

Foreign Collections In Poland: A Historical Overview

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Persica: A Brief History of Polish-Persian Relations through Documents from the National Library

Abstract The author describes the vicissitudes of Polish-Persian contacts as recorded in documents from the National Library in Warsaw. Among the works discussed are travel accounts, memoirs, translations of literary works, studies on the language and culture of Persia and Iran, and early prints.

From the 10th century onwards, Polish merchants, travellers and adventurers joined Jewish caravans and Arab traders moving across Poland, and eventually reached the Near- and Middle East, Mongolian territories, China and India. As pilgrims or crusaders they travelled in Palestine, Syria and Egypt. Poland was also a corridor for eastward-bound missionaries and envoys of the Holy See.

In the 14th century the world of Islam fell under the domination of Ottoman Turks, who after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 emerged as a military power capable of posing a serious threat to Christian Europe.

Accession to the Persian throne by the Safavid Dynasty in 1502 and the establishment of Shiite Islam as a state religion raised hopes in European countries that Persia might be induced to participate in a joint campaign against Sunnite Turkey - here the search for a safe land route to the Far East was not a negligible factor. The new shah, Abbas I The Great, who extended the system of defence against robbers preying on the caravan trade routes, allowed thousands of Armenians (the victims of religious persecution) to settle in Persia, a move which led to the establishment of Catholic missionaries.

The journeys were also westbound: the mid-15th century chronicle of Jan Dugosz, for example, mentions the first envoys of the Persian shah Uzum Hassan to Poland. The legation then continued on to Venice, which was engaged at the time in the formation of an anti-Turkish coalition.

The crusades, along with the comings and goings of merchants, diplomats and missionaries, enhanced the interest of Europeans in the langua-

ges, philosophy and literature of the East. As Barbara Majewska states, 'The 12th century was (...) a turning point to some extent, giving rise to thematic divisions in the types of writing and literature associated with the Muslim East: scientific literature (natural sciences and philosophy); political and religious texts with a polemical intent; travellers' accounts (peregrinations and legations), as well as historiography and descriptions of the political events of the time; literary works about the struggle between the Muslim and the Christian world; translations and adaptations of oriental, chiefly popular, fiction; and literary prose and poetry, in which oriental motifs, stories and forms are used'.¹ Eastern learning began to reach Poland in the 13th century, chiefly through Latin translations; and through literary works from the 15th century onwards, also mostly by means of Western-European adaptations. And obviously, information about the East (both Persian and Turkish-Tartar) could also be gleaned from the accounts of Polish travellers and diplomatic envoys.

The collection of documents concerning Persia held at the National Library largely represents the nature and quality of Polish relations with the East from the Middle Ages to the present day. The collection covers Persian works, in translation and in the original, accounts by Western and - in particular - Polish travellers (though only a few of the latter have survived).

The travel account is *Relacya (...) obywatela warszawskiego od Zygmunta III, krola polskiego, do sprawowania rzeczy wyslanego w Persyi w roku 1602...* [Account (...) by a Warsaw Citizen Sent by Sigismund III, the Polish King,

to Handle Matters in Persia in 1602...] by Sefer Muratowicz, an Armenian merchant and supplier to the royal court. As Jan Reychman writes, 'He did not officially set out as a diplomatic envoy but his mission, camouflaged as a regular business trip, was designed to explore the possibility of strengthening diplomatic ties with Iran - not only by Poland, but also by the Roman curia. His task, directly related to examining the situation in Iran and studying its military power, was part of a larger diplomatic project aimed at inducing Iran to participate in an anti-Turkish coalition'.²

After a voyage that took him through Wallachia, Erzerum, Kashan and Isfahan, Muratowicz finally arrived at the court of Shah Abbas I, who presented him with a declaration of friendship addressed to the Polish monarch. The commercial aims of the journey were not forgotten, however, and so Muratowicz acquired for the royal court in Poland carpets embroidered with gold and silk (ordered in Kashan), precious stones, weapons and tents. His *Relacya...* survived until our times only as an extract recorded in the 18th century and added to *Otia Domestica*, a work by Kazimierz Ignacy Niesiolowski published in 1743.³ The National Library's collection contains an edition of the *Relacya...* which was republished in 1777 by Jozef E. Minasowicz from a manuscript donated (before 1757) by Niesiolowski to another Polish traveller - a Jesuit, Tadeusz Krusiński (shelfmarks BN. XVIII.1.828 adl.; BN XVIII.1.6989; (1777)).

A copy of the latter edition was also kept at the library of King Stanisław August Poniatowski. It can be currently found at the Ukraine National Library in Kiev (shelfmark XXXIII.K.8 Reg. X, 810a).

A more recent part of the National Library collection, on the other hand, contains an edition of the *Relacya...* of 1807⁴ and a contemporary one, dated 1980.⁵ In the introduction to the later edition, Adam Walaszek provides the following commentary to Muratowicz's account: 'The text is not only worth recalling as the first account of a trip to Persia by a Polish memoirist. It also represents a significant source of information on customs in the capital of the land of the lion' and on the artistic weaving industry⁶

Upon his return from Isfahan, King Sigismund III Vasa conferred on Muratowicz the title of 'servitor ac negotiator', excluding him from the jurisdiction of ordinary courts. In addition, Muratowicz

was made the exclusive purveyor of oriental goods to the royal court.

