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BETWEEN THE IDEAL AND REALITY.
POLISH WOMAN IN THE 16TH–18TH CENTURIES

In the Middle Ages and the early modern era, in fact even as late as the 19th century, ideals worth imitating were shaped according to gender. The catalogue of qualities and virtues obligatory for men differed from the catalogue for women. This was the case in the whole of Europe, including Poland, and was closely connected with the opinions on gender's predisposition to vice. Since woman was regarded as a "weaker vessel", it was taken for granted that she was more disposed to sin, that it was more difficult for her to be virtuous. At the threshold of the early modern era only few people would publicly maintain that women were more virtuous than men, but this is precisely what Father Hieronim Mąkowski, a Dominican from Lublin, asserted in Poland in the 17th century¹.

Since the role of wife and mother was the main social role ascribed to women in old Poland, the patterns they were expected to follow concerned these two functions, in addition to piety, of course. A. Wyrobisz has discussed these patterns on the basis of moralistic literature, epitaphs and tomb inscriptions². He started his analysis with Jan Mrowiński Płoczywłos's

¹ *Trzy splendory zacności białogłowskiej pokazane na pogrzebie Jej Mość Pani Ewy Anny Pszonczynej, chorążyny chełmskiej przez X Hieronima Makowskiego (The Three Best Qualities of Women's Worthiness presented by Father Hieronim Makowski at the Funeral of Mrs. Ewa Anna Pszonczyzna, Wife of the Standard-Keeper of Chelm), Lublin 1643.*

² A. Wyrobisz, *Staropolskie wzorce rodziny i kobiety — żony i matki (Old Polish Patterns of the Family and of an Ideal Women — Wife and Mother)*, "Przegląd Historyczny" 1992, № 3, pp. 405–421; *idem*, *Kobiety w społeczeństwie staropolskim: wzorce i rzeczywistość (Women in Old Polish Society: the Patterns and Reality)*, *Pamiętnik XV Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich (Diary of the 15th General Congress of Polish Historians)*, vol. II, Gdańsk-Toruń 1995, pp. 17–22.

treatise *The Married Couple* published in Cracow in 1561, emphasising that this was not an original treatise but a compilation of quotations from the *Scriptures* and “worthy authors”, that is, a work based on earlier, also foreign, literature. This is why the Polish pattern of a model wife and mother was in keeping with the pattern popularised in other countries. In Bohemia, the humanist Jan Kocin, a scribe in the Mala Strana chancery in Prague, wrote *The ABC of a Pious Wife and Prudent Housekeeper* published in 1585, which also repeated the truths acknowledged in the whole of Western Europa at that time³. Another of Wyrobisz’s important observations concerns the universality of these patterns (Catholic, Protestant and Antitrinitarian writers had similar views about the virtues of a Christian wife) and their stability; they remained unchanged throughout the 16th and 17th centuries.

According to Mrowiński, a good wife in an ideal family should obey her husband, remembering that women have been “created to help their husbands”; nevertheless, if she sees that something goes wrong, she should assist her husband by advice, but should be “moderate and honest, without putting herself above her husband”. “It is good to listen to a wife’s timely advice”⁴. Mrowiński also held the view that marriage should be based on love and not on a calculation of material benefits. In this respect he was rather isolated for the majority of 16th century moralists, including the Czech Kocin and Mikołaj Rej in Poland, were against a love marriage and asserted that the voice of reason should be listened to in choosing a partner. “Love does not last long between hungry persons and a mere fly can sometimes set them against each other”, says Rej ironically in *The Life of an Honest Man*⁵. Nevertheless, Father Piotr Skarga, a Jesuit preacher who exerted a great influence on Polish mentality at the turn of the 16th century, emphasised that love and free good will should be the foundation of every marriage; he condemned marriages contracted under pressure.

³ J. Janaček, *Białogłowy rozważnej żywot w czaste burzliwym (A Prudent Woman’s Life in Turbulent Times)*, Warszawa 1982, pp. 7–14.

