

Szymon Starowolski and his collection of epigraphs

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Date of Submission: 20-07-2018

Date of acceptance: 4-08-2018

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the hardest-working and most effective authors writing in Polish and Latin, and one of the most persevering writers - this is what literature researchers in the past said about Szymon Starowolski (1588-1656), the Krakow canon¹. In his second volume of *A History of Polish Literature*, author Leon Rogalski writes "there is no other person to have prepared so many works and on such a variety of topics"². Other scholars address this belief in their dissertations³. Some claim that the legacy of the clergyman comprises more than fifty works⁴. Ignacy Lewandowski assumes that there were about seventy⁵. Piotr Szydłowski provides a more precise number, i.e. sixty-six remaining of that seventy⁶. Finally, considering the value of his books, Jan Poplinski refers to Starowolski as the "genuine polymath" and, given the nature of what remained of his works, the "Polish Varro"⁷.

Starowolski's works and their value

Although the Krakow writer's work received recognition, it was also the subject of highly critical opinions over the years. This is discussed by Ignacy Lewandowski, who explains that after the highly favourable reviews full of superlatives in the 18th century, the 19th century brought exceptionally negative opinions⁸. Interestingly, as contemporary literature research developed, more balanced or even favourable reviews began to emerge⁹. In recognition of Starowolski's contribution, Jerzy Starnawski refers to him as "bibliographer and a 'sui generis' historian of Polish literature". In contrast, Albert Gorzkowski calls him "an eminent historiographer, theologian and orator"¹⁰. Krzysztof Obremski compares Starowolski's writings with the work of Wespazjan Kochowski and adds that in the work entitled *Setnik pisarzy polskich (Centurion of the Polish writers)*, the former makes a more accurate assessment of the literary work of his predecessors than the author

¹ L. Rogalski, *Historia Literatury Polskiej*, Nakładem M. Glucksberga księgarza, Warszawa 1871, vol. 2, p. 77-78; [E. Kierski], *Starożytności polskie*, Nakładem Księgarni J. K. Zupanskiego, Poznań 1842, vol. 1, p. 269.

² L. Rogalski, *Historia ...*, vol. 2, p. 77-78.

³ L. T. Rycharski, *Literatura polska w historyczno-krytycznym zarysie*, Nakład i własność księgarni J. M. Himmelblaua. W drukarni „Czasu” W. Kirchmatera, Kraków 1868, vol. 1, p. 298.

⁴ This point is discussed synthetically in: J. Przyborowski, *Kilka szczegółów do życiorysu Szymona Starowolskiego*, „Biblioteka Warszawska” 189 (1889), vol. 1, p. 171-172.

⁵ I. Lewandowski, *Wstęp*, in: Szymon Starowolski, *Wybor pism*, I. Lewandowski (transl., ed.), Warszawa 2005, p. XXXIV. A detailed list of the works can be found on p. CV-CXII.

⁶ P. Szydłowski, *Koncepcja człowieka Szymona Starowolskiego*, „Euhemer – Przegląd Religioznawczy” 2/92 (1974), p. 41. In another publication, the author provides a list of Starowolski's works arranged in the order of publication, cfr. P. Szydłowski, *Między renesansem a kontrreformacją. Poglądy filozoficzne Szymona Starowolskiego 1588-1656*, Warszawa – Kraków 1978, p. 146-157.

⁷ [J. Poplinski], *Nowe wypisy polskie*, Nakład i druk E. Gunthera, Leszno 1838, vol. 2, p. 274. 301.

⁸ I. Lewandowski, *Wstęp ...*, p. XCVIII-C.

⁹ Ibidem, p. CI-CIV.

¹⁰ J. Starnawski, *Warsztat bibliograficzny historia literatury polskiej*, Warszawa 1982, p. 67; A. Gorzkowski, *Colores rhetorici. Sztuka homiletyczna Szymona Starowolskiego*, in: *Coz stanie sie, Panie, jesli spytam? Studia i szkice o myśli i tradycji biblijnej*, Kraków 2012, p. 165.

of *Annales*¹¹. Research by contemporary scholars indicates that the disapproval expressed by positivists was often a result of failure to understand the writer's intention. Opinions expressed perhaps hastily or rashly are not unusual also nowadays. This is noted by, for example, Jolanta Glebicka, who translated and edited the book entitled *De claris oratoribus Sarmatiae*¹². In that book, she commented on the opinion by Ignacy Lewandowski, who is quoted here several times, that the work by Starowolski is of poor quality due to insufficient biographical information¹³. However, Glebicka emphasised, that it was not Starowolski's intention to write biographies, but eulogies, which should be significantly change the way that the work is evaluated¹⁴.

The Krakow polymath was accused, on several occasions, that his writings were sloppy, full of errors, mistakes and messy¹⁵. Such opinions, though not as biting as in the past, are expressed also today¹⁶. Barbara Milewska-Wazbinska, in her discussion of the inscription on Sigismund's Column in Warsaw, notices that the version provided by the Krakow clergyman not only contains a typesetting error in the king's name, but also that its layout is different from what can be found on the statue and rather follows the layout preserved in a drawing by Willem Hondius. What is more, taking the chalcographer's version as a model, Starowolski uses special typefaces typical of eulogies, which are not found in the original work¹⁷. Further on in her book, where the author makes references to subsequent editions of the inscriptions, she explains that despite the gaffes, the 17th-century version is more accurate than the versions provided by subsequent scholars¹⁸.

All this indicates that attempts to make accurate evaluations of Starowolski's work are made by scholars also today. Without examining whether their opinions are right or wrong, it is important to note that the differences of opinion, which may be surprising, are the result of, above all, the fact that the Krakow clergyman's work has not been studied sufficiently yet. This is what Albert Gorzkowski concluded after studying the legacy of the writer's work as a preacher. Researchers studying old Polish literature, he claims, have for years been waiting for systematic explorations and a monograph of this part of Starowolski's work¹⁹. Similar studies are needed in regard to other parts of the author of *Hecatontas*, including in the case of - on an *a priori* basis - also the book entitled *Monumenta Sarmatarum Viam universae carnis Ingressorum*, which is discussed here. The book was published in print by a publishing house run by Franciszek Cezary's widow and heirs in 1655²⁰. It is a collection of inscriptions found primarily in churches, as well as at cemeteries, on monuments and public buildings in the land of the former Republic of Poland. The final part of the collection also includes a selection of graves dedicated to Poles who died outside Poland. Starowolski's intention was less to create than to write texts, and this was stressed on the title page of the collection, where the Starowolski is referred to as 'collector'²¹.

