “The Shadow of Moscow: Ioannes Dantiscus and the Eastern Dimension of Jagiellonian Diplomacy”, which shows the historical and political background of the poems, and in particular their propaganda function.

In her study “Ioannes Dantiscus, *civis Gedanensis*”, Anna Skolimowska explores the dynamics of Dantiscus’ relationship with his hometown of Gdańsk. A thorough analysis of the very extensive source material of Dantiscus’ correspondence yields information on his interactions, opinions and sentiments toward Gdańsk and its inhabitants. Dantiscus never stopped feeling *civis Gedanensis* and despite his conflict with the Gdańsk patriciate, maintained a strong emotional bond and continued contact with his hometown. He unwaveringly supported the city in its dispute with King

Sigismund I, highlighting Gdańsk's loyalty to the Crown and the economic and propagandistic benefits derived from its trade.

This part of the book concludes with two communications. In the first, "TEI Publisher: Future Prospects of the Web Publication of the *Corpus of Ioannes Dantiscus' Texts & Correspondence*, Magdalena Turska presents the IT systems used for the online publication of Dantiscus' legacy and, in this context, reflects on ways out of the pitfalls of rapidly aging technology for digital editions.

Katarzyna Jasińska-Zdun, who compiled Ioannes Dantiscus' itinerary, briefly discusses both forms of its publication: as a printed book in the series *Corpus Epistularum Ioannis Dantisci* (Volume 1 of Part III entitled *Epistulae et Commentationes*) and as an interactive digital publication (with the ability to search, sort and correlate data), the website *Dantiscus' Itinerary*, nested in the *Corpus of Ioannes Dantiscus' Texts & Correspondence*.

The second part of the book comprises the itinerary (that is, as defined by the Polish historian Antoni Gąsiorowski, a critical listing of the dates and places of stays of the person under study) of Bishop Piotr Tomicki, one of the most significant figures on the political scene during the reign of King Sigismund I Jagiellon. It spans the years 1515–1535, when Tomicki held the position of Vice-Chancellor of the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland. In contrast to Chancellor Krzysztof Szydłowiecki, who was more active beyond the royal court, Tomicki remained almost constantly at the King's side, accompanying the royal retinue throughout his tenure. The itinerary, meticulously compiled by Patrick Sapała on the basis of the very extensive, carefully researched source material, lays the groundwork for a comprehensive biography of Tomicki, a work yet to be undertaken. Moreover, it serves as an effective tool for further exploration into the reign of Sigismund I, offering a deeper insight into the mechanisms of power at the time.

*Anna Skolimowska, Katarzyna Tomaszuk*