⁴ Quoted after A. Wyrobisz, *Staropolskie wzorce*, p. 407.

⁵ M. Rej, *Żywot człowieka poczciwego (Life of an Honest Man)*, ed. J. Krzyżanowski, Wrocław 1956, p. 115.

All Polish writers agreed that a good wife should be a diligent homebody. “She should not be a twitterer”, writes Mrowiński, “should not hang about taverns, bring in pieces of news and gossip; she should not idle her time away, but should always be at home with her children and the servants”⁶. A 16th century Polish writer, Łukasz Górnicki, author of *The Polish Courtier*, thought that women should have such “domestic” virtues as wisdom, good-heartedness, self-restraint, benevolence and should “manage the home well”, “guide the children, if God has given them, towards goodness, as well as guard their husband’s property”⁷. Jan Kochanowski, a Polish Renaissance poet, also laid stress on the wife’s role in helping her husband to manage the house and property: “while keeping watch over the house, protecting it against damage and locking after small children”, she should look after her husband’s health, “she should notice when I am not feeling well and should be afraid lest I should fall ill”⁸. “Care of domestic needs and help to increase property strengthen conjugal love”, said Skarga. At the same time the preacher stressed that the wife was dependent on her husband: “A woman, being a simple being, should let herself be ruled by him who is wiser, and being weaker, should be under the protection of the stronger one and stand in fear of him”⁹. The Antitrinitarian writer Erazm Otwinowski drew up a similar catalogue of a good wife’s virtues: she should be pious, “acknowledge that her husband is her head”, “comfort her husband if he is in trouble”, “the husband should have somebody to rely on”, “she should serve her husband in distress and illness as well as she would serve herself”, “she should bring up her children in piety”, “rule the servants gently”, “avoid all revelries”, “keep a good eye on property”, “earn a good sum of money every year for linen, wool and dairy products”¹⁰. Wacław Potocki, an Antytrinita-

⁶ Quoted after A. Wyrobisz, *Staropolskie wzorce*, p. 410.

⁷ Łukasz Górnicki, *Dworzantin Polski, 1566 (The Polish Courtier, 1566)*, Warszawa 1914, pp. 52–53.

⁸ J. Kochanowski, *Pieśni (Songs)*, ed. L. Szczerbicka-Sięk, Wrocław 1970, pp. 85, 113.

⁹ Quoted after A. Wyrobisz, *Staropolskie wzorce*, p. 411.

¹⁰ E. Otwinowski, *Opisante pobożnej i statecznej żony i dobrej gospodyniej (Description of a Pious, Matronly Wife, a Good Housewife)*, in: *Staropolska poezja ziemiańska*, ed. J. S. Gruchała, S. Grzeszczuk, Warszawa 1988, pp. 140–144.

rian who converted to Catholicism, sometimes rebuked women spitefully, but in his lament over the death of his wife, Katarzyna, he eulogised her seriousness ("she did not busy herself with wordly matters; she was far from enjoying jokes, frivolous thoughts, dresses, dances and revelries"); he praised her for having spent her time reading pious writings and praying, and for performing acts of charity; he also emphasised that she had been a good housewife ("she runs the house gently and well, she is forbearing with her serfs and servants")¹¹.

The wife as a helper in management and a teacher of children is a subject discussed at the beginning of the 17th century by Stanisław Słupski from Rogów¹² and Władysław Stanisław Jeżowski¹³; both advised women to be pious and gentle. A little later Jakub Kazimierz Haur wrote: "a good, sensible wife is God's gift" — that is a wife who "runs the house thriftily, knows how to submit to her husband"¹⁴.

