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SIGURD CURMAN

A POLISH LAUDATORY ADDRESS IN A SWEDISH COUNTRY CHURCH

Laudatory addresses vary a great deal in character. There is a considerable difference, as regards both form and content, between the address to a celebrated Polish divine which is dealt with below, and the expressions now used by friends and admirers in paying homage to a Pole of our own time who has reached an important milestone on life's road.

Our tribute to *Włodzimierz Antoniewicz* — a highly regarded archeologist of wide culture and a warmly appreciated friend — has a much simpler external form than the one described below, but the thoughts and feelings which inspire our greeting today are assuredly more profound, more charged with straightforward sincerity and spontaneous warmth, than those which find such elaborate expression in the baroque tribute of former days which is the subject of this essay.

In the separate fields of Polish and Swedish historical studies, it is well known that a rather large number of objects, originating in Poland and of historic or aesthetic interest, have for a very long time reposed here and there in Sweden—some of them in national collections, particularly that of the Royal Armoury in Stockholm, and others in churches, castles and manor houses in various parts of the country. Many of these objects were brought to Sweden as booty during the wars of the 17th and early 18th centuries. Nevertheless the collections of the Royal Armoury also include many reminders of the peaceful intercourse between the two countries, and above all between members of the related Jagiello and Vasa dynasties, these being exemplified by valuable objects dating from the latter half of the 16th century.

In connection with historical studies, much of great common interest can be learned from examinations of Polish objects in Sweden, and naturally, Swedish objects of similar interest in Poland. It would seem however that the former group is the largest, because of the special historical circumstances and Sweden's previously more remote situation. Happily, Sweden has been spared the terrible fate which in recent centuries has ravaged Poland, where war and foreign occupation have led to irreplaceable losses not only as regards human life, but also as regards objects of historical value and works of art.

In Sweden, objects of similar interest, also originating in Poland, have survived intact and well-cared-for right up till today.

However, the present writer would be departing from his purpose if he attempted to go more deeply into that great and important task of research, the accomplishment of which has been brought nearer, at different times, by the sporadic contributions of both Swedish and Polish investigators. He will deal only with one small, but, he hopes, interesting article, in order to illustrate the kind of objects of Polish origin which may be found in Sweden — often in rather unsuspected circumstances.

We have said that objects of Polish origin can frequently be encountered in Swedish churches. Generally speaking, such objects were probably gifts to the churches from members of families who owned land in a particular district. It was from amongst the aristocratic landowning class that the Swedish army acquired its officers, and it was these officers who brought home this or that „souvenir” of their campaigns in distant countries, and it may well be that from the very start, their intentions were to deposit such souvenirs in their own little churches at home.

But what kinds of things did they generally bring home? Naturally their choice would be very much influenced by considerations of easy transport. It was only the higher command who sometimes had the chance of utilizing forms of transport suited to the bigger and heavier objects. The lower categories of officers had to confine themselves to such articles of booty as could be stowed into their own clothingchests, and therefore they selected less voluminous objects of fairly intrinsic high value, such as altar vessels of precious metal, or perhaps valuable but easily packed textiles: altar-cloths, chasubles, copes, chalice cloths etc., and less frequently, oil paintings on canvas, cut from their frames so that they could be rolled-up. It is objects of these kinds which can often be seen in Swedish churches, where their origin is almost always forgotten, and in the majority of cases it is only after careful study of each object that can confirm-with varying degrees of certainty-their Polish origin.

Hence it is in the nature of things that complete knowledge of Polish objects in Swedish churches cannot be achieved until thorough and systematic inventories of these churches have been pursued—and that, naturally, is an elaborate and time-devouring task. Nevertheless it is a task which was commenced as long ago as 1910, when the writer of this essay, together with his colleague Professor Johnny Roosval, inaugurated and organized the careful inventories of Sweden's churches which are still being continued. The results of these investigations are published with copious illustrations under the general title of „*SVERIGES KYRKOR, konsthistoriskt inventarium, på uppdrag av Kgl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien utgivet av Sigurd Curman och Johnny Roosval* (Sweden's Churches, *Aesthetic-Historical Inventories issued on behalf of the Royal Academy of Historical and Antiquarian Studies,*

edited by Sigurd Curman and Johnny Roosval). Eighty volumes have now been completed and issued¹.