¹¹ K. Obremski, *Krytyka poetycka? (W. Kochowski, Poetowie polscy swiezszy i dawniejszy we dworze helikońskim odmalowani)*, in: A. Stoff A. Skubaczewska-Paniewska D. Brzostek (ed.), *Poezja swiadoma siebie. Interpretacje wierszy autotematycznych*, Torun 2009, p. 42.

¹² Sz. Starowolski, *De claris oratoribus Sarmatiae*, E. J. Glebicka (transl., ed.), Warszawa 2002.

¹³ I. Lewandowski, *Wstęp ...*, p. XLII.

¹⁴ E. J. Glebicka, *Wprowadzenie do lektury*, in: Sz. Starowolski, *De claris ...*, p. 5–6.

¹⁵ Leon Rogalski, *Historia ...*, vol. 2, p. 79. Similar opinions can be found in a text by Franciszek Siarczyński. In *Obraz wieku panowania Zygmunta III krola polskiego i szwedzkiego [...]*, he makes multiple references to Starowolski's writings as source texts. These succinct references in his profiles of various writers are sometimes supplemented with assessments of Starowolski's writings, with comments such as "negligent and careless in everything [...]; [...] this writer is careless in everything", cfr. F. Siarczyński, *Obraz wieku panowania Zygmunta III, krola polskiego i szwedzkiego [...]*, Wycisnieto kotlami Jozefa Schnaydera drukarza T. Cz. Inst. Bibliot. Im. Ossolins., Lwow 1828, vol. 1, p. 180. 229.

¹⁶ Cfr. E. J. Glebicka, *Wprowadzenie ...*, p. 11.

¹⁷ B. Milewska-Wazbinska, *Napisy z cokolu Kolumny Zygmunta – kilka uwag o funkcji i transmisji tekstu*, „Barok. Historia – Literatura – Sztuka” XXII/1 (43) 2015, p. 21.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 21–22.

¹⁹ A. Gorzkowski, *Colores ...*, p. 174.

²⁰ S. Starowolscius, *Monumenta Sarmatarum, Viam universae carnis Ingressorum*, In officina viduae et haeredum Francisci Caesarii [...], Cracoviae 1655.

²¹ *Ibidem*, title page. There are a few online versions of the work. An online version is provided by, for example, a Munich Library (Staatsbibliothek Munchen), see: http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/fs1/object/display/bsb10635860_00001.html. It is also available on Google Books, see: https://books.google.pl/books?id=pqNMAAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=monumenta+sarmatarum&hl=pl&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=monumenta%20sarmatarum&f=false.

For the purposes of this discussion, a copy of the book from Stanisław Staszic Pomeranian Library in Szczecin was used (Library Book Reference: KP.XVII.3286.II).

Reviews of epigraphic works, in the same way as reviews of any other work, can be said to reflect a dichotomy of opinion. The work received positive reviews in the 18th century. This is confirmed by an opinion expressed by late David Braun (1664-1737) in his dissertation on Polish and Prussian writers. While he is extremely critical of other writers, the author's opinion of Starowolski's collection is this:

Simon Starovolskius, Primicerius h. e. Canonicus Cantor Tarnoviensis, magno labore et utilissimo studio, ex multis Templis Poloniae et Prussiae, item nonnullis extraneis, praesertim Italcis *Monumenta Sarmatarum sepulchralia*, Cracoviae typis Anno 1655. edidit [...]. Utinam hanc diligentiam in conquirendis Sepulchrorum Inscriptionibus, multi imitentur!²².

A similar belief was expressed by Feliks Bentkowski, who lived in the late 18th and early 19th centuries (1781-1852):

Monumenta Sarmatarum viam universae carnis ingressorum. Cracov. Apud Haered. Franc. Caesarii. 1655. fol. 818 stron. Jest to zbior nagrobkow po roznych kosciolach Polskich porozpraszanych, i tem jest do historii wazniejszy, iz wiele z tych napisow grobowych, po kosciolach gdzie się przedtem znajdowały, zupełnie zaginelo, musiały bowiem nieraz ustąpić powazniejszym ktorzy takze honoru uwiecznienia swej pamieci przez oplacenie mieysca nagrobkowego, pragneli²³.

Monumenta Sarmatarum viam universae carnis ingressorum. Cracov. Apud Haered. Franc. Caesarii. 1655, 818 pages. It is a collection of gravestones scattered around different churches in Poland. It is a historically valuable collection especially because many of these grave inscriptions are no longer found in churches, where they used to be. They had to give up room for plaques for more significant individuals, who always wanted to be remembered by funding a gravestone.

In both statements, the researchers appreciate Starowolski's work. While Braun does not go beyond praising Starowolski's efforts and encouraging other writers, the author of *A History of Polish Literature* provides his answer to the express question about the reasons for the praise. He first stresses that the work is a homogeneous collection of epigraphs originally found in different places. However, he emphasises another valid reason by explaining that the collection helped to preserve certain monuments destroyed as they were carved in stone. Such arguments were highly convincing for the researchers who continued research into Polish literature. The idea of creating a single collection of inscriptions, they write, "is a great idea"²⁴. However, they place emphasis on the form and literary value of the collection and add that in these respects the book leaves much to be desired²⁵.

The opinions expressed by former literature experts have considerably influenced the research into *Monumenta Sarmatarum*. It can be seen from the long list of bibliography on the work of Starowolski which can be found in the *Nowy Korbut* bibliography of Polish literature that Starowolski's epigraphic collection is not the main focus of any of the texts²⁶. A more extensive discussion of the book can be found in Franciszek Bielak's

²² [D. Braun], *De Scriptorum Poloniae et Prussiae Historicorum, Politicorum et Jctorum typis impressorum ac Manuscriptorum in Bibliotheca Brauniana collectorum, virtutibus et vitiis, Catalogus et Iudicium* [...], Coloniae 1723, p. 73.

