



Romantic *Weltliteratur*
OF THE
Western World

.....
Edited by AGNIESZKA GUTTHY

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Romantic Weltliteratur of the Western World is a collection of essays that examine Romantic literature and art from Europe and America. Since Goethe coined the concept of *Weltliteratur*, scholarly interest in comparative, global, and transnational literary and cultural studies has only continued to grow. Intended to complement existing scholarship, the essays in this volume offer a variety of critical approaches to Romantic literature and explore the dialogic component of different literary works as well as their transnational intertextualities.

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of the Western World

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4. Adam Mickiewicz and The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage: Transnational Expression of Polish Messianism in Romanticism

FERNANDO PRESA GONZÁLEZ

Polish literature is typically inspired by two themes that flow more or less clearly through the consciousness of almost all its authors: the problem of national identity and the issue of the survival of the soul of the Polish nation. The continual border wars waged by the Poles throughout their history and their constant search for a single unifying element that would strengthen the historic identity of Poland as a nation led to her writers to address patriotic and religious topics as matters reaching far beyond literary fiction. With the advent of Romantic literature this issue was reignited and Polish writers embraced messianism, a doctrine of which Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855), the great poet-prophet of the Polish nation, became the chief exponent. With this doctrine they took a step even further than their Baroque predecessors had done with the ethnic concept of Sarmatism in the seventeenth century.¹ The arrival in Poland of the German poet and literato Martin Opitz (1597–1639), who was fleeing the Habsburgs, significantly nourished the formation of a theory of Sarmatism, since this respected scholar had defended the Sarmatian origin of the Polish nobility. Opitz, who was sympathetic to the idea of a Poland conceived as God’s chosen people to defend Christianity in the new era, embraced the concept. The theory of the Polish nobility’s relationship with Sarmatians in antiquity established a cultural ideology that espoused unlimited freedom for nobles. The model of the “humanist man” was replaced by the privileged “Sarmatian man.” The

notion of the nobles' superiority led them to shun work in order to devote themselves to public life.

Polish Romantic poets, stripped of their homeland in the partitions of the late eighteenth century, turned their gaze toward the past and advanced a new concept of Polish nationhood, advocating a reconquest of the country that had been snatched from them while guiding it along a path toward its role in the salvation of the collective European soul. The writer who most decisively embraced this doctrine and expanded it furthest was Adam Mickiewicz, notably in *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage* (1832). Converted into prophet, Mickiewicz took it upon himself to interpret God's plans, offering an explanation for the tragedy that occurred in his homeland. The "death" of Poland as a state could find its way to "resurrection" through the avenue of religion. The Polish nation's unshakeable belief in God would nourish its hope of political restoration and resurrection as a free and independent country. The Polish exile would become a pilgrim searching for his promised land. He knows that only his faith and persistence will make him invincible in the face of adversity and that, sooner or later, he will reach his "holy land."

The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage comprise a "bible" that advances an idealized view of Poland and its history "from the beginning of the world to the martyrdom of the Polish nation." *The Books* are written in biblically inspired poetic prose and were conceived as a spiritual guide aimed at the religious and patriotic strengthening of the Polish nation in exile: the diaspora of the Great Emigration dating to the failed 1830 Uprising.

Mickiewicz's work sets out a radical messianic view of Poland, presenting it as a nation chosen by God who has distinguished it by giving it the historic mission of redirecting the world toward a true Christian civilization. In *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage*, the glory of the Polish past is contrasted with its current martyrdom status because, as the third part of Mickiewicz's *Forefathers' Eve* plainly states, "Poland is the Christ of nations,"² and its sacrifice will redeem all sins and save Christian civilization.

Mickiewicz sets up a parallel between the passion and death of Christ and Poland's history, seeking a religious interpretation for historical events. Personified Poland, paraphrases Christ's own words, "Whoever comes to me will be free and equal, as I am freedom."³ He continues by explaining that, since freedom had been rescinded from the land, the powers then decided to kill Poland. The King of Prussia sold Poland with a treacherous kiss, comparable to Judas' kissing Christ, and the country was pounced on hungrily by Catherine II of Russia and Maria Theresa of Austria, while

