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SPACE AND TIME AS FACTORS SHAPING POLISH MENTALITY FROM THE 16TH UNTIL THE 18TH CENTURY

Much has been said and written about the specific character of the old Polish mentality and its dissimilarity from that of the inhabitants of other European countries, but less attention has been paid to its genesis; as a rule, this is attributed to the differences between the "countries of Martha" (Protestant) and "the countries of Mary" (Catholic). These differences were pointed out in France some time ago by A. Peyrefitte;[1] *nota bene*, they had already been noticed by such researchers as M. Weber and R. H. Weber and R. H. Tawney.[2] In this study I would like to consider other factors which contributed to this mentality, namely, the specific time-and-space circumstance which constitutes the framework of social development and the base for the formation of specific traits of both group and individual mentality. Another important factor is the internal differentiation of this time-and-space entity, resulting from the diversity of the component regions and ethnic structures; no less important are the external conditions, that is, the crossing of both western and oriental, eastern influences in this space-and-time entity, since it lay at the meeting point of two cultural systems.

Let us start with space. At the threshold of the 16th century the Polish state (including the Grand Duchy of Lithuania but excluding fiefs) covered an area of 1,115,000 square km. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth stretched over an enormous territory which was difficult to conceive and difficult to master in the technical conditions of those days. Let us recall that in the first half of the 16th century France

[1] A. Peyrefitte, *Le mal français*, Paris 1976.

[2] M. Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, Berlin 1964–65; R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, 1 ed. London 1926.

had an area of only 440,000 sq km, the German Reich 420,000 sq km, Austria (together with Bohemia and western Hungary) 300,000 sq km, and England 260,000 sq km. In this respect only the Ottoman Empire stood comparison with the Commonwealth, its European part having 820,000 sq km in the 16th century.[3] The vastness of its territory was a serious impediment to the efficient functioning of the state at the threshold of the modern era and in consequence, to its strength; many historians regard this vastness as an important reason for the degeneration of the Polish state organism in the 17th and 18th centuries. The efficient governing of such an enormous country was impossible, given the primitive ways of travel and communication of those times.

This vast space, inconceivable to the people of those days, could not but affect the character and mentality of its inhabitants, all the more so, as settlement was not dense.[4] At the turn of the16th century, the density of population in the Commonwealth was 6–7 persons per square kilometer, that is, far fewer than in Western Europe (France had 28 persons per sq km, Germany 20, England 15). Moreover, this density was very uneven: alongside the regions where the network of towns and villages was dense, alongside Royal Prussia with its large towns and the relatively densely populated Little Poland and Great Poland (where the density of population in some regions was even as high as 15 persons per square kilometer), there were the enormous almost uninhabited expanses in the east, in Lithuania and in the so-called borderlands: wastelands, marshes, forests, steppes, where settlements were thinly scattered and were frequently isolated from one another by a journey of several days. Such isolated settlements had for centuries lived their own life and many of them had very rare and weak contacts with the outside world. This could not but affect the mentality and customs of the inhabitants and make them even more dependent on local geographical and natural conditions. As a result, the Commonwealth was a conglomerate of strongly individualized regions. The landscape as well as people's lives, their way of dressing, the traditional ways of house building, the types of occupation, pronunciation and the customary rules of behaviour bore an individual stamp. The people at the foot of the Tatra Mountains,

[3] A. Wyczański, *Polska w Europie XVI stulecia (Poland in 16th Century Europe)*, Warszawa 1973, pp. 13 ff.

[4] *Cf. Historia Polski w liczbach. Terytorium, ludność (Poland's History in Figures. Territory, Population)*, Part I, Chief Statistical Office, Warszawa August 1990, pp. 12 ff.

linked with the mountains and livestock breeding, differed even physically from the Mazurians living on vast agricultural plains and from the Kashubians settled on the Baltic coast and engaged in fishing, coastal navigation and the gathering of amber. In the marshes and forests of Polesie, life was different from that in the boundless south-eastern steppe expanses, significantly named Wild Fields, where the luxuriant grass could conceal a rider with his horse.