²³ F. Bentkowski, *Historia literatury polskiej* [...], Nakladem Zawadzkiego i Konf., Warszawa i Wilno 1814, vol. 1, p. 5.

²⁴ [E. Kierski], *Starozytności* ..., vol. 1, p. 269; L. T. Rycharski, *Llitteratura* ..., vol. 1, p. 298.

²⁵ *Ibidem* (The mistake in the word *Sarmatarum* has been copied from the original):

Monumenta Sarmatarum sepulchralia. Zbior tych napisow nagrobkowych jest to pomysl swietny, lubo takze zarzutowi niedokladnosci ulega. Główna cecha prac Starowolskiego są pomysly piekne, a nietrafne ich wykonanie, rozlegle objecie, wysokie zdolnosci, ale brak krytyki, ladu i dokladnosci

Monumenta Sarmatarum sepulchralia. This collection of gravestone inscriptions is a great idea, but it was put into action carelessly. The main feature of Starowolski's works are beautiful ideas, but these ideas are realised poorly; the topics are dealt with broadly and brilliantly, but in a naïve, disorderly and careless manner.

Cfr. [E. Kierski], *Starozytności* ..., vol. 1, p. 269.

²⁶ Cfr. *Starowolski Szymon*, in: *Pismiennictwo staropolskie*, R. Pollak (ed.), in: *Bibliografia literatury polskiej Nowy Korbut*, K. Budzyk (ed.), Warszawa 1965, t. 3, p. 285–286.

work, but the book is not the researcher's main interest²⁷. Starowolski's work is mentioned and referred to in several works published by Piotr Szydłowski on the cantor from Tarnow. In the process of gathering information from his other academic papers, this specialist in religious studies also prepared a separate paper dealing with inscriptions only²⁸. It is not, however, an extensive piece of writing and, like the majority of the scholar's studies, looks at Starowolski's writings from the angle of the history of religion and the history of social relations and treats the author's writing style as a matter of secondary importance. Even Ignacy Lewandowski, in his presentation of the collection in the introduction to *Wybor pism (A Selection of Writings)*, considers the documentary value of the epigraphs to be their most valuable feature, and although he is a literature researcher, he gives the collection away to historians so that they could use the texts by the Krakow polymath as source materials in their research work²⁹. A similar approach is adopted by Czesław Hernas, whose continuous discussion of baroque literature contains a few lines on Starowolski's work, combining a description of the work with that of *De claris oratoribus Sarmatiae* and focusing on the historical roots of printing and its role in fostering a sense of national consciousness³⁰.

So far there has been little interest among researchers in the strictly literary aspects of the epitaphs contained in the collection, such as how the sources were obtained or the chronology of the works, or their genealogy. This could be seen as a paradox, since, as Starowolski makes it clear in the introduction to the volume, he decided to create the collection in order to preserve epigraphic texts³¹. Therefore, the present study aims to discuss the work based on an analysis of the internal criteria of the publication and the methodology of literary research³². This discussion will cover only a few selected aspects. However, it will hopefully draw the attention of researchers to the old work and, contrary to popular opinions, persuade them to believe that there is still something to be told about *Monumenta Sarmatarum*. The rationale behind it is that from the perspective of literature studies, the book is the first collection of inscriptions in Poland³³. It can, therefore, be assumed with a high degree of probability that all subsequent similar works referred, to some extent, to the original work and continued to adopt Starowolski's methodology.

Terminology made precise

The printing house that published the collection of epigraphs was, according to Jerzy Samuel Bandtke, known for using quality paper³⁴. The work by the Krakow clergyman, who had previously used the services of that publishing house on two occasions, proves this claim well³⁵. Although Franciszek Cezary, who founded the company, died in 1651, his widow and his heirs, who are named on the title page as the new owners,

²⁷ F. Bielak, *Działalność ...*, vol. 5, fasc. 1, vol. 277–282.

²⁸ P. Szydłowski, *Elementy renesansowej aksjologii w staropolskich nagrobkach*, „Euhemer – Przegląd religioznawczy” 1/87 (1973), p. 113–121.

²⁹ I. Lewandowski, *Wstęp ...*, s. XLVIII. Cfr. A. Piskadlo, *Wstęp*, in: Sz. Starowolski, *Polska albo opisanie położenia Królestwa Polskiego* [...], Krakow 1976, p. 14.

³⁰ Cz. Hernas, *Barok*, Warszawa 1998, p. 387–388.

³¹ S. Starowolski, *Ad lectorem*, in: *Monumenta Sarmatarum ...* (page numbers missing). The pages in the introductory part of the book are not numbered. It is, however, clearly divided into a part with some pages marked with letters A and B at the bottom. Wherever a page has any identifying marks, this shall be noted in a footnote. In other cases, as in this footnote, it is only possible to provide the title of the text that is referred to and the part of the book where the text can be found. In such cases, square brackets will be used to show the page number for each text and whether the page is a *recto* (front) or *verso* (back) page.

³² The topics, composition, themes and other aspects in this area are discussed also in other publications by the author of this article, cfr. J. Nowaszczuk, *Miejsca wspólne łacinskich epitafiów epoki renesansu*, Szczecin 2007; *Wierszowane epitafia łacinskie w Polsce epoki renesansu. Kompozycja. Antologia utworów*, Szczecin 2009; *Prayers in the „Monumenta Sarmatarum” by Szymon Starowolski*, in: P. Urbanski (ed.), *Pietas Humanistica. Neo-Latin Religious Poetry in Poland in European Context*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main – Berlin 2006, p. 201–211; *Mors atra i Mors bona – dwa sposoby przedstawiania śmierci w łacinskich epitafiach renesansowych*, „Pamiętnik Literacki” I (2008), p. 5–16; *Łacinskie autoepitafium renesansowe*, „Studia Classica et Neolatina” IX (2010), p. 63–72; *Topika antyczna w łacinskich epitafiach epigraficznych epoki renesansu*, „Colloquia Theologica Ottoniana” 2 (2010) p. 137–151; *Renesansowe epitafia biskupów*, „Pamiętnik Literacki” CII (2010), fasc. 4., p. 25–39; *Teksty modlitewne w kolekcji epigraficznej Szymona Starowolskiego*, „Studia Paradayskie” 26 (2016), p. 139–152.