It is Volume 73² of this work which contains the first written account of the Polish laudatory address which described in the publication present, which



Fig. 1. Church of Foerentuna in the province
Uppland in Sweden. From S. E.

will naturally treach greater Polish antiquarian circles, than the particular church inventory which provided much of the basis of our information.

On an island in Lake Mälaren, west of Stockholm, is a beautiful little Romanesque church called Foerentuna (fig. 1). In this church is a laudatory address

¹ Each volume is concerned with a particular province. Each account of a particular church is followed by a summary in both German and English, and every picture text is accompanied by translations into those two languages. The publishers of the work are: Generalstabens Litografiska Anstalts förlag, Drottninggatan 20, Stockholm.

² *Sveriges Kyrkor. Uppland. Band VI, Häfte 1: Foerentuna härad, västra delen av Armin Tuulse, Stockholm 1954.*

fig. 2) printed and painted on silk and fitted into a black frame with a gold fillet. It is dedicated to Stanisław Dąbski of the clan Godziemba, Count of Lubraniec, Bishop of Chełmno, Łuck, Brześć, Płock etc., who was born about (1630 and died in 1700, soon after his appointment as Bishop of Cracow.

Thus here we are considering a very celebrated person, one who had played an important part in Polish political and cultural developments during the latter part of the 17th century. It is not the intention of the present writer to attempt any sketch of this famous Pole's varied life; that of course is the task of Polish historians, and doubtless they already performed the greater part of it. Here, we shall confine ourselves to the address in Foerentuna church.

This silk panel, which measures 144 × 93 cm, is dominated by a head and shoulders portrait of Stanisław Dąbski surrounded by an oval laurel-wreath, Dąbski wears dark violaceous clerical attire, with red buttons and edgings, and a red cap. On his breast is a jewelled bishop's cross on a gold chain. He has dark blue-grey eyes and dark hair.

This portrait medallion is flanked by two cherubs sitting on bluegrey clouds and each holding a long, swagged garland of green leaves and gold flowers. Under the lowest part of each garland is an oval plaque bearing a coat-of-arms and having an inscribed scroll above. Beneath the portrait medallion, and helping to support it, is a smaller cherub. Fluttering around the medallion, baroque-style, is a long, inscribed ribbon which is being grasped by the three ministering cherubs, each of which also holds a bishop's mitre (infula). The fluttering ribbon bears the following inscription³:

„CELISSIMUS ILLUSTRISIM(US) ac REVERENDISSIM(US) D(OMI)N(US) STANISLAUS DAŃBSKI COMES IN LUBRANIEC EPISCOPUS CHELMENSIS LUCEORIENSIS ET BRESTENSIS PŁOCENSIS”.

Above the medallion like a crown, and above Dąbski's head, floats a cardinal's hat. Below the hat, written on a narrow scroll, is the inscription: “Purpureis Caput inferet (inset?) Astris”, and above the crown of the hat on another scroll: “Temperat Astra Gale-”(?). Remarkably enough, the colour of the hat and its trimming is green⁴.

At the very top of the panel, in a sunlit region amid a somewhat darker gathering of clouds, a tiny cherub holds before him a big bishop's mitre, and two more mitres float freely in the clouds to the right and left of him. The same cherub also holds, in his upstretched right hand, a little mitre with an

³ When quoting the inscriptions, we have bracketed our amplifications of abbreviated text with (), whilst letters we have added in order to complete damaged text are indicated by [].

⁴ The correct colour for a cardinal's hat is of course red. But then, green is the colour of hope. Perhaps this colour has a symbolic meaning here?