Alongside the regional differences, there were also ethnic and religious differences. In addition to the Poles, Lithuanians and Ruthenians, the multinational state was inhabited by many national minorities: Germans, Jews, Armenians, Walloons, Italians and Tartars, who differed in speech, religion, customs and frequently also in outward appearance (dress). The religious mosaic was extremely colourful. In addition to Roman Catholics and Orthodox believers, the Commonwealth had, from the Middle Ages, been inhabited by Moslems, Jews and Karaites; various groups of the Reformation as well as Uniates appeared in the 16th century. The proximity and coexistence of such diversified ethnic and religious groups naturally meant contacts between various traditions, mental attitudes, ways of life and behaviour. This diversity could not but affect the mentality which was being shaped at that time.

Poland's specific character was also due to the fact that lying on the outskirts, where "Latin" Europe met with Eastern Europe and indirectly with the Orient, it was an area through which differing currents and influences passed. In addition to the influence of scientific, artistic and literary currents from France, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands, the Commonwealth was influenced no less strongly by oriental currents, starting with those having an effect on Poland's material culture (dress, interior decorations) to those affecting the language and the way of life. This was a result of both coexistence and fighting.[5] The oriental elements were blended into the Polish cultural mosaic in an uneven way. They were undoubtedly stronger in the eastern voivodships than in Great Poland or Royal Prussia, and this further deepened the old regional differentiation.

However, alongside the factors causing the great diversity in culture and customs, there was an important unifying element which gave old

[5] M. Bogucka, *La noblesse polonaise face à l'Orient: entre la fascination et l'effroi (XVIe–XVIIIe ss)*, in: *L'histoire à Nice. Actes du colloque franco-polonais d'histoire*, Nice 1983, vol. III, pp. 17–28.

Polish culture and mentality a basic, general, uniform character. This was the fact that the whole country was agricultural, irrespective of all the other differences. The Commonwealth of the Gentry was a farming country with an overwhelming majority of the rural farming, which lived on the land, in the countryside, and was directly linked with Nature through its exploitation and the fact of being dependent on its whims. The urban population at that time is estimated to have accounted for 20% of the total (this percentage was much higher in some West European countries; it was about 50% in Italy and the Netherlands).[6] Moreover, Polish urbanization was of a specific character. There were only a few large towns of the western type in Poland; most towns were small urban centres with from 500 to 1,000 inhabitants, with wooden houses, similar to those in the countryside, scattered amidst the gardens and plots cultivated by the majority of the inhabitants.[7] It is therefore difficult to regard the Polish urban population as genuine town dwellers of the western type. So it can be assumed that over 90% of the population was linked with agriculture and livestock breeding and lived in accordance with the natural rhythm of the seasons, which determined their existence and their world outlook.

Researchers say that the area under cultivation greatly increased in the 16th and 17th centuries.[8] This meant a reduction in the area of forests, which also decreased as a result of the floating of timber to Gdańsk and its export, and the processing of timber into charcoal and wood-ash. The diminution of forests led to the extinction of some animal species (e.g. aurochs died out at the beginning of the 17th century) and to changes in the hydrography and the microclimate, and this, in turn, resulted in more frequent floods and local bad crop calamities. But these changes, discernible from a researcher's perspective, were imperceptible to the people of those days. The travellers visiting Poland in the 16th and 17th centuries admired both her vast fertile fields and her forests full of animals of all kinds. The Polish forests

[6] M. Bogucka, H. Samsonowicz, *Dzieje miast i mieszczaństwa w Polsce przedrozbiorowej (The History of Towns and Townsmen in Pre-Partition Poland)*, Wrocław 1986, pp. 357 ff.

[7] *Ibidem*.

[8] *Zarys historii gospodarstwa wiejskiego w Polsce (An Outline of the History of Rural Economy in Poland)*, vol. II, Warszawa 1964, p. 32.

were in fact larger, denser and wilder than the West European woods, which were greatly thinned out in places owing to the density of population.