France, like Pontius Pilate, washed its hands. But the ultimate crime committed against Poland—its dismemberment, parceling out, and the joy of the assassins over their deeds—is no more than a mirage, since “the Polish nation has not died.”⁴ Mickiewicz insists that, despite being nonexistent on the political map, Poland lives in the soul of each and every one who suffers for her. Like Christ, it will resurrect on the third day, the soul (the nation) will return to the body (the territory), and it will free all oppressed nations in Europe from slavery. Thus, “just as across the earth all bloody sacrifices ceased after the resurrection of Christ, after the resurrection of the Polish nation, wars will cease in Christianity.”⁵

Mickiewicz believed that Christianity, as a doctrine of social and moral progress, was closely linked to the revolutionary tendencies of the people and was the engine of world development. In this ideological context, his *Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage* is a unique monument in defense of freedom while condemning European tyrannies (of which Russia was then the greatest example) and bourgeois democracies practicing French-modeled political realism. The book also condemns the materialistic “new idols” such as greed, luxury, and economic competition among nations. In addition, Mickiewicz gives the name “Satanic Trinity” to the three despotic sovereigns of the recent past: “the names of these three monarchs, Frederick, Catherine and Maria Theresa, were three blasphemies, their lives three crimes and their memory three curses.”

Mickiewicz considered humanity’s first great revolutionary movement to be Christianity, which caused the fall of Rome, and declared that the second great revolutionary movement would take place in Poland, achieving the existence of a single human community and the end of all conflict between people. Mickiewicz could not accept any concept of politics other than Christian, because, as he argued, “civilization, in order to be truly worthy of man, must be Christian.”⁶

The reason for Adam Mickiewicz’s ideological evolution from rationalism during his university years toward messianism can be found in three determining elements: the atmosphere of radical spirituality in which Mickiewicz immersed himself along with some of his closest friends, first during his exile in Russia and later during his stay in Italy; the rigorous instruction he received through reading matter in those years; and the intensification of patriotic sentiment that arose in partitioned Poland, especially after the failure of the November 1830 Uprising.

The spiritual atmosphere in which Adam Mickiewicz was immersed from 27 May 1829, the date when he left for exile in Russia, involved a process of religious and mystical outburst that would be made explicit in the third part

of *Forefathers' Eve* and particularly in *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage*. Mickiewicz, in the final part of this book, explains:

These are The Books of the Polish Nation and Polish Pilgrimage, not invented but compiled based on the history of Poland, the writings, testimonies and teachings of the Poles, pious men devoted to their homeland, Martyrs, Believers and Pilgrims. And other things by the grace of God.

However, the sources that Mickiewicz used to write this work are clearly described by him, in his own hand in certain lines of the original manuscript, which although crossed out, are legible:⁷

And specifically on the teachings of a Pole named Oleszkiewicz and who died recently; and on the teachings of father Stanisław, who is still alive; and on the teachings of other Poles...

This fragment was never published in the book, but it does allow us to get a reliable understanding of what and who had a decisive influence on the shaping of Adam Mickiewicz's messianic thinking.

The first person he refers to is Józef Oleszkiewicz (1777–1830), a painter, Freemason, and visionary who suffered from hallucinations and would enter mystical ecstatic states. When Mickiewicz met him in Saint Petersburg in the winter of 1824, he was fascinated by his personality. Oleszkiewicz worshipped the Holy Scriptures and believed that the destiny of all nations was written in them. According to contemporary accounts, it was Oleszkiewicz who had a decisive influence on Mickiewicz and convinced him that Poland was the nation chosen by God to save humanity. Seduced by this idea, Mickiewicz began to study the Bible and search in it for the answer to all the patriotic and spiritual questions that neither history nor philosophy had been able to answer. Oleszkiewicz died in 1830 leaving Mickiewicz deeply distressed which prompted him to adopt a personal commitment to the painter and defend the idea that God had given the Polish nation the unique mission of preaching the love of Christ to all peoples and saving them from the oppression of tyrants.

Mickiewicz's arrival in Rome in 1830 and his stay there for the next two years is another determining factor in the deeply established Catholic foundation of his thinking. Mickiewicz was dazzled by the grandeur and monumentality of Christian architecture and art, which left a profound spiritual impression on him. While in Rome he struck up a friendship with the exiled Polish priest, Stanisław Chołoniewski (1791–1846) whose teachings would lead Mickiewicz to embrace Catholicism with a renewed conviction to the extent that, after having kept away from the Church for many years, he confessed to his new friend and received communion from him.