³³ I. Lewandowski, *Wstęp ...*, p. XLVII.

³⁴ J. S. Bandtke, *Historia drukarni krakowskich* [...], W Drukarni Groblowskiej J. Mateckiego, Krakow 1815, p. 459.

³⁵ Cfr. M. Malicki, *Repertuar wydawniczy drukarni Franciszka Cezarego starszego 1616–1651*, Krakow 2010, vol. 1 (*Bibliografia druków Franciszka Cezarego starszego 1616–1651*), p. 10.

continued to follow the quality standards set by the previous editions. Indeed, the book has survived the test of time, and so the print of more than two thousand epigraphs in the book is still extremely distinct. The *in folio* binding of the pages is durable and, despite the size of the book, which has over 800 pages, copies of the book are usually complete.

Traditionally, the title page contains the printer's signet - a column (or, in fact, an obelisk) which had once been the distinguishing mark of Lazarzowa Printing House³⁶. This is followed by the name of the publishing house and the year of publication. Above the publisher's symbol, there is the title of the book and the name of its author. The heading is as follows:

MONVMENTA
SARMATARVM,
Viam universae carnis Ingressorum.
SIMONE STAROVOLSCIO
Primicerio Tarnoviensi
Collectore³⁷.

The text is stylised to resemble an epigraph itself. Like in stone-carved inscriptions, the letters in the first two words, which are the title proper, are capitalised and the 'u' vowel is printed as 'v'. The other words are printed in fonts of different sizes³⁸. The part being the *viam universae carnis* subtitle is printed in bold type. The word 'Ingressorum' is printed in smaller characters and, although not in bold type, it is part of the expression. The canon's first name and surname are italicised and capitalised. The word Collectore stands out too. Set between the lines of the text, where the 'a maiore ad minus' font size changes gradually, the word is unexpectedly highlighted by larger characters. Presumably, it was the author's or the publisher's intention to emphasise that the cantor of Tarnow was not the originator of the texts in the book, but a collector of the texts. The entire text above the printer's signet is centred, which makes it look like an eulogy.

It was certainly for a reason that Starowolski decided to include the word 'monumenta' in the title of the book, as this word in this position seems quite appropriate. It combines various semantic ranges. It thus means tombs alone, memorabilia and, finally, inscriptions and the oldest written texts³⁹. The 17th-century dictionary authored by Laurentius Beyerlinck lacks a more detailed description of the semantic ranges. However, in the 'monumentum' entry, the scholar makes a reference to the part on badges of honour (insignia) or honour itself (glory) and, finally, to the part on epitaphic inscriptions (inscriptiones)⁴⁰. An earlier dictionary, by Ambrosius Calepinus, expressly states that the word is associated with anything that evokes a person's memories (dicitur quidquid nos monet). In this category, the linguist includes monuments (tituli), tombs (sepulchra), statues (statuae), sacred sites (fana), porticoes (porticus), hymns (carmina), stories (historiae), documents (documenta), prescriptions (praeceptiones), warnings from wise men (sapientum monita) and books (libri)⁴¹. The fact that the word had multiple meanings was obvious to a scholar of the size of Starowolski. As noted by Antoni Piskadlo, the clergyman used the word to refer to literary works and epigraphic inscriptions on one occasion and to monuments on another⁴². Piotr Szydłowski has identified various 'categories of monuments' in the writer's work⁴³. He also reveals the evolution of the word 'monumentum' in the writer's subsequent works⁴⁴. The Krakow polymath adequately included, in the title of the book, a word that combines both the spheres he studied, i.e. the physical sphere of funeral culture and the literary sphere of the texts alone. When translated, the two meanings of the word would be best reflected as *epitaph*. However, this word has

³⁶ J. S. Bandtke, *Historia ...*, p. 459. The origin of the signet (the printer's mark) and its meaning are discussed in: A. Kawecka-Gryczowa (ed.), *Drukarze dawnej Polski od XV do XVIII wieku*, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków – Gdansk – Łódź 1983, vol. 1 (Malopolska), fasc. 1 (wiek XV–XVI), p. 134–135.

³⁷ The original wording is quoted. Cfr.

http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/fs1/object/display/bsb10635860_00005.html.

³⁸ In the quotation, the differences in the font sizes are not reflected.

³⁹ Cfr. M. Plezia (ed.), *Słownik łacinsko-polski*, Warszawa 1998, vol. 3, p. 533–534; J. Korpany (ed.), *Słownik łacinsko-polski*, Warszawa 2003, vol. 2, p. 281; J. Søndel, *Słownik łacinsko-polski dla prawników i historyków*, Kraków 1997, p. 636; A. Jougan, *Słownik kościelny łacinsko-polski*, Warszawa 1992, p. 432.

⁴⁰ L. Beyerlinck, *Magnum theatrum vitae humanae* [...], Sumptibus I. A. Huguetan et M. A. Ravaud, Lugduni 1665, vol. 5, p. 604.

⁴¹ A. Calepini, *Dictionarium* [...], Sumpt. Haered. P. Prost Ph. Borde et L. Arnaud, Lugduni 1647, vol. 2, p. 80.

⁴² A. Piskadlo, *Wstęp ...*, p. 47.

⁴³ P. Szydłowski, *Między renesansem ...*, p. 73–81.

⁴⁴ P. Szydłowski, *Elementy ...*, p. 117–118; *Koncepcja ...*, p. 47–51.

a foreign origin and refers to a specific literary genre. Thus the optimum choice would be to use the word 'monuments', which is used to mean plaques, altars and tombs, as well as gravestone inscriptions⁴⁵.