Fig. 2. Laudatory address to the Bishop Stanislaw Dąbski offered in 1694 from the Jesuit collegium in Toruń. Now conservad in the church Foerentuna in Sweden.

inscribed scroll. On the other side of this figure is an 8-point star (every other ray has straight contours, whilst the others are wavy, suggesting flames). In the centre of the star are the letters "IHS" surmounted by a cross above three nails, i.e. the insignia of the Jesuit order. Above the star is a scroll with a damaged but readable inscription as follows: "Fundator Collegii Toru (nensis) ac JESU". Above the smallest mitre is another scroll with a damaged inscription;

"VLADIS[LA]VIE[NSIS] et Pomera[niae]"

The coats-of-arms in the oval plaques are obviously those of Dąbski's father (GODZIEMBA) and mother (NIECZUJA). The paternal coat-of-arms consists of a conventionalized, threebranched species of fir-tree, and the maternal coat-of-arms shows an oakstub with a golden cross, and each of them has a red field. The Bishop's father was castellan ADAM DĄBSKI of the GODZIEMBA clan, and his mother was ELIZABET JEMIELSKA of the NIECZUJA clan⁵.

The inscriptions on the scrolls above the plaques are also damaged and therefore difficult to decipher. To the left (Godziemba) one may discern: "Fa... illu(strissima?)...in Te(m)plo DEI". To the right (Nieczuja) we discern: "Tibi celsa.....Qverc(us) assu.....(?)

Unfortunately we have not been able to agument these fragments with additional text which would be acceptable.

Beneath the inscription on the right we note — in very small letters — a painted signature: "S.L.Sartiewski" (or Sartienski), and possibly it is the signature of the artist who executed the panel.

The centre of the lower part of the panel is occupied by a lengthy printed text of homage. It is entirely in Latin and its typography is both varied and beautiful. It is given here in extenso:

CELSISSIMO

ILLVSTRISSIMO ac REVERENDISSIMO DOMINO

D. STANISLAO DĄBSKI,

COMITI in LVBRANIEC,

Vladislaviensi & Pomeraniae Antistiti,

DOMINO ac MECAENATI SUO MUNIFICENTISSIMO.

Celsissime, Illustrissime ac Reverendissime Antistes, Regni Poloniae

Senator, Mecaenas Amplissime

GENERIS TVI per Triumphos Poloniae, Honoris TVI ac TVORVM per Senatus ac Ecclesiae Polonae Titulos deducti, Senatori/um Summum in TVAM Purpuram colligo, Pontificum Vladislaviensium Celsitudinem, in TVAE majestatem Infulae subne/cto, TVORVM Meritorum, Religionis, Zeli, Munificentiae, Cae-

⁵ For valuable genealogical and heraldic information in this connection, the writer is indebted to Dr. Adam Heymowski of the Royal Library, Stockholm.