To the men of those times Nature seemed to be not only unchanging. In was ominous, mysterious, but also a life-giving power. The fields produced food for the people, the meadows gave nourishment to the herds of cattle, the woods provided food of various kinds and served as a refuge during an attack. Dependence on Nature was reflected in the fear of bad crops and floods and even of an ordinary storm or lightning.[9] The weather was observed attentively: frost or a mild winter, rain or the lack of it, a heat wave and drought are frequently mentioned in the diaries, family annals and correspondence of those days. Scholars frequently tend to ignore these references, regarding them as boring and inessential. But they are important proof of the strong ties linking the people of those times with the life of Nature. Above all the middle gentry and the peasants communed with Nature day in day out and felt themselves to be a part of it. Jan Chryzostom Pasek, a 17th century diarist who had led a soldier's life for a long time, changed the style of his reminiscences when he settled down in the countryside and took up farming; he began to eagerly note down whether the winter was cold or not, when the meadows grew green and in which month ploughing was started.[10] Even more characteristic is Jan Antoni Chrapowicki's diary dating from the middle of the 17th century. In his seemingly dull diary, Chrapowicki, a nobleman living in the Podlasie region, scrupulously described the caprices of Nature going on before his eyes. Let us not belittle this monotonous litany, for this is a reflection of man's mysterious communion with Nature, so typical of the old ages when the wind, rain, frost and sweltering heat were direct elements of human existence. Chrapowicki observes the sky and the earth every day and in his short sentences displays great sensitivity to what is happenig in Nature, revealing his intimate, almost physical, ties with the world of

[9] This fear is also reflected in the diaries of townsmen; cf. the diary of Michael Hancke, a municipal clerk in Gdańsk in the first half of the 17th century. The Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Gdańsk, MS 915, pp. 101–102, and the diary of Ernest von der Linde, a Gdańsk patrician from the middle of the 17th century, Gdańsk Archives, 300, R/LI 69, pp. 2b, 3b, 6a ff.

[10] Jan Chryzostom Pasek, *Pamiętniki (Diaries)*, ed. by W. Czapliński, Wrocław 1968, pp. 475, 490, 556.

natural phenomena surrounding him. "Beautiful weather, frost, calm... The last quarter of the lunar period", he writes on 18th January 1656, and on March 6th he notes down: "Cold in the morning, snow, foul, rainy weather." March 20th: "Frost, cold, it snowed, then a strong wind, bad weather. Spring has begun, the equinox." April comes and the new season triumphs: "Rain in the morning," he writes on April 14th, "then good weather, but from the south there came wind, rain and heavy hail, with the first thunder in this spring." Three days later, in spite of the constantly changing weather, the victory of reviving Nature could already be felt. "Good weather in the morning, rain and thunder at noon, and heavy rain in the evening. Swallows have appeared. Have been in the fields." May follows and on the second day of that month Chrapowicki jots down: "Dew at night, cool, beautiful weather during the day, very warm. Have been in the fields." As the notes show, he spent many hours a day walking in the fields (he may have been inspecting field work) in spite of the changing weather. "Rain in the morning, then a cool wind, small cloudlets formed into clouds," he notes on May 7th. June and July are an alternation of hot and cool, cloudy or even rainy days. August brings a heat wave, though there is also rain, which often falls at night or in the morning. "There was some rain at night, cool in the morning, then warm, good weather," writes Chrapowicki on August 23rd. September augurs the end of summer: "fog in the morning, cold, it rained, then good weather," we read under the date of September 7th. October comes with beautiful weather alternating with ever sharper cold. On October 14th it is already "very frosty and the ground is frozen;" on October 28th "it began to snow at night and much snow fell in the daytime." November opens the door to real winter; Chrapowicki writes of ground frost and on November 7th and 8th he notes "sharp frost at night", but the weather is still good in the daytime. December means winter in full. On December 2nd, Chrapowicki writes down: "Snow fell at night and the day was windy. Have been in the fields." Cold and snow do not interrupt his walks in the fields. December 11th: "Warm, windy. Have been in the fields where my swift greyhound bitch broke her neck when chasing a hare. It began to freeze from noon and there was severe frost at night." At Christmas "bitter frost came" and heavy snowfalls, but about New Year's Day "it thawed and sleeted." Weather watching, wanderings in the fields on horseback or on foot, with dogs, hunting now and again, such was Chrapowicki's style of life.

