

The image of Poland and Poles in the Dmitriads, from the British perspective *

BEATA CIESZYŃSKA

ORCID: 0000-0003-4577-1792

(Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz)

The role played by Poland, and the well-known stories of the Poles involved in the Dmitriads,¹ evoked an animated interest among the seventeenth-century British. Their perspective was, however, a view from a distant, Protestant and mercantile country. First and foremost, Poland represented the ‘Other’. Even when they were eyewitnesses to the tragic events in Moscow, those authors who were looking at those from the distance of the United Kingdom, would often overlook the details of Rzeczpospolita’s representatives’ involvement in the Dmitriads (varying in its successive stages). For this reason, it is more difficult to judge the degree of representativeness of the actions of Poles involved in the Dmitriads of the wider society. Hence the many generalisations and reductionist interpretations of Polish motivations and actions. From this point of view, for example, the actions of the Lisowczyks could easily represent the attitude of an average Polish nobleman. The hysterical anti-Catholicism and anti-Jesuitism, taking its toll on the British Isles throughout the entire seventeenth century, would only reinforce reductionist tendencies. If we add to this the danger that the Dmitriads represented in relation to trading with Russia, we will uncover the main characteristics of the image of Poland and the Poles in the texts analysed.

Interest in the Dmitriads and the role Poland played in them emerged in two types of texts: in reports of British eyewitnesses of the tragic events, that is mer-

* First printed as “Obrazy Polski i Polaków w Dymitriadach z perspektywy brytyjskiej”, in: *Napis* issue XII (2006), pp. 347-362.

1 For the most extensive Polish study on Dmitriads, see: A. Andrusiewicz: *Dzieje Dymitriad 1602-1614* [The history of Dymitriads 1602-1614], vol. 1: *Nadzieje i oczekiwania* [Hopes and expectations], vol. 2: *Na rozdrożu dziejów* [At a crossroads of history] (Warsaw: 1990).

chants and soldiers sojourning in Moscow and writing ‘to give testimony’, and in literature, for which Dmitriads quickly became a source of loosely collected and re-worked themes, used in interpretations (often distant from history itself) of the history of the British and of Europe.

The most extensive collection of British texts on the Moscow events was assembled in 1916 by Sonia Howe in *The False Dmitri: a Russian Romance and Tragedy*.² These texts are an interesting record of the calamity of the Moscow state and of foreigners staying there during the ‘Time of Troubles’ and usurpation of the successive Dmitris.³ A large proportion of the texts analysed here comes from the collection by Sonia Howes, completed by the poem *Locustus* by Fineas Fletcher and the anti-Jacobite tragedy *The Czar of Muscovy* by Mary Pix.

For the purposes of this article, British texts describing Poland’s involvement in the Dmitriads have been divided by genre and criteria of purpose. Direct reports are analysed separately, as are pieces of a more literary nature. This criterion is not, of course, infallible. In between these two extremities, we will find an eyewitness account of the Dmitriads (signed ‘J.F.’): *A Brief Historical Relation of the Empire of Russia*, from 1654, framed as an allegorical panegyric-appeal to Cromwell, in which a report is replaced by the poetics of a persuasive *exemplum*, spurring the Lord Protector on to intervene in the life of the discontented author. On the other hand, the saturation with aestheticism as an indicator of the literary works on the Dmitriads also offers some limitations. This is because, in the case of some of the texts it seems more reasonable to refer to a criterion of ‘aesthetic intent’ (Fletcher’s *Locustus*), or even of ‘unintended aestheticism’ (*News of the Present Miseries of Russia* by Henry Brereton).

THROUGH THE EYES OF A MERCHANT, THROUGH THE EYES OF A SOLDIER

The aforementioned reductionisms in the perception of the Polish attitude during the Dmitriads were also revealed in eyewitness reports from the Time of Troubles.

2 See: *The False Dmitri: a Russian Romance and Tragedy, Described by British Eye-Witnesse, 1604–1612. Reprints of Contemporary Reports...*, ed. with pref. by S.E. Howe (London: 1918) (edition featuring contemporary portraits).

3 Howe also reprinted the marriage contract of Dmitry and Marina (first English edition 1625), which confirmed the accusations made against Dmitry and Poland, particularly those of treating Russia instrumentally, as field for Jesuit expansion (cf. *ibid.*, p. VI). She also made the letters accompanying the Anglo-Russian relations of that time available to the English public. Among the collected letters, there is a diplomatic note addressed to Thomas Smith, James I’s special ambassador in Russia, dated July 1605, with information on Dmitry’s coming to the throne and an offer to continue good trade relations. Sir Thomas Smith described the final months of Godunov’s rule in *Voyage and Entertainment in Russia* (London: 1605).

This is relatively the least apparent in the earliest report from the first Dmitriad the British were introduced to. This was *Bloudie Tragedie*, a description which was not written by an Englishman, but adapted by William Russell, one of the English merchants working for the Dutch East India Company. Russell received it from a direct eyewitness of the events, a wealthy and influential Dutch merchant who miraculously survived the Moscow massacre in May 1606. Russell translated this letter-testimony and published it in London in 1607.⁴

There is a clear differentiation in the evaluations of the Poles in this text: a positive evaluation of Polish aristocrats when the merchant knew personally and a negative assessment of the Poles in general. If we were to take on the argument of Sonia Howe that Russell was the direct addressee of the Dutchman's letter, then some of his remarks would suggest he was accompanied by the Englishman's brother during the tragic events of the first Dmitriad in Moscow. Upon Dmitry's ascent to the throne, they both established contacts with Mniszech and received from him the portent of privileges.⁵ This relation points to the connection of these merchants with Polish affairs, which most definitely conditioned the aforementioned differences in evaluating Poles. The established ties with Mniszech led to the wealthy Dutchman referring to him with respect, calling him 'his Lord'.⁶ Descriptions of the wedding celebrations also reveal enormous fondness of the merchant for the newlyweds, especially for Marina. Marina also accompanies him later on, when he is sympathetically depicting the feelings of the Czarina, surprised by the tragic turn of events.

