

Travels of Leszno residents in the 17th and 18th centuries

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ABSTRACT The paper discusses travels of selected residents of the town of Leszno in 17th-century and 18th-century Poland in the social, cultural and religious context. Leszno, a town in western Poland, was inhabited by religious refugees from Silesia, Bohemia, Moravia, German duchies and Scotland. The refugees together with the local population formed a multicultural, multid denominational and multilingual community. The origins of the majority of Leszno residents also determined their attitudes toward travelling. The article discusses selected examples of foreign trips taken by Leszno residents on the basis of published travelogues in view of travelling purposes (education, business, diplomatic missions, money collections). In particular it focuses on the travels of Jan Jonston, Adam Samuel Hartmann and Daniel Vetter. Their trips were well documented and the sources show the Leszno residents as conscious travelers. The article is a review paper and indicates the need of further research.

KEY WORDS travel, Leszno (Poland), 17th century, 18th century.

The 17th century and the 18th century constitute a period in Poland and elsewhere that witnessed a growing popularity of travelling that can be regarded as forms of tourism, i.e. trips for various learning, health and recreational purposes. Along the rising prosperity and level of education of some social classes, curiosity of the surrounding world and the need to visit faraway places developed as well. This development was a long-lasting process of various intensity. In Poland, a large part of population, especially the gentry, expressed specific views connected with the Polish ethos of national struggle, political independence and religious freedom – all coupled with strong Roman Catholicism. Negative features of this ideology included xenophobia and infatuation with one's own culture and traditions. The Polish landed gentry extolled rural life and often expressed no need to see the world outside their own country. A common opinion in 17th-century Poland was that Western Europe had nothing to offer to the Poles [1]. Such views were not, however, commonly held by the magnates and some groups of aristocratic youth. The proponents of development of contacts with foreign lands were – especially in the second half of the 18th century – magnates' wives and affluent noblewomen, who craved for lavish costumes, good literature and sophisticated pastimes.

Foreign influences were visible in the western and northern frontiers of Poland. The development of a distinctive urban culture in those areas was mainly influenced by the proximity of foreign cultural patterns, business exchanges and transfers of information. A significant role in this process was played by religious immigration, in particular during the

Thirty Years' War, and the settlement of Czech and German Protestant refugees (Lutherans, Calvinists, Bohemian Brethren) in Polish cities. The strong economic position of these cities as well as the religious, linguistic and customary distinctiveness of their inhabitants became a cultural counterbalance to the traditional models of Polish noblemen. One of such distinctive centers was Leszno – a city in western Poland. Leszno was founded in 1547 and reached its heyday in the first half of the 17th century, following the influx of religious refugees from Bohemia, Silesia and Germany as well as individual settlers from Scotland and Hungary. Thanks to the acceptance of these newcomers by the town proprietors – the Leszczyński family – the town soon became a leading cultural, religious and scholarly center [2]. Within two centuries, the Leszczyńscy became a formidable magnate family. It cultivated the image of an enlightened, cultured, well-mannered and Eurocentric family. The greatest achievement in the family's political career was the coronation of Stanisław Leszczyński as King of Poland. The Leszno proprietors' open-mindedness, religious toleration and approval for scientific endeavors were exemplary, and many town residents regarded them as role models. The contacts of the Leszczyńscy with Europe were mostly of educational and political character, but they also involved some typically tourist activities.

Members of the Leszczyński family studied at German, Swiss, Dutch and Italian universities. A renowned Polish politician, parliamentarian, and province governor Rafał Leszczyński (1579-1636) [3] studied in Heidelberg, Strasbourg and Basel, and then spent five years in France, the

Netherlands, England and Italy where he was tutored in Padua by Galileo. Rafał Leszczyński's sons pursued their college education in Frankfurt am Oder, Leipzig and Geneva. The governor's younger son Bogusław (c. 1612-1659), who would later become the landlord of the family estates [4], went on a four-year journey combining studies and sight-seeing, accompanied by his private tutor Jan Jonston. He visited Holland, England, France and Italy. Also Stanisław Leszczyński in his teens was sent on a two-year journey to Germany, Italy, France and the Netherlands. His visits to a number of European royal courts were regarded as an important component of his political education. The future King of Poland visited Vienna and then was received by Grand Duke Cosimo III de' Medici in Florence, Pope Innocent XII in Rome and Louis XIV in Versailles [5].