The choice of the second word, being part of the heading, i.e. the word 'Sarmatarum', can be regarded as the author's tricks that worked. This word was extremely popular in the seventeenth century. Today, it can be found in expressions such as 'Rzeczpospolita sarmacka' (literally translated as the republic of Sarmatians) or 'czasy sarmackie' (Sarmatian times), where it is used as a reference to the reality of the author's times. In the first words of a description of his country, he himself refers to Poland as 'European Sarmatia' (Sarmatia Europaea)⁴⁶. He had earlier used this word in the titles of some of his studies. These are *De claris oratoribus Sarmatiae* (*On famous Sarmatian orators*) and *Sarmatiae bellatores* (*Sarmatian Warriors*)⁴⁷. In all these cases, through his skilful choice of words, he avoided delving into the problems of national identification, which were a fairly complex matter in his times. As Giovanna Brogi Bercoff notes, by referring to his country as Sarmatia, the author was able to refer to the most remote sources on the roots of Poles and, at the same time, to stand aloof from other nations that formed the Slavic community⁴⁸. Apart from this, it was certainly important for the scholar to give this word the feature of nobility, which can be seen in other works as well and which was a response to the lack of respect for Poles in the West. The writer experienced such disapproval at a certain time in his life, when a scholars' home supervisor called him and his friends 'stupid Sarmatians'⁴⁹. Importantly, in his description of the Kingdom of Poland, Starowolski explains that his country is not a homogenous creation. He writes that each of the eight provinces has its own specific features and even its own language. However, what they all have in common is that they are ruled by the same king. Finally, the word Sarmatian reveals nationality, but not national identity or geographic location. This is why the use of the word in the title of the book allowed Starowolski to include, in *Monumenta Sarmatarum*, the gravestones of foreign nationals who had settled and died in Poland on the one hand and, as illustrated by the final part of the collection, to include epitaphs dedicated to Poles who had been buried outside Poland on the other hand.

One antique book with two titles

The Krakow clergyman's efforts to choose the right expressions can be seen in the part of the text that may be referred to as a subtitle. The expression *Monumenta Sarmatarum, Viam universae carnis Ingressorum*, which is referred to and discussed here, is not the only one. There are copies of the book with the words *Monumenta Sarmatarum Beatae Aeternitati adscriptorum* on the title page⁵⁰. Copies of this edition are not many. An electronic version of it is published by the Jagiellonian Digital Library (item reference: NDIGSTDR015650) and Kuyavian-Pomeranian Digital Library, where a copy of the book from the University Library of Torun is made available (item reference: Pol.7.III.1151)⁵¹. The latter copy may seem to be the original edition of the book, with some changes made - for some reasons - to the words and expressions used in it. In the introductory part, where the pages are not numbered, there are slightly fewer elements as compared to other existing copies of the collection. It contains a motto from Augustine of Hippo's *City of God*, an inscription letter to Kazimierz Proczynski and an *Ad lectorem* (*To the reader*) letter, as well as one epigram

⁴⁵ Jerzy Starnawski translated *Monumenta Sarmatarum* into *Polish Monuments*. Cfr. J. Starnawski, *Wstęp*, in: Szymon Starowolski, *Wojownicy sarmaccy*, Warszawa 1978, p. 20–21. In early literature, this work was also entitled *Monuments of Sarmatians*, cfr. A. Tyszyński, *Wiek Jana Kazimierza w głównych przedstawcach piśmiennych*, „Biblioteka Warszawska” 1871, vol. 3, p. 65.

⁴⁶ S. Starovolscius, *Polonia*, Sumptibus C. Bunonis, Wolferbyti 1656, p. 1. The book was first published in Cologne, in 1632, cfr. K. Estreicher, *Bibliografia polska*, Kraków 1933, vol. 29 (III, 18), p. 200. Polish edition: Sz. Starowolski, *Polska albo opisanie położenia Krolestwa Polskiego* [...], A. Piskadlo (transl., introduction), Krakow 1976.

⁴⁷ S. Starovolscius, *De claris oratoribus Sarmatiae*, Florentiae 1628. Translation into Polish: Sz. Starowolski, *O znakomitych ...*; S. Starovolscius, *Sarmatiae Bellatores*, Apud H. Crithium, Coloniae Agrippinae 1631. Polish edition: Sz. Starowolski, *Wojownicy sarmaccy*, J. Starnawski (transl., introduction), Warszawa 1978.

⁴⁸ G. Brogi Bercoff, „Polonia culta”: Szymon Starowolski i nowy wizerunek narodu, J. Borawski (transl.), „Pamiętnik Literacki” 87/2 (1987), p. 15–17.

⁴⁹ Sz. Starowolski, *Reformacya obyczajow polskich* [...], K. J. Turowski (ed.), Krakow 1859, p. 43–44. This event is referred to in: F. Bielak, *Wstęp*, in: Sz. Starowolski, *Setnik pisarzy polskich* [...], J. Starnawski (transl.), F. Bielak J. Starnawski (ed.), Krakow 1970, p. 7; F. Bielak, *Działalność ...*, vol. 5, fasc. 1, p. 205–206.

⁵⁰ S. Starovolscius, *Monumenta Sarmatarum Beatae Aeternitati adscriptorum*, In Officina Viduae et Haeredum Francisci Caesarii [...], Cracoviae 1655.

⁵¹ See: <http://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=324523&from=publication&showContent=true>

or

http://kpbc.umk.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=27036&from=&dirids=1&ver_id=&lp=1&QI.

in the honour of Starowolski, prepared by Mikolaj Zorawski⁵². However, this copy lacks the work entitled *Mnemosynon* by Jan Racki, a rector of the Academy of Krakow; epigrams prepared by professors of that university, namely Piotr Mucharski and Sebastian Stryewicz and by Carmelite Elisha; and, finally, printing authorisations (*Approbationes*)⁵³. All these texts can be found in the edition entitled *Viam universae carnis Ingressorum* on pages marked B⁵⁴. However, the layout of the copy made available by the Jagiellonian Digital Library contradicts the hypothesis formulated here⁵⁵. As was noted, that copy has an alternative heading, but all these texts can be found in the introduction to the collection⁵⁶.

One could be tempted to conclude that the change on the title page must have appeared suddenly, perhaps as soon as during the printing process. The version with the subtitle *Beatae Aeternitati adscriptorum* is most probably the original version. This is indicated by the internal criteria of the collection. Starowolski uses a paraphrase of this expression as early as in the first words of the introduction, which can be found in all the existing editions of the collection⁵⁷. He subsequently uses this expression in the eulogy that is part of the *Ad lectorem* letter⁵⁸. The other of the existing solutions is not found in any of the introductory texts at all. However, it can be found at the beginning of the collection proper, i.e. part C of the book, where the author consistently corrects the heading, in the same way as on the title page⁵⁹.

