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Panegyrics and Politics. Three Polish and One Prussian Epithalamium on the Wedding of Sigismund I and Barbara Zápolya in 1512¹

The wedding of Sigismund I and Bona Sforza in 1518 is a significant symbolic date in Polish collective memory, even if scholars agree that Sigismund I—since 1506 King of Poland, Grand Duke of Lithuania etc.—had already become acquainted with Renaissance art and ideas earlier, at the court of his brother Ladislaus II, King of Bohemia and Hungary (cf. Glonski 2007, 13–15). Sigismund's marrying into an Italian dynasty was more the result of a cultural reorientation than its beginning. One prominent example illustrating the earlier arrival of Renaissance in Cracow is the Sigismund Chapel at the Wawel. Its construction began already during Sigismund's first marriage (Mossakowski 2007, 22ff.) and the chapel was originally intended to commemorate the king's first wife (Decius 1521, III, 105; AT III, 317). Sigismund and Barbara Zápolya married in 1512, but she died young, in 1515.² The Zápolyas were one of the leading magnate dynasties in Hungary and belonged to the anti-Habsburg faction, so the wedding of 1512 sealed an important political alliance and was celebrated on a grand scale including literary representation. This union also proved significant when Barbara's brother John (János) became King of Hungary (1526–1540) after the death of Ladislaus' son. However, Barbara's bones were not buried side by side with her husband as originally intended, and her memory was outshined by that of her Italian successor.

My article was born out of the desire to explore this less known first wedding and the forgotten Hungarian wife from the point of view of literary studies; it analyses the connection of politics and literature with a focus on the poems written to commemorate this union. The *epithalamia*³ were not only an important genre of early modern writing, but also a means of image-building and diplomacy. In 1512, the top Neo-Latin poets wrote and published verses that were supported or even commissioned by most influential figures from the Kingdom of Poland and by a representative of the antagonistic Teutonic Order. The political context and content of epithalamia has been neglected in scholarship, which, in the field of Polish Studies, has concentrated on their generic development and intertextuality (cf. **our introduction**). Information on historical context

¹ I thank Elsbeth van der Wilt and, of course, Katarzyna Kasior, for proof reading.

² A biography of Barbara's life for a broad readership: Przybyszewski (2000).

³ In the new philologies, *epithalamium* is usually understood in a broader sense as 'occasional poetry related to a wedding', cf. Mroczek (2002, 218f.) or Mroczek (1989, 5f.), cf. also Horstmann (2004, 14–18).

is limited to cursory comments in editions or summaries of facts in biographies. My article analyses the four extant contributions to the wedding of 1512 as speech acts, whose meaning is closely linked to the specific communication situation. This approach, which assumes that texts perform actions and aim to solicit reactions, is particularly productive in respect to so-called ‘occasional literature’. Of course, there is Nowak-Dłużewski’s overview that concentrates on political content (on the epithalamia: Nowak-Dłużewski 1966, 69–73), which is still important due to the broad range of discussed material. However, his analyses are short and superficial, their Marxist presumptions outdated. Concentrating on publications dedicated to one political event, my article provides deeper insights into the contexts and, above all, the texts themselves. It profited from digitalization, as (open) access to the composition and visual design of the original publications contributes much to the full understanding of the very first set of wedding poems composed and published in the Kingdom of Poland.

Four (Five) Epithalamia for Sigismund and Barbara

Four epithalamia have survived and they are the earliest examples of the genre in Poland.⁴ These poems were the core texts of small books, ca. 10 pages each, printed in Cracow. A fifth contribution by a certain Johann Lohmüller from Danzig was not published, and the manuscript was lost in World War II.⁵ Three of the four authors are among the most well-known Neo-Latin poets of the Polish Renaissance: Paulus Crosnensis (c. 1470–1517) was one of the early pioneers of humanism in Poland and lecturer at Cracow University. Ioannes Dantiscus (1485–1548) and Andreas Cricius (1482–1537) were ten to fifteen years younger. In 1512, 30-year-old Cricius, the nephew of Piotr Tomicki, was secretary to Jan Lubrański, bishop of Poznań. He would become secretary to Queen Barbara, then to the king, and in the years to come, he would be ordained bishop of Przemyśl (1522), of Płock (1527) and finally archbishop of Gniezno (1535). Dantiscus, a native of Danzig (then a part of Royal Prussia), was at the beginning of his successful diplomatic career; he would represent the king at the Habsburg courts in Austria and Spain. The fourth poet was a foreigner, to whom research on ‘Polish epithalamia’ has devoted little attention. In fact, Helius Eobanus Hessus (1488–1540) was a no less important writer than his Polish contemporaries; he is considered as a main Neo-Latin author in the German pantheon (cf. Vredeveld 1997, 100; Ellinger 1929, 3). In 1512, the young Eobanus worked for Job (Hiob) von

⁴ They are included into the bilingual anthology *Szesnastowieczne epitalamia łacińskie w Polsce*, which is very useful for orientation (Brożek, Niedźwiedź 1999, 60–131).