High offices of the state held Polish noblemen also involved diplomatic missions to foreign countries. One of the Leszczyński family members, Grand Treasurer of the Crown Rafał Leszczyński (1650-1703) went on a mission to Turkey in 1700. His 500-member cortege undertook the journey to Istanbul away from the busy trade routes of the time, risking attacks from Nogai Horde Tartars from the Black Sea steppes. Travels to the Balkans off the contemporary tourist routes were particularly dangerous. Most well-travelled routes went through present-day Ukraine (Lvov, Mariampol, Sniatyn) and Romania (Iasi). The diplomats spent most of their time sightseeing in Istanbul. Rafał Leszczyński divided his time between diplomatic duties and excursions to the Black Sea and the Island of Heybeliada. He admired the Maurimonts monastery and made two visits to Hagia Sophia. On his way back to Poland he visited the fortress of Kamieniec Podolski abandoned by the Turks, in present-day Ukraine [6].

The sources related to the subsequent proprietors of Leszno – the Sułkowski family – provide a far greater deal of information about their travels, in particular, about the educational trips of Aleksander Józef Sułkowski's sons [7]. The documents reveal the complexity of problems with trip preparation, e.g. high costs, supplies. These problems affected even the most affluent of Polish magnates. Aleksander Józef Sułkowski attached great importance to his children's education. Before they were sent to Western Europe the boys had been given special instructions prepared by their father which emphasized the noble aims of such trips. The boys were supposed to acquire knowledge they would have never gained by way of traditional education. They were advised to behave properly, avoid gambling, spend money reasonably, keep strangers at arm's length as well as keep detailed diaries of their experiences. August and Aleksander Sułkowski spent most of their time abroad in Rome and Paris. They also visited Brno, Vienna, Venice, Bologna, Ancona, Naples, Florence, Modena, Reggio, Piacenza, Cremona, Milan, Turin, Grenoble, Avignon, Marseilles, Toulon, Lyon, Calais, Dunkirk, cities in England, Ostend, Bruges, Ghent, Lille, Amsterdam, Brussels, Aachen, Cologne, Bonn, Coblenz, Mainz, Frankfurt, Mannheim, Strasbourg, Luneville, Stuttgart, Augsburg, Munich, Regensburg, Prague and Dresden. The young magnates' diaries reveal that the boys' most interesting experience was their journey through France. On the other hand, they complained about Italy, mostly because of the weather. They were unimpressed

by Venice and spent a carnival in Bologna. Although their itinerary included numerous visits and receptions, e.g. an audience with Benedict XIV and a visit to the Royal Court at Turin, the boys remembered best their stay in Paris. They observed that Parisians made their living off foreigners. The costs of the boys' education and clothes during their three-and-a-half month stay in Paris led to their father's dissatisfaction. A comfort to the young men's studying hardships were their visits to Versailles, hunting trips in Fontainebleau, and, in particular, their stay in Luneville.

Like the nobles, also Polish burghers sent their children abroad. A number of Leszno citizens could afford trips as well as college studies for their sons abroad [8]. Students from Leszno studied mostly at the academies in Frankfurt am Oder (150 students) and Leipzig (58) – chosen most often due to their proximity to Leszno – as well as in German universities in Wittenberg (35), Königsberg (23), Jena (21), Berlin (8), Göttingen (7) and Halle (6). Some also attended Calvinist academies in Leyden (44), Groningen (6), Basel (3), Franeker (3) and Utrecht (1). College studies abroad enjoyed much greater popularity among prospective clergymen than craftsmen. After graduation boys from more affluent families went on tourist trips. The routes were usually chosen according to denominational preferences. Leszno Lutherans usually went to the Netherlands, although some of them ventured into France; while Reformed Evangelicals most often studied in the Netherlands or at Swiss academies and then after graduation they visited England.

The Bohemian Brethren, being the most significant contributors to the character of Leszno Protestant community, also made foreign trips themselves. The leader of the Unity of the Brethren, Jan Amos Comenius (1592-1670), was particularly prolific in making foreign travels. During his residence in Leszno between 1628 and 1656 Comenius traveled many times to cities of Sweden, England and Transylvania (Hungary). He had earlier made study trips to the German universities in Heidelberg and Herborn and to Amsterdam. Like many indigent students Comenius had travelled to Herborn on foot.