The Dutchman assessed the attitude of Poles as a society constituting a side in the conflict much more harshly than he did with respect to the Polish aristocracy.⁷ The author has no doubts about the fact that it was the alliance of Dmitry with Poland that contributed to his downfall. He recounted, with some disbelief, the accusations against Poles as unpunished violators, misappropriating the right to access the Czar, and quoted the condemnation declared over Dmitry's ashes with-

4 The original English print became the foundation for translations into other languages (cf. S. Howe, Introduction to *Bloudie Tragedie*, p. 27), including a late Polish translation – cf. *Wiadomość o krwawej a strasznej rzezi w mieście Moskwie, i okropny a żalotny koniec Dymitra, wielkiego księcia i cara moskiewskiego, przez Hollendra, naonczas w Moskwie barwiącego, w języku angielskim napisana i wydana w Londynie roku 1607, a teraz na język polski przetożona i pomnożona dodatkami wyjętymi ze zbiorów kórnickich*, transl. by L. Jagielski (Poznań: 1858).

5 See: S. Howe, p. 22; cf. *The Reporte of a Bloudie and Terrible Massacre in the City of Mosco, with the Fearfull and Tragical End of Demetrius the Last Duke, Before Him Raining at his Present* (London: 1607).

6 Cf. e.g.: *Bloudie Tragedie...*, in: S. Howe, p. 35.

7 See: *ibid.*, p. 57; The Dutchman believed that the plan to imprison the Poles to use them as hostages in the negotiations on the return of seized treasures was plotted by the Boyars long before the Mniszechs and their entourage arrived in Moscow (cf. *ibid.*, p. 43).

out much conviction. Ultimately, however, he did not see a reason why Divine Providence should watch over the Poles.⁸ The Dutchman was not entirely sure what to think of Dmitry, he did not see him as an usurper, and he did not therefore see Poles as troublemakers who placed an impostor on the throne of Moscow. On the other hand, Dmitry's origin did not appear as fundamental to him. This is because, in his opinion, Dmitry could have kept the crown had he not come close with the Poles, but instead he 'adopted' the Russian tradition, married a Russian woman, and most of all, rejected the demands of 'murderous Polish Jesuits':

» I am of opinion, if he had borne himselfe more mildely, without thought meddling with the Poles, and matched with some Lady of the countrey, applying him selfe to their humor, though he had beene baser then a punch-fed Monke, yet might he have kept the Crowne on his head: but I believe that the Pope, with his Seminaries, and Jesuites, were a principal cause of his ruine, and totall subversion. For these murderers of Princes would needs have made a Monke, too quickly, and they as suddenly light within the Bee hive. It is pittie that their heads, were no better saven, but they were transformed, too cunningly in to secular habit: such maskers, never paint themselves lightly, but in greene.⁹

The essence of the Dutch merchant's view of Poles seems to be his conviction that he is expressing the opinion of God, who did not help the Polish army during the Moscow massacre, even though, with some better tactics, it could have fought much more effectively than the Russians. Therefore, both God and the author of the report decided that the Poles did not deserve this help, because there was no good in them, but 'evil, the same as in the Russians'.¹⁰ As a merchant, the Dutchman understood the striving of Poles from Dmitry's circle for status and material wealth. He condemned, however, the immorality of these endeavours, as well as the provoking of dangerous unrest and the pro-Jesuit attitude. His perspective, as a trader and Protestant, was in full agreement with the British perspective, reinforcing a negative view of Poles in the British Isles.

The surviving soldiers' reports date back to the period of the second Dmitriad, and they depict the Poles solely as cruel and ruthless murderers: vengeful, dishonourable and insidious. Who were the authors of these depictions and where did they get their knowledge from? The Dmitriads revealed the paradox of a mercenary

8 *Ibid.*, pp. 74-93.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 60.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 52.

army: fighting for those who pay, and not 'for the cause'. This is because we will find British soldiers-witnesses of the Dmitriads on both sides of the argument. *Captain Gilbert's Report* is a memoir of Dmitry's former guard who also joined the second False Dmitry.¹¹ Another report, *A Narrative of an Englishmen Serving Against Poland*,¹² written by one of the soldiers from Captain Crale's division, exposes the tragic fate of the conscription carried out by the Swedes in 1609.

Captain Gilbert presents the Poles as the driving force behind the second Dmitriad. He recounts his confusion upon meeting Dmitry II, who allegedly miraculously survived the Moscow pogrom,¹³ was perfectly up-to-date with the details of the Englishman's service to the first False Dmitry, and yet was different from Gilbert's first employer 'as night is to day'. When, however, the captain shared his doubts regarding the identity of the False Dmitry with the 'Polish general'. What he heard in response was that it was of no importance, as long as it enabled the Poles to take revenge on the perfidious and bloody Russians.¹⁴ Although we are dealing with a testimony written from the position of the Polish-Russian side of the conflict here, the Poles appear as a calamity, causing hunger and violence, and Gilbert's depiction is merely a prelude to another act of the drama, that is: 'the marching in of a hundred thousand-strong army with king Sigismund at the helm, attacking Moscow and settled in Smolensk.'¹⁵

Both of the soldiers' reports provide tactical details. The description by a private from the mercenary division of Captain Crale is simply dominated by military insight. The soldier does not understand Polish tactics or even condemns them as cruel to civilians and causing unnecessary losses. He often mentions the ruthlessness of Polish soldiers and examples of cruelty, although those, the author admits, do not come close to the behaviour of the Cossacks.¹⁶

The anonymous author provides information on deceitful and dishonourable actions of the Polish side with indignation. One of the most drastic examples was the cunning killing of Russian aristocrats. While escorting Shuisky to Poland, they were lured to the Polish camp under the pretence of bidding farewell to the Czar, and then treacherously murdered. From this point of view, it seems understand-

11 Commanders of Dmitry's guards were, apart from the Frenchman, Englishman Matthew Knolson and Scotsman Albert Francie, named in *Bloudie Tragedie...* (p. 33).