⁵ Vredeveld (Hessus 2008, 6) refers to the catalogue by Bertling (1892, 312f.), containing a description of the text ensemble.

Dobeneck, bishop of Pomesania, which was one of the four church provinces of Teutonic Prussia. With respect to politics, his verses are the most intriguing.

Barbara Zápolya arrived in Cracow on February 7 and the wedding and coronation ceremonies took place on the next day (cf. the short summary of the events of the year 1512 in AT II, 2⁶). The first epithalamium went to print by the following week. According to the dates given at the end of each book, the chronological order was:

MAIN AUTHOR	TITLE OF THE BOOK	PRINTER	DATE ⁷	ACCESS ONLINE
Ioannes Dantiscus	Epithalamiu(m) in Nuptijs inclyti Sigismu(n)di regis Poloniae inuictissimi: ac Illustrissimae principis Barbarae filiae praeclari quonda(m) Stephani comitis p(er)petui Czepusien(sis) & regni Hungariae Palatini. Per Johannem Linodesmona Dantiscum aeditum	Johann Haller	Pridie idus Februariarum (February 12)	✓
Andreas Cricius	In Augustissimu(m) Sigisimu(n)di Regis Poloniae & reginae Barbarae connubiu(m) Andreae Critij scholastici Posnaniensis Carmen.	Johann Haller	Tertiodecimo Kalendas Martias (February 18)	✓
Helius Eobanus Hessus	Encomi(um) nuptiale divo Sigismu(n)do Regi Poloniae Scriptu(m). Anno Christiani calculi M.D.XII magistri Eobani Hessi diligentia	Johann Haller	Pridie Kale(n)das Martias (February 29)	✓
Paulus Crosnensis	Epithalamion, hoc est carmen connubiale in nuptias illustrissimi ac inuictissimi principis et d(omi)ni, d(omi)ni Sigimundi Regis Poloniae, nobilissimaeque ac pudicissimae Barbarae filiae incliti a magnifici d(omi)ni Stephani Palatini Pannoniae Cepusiique comitis perpetui a magistro Paulo Crosneu Rutheno concinnatum	Florian Ungler	Calendis Martiis (March 1)	

The structure I adopted for this article does not follow the printing chronology but is more flexible to suit my line of argument.

Paulus Crosnensis: Recognition for the Matchmaker

⁶ The *Acta Tomiciana* are an extensive collection of material on major events in Polish-Lithuanian politics covering the years 1507–1548. For an understanding of authorship, genesis, aims, manuscript tradition etc., see Marciniak (1984): The ‘author’ of the AT was Stanisław Górski (†1572), who was for many years the secretary of the Vice Chancellor of the Crown, Bishop Piotr Tomicki. Górski started to collect this material after Tomicki’s death in 1535, initially to commemorate his patron (Marciniak 1984, 31ff.). The *Acta Tomiciana* have been handed down to us in three manuscript ‘editions’ (*redakcja* nr. 3 in several copies); they contain a broad range of copied (and reworked) material. According to Marciniak, Górski presented the first redaction to young Sigismund II August (13+6 vols., the ‘Jagiellonian Collection’; Marciniak 1984, 53ff.), the second probably to the Lithuanian Senate (17 vols.; ‘Sapieha-Radziwiłł Collection’, destroyed in WW II; 69–71, 93). The 24 volumes of the third manuscript series were given to the Polish Senate (‘Opalinski Collection’); Górski also kept a private copy (‘Karnkowski Collection’), cf. Marciniak (1984, 72ff., 89–105). The modern print edition began due to the initiative of Count Tytus Działyński as part of the work of the Biblioteka Kórnicka (vols. I–XIII, 1852–1912). The quality of the first volumes has been criticized; they lack, in particular, information about the provenience of the collected documents, changes and variations.

⁷ Vredevelde’s (2002, 162) translation into contemporary chronology was checked with Grotefend (1982).