The catalogue of women's virtues was similar in funeral sermons which, however, laid greater stress on piety, steadfastness in faith, charity and humility. Before starting a laudatory paean the preacher would often remark that the deceased woman would not have liked a panegyric. The stress on steadfastness in faith is understandable in the epoch when the Reformation clashed with endeavours to reform Catholicism and when problems of the Orthodox Church and the Uniates were coming to a head in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's south-eastern territories. In noblemen's circles the question of charity was closely linked with attitude to serfs. It seems that women were expected to show more understanding and consideration for them. "She treated the serfs as a bee treats flowers, she took the juice but did not destroy the plant", said the Dominican Father Hiacynt Mijałowski in 1639, eulogising the deceased Anna Lubomirska¹⁵. Preachers also praised deceased women for their

¹¹ W. Potocki, *Dzieła (Works)*, vol. II, ed. L. Kukulski, Warszawa 1987, pp. 508–514.

¹² Stanisław Słupski z Rogowa, *Zabawy orackie gospodarza dobrego (Amusements of a Good Husbandsmen)*, Kraków 1618, ed. J. Rostański, Kraków 1981, pp. 19–20.

¹³ Władysława Stanisława Jeżowskiego *Oekonomia*, 1638, ed. J. Rostański, Kraków 1891, p. 21.

¹⁴ J. K. Haur, *Oekonomika ziemiańska generalna (Landowners' General Economy)*, Kraków 1679, pp. 91–94.

generosity to the poor, in particular for their gifts to churches and monasteries. It seems that an ideal woman was an ardent founder who supported her religion and the clergy. This was typical not only of Catholics but also of Protestants, Orthodox believers and Greek Catholics.

Beauty was an important attribute of women, as Górnicki said in *The Polish Courtier*¹⁶. Women's beauty was eulogised by Polish poets, Jan Kochanowski, Mikołaj Sęp-Szarzyński and Andrzej Morsztyn. Even the sober and prosaic Mikołaj Rej said that "what ensures a good marriage is beauty (emphasis mine, M.B.), good morals and willingness to help"¹⁷, and Piotr Skarga stated: "he who looks for a beautiful wife cannot be blamed"¹⁸. The Bohemian humanist Jan Kocin had another view of beauty; in his opinion a beautiful woman was more prone to the sin of laziness and vanity, she would not make a good wife¹⁹.

However, what was regarded as a woman's chief virtue, especially by funeral orators, was fertility. The greatest praise in a funeral oration was to say that the deceased had borne a numerous progeny; some speakers stressed that a deceased woman's sons were heroic knights, senators, starosts, hetmans, that is, the pride of the Commonwealth²⁰. "Politicians have been disputing for a long time how women can best be of service to their Fatherland", said the Dominican Mijakowski. "A man serves his country by courage, gallantry, wisdom, by his heart, blood and money. I do not know how a woman could be useful. She will not serve her Fatherland by her head or advice, for *Consilium mulieris est invalidum, pueri imperfectum*, wrote Aristotle ... She cannot render service by the sabre, by strength or courage for she is *Infirmius vasculum*, as the Bible says, a weak

¹⁵ *Znaczna w cnotę matrona Jaśnie wielmożna Pani JMP Anna z Ruśce Lubomirska, Hrabina na Wiśniczcu etc... dnia 3 lutego w Krakowie u św. Trojcy schowana ... od X Jacyntha Mijakowskiego Domnikantna ... Roku Pańskiego 1639 (Her Ladyship Anna Lubomirska, Countess of Wiśnicz, a matron of eminent virtues, etc... buried in the Holy Trinity Church in Cracow on February 3 ... by Father Hiacynt Mijakowski, a Dominican ... Anno Domini 1639).*

¹⁶ Ł. Górnicki, *Dworzanin Polski*, p. 51.

¹⁷ M. Rej, *Żywot*, p. 116.

¹⁸ Quoted after A. Wyrobisz, *Staropolskie wzorce*, p. 409.

¹⁹ J. Janaček, *Błaogłowy rozważnej żywot*, p. 9.