As a result of this routine Nature assumes the rank of the principal hero in his diary.[11]

The country-based gentry did not like towns. Magnates and the more prosperous noblemen liked to have a residence in town for their own convenience, to have a pied-à-terre when they attended a dietine, had to go to court or settle some economic matters, but they usually tried to limit their stay in town. As an example let us mention the Sarmatian king, John III Sobieski, who escaped from Warsaw whenever he could and built three country residences on its outskirts (Wilanów, Marywil and Marymont) to avoid the urban way of life. According to writers with a gentry background, the town was "a nest of knavery and lies", a place full of noise, foul stench and crowds, a swindlers' market and a haunt of vice.[12] At the same time they idealized the country and the farmer's life. A current of poetry eulogizing the countryside and the agricultural activities began to develop in Poland, starting with the Renaissance writers Mikołaj Rej (*The Life of an Honest Man*) and Jan Kochanowski (*Song of St. John's Eve*). "The Omnipotent God Himself had established this way of life," said J. K. Haur in the 17th century.[13]

The agricultural way of life and its close ties with Nature had important consequences: they developed individualism and the sense of privacy, and gave the noblemen the possibility of being as free as air, of living according to their likes and dislikes. In the vast territories of the Commonwealth, in thousands of manor houses, big and small, everybody led the way of life he liked best, lived with his family in accordance with the rhythm of the seasons and his own fancy, uncontrolled (as long as he was of the noble origin), by anybody. "A master in his home ... no orders ring in his ears," this is how Jan Gawiński described the life of a Polish nobleman in the second half of the 17th century.[14]

The agricultural way of life and close ties with Nature had also important consequences for attitude to the second — alongside space — basic category of the human existence: time. In the 16th, 17th and

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[11] Jan Antoni Chrapowicki, *Diariusz (Diary)*, ed. by T. Wasilewski, Warszawa 1978, pp. 82–109.

[12] *Cf.* M. Bogucka, *L'attrait de la culture nobiliaire? Sarmatisation de la bourgeoisie polonaise au XVIIe s.* "Acta Poloniae Historica", XXXIII, 1976, pp. 23–42.

[13] *Cf. Staropolska poezja ziemiańska (Old Polish Landowners' Poetry)*, ed. by J.S. Gruchała and S. Grzeszczuk, Warszawa 1988, p. 29.

[14] *Ibidem* p. 26.

18th centuries time was to a large extent regarded in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as cyclic, as a constantly recurring rotation of the seasons and holidays woven into them (the liturgical year consisting of a cyclic recurrence of sacral events). The life of the individual and the existence of entire generations were subordinated to this cyclic movement. This typical farmer's time predominates in *The Life of an Honest Man*, a Renaissance work by Mikołaj Rej; according to the writer, human life is almost painlessly woven into the cycle of Nature, the phases of life change like the seasons; Rej's philosophical picture of man's existence is serene and harmonious. "The years of man run like the year," says Rej. "Gone is the spring of your flourishing youth... gone is the summer of your warm middle age... cool autumn, when everything ripens, has come upon you... You are no longer waiting for anything except for the peaceful winter in order to rest from all your labours."[15] The natural course of things — their transitoriness, their fugacity, is the fate of not only plants, but also of man. The writer explains to the reader: "You see that the moon must constantly change and renew itself... the earth too must sometimes become green, sometimes yellow, it must sometimes get burnt and at other times become soggy, it must also get frozen and hard as iron... and why should you be an exception, my dear brother, when you see that the sky, the earth, the multiple planets, the seasons and all events must go on according to order until the end of the world."[16] Having passed like the seasons, the human life described by Rej flows peacefully into eternal rest, without haste, against which Rej warns his reader for haste "robs us of time". This course of events is so natural, so general in the order of the world, that it should arouse neither surprise nor dissent. "Have you not already lived through the comely spring of your green youth? Have you not already lived through that delightful summer and autumn... through that gay and graceful middle age? And now that you have already come to the winter, to your cooler time, why should you not make use of your charming little room, like that good husbandman who having filled his home with all the necessities in summer and autumn, now enjoys things in his warm dwelling?"[17]

[15] M. Rej, *Zwierciadlo (The Mirror)*, ed. by J. Czubek and J. Łoś, prefaced by I. Chrzanowski, Kraków 1914, vol. II, p. 41.

[16] *Ibidem*, pp. 126–127.

[17] *Ibidem*, p. 127.