A stay abroad was often eventful and had far-reaching consequences, not only for the traveler but also his family members. Visits to foreign lands shaped one's views of the world, passions and interests. A case in point can be Carl Gottfried Woide (1725-1790) [10], who went on a political mission to Britain after having received holy orders. He then brought his wife to London and dedicated himself to scientific research. In 1782 he started working for the British Museum, where he studied Egyptian antiquities.

Young physicians from Leszno also made frequent trips abroad. Having attained their degrees in medicine, Caspar Gottfried Goldammer (1673-1700) and Johann Daniel Arnold (1671-1709) went on a trip to England [11]. In the years 1668-1671, Elias Nitschke (1645-1711), the future court physician to Rafał Leszczyński, visited Leyden, Amsterdam, London, Oxford, Ghent, Bruges, Antwerp, Brussels, Copenhagen and Berlin [11, p. 155]. His son Elias Gottfried (1676-1718) was sent to Kraków after his graduation to acquire proficiency in the Polish language, and later to Western Europe [12]. Gottfried visited many German and Dutch cities. After studying for a long time in Leyden he attained the doc-

toral degree in medicine in 1700. On his way back, Nischke visited Strasburg, southern Germany, Vienna and Bohemia.

Young craftsmen from Leszno traveled abroad much less extensively. Daniel Zugehör (1660-1729), a son of a powder house proprietor, was sent to the Netherlands and England for professional training to be able to inherit the family business in the future [13]. For three years Daniel Zugehör visited powder houses in Danzig, Hamburg, Horn and other cities. He also visited Leyden and Kronstadt and took a trip from Rotterdam to England, where he stayed in London, Oxford and Westminster and became infatuated with English libraries. The Zugehørs were affluent and many family members could afford long and expensive journeys. One of Daniel Zugehör's relatives, Samuel Zugehör (1701-1749), also made trips to foreign countries, getting as far as Lisbon.

Travelling served a form of employment, especially for private tutors. For example, a famous Polish polymath, Jan Jonston (1603-1675) [14], the tutor to the Leszczyński family, went on a number of foreign trips with his pupils in the years 1628-1631. They visited Frankfurt, Leipzig, Wittenberg, Magdeburg, Berlin, Hamburg, Leyden, southern Netherlands, Zealand, Vlissingen, Mittelburg, London and Cambridge. On their way back they explored Denmark and the Baltic coast. In 1632 Jonston accompanied Bogusław Leszczyński on another journey via Frankfurt to Franeker and Leyden where they stayed until May 1634. On Rafał Leszczyński's request the travelers went to Dordrecht and Harderwijk to examine the minting and assaying equipment there. Then they went to England where apart from regular tourist destinations (London, Oxford, Cambridge) they also paid visits to some seaside resorts, e.g. Bath, Bristol and New Salisbury. From Dover they sailed back to France, and before reaching Paris they explored Flanders and Brabant. They travelled to Leuven, where Jonston met Eric Putean, via Calais, Ostend, Bruges, Brussels and Antwerp. After a winter in Paris, the travelers explored southern France and visited Orleans, Blois, Tours, followed the Loire to Saumur and then to Angers, La Rochelle and Bordeaux. In Languedoc and Provence they admired historical buildings from the Roman times and other historical monuments, all of which left a long-lasting impression on them. In Agen, Jonston visited the tomb of Renaissance scholar, Julius Caesar Scaliger. He also saw Montauban, Toulouse, Carcassonne, Lesignan, Narbonne, Beziers and Montpellier. Jonston was thrilled to have seen the Arena of Nimes, Temple of Diane as well as the nearby remnants of the Roman aqueduct Pont du Gard. Before they reached Italy the Leszczyńscy and Jonston explored Arles, Marseilles, Aix, Avignon, Orange and Valence. From Lyon then they travelled to Turin, admiring breathtaking views of Savoy, Cartheuer monastery or Montmelian castle as they crossed the Alps. En route to Genoa the travelers had an unpleasant encounter with local highwaymen. Naturally, their main Italian destination was Rome, which they reached on May 13, 1636. After a two-week stay in Rome the Leszczyńscy left for Naples via Sermonette, Piperini, and Capua. Naples and the area around it provided the travelers with a number of noteworthy attractions such as the ancient Caligula Bridge, Bajas baths and Tomb of Agrippina as well as Vesuvius and Solfatarata – the crater of an extinct volcano named Sybil's "hell". Having returned to Rome they went on a trip to Loretto,

Ancona, Pesara, Rimini, Bologna, Ferrara and Padua. Finally they reached Poland travelling through Carinthia, Austria, Moravia and Silesia.