12 S. Howe, p. 151.

13 Cf. *Captain Gilbert's Report*, in: S. Howe, p. 66.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 67.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 68

16 *Ibid.*, p. 174.

able that the fall of the Polish detachment, dying of hunger at the Kremlin, is perceived by the soldier as 'a just spectacle, albeit sad'.¹⁷

The soldier's account reveals a simple mind used to the atrocities of war. He is predominantly an observer and reporter, does not ask questions regarding the general plan, consistently behaving like a loyal mercenary, for whom there are no enemies, but opponents. On the other hand, it seems that his belief that the Poles are remorseless influenced his decision not to join their side, as some of his military companions ultimately did.

We can, therefore, see how the opinions of both soldiers generalise the image of the Poles, equating Sobczyk's actions with the attitude of the whole of the military. These accounts present simply the Poles, all of whom are cruel, ruthless and treacherous, thus creating a belief that the depicted military groups were representative of Poland's entire population.

IN THE LITERARY MILIEU

A. THE 'OTHERS' – EVIL ALLIES AND ADVISORS

Polish people were also depicted as evil and cruel in literary explorations of the Dmitriad themes. These characteristics were exposed not only on the battlefield, but also in socio-political relations, in the contemptuous and provocative approach to the Russians, and in the pernicious influence on Dmitry. Two texts accentuate these specific characteristics of the Polish participants in the Dmitriads: *A Brief Historical Relation of the Empire of Russia* and *News of the Present Miseries of Russia*.

The deceitful position of Poles as egoistical and destructive aides of Dmitry was highlighted especially in the first of the two texts, the genre of which oscillates between panegyric and satire. In *A Brief Historical Relation of the Empire of Russia*,¹⁸ signed with the initials 'J.F.', Poles appear predominantly as false advisors to Dmitry. In this analysis, the text is situated between the reports of eyewitnesses, and writings of a literary character. This is because we will find here a clear cross-over of report, parenthesis, and allegoresis. From its dedication letter to its conclusions, the booklet (printed in London in 1654) presents personal motives of its anonymous author, identified by him as the common good. Russian history served J.F. as an instrument of interpretation of both English history, and his own situation which

17 *Ibid.*, p. 175.

18 J.F., *A Brief Historical Relation of the Empire of Russia and of Its Original Growth Out of 24 Dukedomes Into One Empire Since the Year 1514. Humbly Presented to the View and Serious Perusal of All True-hearted English-men, that Love and Honour the Peace and Happiness of this their Native Country* (London: 1654). Quoted after: S. Howe, pp. 184-220.

he saw as deeply unjust and in need of Cromwell's intervention. The use of Russian historical context was justified by the fact that, in his long-term journeys through Europe, the author also reached Russia and spent twenty two months there during the siege of the Kremlin, also becoming eyewitness to the capitulation of the Polish unit.¹⁹ The autobiographical parts of the text suggest that, in his opinion, he provided significant (though never compensated for) service to the victorious revolution upon his return to the country, and as a 'reward' he was unjustly accused of plotting to kill Cromwell. For him, the analysed 'history of Russia' is motivated by great bitterness and a grudge against the Lord Protector, who had still not reacted to his appeals. Despite the manifested grievance, he also saturates the text with panegyric and parenetic elements.

The image of the Poles plays a key part in achieving both of J.F.'s aims: a panegyric for the Lord Protector and a critique of the corrupt English judiciary system. The intentions of J.F. turned his 'history' into a novel of purpose. In this context, the period of Godunov as the Russian 'Lord Protector' appears to be a golden age, also initiated in England, but halted halfway through by Cromwell. The golden age in the British Isles was stopped by the unfairness of the courts. By depicting the real golden age in Russia, the author emphasised the effect of Godunov as proponent of 'pure justice', and he highlighted, unambiguously, the necessity to follow in his footsteps and for Cromwell to initiate a vetting of the advisors and officials of the English republic.

The report of J.F. is very inconsistent at numerous points. There is an apparent care for the shape of the text as a whole, but a lack of interest for historical detail. The author loses sight of proportion, confuses numbers and dates. He merely drafts the scene, as he is not concerned with historical detail, but with the depicting of the 'burning' analogy between England and Russia.

The consistently negative view of Poles justifies the depiction of the siege and surrender of the Kremlin as Divine Judgement. What did they do to deserve this calamity? From the angle presented by the author, their mortal sin was their wrongful advice given to Dmitry. The opposition of Godunov and Dmitry, presented against a backdrop of their relationships with their advisors, becomes key to interpreting J.F.'s work. Godunov did not trust false advisors and he turned Russia into a 'land of milk and honey', whereas Dmitry, despite his heroic spirit, forfeited his opportunities by surrounding himself with wrong advisors. In this allegorised view, Poles enter the arena of the depicted Russian-English history as the embodiment of evil advisors of Dmitry-Cromwell. J.F. sees, and puts before Cromwell,

19 See: *ibid.*, p. 187; in the Introduction, Howe establishes that the author spent twenty two months with 'Poles in Moscow' (Cf. p. 184).

a choice of either Godunov's or Dmitry's approach. To avoid Dmitry's fate and bring prosperity to England, he should reject the false advisors (who made accusations against J.F. – personal fortunes are equated to the common good here).²⁰ As the Lord Protector does presently, Dmitry once left politics in the hands of his entourage and let himself be led entirely by his secretary, Mr Buczyński, as well as by a few other Polish adulators and parasites.²¹ The Czar also neglected to respond to petitions from discontented citizens, which was precisely what the disappointed author demanded from the Lord Protector. The analysis carried out by the unhappy English citizen portrays Poles as Dmitry's undoing, allegorically representing Cromwell's circle contemporary to J.F.