²⁰ *Znaczna w cnotę matrona*, cf. fn. 15.

vessel which rather needs protection from the Commonwealth than is able to protect or serve it". There were, of course, brave, courageous women in Antiquity, such as Deborah, Judith and other women. "But the idea that a woman could render service by the means used by men does not attract me", said Father Mijakowski. "In our Fatherland good repute is enjoyed by a woman who *faecunditate et pia educatione* leaves behind a progeny that can sit on horseback or in a post with dignity, a progeny that can handle a sabre in case of need and use head to give advice ... Happy is the country that has a sufficient number of such women"²¹. Thus a woman's chief virtue was fertility, a vast, well brought-up progeny, in particular brave and wise sons who served their country by their wisdom and sabre. This was an exclusively passive model; the woman herself was of no significance; she was unable to serve her society and her Fatherland' she gained merit only as the mother of the next generation, through the merits of her children and became a *muller virtutis* emitting a light reflected from her offspring. Father Mijakowski's words were echoed in the second half of the 17th century by Father Lorenovic, a Jesuit from Kalisz: "St. Paul, the apostle, says that a pious woman can gain salvation by bearing children, provided she gives them good training and education to ensure that they are steadfast in faith, love of God, purity and soberness. A good mother will deserve salvation by bringing up her children well"²². He believed that her example exerted an influence on the whole house, also on a wider family circle; "a wise woman sets an example of modesty to her husband's home, her children and the servants, she rules everything silently and peacefully and augments the fame and glory of the family". Lorenovic also recalled another virtue, second only to fertility: industriousness. "Flax, wool and linen, cloth, carpets, distaff, the weaving loom, the needle, these are the instruments of a brave woman, the

²¹ *Ibidem*. Cf. also *Trzy matki. Urodzeniem, pobożnością, potomstwem ozdobione ... kazania pogrzebnymi ... do podziwiania i naśladowania podane (Three Mothers. Adorned by their birth, piety and progeny ... cited in funeral orations ... as examples to be admired and imitated)*, Kraków 1644 (anonymous print penned by Mikołaj Kmitya, a Carmelite).

²² *Kazania na niedziele całego roku X Aleksandra Lorencovica Prowincjała Polskiego Societatis Jesu (Sermons for Sundays of a Whole Year by Father Aleksander Lorencovic, Provincial of the Polish Society of Jesus)*, Kalisz 1671, part II, p. 240, part III, p. 147.

achievements of her hand; this is how she can combat idleness, that dreadful enemy”²³.

In the 17th century the words “a brave woman” are more and more frequently used in sermons with reference to women steadfast in faith, practising such matrimonial virtues as modesty, devotion to the family and thrift, women who were bringing up a large progeny well. But in the eyes of society these words had a broader meaning. They were associated with the type of woman that appeared at the end of the 16th century, particularly in the south–eastern territories endangered by the Turks and Tartars, the type of a courageous Amazon who mounts a horse and can wield the sword no worse than a man, a woman who can defend her interests and fight an enemy not with women’s but with men’s weapons. This Polish *virago* had her counterparts in Western Europe. *Femme forte* was glorified in France in the 17th century, *mujer varonil* was lauded in Spain²⁴; *virago* was the heroine of countless dramas and poems²⁵. Mannish women had many opportunities to display their talents. There is a legend about an energetic bride, Beata Dolska, who during her wedding saved the town of Dubno from a Tartar attack (1577); the courageous bride rushed to the ramparts and, having loaded a gun, fired a shot and hit the tent of the khan, who then hastily raised the siege²⁶. The “borderlands’ she–wolf”, Teofila Chmielecka, fought at her husband’s side against Tartars in the 1620s. She also organised forays, was cruel to her servants (she maimed a servant, a noblewoman, Anna Walicka, cutting off her nose); when her son fell in love with a beautiful girl whose father refused to agree to the marriage, she had her abducted and brought the young people to marry forcefully²⁷. Anna Dorota Chrzanowska, wife of the commander of Trembowla, not only roused the defenders of the fortress to action during the siege in 1675 but led them in sallies against the Turks and threatened that she would blow up

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ M. McKendrick, *Women and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age. A Study of the Mujer Varonil*, Cambridge 1974.