Paulus Crosnensis Ruthenus wrote his “Epithalamion, hoc est carmen connubiale...” [Epithalamium, That Means Wedding Poem] while he was in his forties and a lecturer in Roman Literature at the University of Cracow (on his academic career: Cytowska 1980, 385; Gorzkowski 2000, 94–97). The narrative structure of his poem pays tribute to his philological expertise and deserves at least a comment. It was inspired by the dialogical part in “Epithalamion in Stellam et Violentillam” [Epithalamium about Stella and Violentilla] from the volume of casual poetry *Silvae* by the Roman poet Statius (†96 AD).⁸ Imitating and surpassing the classics, Paulus Crosnensis increased the number of narrative levels, as Brożek’s translation into Polish shows (Brożek, Niedźwiedź 1999, 60–79; cf. Brożek 1995, 44f.; Niedźwiedź 1999, 24f.). The first-person narrator of *Stat. Silv.* I.2 reports a dialogue between Amor and Venus about the future couple, and a speech by Venus to the bride Violentilla. Paulus’ first-person narrator meets the Graeco-Roman gods at the outskirts of Cracow. The muse of love poetry, Erato, tells how the union between Sigismund and Barbara came into existence: Jupiter decided to get the king married and ordered Mercury and Venus to visit Sigismund and Barbara. There are three narrative layers: the narrator (1) reports the answers of the jolly company (2) and what Erato (2) told him, namely what the gods, bride and bridegroom had said (3).⁹

Among the four contributions, the epithalamium of Paulus Crosnensis was the least political one and expressed rather general ideas. As Segel (1989, 116) argues, the poet also did not make much of his Hungarian connections, although he had spent about a year there and was acquainted with some prominent nobles (Gábor Perényi, the Thurzó family: 110–112).¹⁰ Nevertheless, all his “Epithalamion” tells us about the bride and her homeland is that they are Hungarian; the title page (Crosnensis 1962, 9) adds at least the name and office of Barbara’s deceased father, who was Palatine of Hungary (the highest-ranking dignitary after the king) and Count of Spiš.

Paulus was also not eager to refer to Polish politics of the day. That the king should get married seems to have been a particularly pertinent political demand of the realm’s estates in the case of Zygmunt ‘the Old’, as the following quote shows, but it is also a general topos that could adorn any epithalamium:

Hoc prece ruricolae, hoc cives simul atque senatus,
 Hoc petit armisonis bellica turba tubis.
 Aurea tum verso remeabunt saecula fetu,
 Manebunt liquidis dulcia mella vadis.
 Producet segetes viridis sine semine campus,
 Nascentur summis bacchica dona iugis. (v. 208–212)

⁸ On the genre *silvae*, cf. Parrott’s introduction to Statius (2015, xi–xxix, xiii).

⁹ Paulus’ book did not have the inverted commas, which Brożek’s translation adds for convenience; changes of voice had to be marked with words, cf. the inquit-formula in v. 49f. and the transition back to the primary narrator in v. 283f.

¹⁰ On the Hungarian period also: Gorzkowski 2000, 106–120.

This is what the peasants, what the burgher with the senate demand with pleas, /
what the bellicose turmoil requests with trumpets, resounding of arms. / After
the turn, caused by the birth, the golden centuries will return, / sweet honeys will
flow in the rivers. / The green field will bear fruit without seed, / the presents of
Bacchus will grow on the highest ridges.¹¹

The second part of this quote, similarly, has both a general meaning and refers to the specific case of Sigismund's marriage. It indicates a change in representation: the King's past as a brave warrior and successful military commander (v. 89–94) is replaced by his future as a married ruler of peace. This universal idea of the Golden Age fits in well with some of the ambitious plans of the Jagiellonians. The *aurea aetas* had been a key trope of Roman imperial propaganda, with one of the most prominent examples of the Augustan agitprop being Virgil's fourth Eclogue. Some Virgilian motifs ('abundance of honey', 'wine' and 'the self-bearing nature') reappear in Paulus' epithalamium. *Virg. Ecl. 4* links the expectation of peace and abundance to the birth of a child, the awaited successor to Octavianus-Augustus, or in the Christian interpretation, the Savior. These intertextual references place the urgent hope for an heir in the epithalamium from 1512 in a solemn symbolical context. This could be taken as mere coincidence, if the long-awaited son—eventually delivered by Bona—was not called Sigismund II *August(us)*. *Semper Augustus* was, of course, also part of the title of the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.