This serene philosophical attitude to the passing of human life, conceived as a part of Nature, breaks down in the poetry of Jan Kochanowski, 25 years younger than Rej. Representing the next generation, Kochanowski feels the passage of time in a different, more dramatic way; the parallel between the cycle of Nature and human life grows weaker in his poems. What is more, the poet emphasizes the difference between the rules governing the world of Nature and those applying to man, complaining that only the deer "can grow new horns;" while man "once his youth is past, this is for all time."[18] In another place he says:

Time does not allow anything to last
It brings everything and takes away all from us...[19]

Kochanowski's perplexities lead like a footpath to a new perception of time manifest at the end of the 16th century in the works of Mikołaj Sęp Szarzyński and then in the works of Baroque poets in the 17th century. A more modern, "western", linear conception of time with its tragic irreversibility makes its appearance and even gets the upper hand. For Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski, one of the most prominent representatives of the Polish Baroque, human life is completely separated from the cycle of Nature and is governed by different, more merciless laws, passing quickly and irreversibly. "The snow which fetters the valleys today" will melt again, but the hoar covering man's head means irreversible old age.[20]

For Sarbiewski the time of human life is a linear time, made up of an unrepeatable chain of events, running fatalistically according to a pre-ordained fate: "The *Parcae* do not unravel what has been spun quickly for mortals."[21] For the poet, time seems to be a powerful destructive force governing the world and pushing everything that exists towards inexorable destruction. "Time turns large towns into a wasteland, destroys nations more effectively than the sword," says Sarbiewski.[22] His thoughts are echoed in nearly identical words by Jan

[18] J. Kochanowski, *Dzieła polskie (Works in Polish)*, ed. by J. Krzyżanowski, Warszawa 1972, p. 258.

[19] *Ibidem*, pp. 573–574.

[20] M.K. Sarbiewski, *Liryki (Lyrics)*, translated by T. Karylowski TJ, ed. by M. Korolko in collaboration with J. Okoń, Warszawa 1980, p. 101.

[21] *Ibidem*, pp. 27–28.

[22] *Ibidem*, p. 29.

Andrzej Morsztyn: "Time destroys everything, everything will change with time, the glory of treasures and stones will vanish..."[23] How far the people of the Baroque had departed from the serene philosophy of the times of Rej is clearly visible in old Polish poetry.

However, if a break was to be effected in the cyclic perception of time, typical of an agricultural society, and if its linear dramatic conception was to be popularized among broad circles, not only among the poetic intellectual élite, great progress in civilization, especially in the technical field, had to occur. As a result of her urban backwardness, Poland was entering the road of technical changes in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries much more slowly than the other European countries. The appearance of mechanical clocks on the towers of Polish town halls was a real revolution; they became popular only in the 16th century and then were to be seen not only in the largest towns (Cracow, Poznań, Gdańsk), but also in those of medium size (like Gniezno and Przemyśl). Even more important was the appearance and popularization of household clocks and then of pocket watches, which did not become popular in Poland until the 17th century.[24] As a result of the general use of clocks and watches, the concept of time was made more precise and became, as in the West, a socio-economic value. The requirements of time were encountered first and foremost in towns, where many people were employed as hired workers, receiving payment for some defined period of time (a year, a month, a week, a day). The statutes of journeymen frequently established the daily work hours, sometimes even specifying the length of the break for a meal.[25] What contributed to an accurate definition of time was the development of credit and money operations, since the rate of interest depended on the length of the loan and the debt had to be paid back on time. The floating of agricultural

[23] J.A. Morsztyn, *Utwory zebrane (Collected Works)*, ed. by L. Kukulski, Warszawa 1971, pp. 140–141.

[24] M. Bogucka, *Uwagi o postrzeganiu czasu w Rzeczypospolitej w XVI–XVII w. (Remarks on the Perception of Time in the Commonwealth in the 16th and 17th Centuries)*, in: *Stosunek do czasu w różnych strukturach kulturowych (Attitude to Time in Different Cultural Structures)*, ed. by Z. Cackowski and J. Wojczakowski, Warszawa 1987, p. 358.

[25] *Cf.* M. Bogucka, *Gdańsk jako ośrodek produkcyjny w XIV — pierwszej połowie XVII w. (Gdańsk as a Production Centre from the 14th to the First Half of the 17th Century)*, Warszawa 1962, pp. 332 ff.

and forestry products down the Vistula to Gdańsk, which was very common in Poland from the 16th until the 18th century, attracted increasing numbers of noblemen, townsmen and even peasants to the commodity economy and thereby strengthened the sense of time. The price depended on how quickly the product was delivered to the market, and since many contracts were for standing corn which was to be supplied later to Gdańsk, there were fines for late deliveries; each day of delay could be assessed in terms of money.[26] The development of the courts of law and parliamentary practice also required a greater sense of time among broad social circles. The various courts (first instance, district and municipal courts, and tribunals from the end of the 16th century), had a more or less strictly observed calendar of cases. The demand that the debates of the Sejm and the dietines should open punctually (which met with a differing response) also popularized reference not only to days, but even to concrete hours as marks in the broad, lazily flowing time of people used to the rural way of life.