Another decisive factor in the development of Adam Mickiewicz's ideological thinking was by studying the works of two significant authors during these years: Thomas à Kempis (1380–1471), a German Augustine canon, and Félicité Robert de Lamennais (1782–1854), a French philosopher, theologian and politician. Thomas à Kempis's book, *Imitation of Christ* (*De Imitatione Christi*, 1473) was one of the most influential books for Mickiewicz during this period. This well known ascetic work of Catholic devotion is structured into four books (*Helpful Counsels of the Spiritual Life*, *Directives for the Interior Life*, *On Interior Consolation*, and *On the Blessed Sacrament*) and contains numerous short pieces of advice for those aspiring to Christian perfection. From this work Mickiewicz learned religious doctrine while absorbing a literary and aesthetic model that he would later use in *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage*. Writing to his friend, the poet Antoni Edward Odyniec (1804–1885)⁸ on 19 January 1830, he says: "I read a lot and stay at home; now I am meditating with the works of the Abbé de Lamennais and I would like you to read them carefully."⁹ The three works published by Lamennais in 1830 that Mickiewicz was referring to are: *Essay on Indifference in Matters of Religion* (*Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion*, 1817–1823), *On Religion Considered in Its Relations with the Political and Civil Order* (*De la religion considérée dans ses rapports avec l'ordre public et civil*, 1826), and *The Progress of the Revolution and the War Against the Church* (*Des progrès de la Révolution et de la guerre contre l'église*, 1829). In them, Lamennais defended the need to introduce religious rules based on Catholicism into people's social lives.

A year later, in 1831, Mickiewicz wrote to Joachim Lelewel, his former classic languages teacher at the University of Vilna, now a friend in exile in France.¹⁰ Describing Lamennais he says: "He is the only Frenchman who has wept for us with sincerity; the only tears for us that I have seen in Paris have been his."¹¹ And in fact, Lamennais was a great friend to Polish exiles and a staunch defender of the Polish cause. French minister Casimir Périer (1777–1832) spoke in the French parliament on 18 March 1831 opposing France's help for the Polish people in the Uprising of 29 November 1830, arguing that French money and blood could not be used for matters outside of France. On 9 August 1831, Périer further argued that Polish emigrants in France should be spread across different provincial constituencies under the direct authority of the police. In response, the liberal Catholic newspaper founded by Lamennais, *L'Avenir*, defended Polish exiles and expressed its opposition to such confining measures. When the Count of Montalembert¹² offered Lamennais the chance to read the proofs of the translation into French of *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage*, the latter begged

the count, who had been his disciple, to allow him to add one of his own texts to Mickiewicz's work, a "Hymn to Poland." But where Lamennais would show most clearly the extent of Mickiewicz's influence would be in his *Words of a Believer* (*Paroles d'un croyant*, 1834), a work in which he rejects the use of force, discredits the Pope, and declares his rupture with the Church. The effect of Mickiewicz's teaching on Lamennais was very soon made clear, as Manuel Pérez Salazar pointed out in 1866:¹³

In April 1833, Count Montalembert published his translation¹⁴ of Mickiewicz's *Book of the Polish Pilgrimage*. The reading by its translator to Abbé de Lamennais left a deep impression on the latter, and profoundly influenced his spiritual outlook. As Alfredo Nettetement says,¹⁵ it is impossible not to recognize in Mickiewicz's work the language that [Lamennais] used later in *Words of a Believer*. Mickiewicz's combination of biblical and satanic inspiration, of evangelical love and revolutionary violence, mysticism and democracy, violence and poetry, prayer and sarcasm, humility and anger in the *Book of the Polish Pilgrimage*, is also found in the work of Abbé de Lamennais. We can be sure that, on hearing the translation, Abbé de Lamennais conceived his infernal text which he then published.

A final factor involved in Adam Mickiewicz's road to messianism is the intensification of patriotic sentiment following the failed 1830 Uprising and the surrender of Warsaw resulting in dramatic consequences both for Poles taking part in the Great Emigration and for those who remained in territory occupied by the three empires. This induced a mystical exaltation as well as patriotic anguish in him, hinted at in a letter addressed to Joachim Lelewel in Dresden, dated 23 March 1832:¹⁶

Perhaps our nation is destined to preach to all peoples the Gospel of patriotism, morals and religion, the contempt for budgets and the only politics that currently exist, that of customs and excise.