In a sentimental-heroic narrative by Henry Brereton, *News of the Present Miseries of Rushia* (1614), Poles are not just evil advisors, but also wrongly chosen political allies.²² Brereton illustrates Dmitriads with great care for theatrical effects, as a story of an incorrect choice by Dmitry of an official political partner. The author does not accept the information about the heritage, behaviour and situation of the False Dmitry's, propagated by other writers. His story, born out of the argument that history had never before been so 'disastrous' for any ruler or country,²³ depicts Dmitry as the only legitimate descendant of Ivan the Terrible, a good ruler, albeit burdened by the characteristics of his tyrannical father.²⁴ Dmitry is further portrayed as having made a mistake while looking for a political ally abroad, by falling in love with a Polish woman (related to the Polish king, the beautiful 'Duchess Marina'), and then by surrounding himself with Poles. This alienated his long-jealous subjects, especially rival Shuisky.

In highlighting the sentimental subplots of this story, Brereton devotes much attention to the love between Dmitry and Marina, a typical sentimental couple. The author unfolds before the reader their love story, its beginnings and progress. In line with the sentimental tradition, the origin of the romantic feeling was a picture of Marina, which moved Dmitry and inspired him to undertake political and matrimonial negotiations with the Polish king. Upon their conclusion, he set off on a journey to Poland, whence he returned completely in (required) love. Love

20 Cf. especially the conclusion, *ibid.*, pp. 219-220.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 201.

22 H. Brereton, *News of the Present Miseries of Rushia: Occasioned by the Late Warre in that Country. Commenced Betweene: Sigismond now King of Poland, Charles Late King of Swethland, Demetrius, the Last of that Name, Emperour of Rushia. Together with the Memorable Occurences of Our Owne Nationall Forces, English, and Scottes, under the Pay of the now King of Swethland* (London: 1614), quoted after: S. Howe, pp. 68-150.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 71.

24 The author highlights that Ivan the Terrible was 'alive' in his son. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 73.

for Marina took away Dmitry's ability to evaluate the political weight of the alliance with Poland, which turned out to be the wrong choice, tragic in its consequences. In the eyes of the narrator, however, the romance and family characteristics explain the actions of the protagonist whom the author not only does not criticise, but in fact always takes his side, exhibiting a fondness for Dmitry as the 'rightful ruler of Moscow'. He does not, however, spare any criticism towards the treacherous Shuisky and the Poles surrounding him – the unpunished tormentors of the Russians. The author presents two pieces of information about the Poles as undisputed: that it is a very proud nation, and the favours shown to it by Dmitry had dangerously magnified this pride,²⁵ and that the Poles induced widespread fear of a military confrontation among the Russians, as they were much better soldiers.²⁶ The last item on the list of Polish sins is treason, as they turned out not to be loyal to Dmitry in the times of the second Dmitriad.

Just as Brereton did not acknowledge the highly dubious heritage of Dmitry, he later also rejected the news of his death, taking it to be Shuisky's hoax. Dmitry's death in Shuisky's assassination attempt did not fit Brereton's sentimental picture. The attack on the palace caught Marina and Dmitry in an embrace of love, prepared to die together, fleeing hand in hand like 'Aeneas from the burning Troy'.²⁷ In long sentences full of compassion, Brereton describes the escape of the lovers, struggling against the currents of the Volga, perceiving them as 'great people in a small dinghy',²⁸ overcoming life's obstacles thanks to love. He portrays the second Dmitriad in a similar heroic-sentimental style, depicting it as the endeavours of the rightful ruler to regain the throne with the help of Polish forces. Dmitry and Marina reach Poland in disguise, and it is there that they part forever, when Dmitry takes the lead of the army setting out to conquer Moscow. The author devotes much space to illustrating Dmitry's internal tragedy as a ruler forced to see the cruelty of war inflicted on his own subjects. It was cruelty that he would have wanted to avoid, but which the Poles craved, as they were not only thirsty for blood, murder and tyranny, 'prostituting' everything on their way (in Brereton's words), but they were also treacherous, as they ultimately abandoned Dmitry.

In his depiction of Czar's death betrayed by the Poles, Brereton once again reaches out to his audience-readers in a theatrical way, asking for compassion for the great protagonists of this tragedy, especially Dmitry 'Ivanovich', whose fate was predominantly the fault of 'unworthy others', that is the Poles.

25 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 80.

26 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 87.

27 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 92.

B. THE 'OTHERS' INTERFERING WITH THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF ANOTHER STATE

Some English writings of the era emphasised a different element of this 'otherness' of the Poles – the foreign political and religious powers interfering with internal affairs of the Moscow state. This perspective was particularly close to British authors, as such an image of Poland made it possible to draw an analogy between Russia and the British Isles, based on the stylistics of permanent threat.

Poland represented such a threat mostly as a Catholic state, and thus as a tool in the hands of the Machiavellian Jesuits. This is how Polish participation in Dmitriads is portrayed in the anti-Jesuit poem by Phineas Fletcher,²⁹ *Locustus or Apollyonists*,³⁰ published in 1627. Fletcher's criticism was directed against Jesuits as envoys of Rome and Spain, from whom the Divine Providence protected 'this small island', as he calls England. The poet focuses especially on the foiled assassination attempt of king James I by fanatic Catholics, undertaken in 1605 and known as the Gunpowder Plot. According to Cicely V. Wedgwood, in England the plot led to the formation of an almost hysterical belief in the machinations of Jesuits as tools of the hated Popery.³¹ The coinciding dates of the Gunpowder Plot and the Russian events allowed Fletcher to draw an analogy³² and treat the Dmitriads as another example of Divine Protection against the 'murderous' Jesuits. This time, Providence exposed the machinations of the Jesuits in Russia too, guarding that country against Popery, imposed on it by the impostor created by Polish Jesuits.

In Song III of the poem, the actions of the Poles were linked with plans of the Jesuits, the hellish army of monks hungry for blood and power, and ready to do anything to 'establish' Popery in Russia. In Fletcher's work, this aim was presented unambiguously:

» 8.
 But none so fits the Polish Jesuite,
 As Russia's change [...]