In the 16th century the almanac became popular in noblemen's houses, all the more so as it included various interesting items and prognostications (a trick used until this day)[27]. The conception of the hour became more precise, the Poles following in this respect the example of the West. The ecclesiastical *horae canonicae* announcing the time of prayer to the neighbourhood by bell ringing had already in the 15th century given birth to the secular hour as a measure of time. Its length became uniform in the 15th century, and in the 16 th century, when the 12-hour clock system appeared (the so-called half clock) the day began to be reckoned not from sunset, which occurred at various times, depending on the season, but from midnight; this introduced order into the division into successive days. Another proof that after the example of the West the conception of time was becoming more and more precise in Poland is the increasingly exact definition of age (the date of birth as well as of death). As late as the end of the 16th century, witnesses in court cases in Warsaw stated their age and the occurrence of past events in rough approximation: " I am about 60", "that was in the

[26] M. Bogucka, *Gdańskie kontrakty zbożowe w pierwszej połowie XVII w. (Gdańsk's Grain Contracts in the First Half of the 17th Century)*, "Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej", 1969, No. 4, pp. 711–719.

[27] *Cf.* B. Rok, *Kalendarze polskie czasów saskich (Polish Calendars in Saxon Times)*, Wrocław 1985; for an outline of the history of calendars and their use see pp. 10 ff.

year when His Majesty went to Sweden for the coronation."[28] Precise information became increasingly frequent in the 17th century; not only the year but also the month, the day and even the hour were stated. For instance, in his diary Stanisław Oświęcim noted on March 27, 1645 that the Sejm had broken up "at three o'clock in the afternoon;" on June 15, 1645, he put down that Katarzyna Koniecpolska had died "between three and four o'clock in the afternoon."[29] In the second half of the 17th century, quarters of the hour and even minutes began to be taken into account.[30]

Nevertheless, such an important event in the social conception of time as the Gregorian calendar reform passed almost without emotion and discussion in Poland,[31] while in the West it led to disturbances in some countries; the Protestant countries in particular, delayed the introduction of the new calendar for a long time (Britain did not introduce it until 1732).[32] As early as July 1582, King Stephen Batory issued appropriate orders[33] to this effect and they were accepted without resistance.[34] The reform was unopposed in large towns (Cracow,

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[28] M. Bogucka, *Warszawa w latach 1526–1720 (Warsaw in 1526–1720)* in: *Warszawa w latach 1526–1795 (Warsaw in 1526–1795)*, ed. by A. Zahorski, Warszawa 1983, p. 131.

[29] *Stanislawa Oświęcima dyariusz 1643–1651 (Stanislaw Oświęcim's Diary 1643–1651)*, ed. by J. Czermak, Kraków 1907, p. 74.

[30] *Cf.* M. Hancke's *Diary, op. cit.*, p. 168.

[31] There are mistakes on this subject in some Western publications. For instance, M. Gatineau, *Le temps*, Paris 1968, pp. 11 ff. says that Poland did not adopt the reform until 1586 and that this caused disturbances. The wrong dating of the Gregorian reform in Poland had already been corrected in the 19th century, *cf.* A. Wejnert, *Sprostowanie błędu co do wprowadzenia kalendarza gregoriańskiego w Polsce (The Correction of the Error concerning the Introduction of the Gregorian Calendar in Poland)*, "Biblioteka Warszawska", 1865, vol. I, pp. 497–507, and also F. Bostl, *Zur gregorianischen Kalendarreform in Polen*, "Mitteilungen des Instituts für Oesterreichische Geschichte", 1989, vol. VI, pp. 626–632.

[32] *Cf.* M. Gatineau, *op. cit.*, pp. 11 ff.

[33] A copy of such an order is preserved in the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Gdańsk, MS uph. fol. 26, p. 31.