Traveling was an inherent part of the trading profession in the 17th century. Although business trips of traders had little in common with tourism, they undoubtedly provided young trade apprentices with an extensive knowledge of the world and effective communications skills in a foreign environment. The Leszno traders were known for their mobility and enterprise. They had penetrated markets in Silesia, Germany, Russia, Turkey and even Persia. Since the 15th century they had frequented fairs in Leipzig. Many of them were Jewish traders [2, pp. 102-111].

A dire calamity that descended upon Leszno several times were fires. The rebuilding of churches, schools and the town hall was costly, and fundraisers were organized by Leszno Protestant parishes. The *Tagebuch* (Diary) [15] of Adam Samuel Hartmann, a clergyman from St. John's Church in Leszno, includes an extraordinary detailed report from the clergyman's long journey and collection abroad between May 15, 1657 and September 22, 1659. The route of Hartmann's fundraising trip passed through the towns of Silesia, Frankfurt, Hamburg onto the Netherlands. Between June and October, 1657 Hartmann visited Amsterdam, Breda and Antwerp. He then left Rotterdam for England where he spent more than a year interrupted with a trip to Paris, Rouen and St. Denis. Hartmann's diary is a detailed record of all the places he reached. Like many of his contemporary travelers he quoted inscriptions from churches he visited, included descriptions of the most interesting edifices, and wrote down his own impressions. Occasionally, he made comparisons between the visited churches and buildings with those he knew from Poland. The most interesting parts of his diary are Hartmann's descriptions of foreign customs, dress, food and living conditions. Considering its abundance of useful information, Hartmann's diary could be regarded as a fairly comprehensive practical tourist guide. For example, Hartmann recalls his high-quality accommodation in the Black Bear Inn in Rostock, in Amsterdam and in many places in the Netherlands. His stays in large European cities resulted not only in collecting offerings but also in written reports on excellent drinks, luxury goods, well-stocked bookstores, libraries and print works. Hartmann made extensive observations of the lives of burghers and country folk, their dress, occupations, dwellings and means of transportation. He was impressed by London – the world's greatest city of the time – and noted he had to take a carriage to cover some distances within the city.

The therapeutic qualities of mineral spas have been known for ages. It was however only in the 18th century that these qualities started to be used in therapy on a large scale. For the residents of Leszno the nearest health resorts were in the Karkonosze mountains to the south and they had been already visited by the Poles for some time. A few residents of Leszno attended health resorts, most notably Martin Zugehör (1578-1644) [16] and Jan Jonston, who spent some time in Cieplice. In 1748, Aleksander Józef Sułkowski recuperated in the Karkonosze spa resort of Carlsbad (present-day Czech Republic).

Finally, some Leszno residents set out on sea voyages. For the inland dwellers, the sea was a strange and danger-

ous environment. Sea voyages were perceived as hazardous, and sailors, mariners as well as sea merchants were regarded often as desperate persons. On the other hand, overseas voyages of diplomats and pilgrims were met with understanding. The common fear of death in the depths of the sea resulted not only from the enormity and mightiness of the sea but also from the imperfection of navigational instruments of the time and widespread activities of privateers. The most famous sea voyager from Leszno was a Czech, Daniel Vetter (1592-1669) [17]. After finishing his theological studies in Heidelberg and Leyden, Vetter settled in Leszno in 1620. In 1632 he managed a local printing house, and at the age of 21 he completed a bold expedition to Iceland. The fruit of his voyage was the first ever description of the island and its inhabitants in the Polish language titled *Islandia to jest opisanie wyspy...* (Iceland. A description of the island...) published in Leszno in 1638. The book is not a traveler's diary but rather a comprehensive monograph on Iceland, with a separate description of the sea voyage itself. The fourteen thematic chapters of the book provide readers with an orderly panorama of Icelanders' life starting with the explanation of the etymology of the island's name. This unusual text of the 48-page volume often stresses differences between life in the European mainland familiar to the author and the distant island in the far north.