Muratowicz's expedition was the first of a series of political-diplomatic missions to and from Persia. In 1605, after the end of the Turkish-Persian war, the Polish capital hosted a legation headed by Mehdi Kuli ben Turkman, the aim of which was to bring together Persia, Poland and other European countries in an anti-Turkish alliance. In 1609, another group of envoys, this time headed by an Englishman, Robert Sherley appeared before the Polish parliament (the Sejm) in Warsaw and in Cracow. Plans for joint action against the Turks are referred to in a poem by Wawrzyniec Chlebowski *Tręba pobudki ziemie perskiej do wszystkich narodów chrześcijan-kich przeciw Mochametanom* [!] [Reveille Trumpet in the Persian Land to All Christian Nations Rising Against the Muslims], Cracow, 1608, available at the National Library in microfilm.

Due to ongoing peace negotiations with Turkey in Istanbul, Sigismund III Vasa did not assume the role proposed by the Persians. In spite of this, he continued to receive Persian delegations and envoys on their way to the West of Europe. The letters brought to the Polish king have been partially preserved in the Central Archives of Historical Records (AGAD) in Warsaw.

The first half of the 17th century, with its recurrent plans for establishing an anti-Turkish league, witnessed the attempts of several subsequent Polish kings to develop closer ties with Persia. In 1639, at the behest of King Ladisław IV Vasa, Teofil Szemberg, a German-born artillery general in the service of Poland, went to Isfahan with the aim of 're-establishing an old friendship and ensuring the Shah's care over Catholic missions in Persia'.⁷

Between 1641-1644 a Persian named Mirza Musa beg travelled with a mission from Shah Abbas II to the Polish king, and in 1647 Ladisław IV sent a Polish nobleman, Michał Ilnicz, on a diplomatic mission to Isfahan. For the most part, Polish diplomatic efforts did not bring the expected results, but they did contribute, however, to invigorating trade relations and to securing the activities of missionaries.

The first group of missionaries to include Poles was from the order of the Barefooted Carmelites, who were sent to Persia in 1604 by Pope Clement VIII. As can be inferred from

the documents held at the Jesuit archives in Rome (Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu), between 1627 and 1723, 114 Polish Jesuits expressed their desire to take part in missions to Persia. In 1646, with the financial assistance of Louise Marie, the wife of king Ladislas IV, the first missionary post was established by French Jesuits at Isfahan. One year later the Persian shah granted Polish Jesuits - who for the next century and a half would operate under the patronage of the Polish royal household - leave to extend their care to the entire Christian population in Persia, particularly the Armenians.

The relations between both countries intensified towards the end of the reign of king John II Casimir Vasa (1648-1668) and under king Michael Korybut Wisniowiecki (1669-1673). Bohdan Grudziecki, a Georgian in service to Poland, made frequent diplomatic trips to Persia, on which he obtained, among other things, guarantees upholding earlier privileges for missionaries. Grudziecki remained in Polish diplomatic service during the reign of king John III Sobieski (1674-1692), and was responsible for informing shah Suleiman about the victory of the Christian forces at Vienna (1683).

The plans to create a Holy League against Turkey involved Poland having to develop deeper relations with Persia. The next envoy of the king of Poland to Persia in July 1685 - in the capacity of extraordinary and plenipotentiary legate - was an Armenian, Konstanty de Siri Zgorski. The story of a part of this trip is recorded by Philippe Avril, a French Jesuit. Avril was travelling overland to China, and joined Count de Siri's retinue after the Russian tsar had refused to grant him permission to pass through Siberia. As a plenipotentiary of Louis XIV, Avril managed to secure for the Polish envoy the full power to act as plenipotentiary of the French monarch, the Roman curia, the Emperor of Germany, and the Doge of Venice. Avril's memoirs were published in Poland only in 1791 in a translation by Rev. Remigiusz Ladowski, dedicated to Stanislaw Jablonowski and entitled *Podroz do roznych kraioiw Europy i Azyi przez misyjonarzow S.J. w roku 1690 odprawiona kohcem odkrycia nowej drogi do Chin...* [A Journey Made to Various Countries of Europe and Asia by the Missionaries of S.J. Made in 1690, its Aim Being the Discovery of a New Road to China...], Warszawa 1791. This account, available at the National Library (shelfmarks BN XVIII.1.4097, BN XVIII.1.6774), provides the

following assessment of the Polish king's envoy: 'Though Count de Siri was not above acting from motives of personal profit whilst serving as the royal envoy, his efforts in upholding the interests of Religion and of His Highness in addition to his own are, I must admit, entirely to his credit'.⁸

As the delegation, headed by Count de Siri failed to encourage 'the inert shah Suleiman'⁹ to join the anti-Turkish coalition, in 1690 the position of ambassador to the shah's court fell to Ignacy Zapolski, a Jesuit and an expert in the politics of the region. Together with father Jan Gostkowski, Zapolski began work on establishing a permanent Polish missionary outpost in Persia. These goals were accomplished in 1691, when in recognition of their diplomatic activity king John III Sobieski ordered the founding of an outpost for Polish and French missionaries at Shemakha near Baku. In 1700, Zapolski received credentials from king Augustus II as a diplomat-in-residence of the Polish Commonwealth; at the same time the king turned the city of Gandja - where Zapolski with the consent of shah Hussein had set up a new missionary station - into the permanent residence of the Polish legation.