This variation in the subtitle may have been a result of censors' opinions or advice from the first readers, or the author's idea. It cannot be ruled out that the author made the change for theological reasons. After all, the original expression is imprecise from the perspective of Catholic theology. The variant of the expression 'Monumenta nostrorum Sarmatarum, in Beatorum Quiritum numerum adscriptorum' (the gravestones of our Sarmatians, added to the number of the blessed Quirites), which is used in the introduction, raises no doubts, especially in combination with the authors arguments. The replacement of the deceased Romans with the words 'beata aeternitas' (the blessed eternity) makes the meaning of the entire expression complicated. It can then be translated as 'the gravestones of Sarmatians recognised⁶⁰ as the blessed eternity'. Although the Catholic Church never decides to condemn anybody, it sometimes declares certain people to be saint, thus pronouncing their salvation. However, such a decision must be preceded by a thorough examination and the conduct of the canonisation process. In his subtitle, Starowolski extends the judgement on sanctity and salvation to all those people whose gravestone inscriptions are contained in his work. This may seem inappropriate, especially because the purgatory and posthumous punishment doctrine was a matter of controversy between religions at the time of Starowolski, and its orthodox form had been dogmatised only a hundred years before, during the last session of the Council of Trent⁶¹. It was somehow despite all the possible accusations from theologians that the author modified the subtitle to include an expression taken from the greatest religious authority, namely the Bible. The 'viam universae carnis ingredi' expression can be found in some codes of the Book of Joshua of the old Vulgate⁶². It can also be found in mediaeval texts and liturgical books⁶³. How this expression should be understood is explained in simple terms by Antoine Augustin Calmet, in his *Dictionarium*, using these words:

⁵² Cfr. *Ibidem*.

⁵³ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁴ S. Starovolsci, *Monumenta ... (Viam ...)*, c. B *recto* – B2 *verso*.

⁵⁵ See: <http://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=324523&from=publication&showContent=true>.

⁵⁶ See: <http://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=324523&from=publication&showContent=true>.

⁵⁷ S. Starovolsci, *Praefatio*, in: *Monumenta ... (Viam ...)*, c. A2 *recto*; *Monumenta ... (Beatae ...* – item: NDIGSTDR015650), c. A2 *recto*; *Monumenta ... (Beatae ...* – item: Pol.7.III.1151), c. A2 *recto*.

⁵⁸ S. Starovolsci, *Ad lectorem*, in: *Monumenta ... (Viam ...)*, (page numbers missing).

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 1. The alternative expression, which is used in other versions on the title page, is also the opening expression of part C of the collection, cfr. S. Starovolsci, *Monumenta ... (Beatae ...)*, p. 1.

⁶⁰ Literally meaning: 'entered', 'added'.

⁶¹ In the conclusion of the discussion on justification, the view that purgatory did exist, a view formulated by the Council of Florence, was maintained. All those with different views were excommunicated. These beliefs were subsequently confirmed during meetings of the twenty-fifth session, at which the Catholic Church formulated its final teaching on life after death. Cfr. J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, Apud. A. Zatta, Venetiis 1798, vol. 33, col. 43; vol. 33, col. 170-171.

⁶² (*Biblia Sacra Vulgata*) Ios 23,14. Different versions of the text in the place indicated were presented in: *Variae lectiones Vulgatae Latinae Bibliorum* [...], C. Vercellone (dig.), Apud I. Spithover, Romae 1864, vol. 2, p. 75.

⁶³ Cfr. e.g. Eckerhardus Decanus Sancti Galli, *De vita beati Notkeri Balbuli monachi*, in: *Thesaurus monumentorum ecclesiasticorum et historicorum sive Henrici Canisii lectiones antiquae* [...], J. Basnage (praef. animadv. criticas et c. adiecit), Apud R. et G. Wetstenios, Amstelaedami 1725, vol. 3, part 2, p. 574; *Ordo*

[...] *viam omnis carnis ingredi: est mori et sepeliri*⁶⁴.

Considering the meanings of the individuals phrases in the text, the whole text taken from the title page could be translated as

MONUMENTS
OF SARMATIANS,
who went the way of all flesh
Collected by
SZYMON STAROWOLSKI
a canon and cantor from Tarnow

When we realise that the change to the subtitle was made in the year of the death of the author, it cannot be ruled out that Starowolski, an old person at that time, gained a better understanding of the words by Joshua, who was leaving his people, and used the words in a work which, as Mikołaj Zorawski's epigram indicates, was to become his own epitaph⁶⁵. For the baroque writer who saw his country ravaged by war, the elements indicating the human 'vanitas' were most probably very appealing and the corrected heading was undoubtedly a reference to that idea.

Chronology and obtaining sources

In both existing versions of the work, the page title clearly states that the collection was published in 1655, that is a few or a dozen or so months before the author died. Both the form of the subtitle must have been changed and the book must have been printed in the first semester of that year. A certain degree of clarity on this point is provided by the already mentioned printing authorisations (*approbationes*), which can be found in the part B of the book, where the pages are not numbered. One of the authorisations, prepared by Hyacinth Liberius, a provost for canons regular and a censor, was issued on 3 March⁶⁶. Another one, by Gabriel Ochocki, a rector of the Academy of Krakow, was dated 23 January 1655⁶⁷. It would be no surprise if Starowolski had not included, in his work, an epitaph of Jan Baptysta Zamojski, a bishop of the diocese of Lutsk, who - according to historians and a note by Starowolski himself - died on his way to the town of Bilgoraj on 1 January of the same year⁶⁸. This means that not a full month passed before the death of the hierarch and the publication of the last of the afore-mentioned reviews. Importantly, a gravestone was hardly ever placed on the grave on the day of the burial. It took some time to make a gravestone, especially if the person buried had died suddenly, as in this particular case. Also, the censor of the book took his time to read it before issuing an authorisation for it to be published. The question then arises whether it is possible for an inscription to commemorate the bishop to have been made in such a short time. Also, it did not take long for it to be written down and handed over to the author of the collection, who - with no sluggishness - included it in the collection and delivered to reviewers. Of course, the inscription may have been made while the bishop was still alive, and after he died, only details of his death were added to it. It cannot be ruled out that Starowolski even attended the funeral or that he received a letter with information about lacunas in the text of epigraph having been filled in. This hypothesis might be regarded to be true, as the diocesan ordinary of Vlachia consecrated the church on 18 November 1637, and the place itself became a mausoleum of his family⁶⁹. However, what contradicts this hypothesis is the text of the epitaph, which indicates that the person was a bishop for Bakowa⁷⁰, Przemysl and Lutsk⁷¹. He had taken

qualiter agendum sit, quando quis ingreditur viam universae carnis, in: *De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus* [...], E. Martene (coll. et exorn.), Typis J. B. de la Bry, Antverpiae 1736, vol. 2, col. 1082-1083.