The epithalamium itself does not hint at who supported the publication, in contrast to the two poems, which precede and follow the epithalamium. The only extant copy of the booklet, today kept at the Ossolineum Library, is not accessible online and, even worse, incomplete¹², but modern editions contain the information that is needed for a reconstruction of the text ensemble (description: Crosnensis 1962, 9; texts: *ibid.* 151–162, 162–167 and Dantiscus 1950, 58f.). Only the illustrated title page—showing the “insignia regis Poloniae” (probably similar to Ill. 1, below)—seems to be lost forever. The poems framing the epithalamium were written by Dantiscus (opening), and by Crosnensis himself (closing). They refer to Jan Lubrański, the Bishop of Poznań, and contain little more than admiration for his and the poet's virtues. In fact, the double praise of Lubrantius surpasses the *laus Sigismundi* in the epithalamium. The Polish eagle on the (lost) title page could be replaced with the bishop's arms, the fir tree (*Pinus*), mentioned in Dantiscus' poem “In laudem Pauli Crosnensis” (v. 35f., Dantiscus 1950, 59), though this might have been a transgression of etiquette. As to Lubrański's connection to the wedding, v. 149f. of the closing poem by Crosnensis informs us that he had participated in these “joys of marriage” as “matchmaker, best man and bride-leader” (in 2nd Ps. Sing.: “sponsalia gaudia, quorum / Pronubus

¹¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own, M.R.

¹² According to the library's electronic catalogue, the copy (sdXVII-3231) lacks the title and a further page with a dedication to Lubrański by Dantiscus (i.e. the dedicatory poem).

atque auspex ac paranympus eras”, Crosnensis 1962, 166). Decius’ overview over the first years of the reign of Sigismund I (Decius 1521, LXXIX) and the short “Commentarius” on the major events of 1512 in the *Acta Tomiciana* (AT II, 2), which precedes the collected documents, confirm that Lubrański was part of the delegation which accompanied Barbara Zápolya to Cracow, probably even as the main envoy, since his name is listed first. Thus, the bishop of Poznań supported Paulus Crosnensis—then an outstanding figure in academia and authority for younger poets (cf. “In laudem Pauli Crosnensis”, v. 19–32)—in publishing a book that commemorates an important event in Lubrański’s successful career as politician.

Ioannes Dantiscus: PR in Service of the King

Ioannes Dantiscus’ wedding poem (in the original book laconically called “Epithalamium”¹³) is in many respects close to the text of Paulus Crosnensis but pays more attention to specific events. Also drawing on Statius, Dantiscus competes for the best adaptation of this model. Erato is not a narrator,¹⁴ but there are three layers, as the narrator (1) repeats words of Venus and others (2), and Venus reports previous speech by Amor and by herself (3). Dantiscus also varies the choice of characters. His *dramatis personae* are female—Juno, Venus—, and it is Juno, who decides to find a bride for Sigismund. The two goddesses settle their eternal dispute that began with the judgment of Paris (v. 48f.) and caused, according to the legend, the destruction of Troy and Carthage (v. 25–31). Like Crosnensis’ epithalamium, Dantiscus’ poem predicts a golden age:

Conveniamus! Erit totum pax laeta per orbem.
Aurea, sub nostro fuerant quae patre, redibunt
Saecula. Sic rediens liquida descendet ab aethra
Iusticia [...]. (v. 38–41)

Let us come together / there will be joyful peace overall the globe. / The golden centuries, which existed under our father, will return. / Thus, Justice will return and descend from the liquid sky [...].

This Augustan idea is at the very heart of Dantiscus’ mythologically-inspired narration. Nonetheless, the “Epithalamium” also referred to particular political context and thus was more propagandistic. The keywords on the right margin of the pages are very helpful in identifying the contemporary events that were of special importance to the author (and his patron), as several refer to political content. ‘Justice’ even appears twice (v. 41, v. 88): The paragraph quoted above predicts that *Iustitia* will descend on Earth (v. 40f.). In Juno’s appraisal of Sigismund’s qualities, the words on the margins single out *Iustitia* (v. 87) and *Virtus* [here: courage, braveness].

¹³ My analysis is based on the digital representation (Dantiscus 1512); the quotes follow in punctuation and decoding of abbreviations Skimina’s edition (Dantiscus 1950, 41–58).

¹⁴ There is no clear opening and no closing of speech, cf. **footnote 9**. A different view has Niedźwiedź (1999, 26).