Mickiewicz was deeply convinced of this view and it was not long before he set to work to express it in writing. On 20 May 1832, barely two months after writing the letter to Lelewel, he began working on a book that would be completed in late June, only a few weeks later. The title of the manuscript was *Catechism of the Polish Pilgrimage* and was in two parts: *Ancient History* and *On the Pilgrimage*.¹⁷ The book, published anonymously in Paris on 4 December 1832 under the title *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage* (*Księgi narodu polskiego i pielgrzymstwa polskiego*), consists of two parts: the first part is an introduction and the second is a real catechism structured into questions and answers accompanied by many parables. It sold well and four printings in Polish were issued by month's end. And despite Pope Gregory XVI characterizing the book as a "libel filled with evil and

reckless judgements,”¹⁸ in 1833 alone, five additional printings in Polish were produced along with six in French, five in Italian, two in German, three in Lithuanian, and one edition each in English, Croatian, Czech and Hebrew.

There is no doubt that that change in title from *Catechism of the Polish Pilgrimage* to *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage* was owing to Mickiewicz’s intention—carefully pondered during the months of preparing the text for printing—of producing a truly biblical book that would nurture the religious spirituality and patriotic sentiments of the exiles, now elevated by him to the identity of pilgrims yearning to return to the promised homeland. The change in the title from catechism (katechizm) to books (księgi) is a result of Mickiewicz’s intention of imitating the Bible (the Polish word for the Greek “biblia,” βιβλία is “księgi,” or “books”). And just as the Bible is a recompilation of canonical books of Judaism and Christianity that were originally independent documents, Mickiewicz’s work is also composed of independent books, albeit only two: *The Book of the Polish Nation* and *The Book of the Polish Pilgrimage* comprise a single ideological and doctrinal unit.

The first book is a panorama of the history of humanity into which a great prophecy for the Polish nation is inserted, while the second is a manual that instructs the exiles-pilgrims in righteous behavior, evaluates their circumstances, and reminds them of the importance of their activity in France, and by extension in Europe, using models taken directly from Scriptural parables for illustration.

From the very start of the work, Mickiewicz makes clear his intention to write a biblical book in terms of format, paraphrasing the beginning of the Gospel of Saint John: “At the beginning there was faith in one God alone, and there was freedom in the world.” John 1:1 reads, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” This biblical style maintained throughout the work fulfills a very specific purpose: propaganda. It should be noted that the audience for this book consisted of Polish exiles whom Mickiewicz addresses by saying: “Read them, Nobles-Peasants-Soldiers; and those of you who are seniors, those whom you call noncommissioned officers or lieutenants, get them to clarify and explain them to you.”¹⁹ By using the composite term Nobles-Peasants-Soldiers he addresses the three social groups of nobility, people, and army as a homogeneous unit, conveying a message of the necessary alliance of the entire Polish nation regardless of social background. They are all now exiled Poles and as such are simply pilgrims, an army of freedom fighting for a Confederation of Europe, “because when Freedom sits on the capital of the world, it will judge the Nations.”²⁰ The only hierarchy that Mickiewicz considers valid among the

exiles-pilgrims is that of age and seniority; that is, accumulated experience and training. The most veteran and educated should be teachers to the others.

This biblical style best fulfills the work's propagandistic purpose as well as its prophetic tone. The style of the Bible was well known to everyone regardless of social background or previous occupation since Catholicism had reached even the smallest and most remote villages in Poland. Respect for the Church's moral authority was also represented by way of this stylized form in *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage*, whose verses were unequivocally associated with the texts that they had heard in Polish churches.

In addition to its "biblical" division into books, being written in verse, constantly using biblical paraphrasing and parallelisms, and its inclusion of Gospel parables and Gospel-inspired accounts of political allegories, Mickiewicz's work employs a number of rhetorical formulas and devices. Among these are polysyndeton, didactic tone, and various elements of grand style rhetoric and biblical stylization that enrich this work with an abundance of poetic and rhythmic prose, making it an experience comparable to reading the Bible. It is a unique work of careful and complex formal composition but with an extraordinarily disarming simplicity.