⁶⁴ A. Calmet OSB, *Dictionarium historicum, criticum, chronologicum, geographicum et litterale Sacrae Scripturae* [...], E Gallico in Latinum transt. J. D. Mansi, Sumptibus I. Adami et F. Antonii Veith Fratrum Bibliopolarum, Augustae Vindelicorum 1759, vol. 2, p. 503.

⁶⁵ N. Zorawski, *In Authorem epigramma*, w: S. Starovolsci, *Monumenta ... (Viam ...)*, (page numbers missing).

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, c. B2 verso. See:

http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/fs1/object/display/bsb10635860_00020.html.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁸ S. Starovolsci, *Monumenta ...*, p. 639. K. R. Prokop, *Sylwetki biskupow luckich*, Bialy Dunajec – Ostrog 2001, p. 1-2-103.

⁶⁹ Cfr. B. Kaczorowski, *Swiatynie Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa/Struga – Krakow 1987, p. 145; A. Kedziora, *Kolegiata zamojska*, Warszawa 1988, p. 8.

⁷⁰ Today it is Bacau in Romania.

⁷¹ S. Starovolsci, *Monumenta ...*, p. 639.

charge of Przemyśl and Lutsk in 1649 and 1654, respectively, which was a long time before the church was consecrated and shortly before his death⁷².

The doubts are even greater if one looks at the 'S.S.' letters under the text of the inscription. One might think that the letters refer to Szymon Szymonowicz, who had been buried in the collegiate church of Zamosć and also honoured with a gravestone inscription and whose death in 1692 is sometimes regarded as the end of the Renaissance in Poland⁷³. However, the poet would most probably have prepared a rhyming epitaph and, as was emphasised, the 'cursus honorum' of a bishop goes beyond the times in which the author of *Sielanki* lived. Finally, the form of the epitaph represents baroque tendencies. The abbreviation under the inscription dedicated to Jan Baptysta Zamojski is, therefore, rather a short version of the first name and surname of Starowolski himself. Ignacy Lewandowski confirms that the *Monumenta Sarmatarum* collection contains texts written by the Krakow polymath and that these texts are signed with the writer's acronym⁷⁴. This belief is also confirmed by what can be concluded from an analysis of the text of the collection itself. In the preface to Kazimierz Proczynski, a parish priest from the town of Iwanowice near Krakow, the author mentions that he had originally intended to dedicate the work to Stefan Zoltowski, who was their friend. The latter, however, had died before the collection was published⁷⁵. The collection contains a gravestone inscription for the deceased monk. It is accompanied by the afore-mentioned 'S.S.' abbreviation and a 'amicus ex asse' gloss⁷⁶. As Konstanty Hozzowski notes, the latter expression is not found in almost any Latin texts written by 17th-century Poles, except for Starowolski's. And Starowolski used the gloss to describe his deep friendship with someone⁷⁷. While this expression should have antique provenance, it is a rare one. The hidden substance of the expression is explained, at the time of the Krakow canon, by Albert Le Roy. In his Latin explication, he uses a hendiadys and explains that 'ex asse' means "in absolute integrity" (ex toto et integre), or - in other words - 'deeply' (penitus)⁷⁸. The whole expression could thus be translated as 'a friend in everything' or 'a friend in every way'. All things considered, there is no doubt that it is Starowolski who is the author of the text for Zoltowski and that the letters 'S.S.' stand for Starowolski himself. If this is so, he is also the author of the gravestone inscription for Bishop Jan Baptysta Zamojski.

The fact that Starowolski was asked to prepare gravestone inscriptions for his friends should not be surprising. The author was known for his previous works dedicated to some remarkable Poles. Moreover, by copying epigraphs from church walls, he must have met some local clergymen and notables. Being an expert on form, he was asked for gravestone texts⁷⁹. And, at this point, it appears that the epitaph of Bishop Jan Zamojski travelled the opposite way as compared to the other texts in the collection. Most of the text were transferred from gravestones to the pages of the book, whereas the epitaph was prepared by Starowolski and included directly in the collection. The question to be answered is whether the epitaph was carved in stone. Earlier works confirm that the hierarch was buried in Zamosć and his gravestone showed an inscription from *Monumenta Sarmatarum*⁸⁰. However, in his modern description of the bishop, Krzysztof Rafał Prokop claims that the burial place of the ordinary of Lutsk was not clearly identified⁸¹.

Thus if the inscription for the bishop was prepared by Starowolski himself, it is also possible that the text was included in the collection soon after the death of Jan Baptysta Zamojski and the entire collection was handed over to a censor for approval. The printer did his job most probably in February or, at the latest, in March 1655. Considering all this, one could hardly agree with the claim by Franciszek Bielak that the work

⁷² K. R. Prokop, *Sylwetki* ..., p. 102-103.

⁷³ S. Starowolski, *Monumenta* ..., p. 642.

⁷⁴ I. Lewandowski, *Wstęp* ..., s. XLVII.

⁷⁵ S. Starowolski, *Reverendo viro. D. Casimiro Proczynski* [...], in: *Monumenta* ... (*Viam* ...), c. A2 recto.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 687.

⁷⁷ K. Hozzowski, *Obraz zycia i zaslug opatow mogilskich*, W drukarni Uniwersytetu Jagiellonskiego, Krakow 1867, p. 174.

⁷⁸ A. Le Roy, [Annotation] 346, in: P. Scholirius, *Sermonum familiarium libri III* [...], Typis Basilicis, Hermopoli 1683, p. 64. This expression can also be used in other combinations, e.g. *heres ex asse, doctus ex asse*. The author of this edition adds that this expression also refers to weight measurement. As the Roman weight unit of *as* was equal to 12 *uncias* (or Roman ounces), it was regarded as something perfect and complete. The fact that number 12 was perceived as the perfect number is also confirmed by Piotr Bongo, in his book, cfr. P. Bungus, *Numerorum misteria* [...], Apud M. Sonnum, Lutetiae Parisiorum 1618, p. 386-398.