 Straines all his visits, and friends; they worke, they plod

29 Fletcher, poet and priest, was the son of Giles Fletcher, English poet, diplomat and member of Parliament, who was the ambassador of England in Russia in 1588, and who was the author of the treatise *Of the Russe Common Wealth. Or, Maner of Governement of the Russe Emperour (Commonly Called the Emperour of Moskovia) with the Manners, and Fashions of the Peple of that Countrey* (London: 1591).

30 P. Fletcher, *Locustae, vel Pietas Jesuitica (The Locusts or Apollyonists)* (Cambridge: 1627).

31 Cf. C.V. Wedgwood, *Poetry and Politics under the Stuarts* (Cambridge: 1960), pp. 18-19.

32 Cf. *ibid.* The author deliberates on why a man of such knowledge and intelligence could give in to the persecution of Jesuits, hence the argumentative tone in Fletcher's analysis of the topic of Dmitry.

With double yoke the Russian necks to load;
To crowne the Polish Prince their King, the Pope their God.

In this perspective, Dmitry became merely a pawn in the Jesuit game of world domination, a puppet that has learnt its role in the 'Dmitriad masquerade' from the beginning. Their sole objective was the conversion of the whole of Russia to Catholicism:

» II.
With mimicke skill, they trayne a caged beast,
And teach him play a royall Lyons part:
Then in the Lyons hide, and titles drest
They bring him forth: he master in his art,
Soone winnes the Vulgar Russe, who hopes for rest
In change; and if not case, yet lesser smart:
All hunt that monster, he soone melts his pride
In abject feare; and life himselfe envi'de:
So welp't a Fox, a Wolfe he liv'd, and asse he di'de.

The author's comment which accompanies this passage presents the case of Dmitry as wholly arranged by Polish Jesuits, and not merely used by them in the context of wider political, national and personal efforts.³³ The note on page 63 of the poem explains the drastic change in Dmitry's behaviour, who became a tyrant, as a foreign (Jesuit and Polish) characteristic within him came to light, thus fully justifying his murder.

The accusation of Poland's religious interference in the affairs of Moscow was reinforced by the political aspect of this act. In this view, the Poles appear as characters of an anti-Jacobite sentimental tragedy by Mary Pix,³⁴ *The Czar of Muscovy*, stages in 1701 at Lincoln' Inn Fields.³⁵

This historical tragedy, saturated with sentimental and erotic elements, as well as great pomposity, presents interesting, strong and relentless female characters (Marina and Zarianna). In the context of its prologue, however, it could also be

33 Cf. *ibid.*, comment on p. 62.

34 Mary Pix, a relatively well-known English writer of the late Restoration time, was connected in a 'trinity' with other female writers: Belavier Manley and Catharine Trotter. All three were called (sometimes not without a certain irony) the 'women wits'. For an explanation of this name and its consequences, see: C. Clark, "Three Augustan women playwrights", in: *American University Studies Series 4: English language and literature*, vol. 40 (1986).

35 See: A. Nicoll, *A history of English drama. 1660-1900*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: 1927), p. 97.

interpreted as an occasional work, introducing a comparative perspective of London and Moscow.

The occasional context of Pix's play, important due to its interpretation of Polish themes, was marked by the new wave of Jacobitism and anti-Jacobitism which was sweeping over the British Isles at the time. The Catholic king James II, deposed as a result of the Glorious Revolution and residing in France, died precisely in 1701. After his death, London was 'snowed under' with occasional prints, especially funeral elegies, touching once again on the subject of the right to succession of the English throne. James II was seen there as the only rightful ruler of the Stuart dynasty. Supporters of the presently ruling Orange line of the Stuarts, as well as the Republicans, replied with a satirical attack, aiming their criticism at the infamous and fear-inducing 'tyrannical' tendencies of James II, which the next pretender to the throne from his line, Charles Edward Stuart, could also come to exhibit. This is also how Pix's drama could be interpreted. It was devoted only to the first Dmitriad (1605-1606), but it also made use of selected events from the second Dmitriad (1607-1609), abbreviated for the stage. The prologue of the play clearly suggests the Moscow-London analogy:

» But here the Scene shou'd all its wants supply,
For Wit is not the growth of Muscovy:
Tho', faith of late so flat your tast is grown,
That Mosco may regine upon this Town [...]³⁶

After the death of his father, the 'pretendent' to the throne was officially acknowledged by Louis XVI as the rightful king of England, and proclaimed James III. In England, he was the source of permanent political and religious tension, because he brought with him the danger of invasion with the help of French forces, which would have led to another war of succession. Pix's anti-Catholicism³⁷ and anti-Jacobitism,³⁸ inspired by this threat, were a hallmark of her work since the first tragedy she has written (*Ibrahim*, 1696).

The fate of the False Dmitry in Pix's play was shaped so as to illustrate the in-

36 Quotation from the edition: *The Czar of Muscovy. As it is Acted at the Theatre in Little Lincolns-Inn-Fields By His Majesty's Servants* (London: 1701). The play was published without the author's name.

37 For information on anti-Catholicism as a tendency in Pix's tragedies, see: M. Rubik, *English dramatists, early women dramatists 1550-1800* (London: 1998), p. 88.

38 Pix's anti-Jacobite attitude reveals her hatred towards any kind of tyranny, which she usually portrays in two forms: sexual and political. One can recognise this already in her first tragedy, *Ibrahim*, in which political tyranny paired with a raping a woman leads the Turkish ruler to his ruin. More on this in: J. I. Marsden, "Mary Pix's *Ibrahim*: The woman writer as a commercial playwright", in: *Studies in the Literary Imagination* no. 10/1 (1999), p. 6.

evitable destiny of unpopular pretenders to the throne who display tyrannical tendencies. In light of the deposed Stuarts' claims to the English throne, we are presented with an image of a tyrant defeated (on a political, religious and private plane), and of liberties regained.