Sigismund is compared not just to outstanding military leaders, but also to Solon and Lycurgus (90f.). Solon's constitutional reform allowed the citizens of Athens to participate in politics, while the Spartan Lycurgus established, according to the legend, a division of power between the king and the people by creating a 'council of elders'. In 1512, these references probably alluded to changes in the political system. Sigismund's brother Alexander and later Sigismund himself had consented to the famous act *Nihil novi* (no new laws without the consent of the Sejm; cf. Frost 2018, 349–353), which significantly restricted the power of the monarch. Among the military successes the most interesting is the victory over an individual opponent, *Michael Hlynsky*,¹⁵ “who wanted to become Lithuanian Duke by betrayal” (“Per fraudem voluit qui dux Lituanus haberi”, v. 105–108). The Ruthenian noble had been a favorite of King and Grand Duke Alexander, lost his former influence and offices under Sigismund I, started an unsuccessful rebellion, and finally fled to Muscovy, entering the service of Vasilii III.¹⁶

The first paragraph of Juno's *laus Sigismundi* contains another interesting element of royal propaganda as Juno praises Sigismund's father. Singled out as “Casimirus Rex Polo(niae)” by the keyword in the margin, he is described as the founder of a mighty dynasty, with four of his sons having become kings (v. 67–83). It is astonishing that neither Dantiscus nor any other of the poets refers to older ancestors or a Jagiellonian dynasty. A possible explanation is linked to Nowakowska's argument (2018, 43:00ff.) that a Jagiellonian identity did not yet exist; she dates its genesis to the overview of Polish history published by Decius in 1521 (also Bömelburg 2006, 77–84; Glomski 2007, 18–20). Part 2 of Decius' synthesis, “De Iagellonum Famila”, presents information about Lithuania and the dynasty, and Part 3, “De Sigismundi Regis temporibus”, contains the famous woodcut genealogic tree (Decius 1521 LIII f.).

Although the goddesses in the role of matchmakers give Dantiscus' epithalamium a matriarchal touch, his contribution concentrates on the bridegroom. The woodcut on the title page (Ill. 1) bears only Sigismund's well-known individual logo, the eagle interwoven with the first letter of his name (examples: Morka 2006, 88; 148f.; 221; 235; 275f.; 322). This heraldic image is accompanied by some verses, i.e. an ‘allusio ad stemmata’,¹⁷ which are quite well-known (for example, Dantiscus 1950, 41: “In Sigismundi aquilam”). This bimedral combination of heraldic picture and verses from 1512 might be the oldest known to us in Polish literature, as the earliest example mentioned by Pilarczyk (1982, 24) and Kroll (1985, 65) dates from 1513. The illustrations in Morka (2006, 325) show that the very same woodcut logo was used for at least three other books. Two of these title pages also contain the two heraldic verses by Dantiscus: one

¹⁵ The modern edition renders his name as *Michaël Gliński* (Dantiscus 1950, 49).

¹⁶ Details: Sach (2002, 118–123); Decius (1521, e.g. 64f.).

¹⁷ Term by Kroll 1985, 64f. Polish researchers refer to this bimedral genre as ‘stemmata’ (cf. Pilarczyk 1982), but avoid the (polysemic) singular.

is from an epithalamium-booklet on the wedding of 1518 by Laurentius Corvinus and the other from *Soteria* by Ioanes Dantiscus.



Ill. 1: The individual heraldic logo of Sigismund I, accompanied by Dantiscus' verses (Dantiscus 1512, title page)

It is highly probable that Sigismund commissioned Dantiscus' poem and that it represented the image that the King wanted to convey. In the dedicatory poems framing the epithalamium, in the 'Recommendation' ("Ad Inclytum Sigismundum ... Com(m)e(n)datio", v. 19), and the 'Supplication' ("Ad inclytum Sigismu(n)du(m) ... Deprecatio", v. 2), the speaker calls himself *tuus scriba*, i.e. the King's secretary.