In the following years, due to the ongoing Northern War, a shortage of funds, the increasing weakness of the Polish diplomatic service and a less immediate threat from Turkey in the wake of the Karlowice peace treaty (1699), 'the entire responsibility for maintaining waning Polish--Iranian relations'¹⁰ was taken over by Jesuit missionaries.

The Polish representative to Persia between 1715-1720 was a Jesuit, Ignacy Wiczorkowski, whereas the person with the greatest abilities in the area of bilateral relations at that time was Tadeusz Juda Krusihski, a Jesuit fluent in nine Oriental languages and gifted with 'practical medical knowledge, which was one of the chief sources of income for missionary outposts'.¹¹ Krusihski spent nearly 25 years in Persia, serving the Polish Commonwealth and fulfilling on behalf of the Holy See the function of 'procurator of the bishop of Isfahan, whose aim was to defend the Catholic mission in Persia at the court of the shah'.¹²

Krusihski served the Persian court as a *dragoman* (translator) of official documents referring to relations of Persia with European countries. His considerable knowledge of political relations in

the Near East and of Polish-Persian relations bore fruit in the form of works which, according to one Polish scholar, 'have maintained their value until today, and had been a major source of information about the history of Iran for a long period of time'.¹³

On returning in 1726 to Rome, Krusihski wrote *Relation de mutationibus Regni Persarum*, a work presenting the final years of the dynasty of the Saphanides, the conquest of Persia by Afghans and the first years of their rule (1711-1725). The *Relation...*, published for the first time in Paris in 1728, was reissued under various titles in a number of European countries over the next several years, and even 'became the subject of numerous alterations and plagiarisms'.¹⁴ Back in Poland, Krusihski published the extensive *Prodromus ad Tragicam vertentis belli Persici Historiam seu Legationis a Fulgida Porta ad Sophorum Regem Szah Sultan Hussein A. 1729 expeditae...* (Leopoli, 1734; shelfmark BN XVIII.2.1462, W. 11872), containing a translation from a Turkish report by Durri Effendi (an envoy of sultan Achmed III to the Persian shah Hussein in 1720) and supplemented by authorial glosses, an essay on Polish-Persian legations and a plan for a new work - an expanded version of the *Relatio...* The latter was published together with *Prodromus* under the title of *Tragicas vertentis bellis Persici historia per repetitas clades ab anno 1711 ad annum 1728vum* (Leopoli 1740; shelfmark BN XVIII.3.1246, XVII.3.2312).

Both these works, present in the collections of the National Library, come complete with a microfilm of another work by Krusihski, published from a manuscript entitled *Pragmatographia de legitimo usu ambrozyi tureckiey to iest Opisanie sposobu nalezytego zazywania kawy tureckiey* [Pragmatographia de legitimo usu of Turkish Ambrosia that is a Description of the Right Way to Use Turkish Coffee...] (Warszawa 1769). The microfilm was made from a copy held at the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kornik.

In 1748 Krusihski donated his collection of oriental manuscripts to the Zaluski Library. Two of these, *Tragica belli Aghuanico-Persici historia*¹⁵ and *Pragmatographia*¹⁶ were found among the group of items restored to Poland by Russia in the 1920s; none of them, however, survived the Second World War.

Krusihski returned to Poland in 1728. In later years the Polish missionary outpost fell into decline and Catholicism in Persia under the rule of shah Nadir (1736-47) was on the verge of extinction, yet the official Polish-Persian contacts actually came to an end when Poland was partitioned and ceased to exist as a sovereign state (1795).

Although relations with the East definitely had an impact on the cultural attitudes of the Polish nobility in the 17th and 18th century, '(...) Polish Orientalism manifested itself, basically in the same way as in the West, through customs, attire, decorative elements, military accessories, and even architecture'.¹⁷ Goods imported from Persia were such a tremendous success that special factories known as *persjarnie* starting turning out their replicas. Scholars, however, unanimously agree that 'the establishment of closer ties between Poland and Persia did not coincide with a surge of interest in a presumed ally',¹⁸ and 'the knowledge of the Persian language among Poles was unfortunately very small and nowhere near the knowledge of Turkish'.¹⁹ The latter incidentally explains the presence of so many foreigners among Polish diplomats. For this reason, the first attempts at lexicography and translation are all the more noteworthy.

The National Library possesses three works by Franciszek Mesgnien-Menihski (1620-1698), a Frenchman by birth and a resident of many years in Poland and in Turkey (also in an official capacity). Of these works, two are dictionaries of Turkish, which also comprise elements of Persian and Arabic: *Complementum thesauri linguarum orientalium, seu onomasticum latino-turcico-arabico-persicum...* (Vindobonae, 1687; BN XVII.4.1187) and the monumental *Thesaurus linguarum orientalium, turcicae, arabicae, persicae...* (Vindobonne, 1680; shelfmark BN XVII.4.1179 I-II), the third is a grammar book, *Institutiones linguae turcicae, cum rudimentis parallelis linguarum arabicae et persicae...* (Vindobonae, 1756; shelfmark BN XVIII.2.4005 I-II).