⁷⁹ The collection contains 35 pieces signed with Starowolski's initials. Cfr. P. Szydłowski, *Elementy* ..., p. 114.

⁸⁰ S. Baracz, *Rys dziejow Zakonu Kaznodziejskiego w Polsce*, Nakladem W. Manieckiego, Lwow 1861, vol. 2, p. 60-61; G. Schmidt, *Romano-Catholici per Moldaviam Episcopatus et rei Romano-Catholicae res gestae*, Typis Societatis Typographicae „Athenaeum”, Budapestini 1887; p. 78-79.

⁸¹ K. R. Prokop, *Sylwetki* ..., p. 103.

was published in early 1655⁸². Moreover, he claims that the work may have been finished before the cantor from Tarnow left for Italy in 1652⁸³. The scholar must have been influenced by the information contained in the preface to *Breviarium iuris pontifici*, where Starowolski writes, in 1653, that the epigraphic collection had already been completed and was awaiting publication⁸⁴. The contemporary scholar failed to notice that certain additions had been made to the collection, and the printing authorisation issued by Liberius has a date falling on a day in early March 1655. The description of the canon's scholarly activities contains one more piece of information concerning the chronology of this edition of the work. As Bielak notes, in March of the same year, Starowolski was conferred the rank of a canon of Krakow⁸⁵. This is something that can be believed, unlike the 19th-century sources, where it was presumed that it had happened much earlier⁸⁶. If that had been the case, the conferment of the rank would certainly have been recorded on the title page of the book. However, the title page still refers to the writer as a cantor of Tarnow. It can therefore be assumed that the conferment of the new rank coincided with the finishing work on the edition of *Monumenta Sarmatarum*.

On new beginnings as the conclusion

The only several points addressed in this study show that despite the passage of time, the collection of gravestone inscriptions disseminated under the name of Szymon Starowolski is still an interesting research subject. There are still many problems to be researched, such as the methods that the author of the collection employed to obtain the epigraph he was interested in or his journeys across the country, or the layout of the material, the genological typology of the texts, regional preferences regarding ways to commemorate the deceased, funeral topics, as well as the composition and elocutionary layers of the texts. The present discussion aimed to contribute to further research in literary studies, challenging certain established arguments and showing new ways of exploration. Contrary to the critical opinions referred to at the beginning of this article and concerning the book, one must admit that the canon of Krakow worked very hard to prepare the collection. Importantly, what deserves appreciation in this hard work is not only the idea itself, which was never a point of disagreement, but also the form of the collection. Contrary to popular belief, it turns out that in regard of the several problems addressed in this discussion, the author of the collection shows himself to be not only non-superficial, but also inquisitive. In his introductory texts, he refers to the monuments collected as eulogies or epitaphs. However, these words do not appear in the heading for the collection. It is perhaps because, firstly, he uses the words in broad meanings and, secondly, they were terms of Greek provenance that were used to describe specific literary genres. Thus he gave the work a title in which he used originally Latin, meaningful terms, not hesitating to modify the expression to make it more correct in theological terms and more meaningful. In this case, it can be said that the author not only prepared the book for publication, but also did what is known as author's revision. After all, he arranged for the collection to be published by a company famous for its editorial diligence. Also, the brief analysis of the chronology of the preparation of the book reveals the need for more in-depth research into this subject. Although the title page of the book shows the year of publication, not all the texts in the collection are epigraphic monuments. Some of them, prepared by Starowolski himself, travelled the opposite way as compared to the inscriptions. They were published first and placed on gravestones later. This seems to be a feature of not only the collection itself, but the Krakow polymath as well. After all, in his generation, there were no literary critics who were not writers at the same time. Starowolski shows himself as a good example of a baroque scholar, researcher and author, all at the same time. To conclude, it can be said that further, modern research into other aspects of the *Monumenta Sarmatarum* will provide new knowledge, as has been the case with the aspects discussed in this article. Today, when the practical side of literature is going through a period of renaissance, it would be truly advisable for the work to become a subject of research not only for historians and researchers studying social relations, as has been the case so far, but for literary scholars above all.

II. SUMMARY

Szymon Starowolski and his collection of epigraphs

Monumenta Sarmatarum is Poland's first collection of funerary inscriptions, compiled by Szymon Starowolski and published in Krakow in 1655. This collection has always been appreciated as a valued source material by historians. It has also been the subject of analyses by researchers specialising in religious studies and the history of social relations. However, in the field of literary studies, it has been researched to a limited extent only. The reason for this was the lack of approval, at that time, of work that can be referred to as 'utility work'

⁸² F. Bielak, *Dzialalnosc ...*, vol. 5, fasc. 1, p. 224.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, vol. 5, fasc. 1, p. 281.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, vol. 5, fasc. 1, p. 278.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, vol. 5, fasc. 1, p. 224.

⁸⁶ A. Tyszyński, *Wiek ...*, vol. 3, p. 64.

and the fact that the scholars of the 19th century thought that all of Starowolski's work, including his epigraphic collection, lacked care and was full of mistakes. These beliefs are, however, contradicted by the results of the limited research discussed here. The research shows that the author of *Monumenta Sarmatarum* put a great effort not only in finding the source materials, but also in preparing these materials for publication. Special care is seen in the choice of language, the use of Latin terminology and the visual preparation of the publication. An analysis of the chronology of the texts has revealed that *Monumenta Sarmatarum* contains not only epigraphic work, but also commemorative elogia prepared by Starowolski himself. Finally, the research study discussed here, which covered only a few problems, has shown that *Monumenta Sarmatarum* should be the subject of more extensive research work in the field of literary studies.

Keywords: Szymon Starowolski, Poland's first epigraphic collection, funerary inscriptions, Baroque funeral literature, Poles' graves in the 16th and 17th centuries

Jarosław Nowaszczuk" Szymon Starowolski and his collection of epigraphs.IOSR Journal of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS). vol. 23 no. 07, 2018, pp. 29-39.