The tempo of the work underscores Mickiewicz's probable intention that *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage* were not written to be merely read, but primarily to be heard. The declaratory tone, reminiscent of the free verse in which the work is written, seems to leave little room for doubt in terms of Mickiewicz's purpose. He sets out to not only indoctrinate his exiled countrymen in the Catholic faith and patriotism but also to move their spirits and strengthen their hope that the end of their pilgrimage is in sight and that they would achieve their goal of returning to their lost homeland. This spiritual and patriotic call to unity can best be seen in "The Pilgrim's Prayer" and "The Pilgrim's Litany" which appear at the end of *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage*. Both texts mirror the structure of the religious practice of ending the liturgy with a communal prayer and a litany in which all worshippers take part, responding to the priest who invokes them. This form of ending lends support to the oral nature in which Mickiewicz intended to cast his work, giving it similarity to a canonical book in worship. As has been documented in letters and texts by Polish exiles of the period, both the "Prayer" and the "Litany" were recited not only in private and civil meetings and celebrations held by the Polish community in exile, but were also raised to God as real prayers during religious ceremonies in churches, becoming a strong element of unity and a popular expression of collective heroism.

The most direct literary model that Mickiewicz probably had in mind was the Wujek Bible, so called because it was translated into Polish by the Jesuit Jakub Wujek (1541–1597) in 1599. His version, which was the most popular in Poland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, left its mark on the Polish biblical style that Mickiewicz made his own when he wrote *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage*. However, there are precedents in Polish literature of biblical style prose that Mickiewicz evidently did not disregard and doubtless took them into account when writing this work. His probable models of medieval ecclesiastical prose are the *Holy Cross Sermons* (*Kazania świętokrzyskie*), compiled between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and the *Gniezno Sermons* (*Kazania gnieźnieńskie*), from the late fourteenth century, homilies written in Polish by priests for educational purposes and intended to be spoken aloud during mass. Sixteenth century Polish rhetorical literature would have also furnished material to assist Mickiewicz as he looked for models to define his ideal of the politically dedicated man. The books *The Image of a Good Man's Life* (*Wizerunek własny żywota człowieka poczciwego*, 1558) by Mikołaj Rej (1505–1569) and *The Polish Courtesan* (*Dworzanin polski*, 1566) by Łukasz Górnicki (1527–1603), establish models of human and political conduct befitting “a man who is member of the council” (człowiek radny), the “astute man” (człowiek przemyślny), and the “honorable man” (człowiek poczciwy), that Mickiewicz defines in *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage*.²¹

The form of the future government is similar to that of the speech delivered by a man who is a member of the council. An astute man, when he attends the national council, considers how to begin his speech, what to begin with, what to say in the middle and what to put at the end, because that is how he learned at school; but as he no longer feels the national cause strongly, his speech, artistically elaborated, will be empty, it will pass and will not be remembered. But the good man, when he goes to the national council, has a heart that swells with love for the Homeland and he feels the truth of what he has to say; he speaks without thinking about the composition and, nevertheless, his discourse will be ordered, the stenographers will copy it as a model for others and he himself will be surprised at having spoken with such wisdom.

The literature of certain exponents of the Polish Renaissance also provided resources and rhetorical techniques for Mickiewicz to consider in the composition of *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage*. The book's didactic nature and educational mission regarding the conduct of the upstanding citizen and one's individual and civic behavior would have been assisted by works such as Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski's *Commentariorum de Republica emendanda libri quinque* (*Five Books of Commentaries on the Improvement of*

Commonwealth, 1551–1554), known in its 1599 Polish translation as *O poprawie Rzeczypospolitej* (*On the Improvement of the Republic*). Also relevant for Mickiewicz was the treatise *Quincunx or the Model of the Polish Crown Represented in Zinc* (*Quincunx, to jest Wzór Korony Polskiej na cynku wystawiony*, 1564) by Stanisław Orzechowski (1513–1566), a work that advocated a new theocratic system in Poland in order to limit excessive royal power.

But the model of discourse that is most similar to Mickiewicz's is undoubtedly that of the Jesuit Piotr Skarga (1536–1612), whose *Sermons to the Diet* (*Kazania Sejmowe*, 1597) constitute a formal and ideological canon reflected in several chapters in *The Book of the Polish Pilgrimage*. *Sermons to the Diet* consists of eight speeches constituting an authentic political treatise discussing ways to strengthen the Polish State. They were published in 1597 as an appendix to the second edition of another work by Skarga, his *Sermons for Sundays and Holidays* (*Kazania na niedziele i święta*), and contain a description of the ideal sixteenth century Polish nobleman: a creative man with a benevolent outlook and deep spirituality who devotes his life to love of God, homeland, and the Church. Skarga structures each of the sermons identically. They begin with a synopsis of the Old or New Testament followed by the sermon itself in the form of a homily. The sermon begins with a few words from the Bible that serve as a starting point for developing its theme. Then there is an apostrophe to the senators in which they are invited to reflect, followed by a prayer related to the theme asking God not to allow the misfortunes predicted by Skarga to happen in Poland. This structure is very similar to the one used by Mickiewicz in several chapters of *The Book of the Polish Pilgrimage* and it is not surprising that he imitated it since its usefulness had been demonstrated centuries earlier and Skarga's work remains in the memory of the Polish nation as one of the guiding examples for national identity.