²⁵ J. Mac Lean, *Woman Triumphant. Feminism in French Literature 1610–1652*, Oxford 1977.

²⁶ A. Machczyńska, *Kobieta polska (Polish Woman)*, Lwów 1912, p. 22.

²⁷ Z. Kuchowicz, *Wizerunki niepospolitych niewiast staropolskich XVI–XVIII w. (Images of Exceptional Women in Old Poland 16th–18th Centuries)*, Łódź 1972, pp. 194 ff.

the fortress if they capitulated²⁸. Women took up arms in Ukraine during the Chmielnicki uprising, they rose in arms all over the country during the Sedish invasion²⁹. They went beyond their official female roles not only during wars but also in times of peace. We have mentioned the forays and attacks organised by Mrs. Chmielnicka. W. Łoziński shows in his book that there were many women warriors in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; forays and attacks led by women were not a rare occurrence, especially in Ukraine³⁰. A. Gradowska has recently come across an interesting example of awesome family quarrels: Kazimierz Drohojowski, a Volhynian esquire (b. 1740), sued his aunt Antonina Księska, née Drohojowska, for thirty years over the sums bequeathed on his village, Bestwinka. The aunt carried out the court verdict herself, organising a foray on her nephew's house. Drohojowski was shot during the fighting and died of the wounds he had sustained³¹.

Contrary to the official catalogue of women's virtues which recommended modesty, gentleness and submissiveness, the old Polish society admired strong, bellicose women. Jan Chryzostom Pasek writes with approval in his *Diary* about a Mrs. Sułowska, who reviled King John Casimir and then coaxed 2,000 zlotys from the monarch for a birch wood worth no more than 50 zlotys³². This is what the diarist Marcin Matuszewicz wrote with great respect about Helena Ogińska, daughter of the wolevode of Wilno, at the beginning of the 18th century: "a beautiful, wise woman and so strong that she was able to break horseshoes"³³. The rowdy peasant woman, Agnieszka Machówna, wife of the Cossack Zatorski, made a bewildering career; first she married Kollati, an Austrian nobleman, then, the son of the castellan of Sącz Stanisław Rupniewski, and finally the starost of Łuków Kazimierz

²⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 267 ff.

²⁹ K. W. Wójcicki, *Niewiasty polskie. Zarys historyczny (Polish Women. An Historical Outline)*, Warszawa 1845, pp. 129 ff.

³⁰ W. Łoziński, *Prawem i lewem. Obyczaje na Czerwonej Rusi w pierwszej połowie XVII w. (By Hook or by Crook. Customs in Red Ruthenia in the First Half of the 17th Century)*, vol. I-II, Kraków 1957, especially vol. II, *passim*.

³¹ A. Gradowska, *Testamenty szlachty krakowskiej XVI-XVIII w. (The Last Wills of Cracow Nobility 16th-18th Centuries)*, Kraków 1997, pp. 84-87.

³² J. Ch. Pasek, *Pamiętniki (Diary)*, ed. W. Czaplński, Wrocław 1968, pp. 252-255.

³³ M. Matuszkiewicz, *Diariusz życia mego (The Diary of My Life)*, ed. B. Królikowski, Warszawa 1986, vol. II, p. 315.

Domaszewski; unmasked, she was sentenced to tortures and death for polyandry. But the poets Wespazjan Kochowski and Jan Gawiński treated her kindly³⁴.