From the very first scenes of the play, Polish characters play an important role, both to the plot of the tragedy, and to the shaping of its ideological and sentimental message. The play begins with a wedding scene of the new Czar couple. The new Czarina's father is among the newlyweds' entourage: Manzeck (voivode of Sandomierz, Jerzy Mniszech), acting on behalf of the Polish king and overseeing the local garrisons, which considerably strengthened Dmitry's position.

Apart from Mniszech, the wedding entourage of Dmitry and Marina also includes several unnamed Polish magnates and ladies. Their presence is supposed to emphasise the role of the foreign, Polish element in the inauguration, and of its hostile, self-interested character, incompatible with Russian traditions. Disguised as a pilgrim monk, another Pole arrives. This is Aleksander, son of prince Wiśniowiecki (a fictional character), a former rival for Marina's hand in marriage, who is experiencing a personal tragedy seeing that another man has married his beloved.

The representative of Polish politics in the text, voivode Mniszech, is characterised by cynicism and being driven by his own best interests, both on a personal and political level. Already in the opening scenes of the play, it becomes obvious that the marriage of his daughter with the False Dmitry is his doing, arranged so as to take advantage of her Czarina status. From one of Marina's statements, we learn that she hated Dmitry, but that she also hated Aleksander Wiśniowiecki, who broke her heart. Pix makes the passion and feelings of the characters of this story become the motives for their behaviour. On the occasion of the special day, Dmitry declares amnesty. Zueski (prince Vasili Shuisky) acknowledges his rule and pays homage to him, fearing for the life of his beloved Zarianna (Xenia), daughter of Godunov, whom he had hidden in a monastery, and who could now have a chance of being saved thanks to the amnesty. Initially, therefore, Zueski participates in the spectacle arranged by the new Czar. But when Dmitry, whose 'appetite increased' upon coming to the throne, becomes infatuated with Zarianna,³⁹ Zueski starts a conspiracy against him. Within the circle of feelings of these five: Zarianna, Marina, Zueski, Aleksander and Dmitry, a complicated intrigue will

39 One source that may have inspired this theme could be identified as *Bloudy Tragedie...*: the corruption of nuns and Godunov's daughter is one of the damning accusations posthumously made towards Dmitry (p. 58).

play out, set in the context of the first Dmitriad, and with an anti-Catholic, anti-Jacobite and feminist message.

Zueski is the closest living pretendent to the throne from the Rurik dynasty, acknowledged and next in line after Dmitry, should Dmitry live. In Pix's play, the issue of right to the throne re-appears several times. Godunov's rule is met with a positive evaluation – though an usurper, he was a lover of freedom and, in the opinion of the boyars and 'the people', he was the true father of the Muscovy nation. This is why they begin to miss him, and even more so, the more Dmitry's tyranny reveals itself in the political, religious and moral realm. Moral and political legitimation of a candidate to the throne is connected to the issue of blood rights. These, however, need to give way to the traits of a true ruler: that is, most importantly, being a man of the state and nation, caring for his citizens, determined in the role he undertakes, and only focusing on personal happiness in the very last instance. This is why, in Pix's interpretation, it was not the usurping that negated Dmitry's rule, but the ever more violent expression of the Czar's tyrannical tendencies. The striving towards enslaving the Russian people and refusing them their former liberties becomes Dmitry's sin. His second sin is interfering in the matters of religion under the influence of the 'Other', that is the Poles – a tyranny of Catholicism against the Russian people, who 'hate Rome more than death', which will become one of the milestones on his way towards execution. Thirdly, Dmitry's sin is also thinking solely about himself and his own pleasure, giving in to animalistic desires and a readiness to give away his power for Zarianna's submission. Such an attitude discredits him as a ruler in the eyes of the reader and viewer.

One result of these desires, subdued at first, but then erupting ever more violently, was postponing the wedding night with Marina, and ultimately imprisoning her and demanding (under threat of death) that she resigns from the title of the Czarina in favour of a more worthy rival. Mniszchówna's denial is motivated in two ways. By marrying Dmitry whom she finds repulsive, the female character submitted to the will of her father, but now as a wife she feels bound by the necessity to protect her honour and that of the family. Apart from honour, the other motivation of Mniszchówna is her self-destructive struggle; she dares fate to fulfil her tragedy, as she had bound herself to the hated Dmitry at her father's request and without hope of fulfilling her love for Aleksander Wiśniowiecki. This decision was forced by a ruse by the voivode of Sandomierz, greedy for glory and wealth. Though initially agreeable to the love between Wiśniowiecki and Marina, once Dmitry appeared in the picture, he regarded him as a more promising match and decided to achieve royal advantages through the marriage. He therefore made use of the long absence of his daughter's lover, who went on a diplomatic mission

to the court of the German emperor. Manzeck (Mniszech) forged a letter from Aleksander's father, prince Wiśniowiecki, announcing his son's alleged marriage to a German lady. Having lost hope for personal happiness, Marina agreed to take on the yoke, forced on her by her father, of marrying Dmitry, whom she hates and finds physically repulsive. Reuniting with Aleksander (who arrives too late to stop the tragedy from happening) could not change much in her view on life. Instead, it only reinforces a feeling that fate has failed her, taking away her chance for requited love. Honour and submitting to her father, however, turned out to lead to shame. This is why, desiring death and a drastic end to her journey, she stubbornly refuses to renounce the hated title of Czarina in favour of Zarianna, whom she in fact wishes the title upon.

Here lies another dilemma that complicates the position of Marina Mniszchówna in the play *The Czar of Muscovy* – it is a character wearing upon herself the stigma of tragedy in its most classical form. She does not love her husband-Czar, but she nevertheless wants to, and has to, obey him. She wants to obey him, but at the same time, because of her own honour and her father's, she cannot give in to the demand of renouncing the title of Czarina, which she gained legally, and did nothing wrong to deserve losing it. Therefore, she will submit to his will in a different way, and she will die in an act of obedience, unable to sever the ties binding them, forced on her and hated, any other way.