Mickiewicz learned from *Sermons to the Diet* how to ennoble common language, how to formulate rhetorical questions and answer them with a clear instructive intention, and how to use antithesis, especially to contrast State models with Poland's situation. Mickiewicz also learned from Skarga how to use the technique of producing the parables he narrates so that they are not only read or listened to for edification but would powerfully move audiences, obeying the Latin maxim of *docere, delectare, movere* (teach, delight, move). Piotr Skarga uses two devices that we also find in *The Book of the Polish Pilgrimage*: metaphor, where he portrays Poland as a ship in danger of foundering and whose crew, the Polish nation, is struggling to decide whether to save themselves or go down together; and personification, where Poland is both mother and nation for her children, insisting that the connection between them must be founded on authentic, selfless love.

In the seventeenth century we find a very important source for Mickiewicz in the composition of *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage*: Wespasjan Kochowski (1633–1700) and his *Polish Psalmody* (*Psalmodia polska*, 1695). Comprising thirty-six psalms written in prose, it borrows the narrative tradition of David's Psalter. While the Bible narrates the warring deeds of the Hebrews, Kochowski's *Psalmody* describes those of the Poles against the Turks. In general, these psalms have a penitent, religious tone with reflections and confessions in which, like a sinner, the writer express his repentance and his gratitude to God for benefits received. This metaphysical framework of the relationship between man and God is used by Kochowski to describe his Catholic ideas while rejecting other beliefs, and to deliver his political opinions on freedom in Poland and the situation of the Commonwealth. The events in his psalms are presented as divine rewards or punishments and the author embraces the permanent care of God for the Polish nation, positing a messianic mission for the country, an idea that Mickiewicz makes his own when, after the disaster of 1830 the Poles were asking themselves why God had punished them by seizing their homeland and freedom.

Mickiewicz's messianism develops the idea of Kochowski that Providence provides the solution to Poland's disaster. A great mission awaits Poland in the future and God himself has chosen this particular country to fulfill it. That mission is to bring true freedom to the peoples of Europe and enable them to live together in Christian harmony. The Polish people, an alliance of nobles, peasants, and soldiers, having been forced to abandon their homeland do not lose hope of returning to it. This faith offers assurance that Poland does not suffer in vain. Its suffering, as part of God's objective, is both rational and moral. And, just as Christ is the reflection of the harmony between God and humanity, according to Francois-René de Chateaubriand in *The Genius of Christianity* (1802), Poland would now, according to Mickiewicz, assume this role as a nation. While acknowledging substantial differences between the passion of Christ and the mission of Poland (for example, unlike Christ, Poland was not of divine origin) Polish emigrants—its pilgrims—would have an apostolic mission of spreading faith with their words and example just as Jesus Christ's disciples had done in other times. The Poles would suffer not only for themselves but for all humanity. In this way, Mickiewicz taught his nation and others that the supreme good is not scientific, military, economic, or commercial hegemony, but faith, love for one's neighbor, and freedom. He wrote:²²

Christ taught that on earth neither human wisdom nor power nor wealth nor the crown had any value, and that the only valuable thing is sacrifice for the common good. The person who sacrifices himself for others will find wisdom, wealth and

a crown on earth, in heaven and in every place. Further, the person who sacrifices their neighbor for himself to obtain wisdom, power and wealth, will find only foolishness, misery and condemnation on earth, in hell and in every place.

Mickiewicz interprets the doctrine of the Gospels as a utopia of social equality, similar to the form of socialism instituted in nineteenth-century England and understood as an attempt to achieve greater equality in a society based on the principles of fraternity, and for the support and benefit of all its members. This concept, predating Marxism and the idea of class struggle, ties in with the Mickiewicz's interpretation of Christianity as a social doctrine and is associated with certain aspects of utopian socialism advanced by Englishman Robert Owen²³ (1771–1858) along with the Saint-Simonianism of Claude Henri de Rouvroy, count of Saint-Simon²⁴ (1760–1825). The latter's *The New Christianity* (1825) postulates that society must be built on the moral foundation of Christian brotherhood.