The *virago* type survived the turbulent 17th century³⁵ and continued to thrive in the 18th century. In the second half of the 18th century, when the Enlightenment and the influence of refined French culture were in full bloom, Teofila Morawska wrote proudly (in 1778) about a hunt in which she had taken part: "I killed three bears, that is, two came out straight at me; my husband slew one, I ran down the other one, and Diufurt killed it before the hounds arrived; the third, a tiny one, was slain by riflemen; they killed 8 elks, I myself finished off one"³⁶. The same lady reported from Wilno the same year: "Two girls, Horodyńska and Krajewska, both of them pretty, had a fight over the first place in a dance ... I don't know but there may be a duel ... There has been another duel, Miss Oranowska challenged Miss Krajewska to a pistol duel at the Pointed Gate. They hardly let themselves be placated". She added with approval: "In fact, in Lithuania even women are now plucky. Bernatowicz should not attack any of them with small arms or he will get hit with a rolling-pin"³⁷.

As it turns out, reality was completely different from the theoretical recommendations of moralists and preachers. Women in old Poland were frequently temperamental persons of an impetuous, vehement, sometimes even adventurous character. They frequently went beyond the role of a submissive wife and virtuous mother also in the field of culture and politics. The 18th century, though it maintained the traditional ideals, also brought a new attitude to women, perhaps as a result of the changes that were taking place in life. This was best expressed by Franciszek Salezy Jezierski, who came out against the motto of "modesty

³⁴ Z. Kuchowicz, *Wizerunki*, pp. 252 ff.

³⁵ The 17th century was a period when a specific kind of transvestism intensified all over Europe; women frequently dressed in men's clothing to conceal their sex and served in the armed forces, the merchant marine, etc. See R. Dekker, L. van de Pol, *Frauen in Männerkleidern. Weibliche Transvestiten und ihre Geschichte*, Berlin 1990. In Poland women as a rule engaged in martial activities quite openly, without a feigned change of sex; this would testify to a greater social acceptance of activities which went beyond the roles ascribed to women.

³⁶ A. Sajkowski, *Staropolska miłość (Love in Old Poland)*, Poznań 1981, p. 336.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 337.

befitting the fair sex”, a motto on the basis of which women were forbidden to appear in a public forum. He said that “man harmed the female sex by taking away the whole burden of shame from one half of humankind and burdening the other half with it, though moral justice should demand equality in this respect”³⁸. This restriction also affected women in the choice of partners. The ill-conceived modesty imposed upon them by society did not allow women to reveal their feelings, “so one half of humankind, the male sex, rules in the kingdom of love, having the right to reveal their feelings, while the other half, the female sex, is doomed to silence and secrecy”³⁹. In view of the fact that the scope of women’s freedom and activity increased visibly in the late 17th and 18th centuries, it can be said that the Enlightenment theory harmonised with reality in everyday life.

As has been shown, old Poland’s model of an ideal woman oscillated amazingly between a “weaker vessel”, a prudent housewife and a *vtrago*. In the catalogue of women’s virtues intellectual qualities were practically non-existent. They were often negatively assessed in nobility circles. In 1639 Father Hiacynt Mi-jakowski wrote: “The world has been pleased to see women famous for their power, wisdom, governance, heart and wit ... but in my opinion these were monsters of their sex, of their complexion, monsters that are not frequently seen in the world”⁴⁰. His words were echoed in 1671 by Father Aleksander Lorencovic, who argued that because of their weak mind and the small authority they enjoyed in the time of the Gospels, Christ debarred women from bearing witness to His resurrection. “Christ, the Lord, did not want women to be witnesses of His resurrection, for the testimony was to be circulated among outsiders, among alien unbelieving people and nations, where women were of no significance. Although He first appeared to them, He did not want to have them as witnesses”⁴¹. Christ only told the women to tell the apostles that they had seen Him, but the apostles did not believe them. The Holy Virgin was not among these women for Jesus did

³⁸ F. S. Jezierski, *Niektóre wyrazy porządkiem abecadła zebrane (Some Words Arranged according to the Alphabet)*, in: *Wybór pism*, ed. Z. Skwarczyński, Warszawa 1952, p. 192.

³⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁰ *Znaczna w cnotę matrona*, cf. fn. 15.