The first attempt to translate Persian literature into Polish was probably made between 1620 and 1640 by Samuel Otwinowski, an orientalist, and a translator at the crown chancellery. The work he chose was one of the greatest masterpieces of Persian literature, *Gulistan* [The Rose Garden] by Saadi from Syrah, a Persian poet of the 13th century. The source for Otwinowski's translation

was probably Turkish. A copy of the autograph of the translation was discovered (around 1842) by the Polish novelist Jozef Ignacy Kraszewski, and published as the fourth volume of the Krasinski Estate Library as *Perska ksiega na polski jezyk przelozona od Jmci Pana Samuela Otwinowskiego, Sekretarza J. Kr. Mci nazwana Gulistan to jest Ogrod Rozany* [A Persian Book translated into Polish language by the Honourable Samuel Otwinowski, His Majesty's Secretary Named Gulistan that is the Rose Garden], Warsaw, 1879. This edition is currently in the collection of the National Library.

Three years earlier, in 1876, the Kornik Library published a contemporary translation of *Gulistan* by Wojciech Kazimirski-Bibersztejn, an orientalist (awarded the Persian Order of the Sun), lexicographer and the author of many works on topics related to Persia. His rendering, entitled *Gulistan to jest Ogrod Rozany S'adego z Szyrazu* [Gulistan that is the Rose Garden by S'adi of Syraz], is regarded by most scholars as artistically inferior to Otwinowski's translation. The National Library holds a copy of Kazimirski's translation in a beautiful binding.

Saadi's 13th century masterpiece was also translated in the mid-17th century into French, Latin and German. The National Library collection also contains a German translation by Adam Olearius (Olschlager), decorated with lithographs and entitled *Persianischer Rosenthal. In welchem viel lustige Historien... Vor 400 Jahren... in Persischer Sprach beschrieben...* (Schlesswig 1654; shelfmark BN XVII.4.10555; BN XVII.4.9613 adl.). Olschlager, a German traveller and cartographer, took part in 1633-35 and 1635-39 in two missions sent to Russia and Persia by the Duke of Holstein and Schlesswig. He published his observations from those trips in *Vermehrte Neue Beschreibung der Muscowitischen und Persischen Reyse...*, a richly illustrated 1656 edition which is held at the National Library (shelfmark BN XVII.4.3283).

A 17th century Polish reader looking to increase his or her knowledge of other countries could draw on an Italian work popular at that time, Jan Boter Benesius's *Relazioni universali*, which became a bestseller in the Polish edition. The *Relazioni...* were published in Cracow in 1609 and 1613 under the title of *Relatiae powszechne abo nowiny pospolite...* [Universal Accounts or General

News...], and in 1659 as *Theatrum swiata wszetkiego* [The Theatre of the Whole World]. The Department of Early Printed Books of the National Library has a complete set of all editions of Benesius's work. In each of them 20 pages are devoted to a description of Persia and its individual provinces.

This gap in the knowledge on the countries of the East was also filled, though hardly to a significant degree, by a booklet penned by Mikolaj Wolski, *Mowa... Zawierajqca Uwagi nad Pierwiastkowemi Dzieiami Swiata, nad dawnym Egiptem, nad Assyryq, Medami y Persami* [A Speech... Containing Remarks on Elementary World History, on Ancient Egypt, Assyria, the Medians and Persians] (Vilnius, 1784), which provided succinct information on several rulers of the East (shelfmark BN XVIII.1.312).

Two works by Persian authors were of considerable importance for the growth of learning in Europe, also in Poland, from the 12th century onwards. The first was Abu Ali Ibn Sina, known as Avicenna - the author, apart from works on natural sciences and philosophy, of 'The Canon of Medicine', which was the fundamental source of medical knowledge at universities, also in Poland, from the 14th until the end of the 18th century. Its first Latin translation, *Canon medicinae libri V*, was published in print in Milan in 1473. Of the many editions of works by Avicenna and published in Europe since that time, the National Library collection holds three of his works: two incunabula *De anima* [The Book of Healing] - Pavia 1485 (shelfmark BN Inc.F.1331 adl.) and *Metaphysica* - Venezia 1495 (shelfmark BN Inc.F.1037), as well as *Liber secundus de Canone Canonis* - Breslae 1609 (shelfmark BN XVII.4.2899 adl.).

The works of the other Persian philosopher and physician, Razi, known in Europe as Rhasis or Alrazes, were also known among Polish academic circles. In the 15th century one of his most famous works, *Kitab al Mansuri*, was translated into Latin as *Liber Almansoris*. In the National Library collection one may find *Liber nonus ad Almansorem, cum expositione Sillani de Nigris...* (Venezia 1497; shelfmark BN Inc.F.1081) and *Liber nonus ad Almansorem, cum Practica Ioannis Arculani...* (Venezia 1497; shelfmark BN Inc.F.1457), together with *Secunda pars...* (Venetiis 1509; BN XVII.F.2817).

Despite the existence of such works, most of the foreign *Persica* in the National Library collection dating from the 16th to 18th century are classified, similarly to Polish ones, as travel accounts with oriental themes. Among these, a work worth mentioning is *Journal du voyage... en Perse et aux Indes Orientales...* (Londres 1686; shelfmark BN XVII.4.8292), published in Polish in *Podroze po Persji, Armenji, Mezopotamji, Chaldei, Kurdystanie, Arabji etc.* [Journeys in Persia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, Kurdistan, Arabia etc.], Vilnius, 1853.