The fortunes of Zarianna are equally as dramatic, though less ambiguous. Her refusing to marry Dmitry, consistently declaring her love for Zueski and her secret marriage to him, results in the jealous Dmitry (and also jealous of the political influence) planning to eliminate his rival and sentencing him to death. The entrusted general Bosman (Basmanow), however, betrays Dmitry and informs him of having carried out the sentence, while in reality he hides Zueski-Shuisky until the start of the uprising.

By acting against Marina Mniszchówna, the False Dmitry makes an enemy of her father, his recent protector. In her arguments with Dmitry, who demanded her renouncing of her title, Mniszchówna mercilessly uses her father's name and the threat of revenge. The play originally confirms the infamy of the historical Mniszech: his greed for wealth and glory, for which he did not hesitate to sacrifice his daughter's happiness and offer her hand in marriage to a dubious pretendent to the Russian throne. In the face of the ultimate evidence of Dmitry's usurping of the throne, Mniszech admits that he had his doubts with regard to the roots of the issue. He also admits that it did not stop him from taking advantage of the opportunity and marrying his daughter off to Dmitry – against her will, and having committed forgery – and then even demanding that she pretended she was happy and honoured.

As the play progresses, however, we observe a change in the antagonist, as he wakes from his delusion with a hope for great glory to his family, and realises the disgracefulness of his actions. Firstly, it is mostly his wounded pride that suffers. Having found out that Marina was insulted by Dmitry, he responds with a threat.⁴⁰ Once he realises the danger to Marina's life, his wounded pride and shame, though still present, give way to a reflection on the fate he created for his own child and a sudden remorse,⁴¹ shown also towards Aleksander.

From this point on, the Voivode – having originally represented foreign interference and the enemy, a Catholic force – unites with the defenders of 'old' Muscovite liberty and stands on the side of the only rightful pretender to the Russian throne, Zueski, for whom defeating Dmitry is both in the personal and political interest. He becomes an eager, trusting and efficient ally. He collects his army and passes it on to Aleksander and Bosman to lead.

Such a shaping of the character of the voivode of Sandomierz was decided because of the following two factors: sentimental subplots of the play, and the message of its ending. Sentimental love as the harmony of hearts and souls is characteristic of both couples of protagonists, in whose lives a tyrant has meddled: this is Aleksander and Marina, and Zueski and Zarianna. Fate united Marina and Zarianna, who shared the Czar's enslavement, while Aleksander and Zueski won their freedom, fighting shoulder to shoulder. The message of the tragedy is therefore optimistic – a fall of the tyrant guarantees the return of the golden age. In the play, Pix uses some themes from the second Dmitriad, but her tragedy lacks the space for the continuation of the conflict, which unfolded in several forms after the killing of Dmitry. The playwright shows the overthrowing of Dmitry, when everyone unites against him, both 'one's own' and 'others'. For this, a harmony of the representatives of both nations, which had only recently treated one another with animosity, is a crucial element of historiosophical evaluation of tyranny and a moral assessment of a ruler, which Pix put forward to her British publishers. Brotherhood at arms and common endeavours required harmonious political relations, while a feminist message of the play needed a victory of steadfast women, refusing to give in to masculine tyranny.

In the play, the place of historical Poles is partly taken by the Cossacks, depicted in line with the stereotypical, negative image of savage and bloodthirsty warriors, selling their lives at a high price. It is them, and not Poles, whom Dmitry's personal guard is made up of in Pix's play. His closest ataman was Carclos, his evil spirit, encouraging the Czar to undertake violent and cruel actions. The Cossacks

40 Cf. Act I, Scene 1, lines 69-76.

41 See: Act I, Scene 2, lines 1-5.

seem to fit Dmitry's likings and moral competencies perfectly – they are his reflection, and they complete him. The dynamics of Dmitry's transformations bring him closer to that extreme of existence, which could be seen as 'Cossackism and barbarity'. This is why Carclos, when almost all is lost, understands and shares the emotional state of Dmitry, who does not in fact regret the power he has lost, but only the fact that he did not capture Zarianna and that he has to leave her for Zueski, now being proclaimed as Czar. Both, until their dying breath, try to fulfil their erotic desires and the need for revenge. One of them wants to demoralise the Czarina, a real princess Zarianna, and the other receives as a gift from his master the 'Princess of Northern Lands' and Czarina, Marina Mniszchówna. The form of that final plot could have been inspired by historical facts of the third Dmitriad, and the relationship of Marina with a Cossack ataman. In Pix's play, however, such a prospect is worse than death for Mniszchówna.

Replacing the Poles with Cossacks is also fundamental to another theme of Pix's tragedy. It is them, and not the Poles (as was the case in reality) who constitute the core of the Czar's personal guard and are massacred when Shuiskey's conspiracy comes to a head. In *Czar of Muscovy*, even the negative Polish characters are separated from the Cossacks by a substantial cultural distance. As enemies of tyranny and allies of the protectors of Russian freedom, despite their initial criticism, they are portrayed in the most benign way out of all the texts analysed.

After the death of the False Dmitry, nothing stands in Zuesky's way to come to the throne, and he does so together with Czarina Zarianna, restoring Russia's lost golden age. The love between Aleksander Wiśniowiecki and Marina Mniszchówna also ends in marriage. Relations between Poland and Russia seem to blossom, and peace and harmony (symbolised by freedom) encompasses the internal and external relations of the Muscovy state. In Pix's optimistic vision, the collaboration of Polish and Russian opponents of tyranny achieves complete success.

* * *

In British depictions of Poland and the Poles during the Dmitriads, the focus varied. The role played by the Polish Republic in Moscow's events was most often met with criticism, and it was regarded from a protestant and economic perspective, though there was also no shortage of existential reflection. Usually, the authors would choose a particular aspect of Polish participation in the Dmitriads – political, religious or moral – and then build their critical deliberations around it.