lum quoddam, in hanc vultus TVI umbram combino; & ha/beo ex umbra Illustrissimi vultûs, lucem eruditionis immensae: ex Solio Pontificii Honoris, Caelestem quandam in terris Aram, ad quam Philosophici Voti mei Summam appendo, tam Potestati TVAE Supplex, quàm Majestatis admirator. Hae quidem/lineae, alijs Imago sunt TVI; Sed TIBI umbra TVI: tamen si addis gloriae TVAE lucem, vides hic quod in TE aestimetur, & ex TE est immensum: vides, quod in TE Summi Romae ac Orbis Pontifices dilexerunt, tot Infulis coronant, & Tiararum Coronidi Emi/nentiae praeordinant. Vides Infulas quae gessisti: Chelmensem, Voto JOANNIS CASIMIRI, Nutu CLEMENTIS X. Luceoriensem ac/Brestensem Tiaram, Plocensem Mitram, Vladislaviensem ac Pomeraniae Infulam Coronatam, quia TV, etiam Regum Poloniae Coronator: Amo/re JOANNIS III, Regis Heroum: desiderio XI. ac XII. INNOCENTII; ut ad TVOS honores, conspirare videantur, in uno Rege Re/gnum & Orbis, in tot ac tantis Pontificibus Roma & Caelum; in tot meritis TVIS, universitas virtutum & DEUS. In TVIS honoribus/Sui implevit Oraculum Nominis & superavit antiquitûs cantatarum numerum Gratiarum: JOANNES Rex Gratiarum; Triplici Cathe/dra ac Solio unius merita, Sex Infulis TVVM Caput coronando: ut qui ab JOANNE CASIMIRO aetate Infulata Primas es Pontificum Po/loniae, á JOANNE III. fieres Vice-Primas Poloniae, Et in TE Vladislaviensis Cathedrae Diademata Culmen quoddam invenirent. Vo/bis haec Infula originem Suam debet: primi gessisti: TU Infulatae Serie' succedis; & misces cum origine gloriam Successoris. sine exemplo tot In/fularum. Scio quid intelligeret Tullius, cùm declameret Caji Metelli Pontificis vultu ac supercilio Athenas instrui subniti Romam. Sed quàm/sanctiûs hae ipsae, in quibus TVO honori plaudimus, aedes acclamabunt Athenas Torunensis in Societate Palladis, TVO Pontifex Munificentis/sime Vultu assurgere, Nutu crescere, Honore perfici: ut idem sis auspicatae moli Basis Purpurata, tanquam Fundator Religiosae Eruditionis; idem/perfecto operi Corona, tanquam Pontifex Doctorum. Certè Limina Religiosae molis hujus, TVOS Titulos adorabunt, scientiae sub Infula regna/bunt, praedicabit Societas, in Stemmate TVO, Summam operis et Majestatem Auctoris in Beneficio effusam colet. In umbra Tutelari, Purpurati/Godziembae TVI, Suae ac TVAE Religioni vivet Collegium; TVAE aeternitati vivet Societas; disputabunt Scientiae: TU concludes Patroci/nio, vinces Beneficio, triumphabis ingenio gloriae TUAE; quod est; plura fecisse, ut agas omnia, scire summa, ut immensus sis cùm prodes. TU/JOANNIS CASIMIRI, MICHAELIS I. JOANNIS III. Senator, Oraculum, Amor, Votum. Vivis Infulati Ideam Zeli, Coronatam/Meritis ac Honoribus Religionem: cum Illustrissimo Brestensi in Cujavia Palatino Fratrem TUO socias unionem sanguinis, multiplicas invicem/Purpuras: Ille in TE Religionis Majestati: TU in Illo Heroicae vivis Fortunae: differentia Purpurarum non Honoris, Nominis, non Zeli. Sed/haec Collegii TUI Historica narrabit Eruditio, TU ipse Testis futurus temporum, & Senatoriae Fidei ac Pontificii

Pectoris Ara illibata. En in/Imagine TUA quanta latent! & umbra est TUI, quid si TE non in umbra videres; sed quantus es intellegent omnes, etiam qui umbram TUI/adorant. Sed & haec jam in Luce, & adhuc sub elogio. Inter —(?) Philosophum cum Voto admitte, & Votum approba. Ut qui Religionem pe/ctore, Senatum animo, Manu ac Ingenio Scientias Honores gestis, Infulas TUO Capite coronas, TUO Nomine iterum Stanislaus ex Polonia,/TUO Stemmate saepiùs coronas Eminentissimos Purpuratae Fidei Honores. Hoc Philosophi, hoc Scientiae Votum est, haec expectatio Poloniae./Tu post tot Infulas age in Polonia Romanae Purpurae Senatum.

ILLUSTRISSIMAE CELSITUDINISTUAE

Tibi subiectissima Philosophia collegit, TVI
& Philosophus
Cliensdevinetissimus
FRANCISCUS PREJICZ
MARIANAE Academice Rector

CONCLUSIONES EX UNIVERSA PHILOSOPHIA EX LOGICA

I. LOGICA est Scientia pratico-Speculativa, directiva Operationum intellecùs. II. Objectum Attributionis Logicae est Syllogismus. III. Implicat Distinctio formalis ex Natura tei(?), ac virtualis intrinseca cum proecisionibus objectivis. IV. Datur distinctio Virtualis extrinseca proecisionibus formalibus. V. Universale formaliter datur solum per actum nostri Intellectùs. VI. Relatio proedicamentalis indetificatur soli rationi fun/dondi & terminandi; Veritas formalis actui & objecto.