⁴¹ *Kazania na niedziele całego roku* (cf. fn. 22), Part I, p. 7.

not “want her to witness such an insult and disparagement of her reliability”. Father Lorencovic also said that acquaintance with “profound knowledge” was not only useless but even harmful to women. This opinion may have been due to the fact that women’s knowledge was identified with claims to power. Women desirous of power were sharply criticised and rebuked in the West; in Poland, too, though they were sometimes admired, they were regarded as dangerous. “The fair sex wants to rule over the chessboard as the queen rules in chess; it wants to be everywhere, to know everything, to rule, to lead”, said a preacher in 1644⁴². A hundred years later, in 1751, Father Stanisław Witwicki gave the following advice to a young bridegroom: “After the wedding remember that you are the head of your wife. You should rule her and she should love you. Do not forget your calling, do not become a servant. See to it that you do not become the foot when you are the head. There is nothing a woman wants more than to rule. All that she wants as proof of your affection is that you should serve her and that she should give orders. You will perish if your head starts serving the heart, you will be a servant as long as you live. It will be no use to call yourself master when she is the real mistress. Listen to God, so that you won’t have to listen to a woman”⁴³.

Nevertheless, ever since the time of Łukasz Górnicki, who recommended that “a woman should know how to entertain everyone in her company properly and gracefully, in harmony with the place and time” and that “she should know quite a lot of things and be witty”⁴⁴ some people had praised the sagacity and intelligence of women. Admiration for women who were quick at repartee and could drive their interlocutors into a corner can frequently be found in old Polish *facetiae* and anecdotes. These views became even more frequent in the 18th century, when women’s social role increased and their education improved. Many people believed also that a woman should be intelligent to be able to entertain her husband. In her treatise on marriage Franciszka Radziwiłł advised women to diversify amusement and entertainment so that the husband should not get bored with their uniformity and simplicity⁴⁵. 18th century epithalamia grad-

⁴² *Trzy matki*, fn. 21, p. 21.

⁴³ Quoted after Z. Kuchowicz, *Wizerunki*, p. 156.

⁴⁴ Ł. Górnicki, *Dworzanin*, pp. 51 ff.

ually stopped praising only the virtues of the soul and the grace of the body and began to pay attention to the bride's brains⁴⁶. Particularly characteristic is the *Ode on the Wedding of Marianna Pięłowska with August Kicki* (1786):

Since from a wise woman she received her training,
 She has her mother's virtues and will do her part.
 She will be a good wife and will not be feigning
 She'll love you truly with an undivided heart.
 The good upbringing which she at home acquired
 Will tell her how fittingly to entertain you,
 And since deep knowledge she has always admired,
 She'll tackle many problems as well as you do⁴⁷.

The 18th century, especially its second half when Poland abounded with well-read emancipated women who played first fiddle at the royal court and in magnates' palaces, women who in a conversation often surpassed men by their sharp wit and intelligence, naturally brought changes in the model of a perfect, ideal woman. These changes in patterns were, of course, slower than those which occurred in real life, they had to wait longer for general acceptance; nevertheless, the reality of life could not but exert an influence on mentality, on imagination and ideals, first among the élites and later among wider social circles.

(Translated by Janina Dorosz)

⁴⁵ Cf. A. Sajkowski, *Staropolska miłość*, p. 260.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Oda do Anny Lipskiej, kasztelanek Łęczyckiej, 25.11.1787 w czasie jej ślubowin* (Ode to Anna Lipska, Daughter of the Castellan of Łęczyca, on Her Wedding Day 25.11.1787), Warszawa 1787.

⁴⁷ *Oda na akt ślubny J.W. Imć Pana Augusta Kickiego asesora, sekretarza JKM z Panną Marianną z Pięłowskich Kowalkowską miecznikową nowogrodzką, 5.3.1786* (Ode on the Wedding of the Honorable August Kicki, Assessor, Secretary to His Majesty, with Mrs. Marianna Kowalkowska, née Pięłowska, Widow of the Sword-Bearer of Nowogród, 5.3.1786), Lublin.