Mickiewicz prophesies that nations such as England, France, and Germany, previously “sisters,” have moved away from Christian values and will be punished. This will not be the case for younger nations. For example, Hungary, Ireland, Belgium, and Poland, will be rewarded for their fidelity to the teachings of Christ in all aspects. In fact, this refers particularly to the Polish nation whose patriotic combatants of the 1830 Uprising have already begun to enjoy the divine gift of being glorified by foreigners as they walk toward exile in France, crossing German lands. The exiles-pilgrims-apostles searching for their promised land and proclaiming Christian truth and freedom for all peoples, suffer persecution at the hands of the Prussian government, but peasants celebrate them wherever they go. German villagers sing the national hymn of Poland as they pass by: “Noch ist Polen nicht verloren!”²⁵ German poets, including August von Platen-Hallermünde (1796–1835), Nikolaus Lenau (1802–1850), Gotthilf August von Maltitz (1794–1837), and Ernst Ortlepp (1800–1864) compose poems and songs in their honor, popularly named “Polen-lieder” (Polish songs). A similar reception would await the pilgrims arriving in France. Unlike the disregard shown by Périér's government for Polish exiles, the French people applaud the Poles who were defeated in the name of freedom. The pilgrims are also welcomed in England, Italy and throughout Europe, and when the Revolutions of 1848 take place across Europe it can be said that the “Great Emigration” contributed significantly to the awakening of the general revolutionary clamor for freedom.

In 1918, more than a century after the disappearance of the Polish State from the political map of Europe and as a result of the new order emerging from the First World War, Poland became a free country once again. It had never ceased to exist in the soul of its people. The younger generations, some

born in exile and others in conquered Polish lands, had not forgotten their language, religion, or national identity despite the cultural and bloody political persecutions they were subjected to in the interim. There is no doubt that Adam Mickiewicz contributed decisively to this continued national resistance. The great poet-prophet of Poland, who died without ever seeing his country gain independence, kept the Polish flame burning in the exiles-pilgrims and their descendants with his *Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage*. His verses of hope took the disgrace inflicted on his homeland far beyond its borders to resonate throughout Europe like a universal song against tyranny and slavery, in defense of fraternity and freedom for all people.

Notes

1. The theory of the Sarmatian origin of Polish nobility dates to sixteenth-century chronicles, although it was not until the seventeenth century that it acquired real importance. The Sarmatians were an Iranian people. In the third century B.C. they advanced from the Caucasus, invading land previously occupied by the Scythians. A century later the Sarmatians settled on land that is now Poland and Ukraine; that is, the Sarmatian Plain. As part of a later expansion, in the first century B.C., they conquered territory from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea and from the Volga to the Vistula, the area that the Romans called *Sarmatia*. In the third century they succumbed to the Goths, the Vandals, and the Huns.
2. "Polska Chrystusem narodów" Adam Mickiewicz, *Dziady, Dzieła*, vol. III. Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1955
3. "...ktokolwiek przyjdzie do mnie, będzie wolny i równy, gdyż ja jestem Wolność." Adam Mickiewicz, *Dzieła*, vol. II. Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1955. All quotes come from this edition unless otherwise stated.
4. "...bo naród polski nie umarł"
5. "A jako za zmartwychwstaniem Chrystusa ustały na ziemi całej ofiary krwawe, tak za zmartwychwstaniem narodu polskiego ustaną w chrześcijaństwie wojny."
6. "Albowiem cywilizacja prawdziwie godna człowieka, musi być chrześcijańska."
7. "A szczególnej z nauk Polaka, który się nazywał Oleszkiewicz i umarł niedawno, i z nauk księdza Stanisława, który żyje dotąd, i z nauk innych ludzi Polaków..."
8. Translator into Polish of Walter Scott, Lord Byron, Friedrich Schiller, and Aleksander Pushkin.
9. "Czytam wiele i w domu siedzę, teraz nad dziełami l'abbé Lamennais medytuję i życzę, abyś je z uwagą przeczytał."
10. Joachim Lelewel (1786–1861) was a leading historian and politician, the main ideologist and intellectual of the 1830 Uprising.
11. "...jest to jeden Francuz, który szczerze płakał nad nami; jego łzy były jedyne, którem widział w Paryżu."
12. *Le livre des pèlerins polonais* (traduit du polonais per le Ch. de Montalembert, suivi d'un Hymne à la Pologne, par F. de La Mennais, E. Renduel, Paris, 1833). Charles Forbes, count of Montalembert (1810–1870), was a Catholic politician and French liberal born in London. A disciple of Lamennais, with whom he founded the news-