EX PHYSICA

I. PHYSICA est Scientia Speculativa Corporis naturalis. II. Materia prima unicam tantum semper habet formam. III. Causa potest agere in distans. IV. Anima est actus Corporis Organici potentià vitam habentis./Unica nonnisi Anima datur in quovis Composito. V. Mundus nec fuit, nec potuit fuisse ab oeterno.

EX METAPHYSICA

I. METAPHYSICA est Scientia Speculativa entis realis. II. Forma denominans actu formaliter ab oeterno creaturas possibles est ipsa ac sola Omnipotentia DEI. III. Essentia Entis ereati non distingvitur reeliter ab/existentia ejusdem.

Defindentur in Collegio Toronensi Societatis JESU ab eodem qui suprà, Anno 1694. Mense die Horis consvetis

The text itself states that it was printed at Toruń in 1694. It is signed by Franciscus Prejicz, principal of the Maria Academy, which appears to have been associated with the revived Jesuit collegium which had been founded with the aid of donations from Dąbski. Amongst the Jesuits, Dąbski was known as an exceptionally generous donor. He had amongst other things provided the means for building the Jesuit church at Gdańsk, and he had also contributed to the expansion of the Jesuit church in Toruń, in addition to his donation for the building of the Jesuit collegium in that city. He gladly sought the company of Jesuits, and that probably explains the production of this testimonial, in which the Maria Academy of the Jesuits pay homage and give thanks to their powerful and open-handed patron.

After the laudatory address, and typographically clearly separated from it, is a special section headed "CONCLUSIONES" which can most fittingly be described as a brief academic dissertation, composed of philosophical theses and designed for ventilation at a disputation in the Jesuit collegium, where they would be defended by Franciscus Prejicz, the signatory of the address.

To the modern reader, the form and content of this laudatory address certainly appears difficult to digest, with its exaggerated baroque panegyric concerning an open-handed but ambitious patron whose successful career is proclaimed in the most devoted terms. In the decorative part of the panel, we see depicted the six infulae (bishops' mitres) which the text enumerates as the accumulated symbols of his dignity. The cardinal's hat which is freely suspended above Dąbski's head symbolizes the greater dignity for which he strived so eagerly, and which to him would have meant the crowning of his successful career in the service of the church, a dignity which the address warmly wishes him in its concluding words, but which he was never to attain. When he died in 1700, it was as the newly-elected Bishop of Cracow—but as fate had willed it, he had not then officially acceded to that distinguished and coveted office.

Of course this laudatory address—both the text and its decorative setting—must be seen against the background of usages which were general at the time of its production. Generally speaking, in the matter of devout humility and exaggerated praise, there is not much difference between the elaborate laudatory address which is dealt with here, and the kind of dedications, addressed to benefactors, which prefaced the works of contemporary scholars.

Careful conservation work was carried out in 1927. The silken panel was mounted on good quality artist's canvas and installed in its present frame, and is today in excellent condition.

The one thing that remains to be explained is how this beautiful and interesting address to a celebrated Polish divine found a final resting place in a little rural church in Sweden, where it has mutely escaped the destruction which

has so often swept across the land of its origin. Unfortunately no documents have been found, either in the church or elsewhere, which might provide a clue. We are therefore forced back on a conjecture which is at any rate acceptable.

In the summer of 1703, during the war waged by Charles XII of Sweden against August II of Poland, Swedish troops besieged the town of Toruń. The town capitulated on 3rd October, and the next day Charles rode in at the head of his troops. In accordance with recognized usage in time of war, the church-bells were confiscated because they had been rung during the siege, and a quantity of silver and other valuables, which the aristocracy of the surrounding areas had sought to deposit safely within the town walls, was declared to be booty. It seems very probable that our laudatory address, which no doubt reposed in the Bishop's palace built by Dąbski, thus became an article of booty in Swedish hands, and was later presented by some returning officer or army chaplain to his own little church at home.⁶

HABENT SUA FATA!

⁶ Translated by William Cameron.