In the 19th century the most outstanding scholars in the field of Iranian studies in Poland were Wojciech Kazimirski, Aleksander Chodzko, August Zaba, Aleksander Wereszczyński and Jan Witkiewicz.²⁰

A renowned figure in the history of Iran was General Izydor Borowski - emir (1821) and vizier, commander of the Iranian troops fighting against the Afghans and the emirates of Arabia. Borowski, who reorganised the Persian army according to the French model, lost his life in the struggle for Herat in 1838.

After the Polish November Uprising of 1831, over 500 Poles enlisted in the Iranian army. They were mostly refugees, fleeing exile or the Russian army, and they were speedily dismissed following Russian diplomatic pressure. Some of them immigrated to other countries, while others stayed, thus forming the beginnings of a Polish community. This group of expatriates included physicians, engineers, and military men.

At the height of the Anglo-Russian contest for dominance over the strategic gateways to Afghanistan and the Indian Subcontinent, a number of Poles found their professional calling in the Russian diplomatic service. One of them was Aleksander Chodzko, a member of a secret patriotic student society at Vilnius University, and a friend of the poet Adam Mickiewicz, who worked for the Russian consular service from 1831 to 1841, and conducted ethnographic and linguistic research while travelling extensively to Persia. In 1841 Chodzko left for Paris, where he engaged in scholarly work. Out of the vast range of his works, devoted among other things to Persian fiction and the Persian and Kurdish language, the National Library collection contains a *Grammaire persanne, ou principes de l'iranien moderne...* (Paris, 1851) and *Theatre persan...* (Paris, 1878).

Jan Witkiewicz, an erstwhile exile and later diplomatic agent in the Russian service, was regarded, despite his young age, as an outstanding explorer of Persia and Afghanistan. He was also a proficient linguist, with knowledge of several oriental languages. Between 1837-1839 he journeyed through Persia and Afghanistan, collecting data on the territories he visited, drawing maps and making topographic sketches. Witkiewicz was received by the shah on two occasions, and decorated for his work with the Order of the Sun. In 1839 he died in unexplained circumstances in St. Petersburg; all of his notes were lost.

The views of yet another Westerner on Persia are expounded in a book by Władysław Jabłonowski, *Szkice sanitarne z Persyi* [Persian Sanitation Blueprints], Cracow, 1887. Its author - a doctor and a participant in the January Uprising (1863) - went to Turkey in 1866, where he worked as an army medic until 1881. After the plague and cholera epidemics in Persia and Iraq, he was nominated as a delegate of the International Sanitary Commission in the East. His ethnographic, botanical and archaeological work resulted in many articles appearing in the Polish press. *His Pamiętniki z lat 1851-1894* [Memoirs from the Years 1851-1894] were published in an abbreviated version in 1967.²¹

Following in the footsteps of a 19th century reader, a contemporary visitor to the National Library can see Persia through the eyes of Maurycy Kotzebue, the author of *Podroz do Persyi w orszaku poselstwa rosyjskiego w roku 1817 pod naczelnictwem jenerala Jermoiowa* [A Journey to Persia in 1817 with the Russian Legation Headed by General Jermolov, Vilnius, 1821], or duke Aleksei Soltikov (*Podroz do Persyi* [A Journey to Persia, Warsaw, 1852], and *Podroz nowa przez Kaukaz do Persyi* [A New Journey Through the Caucasus to Persia], Warsaw, 1856).

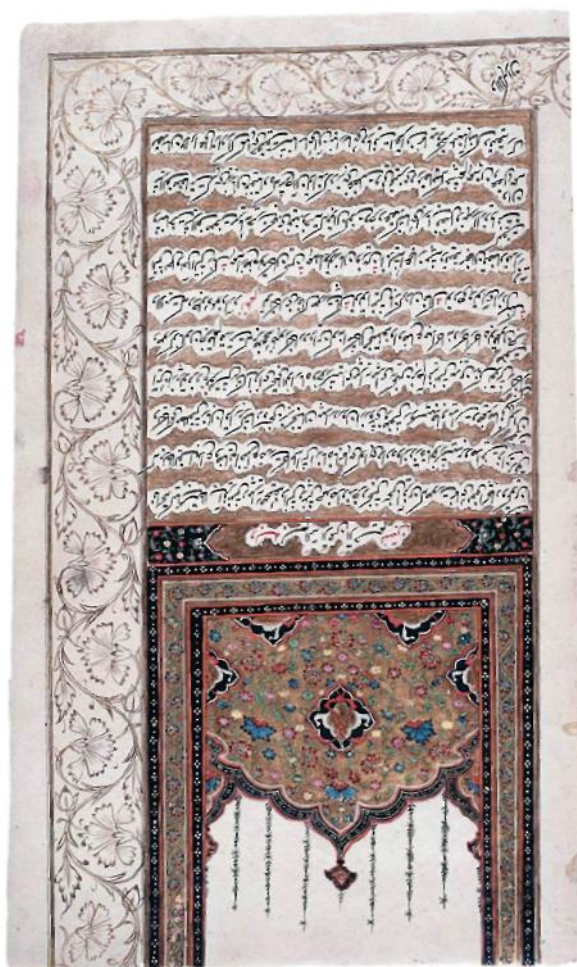
Worth noting are also the extensive *Historya literatury perskiej* [History of Persian Literature] by Julian Adolf Świecicki, published as volume 5 of the *Historya literatury powszechnej* [History of Universal Literature], Warsaw, 1914, and Paweł Hulka-Laskowski's *Tworca religii Iranu Zaratustra i jego nauka* [The Founder of the Religion of Iran, Zarathustra, and His Teachings], Warsaw, 1914 and *Biszen i Menisze. Ustep z Firdusiego poematu: Szach-Namech* [Bishen and