- paper *L'Avenir* in 1830, he actively fought against Ultramontanism and defended the freedom and modernization of the Catholic Church. He was a strong advocate of the freedom of the Polish people.
13. *Examen crítico de las doctrinas religiosas y morales que enseña la moderna literatura francesa*, 1866, 17.
 14. It should be clarified that the real translator from Polish into French was not Count Montalembert, although this is stated in the book, but Bogdan Jański (1807–1840), a Polish exile in France who was part of the Great Emigration and a social activist in the emigrant community. A personal friend of Mickiewicz, Jański translated *The Books of the Polish Nation and Polish Pilgrimage*, the dramas *Konrad Wallenrod* and *The Ancestors* into French, as well as most of his lyrical poetry. Count Montalembert's role in the French edition of *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage* was limited to linguistic supervision and correction of the version in French.
 15. This refers to Alfred Nettement (1805–1869), author of numerous literary works, including a *History of French Literature*.
 16. “Może nasz naród jest powołany opowiadać ludom Ewangelie narodowości, moralności i religii, wzgardy dla budżetów, jedynej terazniejszej polityki prawdziwie celniczej.”
 17. *Katechizm pielgrzymstwa polskiego*. Część I: *Dzieje dawne*. Część II: *O pielgrzymstwie*.
 18. “Commentatorium plenum malitiae i temeritatis.”
 19. “Czytajcie je, Bracia-Wiara-Żołnierze; a ci, co są między Wami starsi, których nazywacie podoficerami, czyli namiestnikami, niech Wam objaśniają, i wykładają.”
 20. “Albowiem gdy Wolność zasiądzie na stolicy świata; będzie sędzić Narody.”
 21. “Podobna jest forma rządu przyszłego do kształtu mowy, którą mówi człowiek radny. Człowiek przemyślny idąc na radę narodową, obmyśla, jak zacząć mowę, co położyć na początku, co we środku, a co w końcu, bo tak nauczył się w szkole; ale iż sprawy narodowej mocno nie czuje, więc mowa jego będzie sztucznie ułożona, ale pusta, i przejdzie, i pamięci nie zostawi. A człowiek poczciwy, idąc na radę narodową pełne ma serce miłości Ojczyzny, i czując prawdę tego co ma mówić, mówi nie myśląc o porządku, a wszakże mowa jego będzie porządna, i spiszą ją skoropisowie na wzór dla innych; a on sam zadziwi się, iż tak mądrze mówił.”
 22. “Więc uczył Chrystus, że nie jest szanowna na ziemi, ani mądrość ludzka, ani urząd, ani bogactwo, ani korona; ale jedne tylko jest szanowne poświęcenie się dla dobra ludzi. I kto poświęca siebie dla drugich, znajdzie mądrość i bogactwo i koronę na ziemi, w niebie, i na każdym miejscu. A kto poświęca drugich dla siebie, aby miał mądrość, i urząd, i bogactwo, znajdzie głupstwo, i nędzę, i potępienie na ziemi, w piekle, i na każdym miejscu.”
 23. These are ideas developed in *A New View of Society* (1813) and the *Book of the New Moral World* (1836–1844). Owen wanted to put these notions into practice and carried out a successful experiment in his own textile factory in New Lanark (Scotland) where he improved workers' conditions while achieving an increase in productivity and profits. Encouraged by the results, in 1825 he founded the Community of New Harmony in the American state of Indiana, but its members soon became disillusioned and this project was never consummated.
 24. French Utopian socialist who offered his support for the French Revolution and renounced his aristocratic title to set an example. In *The New Christianity (Nouveau Christianisme)*, 1825) he argued for a social organization led by wise men whose source of wealth would be sustained by an industrial sector benefitting society as a

- whole in equal measure, with equality between men and women. His book threw religious ideas into turmoil in France and later in other parts of Europe,
25. "Poland has not yet died." First line of the first verse in the German version of *Dąbrowski's Mazurka* (*Mazurek Dąbrowskiego*), a poem originally written by Józef Wybicki (1747–1822) and which has been the official Polish national anthem since 1926.

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