In the long introduction to the book, which takes the form of a memoir, Vetter described his sea voyage on a merchant ship from Bremen and his route on the island. On their arduous voyage to the north the ship crew and passengers experienced a number of misadventures: meeting privateers, a storm, sea-sickness and death of two people. The destination was Helgafeld on the western coast of Iceland. On reaching it the travelers rented horses and went to attend a session of the Althing as well as to view Hekla from a safe distance. The following four days the travelers spent in Skalholt, where they were guests of an Icelandic bishop. As farewell gifts each trip participant received some Icelandic specialties: 20 ells of local cloth and two pairs of spoons made of sheep horn and whalebone. They were also given new horses and a guide who led them back to the port. Daniel Vetter noted that no one travelled in Iceland on foot but always with horses burdened with all the equipment necessary in the barren country with no roads or inns.

Vetter began his description of Iceland with the religious situation. He found it striking that Icelandic preachers used printed collections of sermons, which greatly facilitated their work. Vetter also described differences in services and outlined the structure of the Icelandic church. In his analysis of the political system in Iceland the author focused on the description of the parliament and the island's dependence on Denmark. Other chapters dealt with the natural environment and inhabitants of the island. Vetter pointed out such natural wonders as the polar day and night – unknown in central Europe – which determined the Icelandic lifestyle. He then described such physical features of Iceland as barren rocky landscapes, terrifying volcanoes, bogs and desolate plains. The inhospitable interior of the island, deprived of woodlands and vegetation, was affected by fierce winds, snowstorms and bitter cold. He described Icelandic volcanoes, in particular, the fearsome Hekla, adding that the

people still vividly remembered its last eruption in 1613. Another Icelandic peculiarity noted by Vetter was the abundance of fish and large marine mammals, that provided Icelanders with food, fat, skins, as well as the lack of small land mammals. These conditions, in Vetter's view, influenced the Icelanders' lifestyle, in particular, their daily diet dominated by fish, mutton and beef. Vetter found Icelandic food tasteless. He complained about the bland diet, lack of bread and poultry. He also observed that the islanders used wind drying for food preservation, and washed their clothes in hot springs without soap, for which they also had many other uses. Vetter appreciated the construction of spacious Icelandic huts, partially sunk into the ground with their roofs covered with turf, which ensured warmth and relative comfort to the dwellers. Vetter's stay in Iceland was too short to make any detailed observations of Icelanders' daily life. He understood the hardships of the life in an inhospitable climate and pointed to a number of positive sides, e.g. the Icelanders knew no serfdom. In Vetter's opinion, the wholesome air in the island explained the absence of many diseases among the Icelanders and their longevity. Fishing, according to Vetter, was a light recreational activity. Most likely, Vetter drew this idyllic image of the island on the basis of his observations of his hosts, who represented the upper classes of Icelandic society. The noted peculiarities of Icelanders served in no way as the grounds of Vetter's valuation of their behaviors, but rather gained his acceptance and understanding.

The aforementioned travels of Leszno residents followed the typical travelling patterns of the 17th and 18th centuries [18]. Most of the journeys abroad were taken for a specific utilitarian purpose such as receiving a good education, accomplishment of a mission or doing professional business. Sightseeing and tourism were merely some extra activities on the way. By today's standards, the real tourists were only Vetter and Hartmann, who honestly displayed their curiosity of the world, and craved to gain the knowledge of places and people they visited. Finally, they were astute observers capable of objective assessments of facts, events and people. Sightseeing trips aimed at visiting specific places, gaining experiences unavailable back in one's own country as well as fulfilling dreams became more and more popular in the 18th century. Leszno residents such as Vetter, Woide or Zugehör had fully enjoyed these aspects of tourism earlier.

Considering the prevalent Polish attitudes discussed at the beginning of the paper, which served as a starting point for the endeavors of Leszno travelers, Daniel Vetter's *Islandya* is a favorable testimony of tolerance and open-mindedness, so rare in old Polish travelogues. In the same context, all the other reports of Leszno residents from their travels visibly stand out in the historical reality of Poland of the mentioned period.

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