Menishe. Excerpt from a Poem by Firdausi: Shah-Namekh], Warsaw, 1855. Two other volumes deserving of mention are Karol Zaluski's *O języku perskim i tegoż pismienictwie* [The Persian Language and its Literature], Cracow, 1883, and *Historya starozytniej Persyi* [The History of Ancient Persia] published by Ferdynand Justi and translated by Bronislaw Grabowski (Warsaw, 1880) in the series *Panteon Wiedzy Ludzkiej* [Pantheon of Human Knowledge].

An interesting picture of life in Persia towards the end of the 19th century is provided in a two-volume book *Podroz Polki do Persyi* [A Polish Woman's Journey to Persia] by Maria Rakowska-Ratuld, a writer and translator. For two years, starting from 1894, she stayed in Persia with her husband, Wladyslaw Ratuld, an oculist who came to Tehran at the invitation of the shah in order to organise medical training and combat the spread of eye inflammation epidemics. Dr. Ratuld would revisit Persia once more, in 1907.²²

After Poland regained independence in 1918 '(...) it founded its relations with Iran on the principles of loyalty and good will, offering its co-operation in the field of economic betterment, industrial resources and technical expertise'.²³ The first Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Iran, Stanislaw Podgorski, was an engineer specialising in the construction of roads and railways. He was also a former chairman of a Russian company that owned the exclusive rights to organise insured transports in Iran. The Soviet occupation of Azerbaijan, however, prevented him from reaching his post in Teheran. The Poles in Iran - refugees from Russia - were thus initially under the care of the English and later French outposts in Iran. Polish-Iranian trade negotiations, which only got off the ground in 1925 after Stanislaw Hempel assumed the function of extraordinary and plenipotentiary envoy of the Republic of Poland to Teheran, 'led to the signing, on March 19th, 1927, of a treaty of friendship, based on principles of complete equality and a trade convention based on the most privileged nation clause in matters of customs and settlement'.²⁴ For Persia it was the second treaty signed with a European country after Russia.

The depth of the knowledge of Polish diplomatic officials on the subject of Iranian affairs and economic opportunities is attested by an extensive report on Persia, drawn up in 1928 for



Illuminated leaf from the *Bahar-i damis* of Inayat Allah Kanbu, f. 4

the Polish Foreign Affairs Ministry by Wiktor Szczepan Pol, the consul at the Legation Office in Teheran. This item is also present in the National Library collection.²⁵

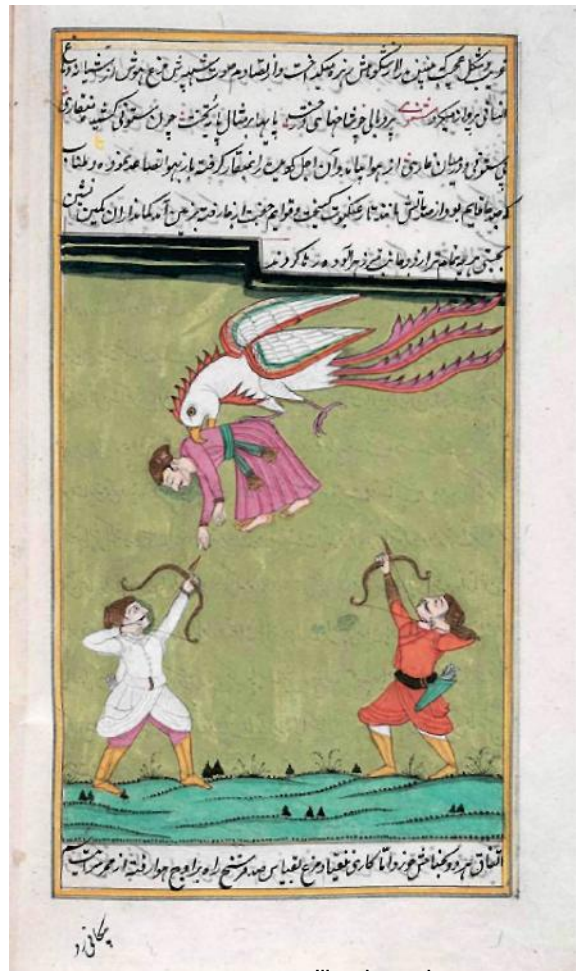
Between 1918-1938, the Polish community in Iran numbered about 120 people, chiefly engineers, pharmacists, physicians, military officers. The group also included oil workers, who arrived from Boryslaw at the turn of the century and were employed by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. After Poland and Iran entered into diplomatic relations, an Association of Poles in Persia was founded 'to gather the community's intelligentsia and provide assistance to countrymen in need'.²⁶

A distinctive period in Polish-Iranian relations, though by contrast relatively well documented, was the Second World War. Throngs of Polish exiles passed through Iran as they headed for Polish army units, which were part of the Allied forces

converging in the Middle East. A Polish Society of Iranian Studies was established in Teheran; a weekly, *Polak w Iranie* [Poles in Iran], and a periodical, *Studia Iranske* [Iranian Studies], were published, and so too were books about Iran. A sizeable portion of those publications is now included in the National Library collection and was put on display in 2001 at an exhibition, 'From Buzuluk to Bologne. Publishing Activities along the Route of the Polish Army in the East.'