[34] The Ossolineum Library in Wrocław has some calendars for the years 1554–1600, published in Cologne in 1570, with marginal notes by the owner, an unknown nobleman, courtier of King Sigismund Augustus. The entry for October 1582 contains a laconic mention: *Hoc Anno calendarium reformatum.* After that the owner made appropriate changes by hand on the margin, giving the new numbers for the church festivities and other days in accordance with the reform. None of the marginal notes on important events indicates that the owner was in any way upset by the reform. The *Chronicle of Stephen Batory's Reign 1575–1582*, edited by H. Barycz, Kraków 1939, does not mention the reform either.

Warsaw), even in Protestant Gdańsk. It seems that Poland, an agricultural country in which hired labour played an insignificant role in the economy and credit operations were weakly developed, accepted the reform with indifference. The new system of dating was introduced into the acts of first instance and district courts by December 1582.[35] The General Sejm held in Warsaw in the autumn of that year used already the new dating (13 instead of 5 October).[36] The calendar disturbances which took place in Riga (1582–1586) had a political-religious foundation and were linked with the struggle waged by the Protestant townsmen against the Jesuits who had just been brought into the town.[37] One can therefore presume that the gentry and townsmen in Poland accepted the new calendar, that is, the new way of counting time, with some indifference. The Gregorian calendar was, however, not adopted by the Orthodox Ruthenians living in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Was this due to religious considerations (the Orthodox Church rejected the reform until the 20th century) or was this a political manifestation of national and cultural distinctness, defence against the polonization of behaviour and attitudes which was taking place in the entire territory of the enormous Polish state? The vehement polemics militate in favour of the second interpretation; the echoes of these disputes can be found in the gentry's 17th century family annals,[38] indicating that it was then that the question of the calendar began to preoccupy public opinion in the Commonwealth, though in a context different from that in the West of Europe.

To sum up let us state that despite some changes in this field. "agricultural time" still prevailed in the Commonwealth in the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries; it was linked more closely with the rhythm of the seasons and changes in Nature than with the mechanical clock or the calendar. The noblemen using them during parliamentary sessions,

[35] *Cf.* W. Budka, *Pierwsze zastosowanie kalendarza gregoriańskiego w aktach grodzkich i ziemskich dawnego województwa krakowskiego (The First Use of the Gregorian Calendar in the Town and District Acts of the Former Cracow Voivodship)*, "Archeion", vol. III, 1928, pp. 30–34.

[36] A Wejnert, *op. cit.*, p. 504.

[37] *Cf.* S. Załęski, *Jezuici w Polsce (The Jesuits in Poland)*, vol. IV, Part I, Kraków 1905, pp. 252 ff.

[38] See in particular, the frequently copied *Discurs o Wielkiejnocy greckiej, w pięć niedziel po Rzymskiej przypadającej (Discourse on the Greek Easter Falling Five Sundays after the Roman One)*, (1641), Czartoryski Library in Cracow, Rps 1657, Mf 9163, pp. 145 ff.

economic contacts and sojourns in town, in their homes usually reverted to the rhythm of life tested by their ancestors, with the season-depending sunrise, sunset and climatic changes as the natural framework of their existence. For the largest social group in the Polish territories, the peasants, the sound of church bells and the sun continued to tell the time of day. The new conception of time triumphed among the intelectual élites and in towns, but the weakness of the latter created insurmountab-le barriers also in this respect. So in the end the old Polish mentality developed in the traditional forms of time, typical of agricultural societies inclined to take a cyclic view of it, disliking haste and a tragic conception of human fate.

Time and space, the two principal frames within which the existence of both individuals and entire societies takes place, were thus very specific categories in the Commonwealth, if compared with the rest of Europe. The typical entities in Western Europe were relatively small densely populated state organisms with a large percentage of the population crammed in the towns and engaged in non-agricultural occupations (industry, trade, services). This necessarily meant early changes in the perception of time as an important socio-economic category and also strict social discipline, unification and rationalization of behaviour. This was what the strong state authority, constantly improving its control apparatus, was seeking.

In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth the vast territory, the sparse population, the agricultural way of life of the majority of the inhabitants, the interlocking of man's life with the rhythm of Nature, all this shaped different forms of life and a characteristic mentality and created conditions which contributed to the unrepeatable conduct of both individuals and entire social groups. The wide breath of space, combined with the weakness of the central authority and the practically non-existent state structures in the provinces, favoured decentralization (also cultural), individualism, behavioural diversity (old Polish fancies), and also "life on the loose", devoid of haste and excessive effort.

(Translated by Janina Dorosz)