Geographical distance meant that the Poles were treated (and presented to the readers) almost as a 'homogenous' whole, and thus as uniform and deserving of

a general opinion, because they were all equally as proud and cruel, and motivated by similar things. What is apparent is the lack of the authors' effort to understand the complexity of Polish participation in the specific phases of the events, which after all consisted of many stages. There is a lack of a critical reflection on whether the attitude of Poles involved in the Moscow events is representative of the whole of the Polish nobility and of the prevailing opinion in the country. From beginning to end, the role of Polish participants is interpreted as representative of the entire Polish Republic, as its official political and religious intervention. The geographical distance is continued with a temporal one, inspiring a retrospective view of the Dmitriads, for example, ascribing to the first Dmitriad the cruelties committed by the Lisowczyks in the second Dmitriad and after it ended. Both texts sympathising with the False Dmitry, and those condemning him, usually saw the Poles as the cause of his downfall.

The participation of Poles in the Dmitriads appeared in several British texts as a literary theme, enabling an analysis of the internal and external position of England both from a private and a public perspective. This tendency emerges for the first time in the period of Cromwell's protectorate. It is expressed in its fullest in anti-Jesuit texts, and, since the Glorious Revolution, also in anti-Jacobite texts. A loose approach to history allowed the shaping of various literary themes: Poland as an allegory of papist France, threatening with Jacobite invasion, the Poles as evil advisors, unfaithful allies, or cruel and dishonourable soldiers are just some of those themes.

The most complex role assigned to Polish characters was that written by Mary Pix. In her tragedy, combining anti-Jacobite and anti-Catholic themes with a feminist message, she illustrated a transformation of Poles from an allegorical representation of Catholic France into defenders of liberty against the enthroned tyrant. This is because the fight against oppression in all aspects of life was the author's most important aim and plea. In their latest literary representation, Poles as 'converted' opposers of tyranny – though often portrayed as barbarians equal to the Cossacks in other texts – were regarded as far more measured and civilised.

Almost all of the presented examples of British opinions on the Poles in the Dmitriads point to the usefulness of this topic as a context for further political, religious and existential reflection, often related particularly, even almost exclusively, to the situation and culture of the British.

*Translated by Maria Helena Żukowska,
verified by Jerzy Giebułtowski*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andrusiewicz A., *Dzieje Dymitriad 1602-1614*, Warszawa 1990.

Brereton H., *News of the Present Miseries of Russia: Occasioned by the Late Warre in that Countrey. Commenced Betweene: Sigismond now King of Poland, Charles Late King of Swethland, Demetrius, the Last of that Name, Emperour of Russia. Together with the Memorable Occurences of Our Owne Nationall Forces, English, and Scottes, under the Pay of the now King of Swethland*, London 1614.

Clark C., *Three Augustan women playwrights*, "American University Studies" series 4: *English language and literature*, 1986, vol. 40.

Fletcher P., *Locustae, vel Pietas Jesuitica (The Locusts or Apollyonists)*, Cambridge 1627.

Fletcher P., *Of the Russe Common Wealth. Or, Maner of Governement of the Russe Emperour (Commonly Called the Emperour of Moskovia) with the Manners, and Fashions of the Peple of that Countrey*, London 1591.

Howe S.E., *The False Dmitri: a Russian Romance and Tragedy, Described by British Eye-witnesses, 1604-1612. (Reprints of Contemporary Reports such as "A Bloudie Tragedie," printed 1607, etc.)*, London 1918.

J.F., *A Brief Historical Relation of the Empire of Russia and of Its Original Growth Out of 24 Dukedomes Into One Empire Since the Year 1514. Humbly Presented to the View and Serious Perusal of All True-hearted English-men, that Love and Honour the Peace and Happiness of this their Native Country*, London 1654

Marsden J.I., *Mary Pix's "Ibrahim": The woman writer as a commercial playwright*, "Studies in the Literary Imagination" 1999, nr 10/1.

Nicoll A., *A history of English drama. 1660-1900*, Cambridge 1927.

Rubik M., *English dramatists, early women dramatists 1550-1800*, London 1998.

Smith T., *Voyage and Entertainment in Russia*, London 1605.

The Czar of Muscovy. As it is Acted at the Theatre in Little Lincolns-Inn-Fields By His Majesty's Servants, London 1701.

Wedgwood C.V., *Poetry and politics under the Stuarts*, Cambridge 1960.

Wiadomość o krwawej a strasznej rzezi w mieście Moskwie, i okropny a żaloszny koniec Dymitra, wielkiego księcia i cara moskiewskiego, przez Hollendra, naonczas w Moskwie barwiącego, w języku angielskim napisana i wydana w Londynie roku 1607, a teraz na język polski przetozona i pomnożona dodatkami wyjętymi ze zbiorów kórnickich, przeł. L. Jagielski, Poznań 1858.

ABSTRACT

This article presents the seventeenth-century publications of English authors devoted to the Dmitriads and the participation of Poles – as inspirers, advisers to both 'false tsars' (Dmitri I and Dmitri II), beneficiaries and finally the victims of the Moscow events in the years 1604-1612. The author makes an initial division of English texts into memories of the participants of the events (English soldiers then fought on both sides of the conflict) and occasional literary works, presenting Moscow events in a specific way, in order to impress readers or viewers, achieve a political goal (e.g. by comparing Boris Godunov with Oliver Cromwell) or promote a specific ideological message with an anti-Catholic, anti-papal and anti-

-Jesuit meaning. The texts quoted here (mainly from the anthology by Sonia Howe *The False Dmitri: a Russian Romance and Tragedy*, published in 1916, supplemented by other literary sources) reveal a generally unfavourable and critical image of Poles of that time, softened by notes of sympathy and idyllic versions of description of love of Dmitri and the Polish aristocrat, Marina Mnischówna.

KEYWORDS: Dmitriads, British literature of 17th century, national stereotypes, Russian history during 'Time of Troubles', Catholic Jesuitism