After 1918 oriental studies blossomed in Poland. Chairs and institutes were established at universities. In 1932 an Institute of Oriental Studies was founded at the University of Warsaw. A Committee for Oriental Studies was active at the Polish Academy of Achievement. In 1933 a Polish Oriental Studies Society was set up. After the Second World War, in 1952, a Committee of Oriental Studies was formed at the Polish Academy of Sciences, and soon followed by a Department of Oriental Studies (1953). The following periodicals were published: *Polski Biuletyn Orientalistyczny* [Polish Oriental Studies Bulletin], Warsaw, 1937-1938; *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* [Oriental Studies Yearbook], Cracow, 1914-1918, Lvov, 1918-1937; *Wschod-Orient* [East-Orient], Warsaw, 1930-1938; *Folia Orientalia* (Cracow, 1959-), *Przegląd Orientalistyczny* [Oriental Studies Review], Warsaw, 1953-. Vigorous academic work meant that both congresses and conferences were organised, and works by contemporary Polish scholars of Oriental studies, such as Ananiasz Zajaczkowski, Tadeusz Kowalski and Franciszek Machalski found their way into libraries.

Of the various items in the National Library, related to Persian topics, it is necessary to mention the etchings in the pictorial collections department. These are often depictions of persons (including portraits of Persian shahs Abbas I the Great, Abbas II and Cyrus executed using various techniques), and views of cities (eg. Isfahan, Teheran). The latter can be found in the cartographic collections in *Verschiedene Prospective der Vornemsten Stddten in Persien* (Johann Baptist Homann, Niirnberg, after 1715, a hand-coloured etching; BN ZZK inw 9560). Among other items, two maps should be pointed out: *Imperii Persici in omnes suas provincias...* (J.B. Homann, Niirnberg after 1715, a hand-coloured copperplate; shelfmark BN ZZK inw. 6961) and



leaf from the *Bahar-i danis*—Illuminated
of Inayat Allah Kanbu, f. 68.

Nova Imperii Persici delineatio juxta recentiss. et accuratiss. Observat. Adriani Relandi... (Georg Mathias Seutter, Augsburg, first half of the 18th century, a hand-coloured copperplate aquatint; shelfmark BN ZZK inw. 4288).

Particularly noteworthy are the Persian manuscripts held at the National Library. They include, among others, a 1685 Persian translation of the *Koran* (shelfmark Akc. 14675) numbering 303 leaves, and a work by the Persian poet and mystic Jalaluddin Rumi, *Masnawi-i ma'navi* (shelfmark Akc. 15910) in a manuscript from c. 1492-1493 (439 leaves). Rumi's biography is incorporated in a manuscript by Dervis Mahmud *Tergeme-i sevakib*, which is a Turkish translation from Persian (shelfmark BOZ 162). It has come down from the Zamosc Estate Library, and contains a bookplate and a hand-written note by Stanislaw Zamoyski. It shares its provenance with a 1784 illuminated manuscript

featuring a love story about Gahadar Sultan

script contains 90 miniatures by the Indian school and marginal notes by Zamoyski and the British orientalist Sir William Ouseley (the latter dated 1803)²⁷.

There is no shortage of *Persica* in the music collections - for example *Piesni milosne Hafiza*, [The Love Songs of Hafiz] Op. 26 by Karol Szymanowski, *In a Persian Market* by Albert N. Katelby, *W marszu. Zbior piesni zolnierskich. Spiewnik dla zolnierza armii polskiej na wschodzie* [On the March. A Collection of Soldiers' Songs. A Songbook for a Soldier of the Polish

Army in the East], Palestine 1944, and *3 piesni do slow arabskich z X wieku* [3 songs to 10th century Arabic Lyrics] by Grazyna Bacewicz, to list just a few.

Although the earliest Polish contacts with the East were predominantly of a political nature, which often made them a by-product of relations with Turkey, the historical records in the National Library collection - manuscripts, studies, maps, illustrations and sheet music, provide interesting source material for research on the reception of the culture of the East in Poland and the accomplishments of Polish research in this area, seen against the background of European oriental studies.

Notes:

1. Barbara Majewska, *Wschod w kulturze i pismnictwie [The Orient in Culture and Writing]* in *Slovník literatury staropolskiej* [A Dictionary of Old Polish Literature], Wrocław, 1998, p. 1036.
2. Jan Reychman, 'Zwia_zki Iranu z Polska' [Polish-Iranian Relations], *Kultura i Spoleczestwo* 4 (1971), p. 82. See also T. Mahkowski, *Wyprawa po kobierce do Persji w roku 1601* [An Expedition for Tapestries to Persia in 1602], Cracow, 1951.
3. Karol Estreicher, *Bibliografia Polska* [Polish Bibliography], vol. 23, p. 131. The edition in question can be found at the University Library in Warsaw and the City of Warsaw Public Library.
4. Safer Muratowicz, *Relacya... Obywatela warszawskiego, od Zygmunta III, Krola polskiego, dla sprawowania rzeczy, wyslanego do Persyi w roku 1602. Rzecz z starego rekopisma wybrana, przedrukowana* [Account (...) of a Warsaw Citizen Sent from Sigismund III, the Polish King, to Handle Matters in Persia in 1602... Chosen from an Old Manuscript, Reprinted], Warsaw, 1807.
5. *Relacyja Sefera Muratowicza Ormianina, poslanego JMci do Persyi, z ktora wrocilwszy sie stamtqd. Podal na pismie w te slowa. Anno circiter 1588* [Narrative by Sefer Muratowicz, an Armenian, His Majesty's Envoy to Persia. Upon Returning he Gave these Words in Writing] in *Trzy relacje z polskich podroiy na Wschod muzulmahski w pierwszej polowie XVII wieku* [Three Accounts of Polish Voyages to the Islamic Orient in the First Half of the 17th c], ed. by Adam Walaszek, Cracow, 1980.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
7. Reychman, op. cit., p. 83. On his way back to Poland, Szemberg lost his life in a fight with highwaymen.
8. Philippe Avril, SI, *Podroi do roinych kraioy Europy i Azyi przez misyonarzy S. J. w roku 1690 odprawiona koncem odkrycia nowej drogi do Chin... Zamyka w sobie wiele ciekawych uwag fizycznych, geograficznych i historycznych, z opisaniem Tartaryi W* [A Journey to Various Countries of Europe and Asia by S. J. Missionaries, Made in

1690, its Aim being the Discovery of a New Road to China... Contains Many Interesting Physical, Geographical and Historical Remarks, with a Description of Tartary], Warsaw, 1791, p. 241.

9. Ananiasz Zaja_czkowski, 'Persja-Iran' in Jozef Hieronim Retinger, *Polacy w cywilizacjach swiata* [Poles in the Civilisations of the World], Gdansk, 1991, p. 183.
10. Reychman, op. cit., p. 86. For more on missions in Persia cf S. Zale_ski, *Missye w Persyi w XVII i XVIII wieku pod protektoratem Polski. Szkic historyczny* [Missions to Persia in the 17th and 18th c. under Polish Protectorate], Krakow, 1882; S. Brzeziński, *Misjonarze i dyplomaci polscy w Persji w XVII i XVIII wieku* [Polish Missionaries and Diplomats in Persia in the 17th and 18th c], Potulice, 1935.
11. *Polski Slovník Biograficzny* [Polish Biographic Dictionary], Warsaw, 1970, vol. 15, p. 426.
12. *Ibid.* Cf. F Zielinski, 'Xia_dz Krusinski. Wiadomosci historyczne' [Father Krusinski. Historical Information], *Biblioteka Warszawska* 4 (1841), pp. 375-397; A. Muchliński, 'Materiały do dziejow Kosciola polskiego z jezykow wschodnich' [Materials for the History of the Church in Poland in the Languages of the East], *Pamiet-nik Religijno-Moralny* 8 (1861), f 8, pp. 134-151, f. 9, pp. 289-302.
13. Reychman, op. cit., p. 87.
14. *Polski Slovník Biograficzny*, op. cit., vol. 15, p. 427.
15. Shelfmark Lat. Q IV.34. This might have been a manuscript fragment of a work published ca. 1729, *Historia revolutionis Monarchiae Persicae Constantinopoli pro M. Vezyrjo conscripta...*, on a copy of which, held at the Zauski Library, the author added such a title by hand; cf. Estreicher, op. cit., vol. 20, p. 304. Cf. Brzeziński, op. cit., p. 53.
16. Shelfmark Pol. O XVII.1.
17. Jan Reychman, 'Orientalizm' in *Slovník literatury polskiego oswiecenia* [Dictionary of the Literature of Polish Enlightenment], Wrocław, 1996, p. 365.
18. Bohdan Baranowski, *Znajomosc Wschodu w dawnej Polsce do XVIII wieku* [What Old Poland Knew about the Orient up to the 18th Century], Lodz, 1950, p. 207.

19. Zaja_czkowski, op. cit., p. 184.
20. For more information cf. Janusz Reychman, 'Pro-by organizacji orientalistyki polskiej w dobie Mickiewiczowskiej' [Attempts to Organise Polish Oriental Studies during the Life of Mickiewicz], *Przegląd Orientalistyczny* 3 (1954).
21. W. Jablonowski, *Pamiętniki z lat 1851-1894. Wybor* [Diaries from 1851-1894. A Selection] ed. by J. Fijałek, Wrocław, 1967.
22. *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, op. cit., vol. 30, pp. 511, 641.
23. *Dziesięciolecie Polski Odrodzonej* [A Decade of Poland Reborn], ed. by Marian Dąbrowski, Cracow, 1933, p. 244.
24. Zaja_czkowski, op. cit., p. 187.
25. Wiktor Szczepan Pol, *Persja*, Warsaw, 1928.
26. *Dziesięciolecie...*, op. cit., p. 838.
27. Cf. *Katalog rękopisów orientalnych ze zbiorów polskich* [Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts from Polish Collections], vol. 5, pt. 2: *Katalog rękopisów tureckich i perskich* [Catalogue of Turkish and Persian Manuscripts] ed. by T. Majda, Warsaw, 1967, pp. 130-131.

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