Cricius: The Successful Networker

In contrast to Dantiscus', Andreas Cricius concentrates on the future queen and draws attention to Barbara already on the title page (cf. Ill. 3). The woodcut shows a heraldic representation of the marriage: the coat of arms of the city of Cracow below, and above the coat of arms of both the bridegroom and bride ('marital arms'). According to heraldic rules (Boutell 1963, 136f.; Filip 2011, 36f.), the groom's coat of arms is located on the 'dexter' (i.e. the anatomical right side from the perspective of the bearer of the shield), which is considered in heraldry as the better, more important side. The bride's family's coat of arms is located on the 'sinister' (i.e. the anatomical left). We can verify this rule on the woodcut that illustrates Cricius' book on Sigismund's second marriage to Bona Sforza in 1518 (Ill. 2): The crowned shield is split vertically ('parted per pale'), with the eagle on the *dexter*, and the Sforza's snake on the *sinister*. The husband's eagle turns towards the bride's arms, as is customary (cf. Filip 2011, 36f.), i.e. he looks to the anatomical left, in contrast to 'normal' heraldic representations.

The heraldic image on Cricius' title page from 1512 follow this norm, although at first glance it seems to be the usual representation of the main territories of Sigismund's realm, the Polish eagle and the Lithuanian Knight-on-Horse (Lith. *Vytis*, Pol. *Pogoń*). But if this was the case, the royal eagle should have been located on the 'better' dexter and the mounted knight would have galloped

in the opposite direction. In fact, the *Vytis-Pogoń* on the dexter is the coat of arms of the Jagiellonian bridegroom, whereas the eagle, which originally represented the Piast dynasty, stands for Barbara. The choice of the eagle is also remarkable because we would usually expect the coat of arms of the father of the bride, as in the typical marital arms from a 16th-century manuscript, which is kept in the Biblioteka Kórnicka (Cricius <post 1550>, fol. 321v).¹⁸ This small heraldic picture (Ill. 3) was glued, as we can see on the edges, into the manuscript below a poem dedicated to the marriage (“In insignia Reginae Barbarae coniuncta aquile” [On the arms of Queen Barbara, united with the eagle]). The split shield shows on the groom’s side the Piast eagle and on the bride’s, the wolf of the Zápolyas.¹⁹

Ill. 2. Cricius (1518, title page) Ill. 3. Cricius (1512, title page) Ill. 4: Cricius (<post 1550>, fol. 321v)



Sigismund – Bona



Sigismund – Barbara



Sigismund – Barbara

The comparison shows that the marital arms on Cricius’ book from 1512 are special. The likely reason for choosing the Piast eagle was Barbara’s descent: Her mother Jadwiga (Hedwig) stemmed from a Silesian branch of this dynasty (cf. Cricius 1888, 23; duchies of Cieszyn and Głogów). This Piast lineage of Sigismund’s Hungarian bride appears also in the epithalamium itself, called “*Silva*”²⁰ (italics mine; M.R.):

Threntia pannoniis arx est sublimis in oris
Altaque verticibus tangentes sidera turres,
Clara domus Stephan(or)um clarisque referta trophaeis,
Cui non Gaza Midæ, non Croesi divitis arcae

¹⁸ According to Morawski (Cricius 1888, XI–XIV), this is the earliest and most important codex of Cricius’ works. Like the AT, it was a product of Stanisław Górski’s collecting activities (Marciniak 1984, 32–35). I discovered the picture in the original manuscript in 2017, when I spent some days in Kórnik (and three weeks in Cracow) thanks to a mobility grant from the University of Passau.

¹⁹ Morawski comments on the coats of arms, but omits the existence of a picture (Cricius 1888, 28f.).

²⁰ The basis of my research was the digital representation (Cricius 1512). I compared the quotes with Morawski’s edition (Cricius 1888, 20–28), which is a good example for the destruction of the original text ensemble: the dedicatory texts by others and the *Hymenaeus* are missing, the *Carmina Sapphica* are moved.

Aequari possent [Cricius 1888: possunt] opibus, nec Persa nec Indi.
 Hac sata nutritur forma praestante puella,
 Sed probitate magis, castoque decora pudore.
Virgo, Polonorum veteri quoque sanguine regum
Prodit, maternae referens primordia stirpis. (v. 55–63)

The hill of Trenčín rises high in the Pannonian shores, / while the towers on the hilltops touch the high stars. / The famous house of Stephan's children²¹ is filled with famous trophies, / to whom neither the treasure of Midas nor the chests of Croesus / can equal in fortunes, nor the Persian or the Indians. / The maiden, born here, is nourished in outstanding beauty, / but adorned even more by honesty and innocent modesty. / *A maiden stemming from the ancient blood of the Polish kings / giving back the origins of her maternal stem.*

Although there is no information that the bride's 'Piast blood' was of any importance for the politicians, it is a convincing symbolic legitimation. Who knows what propaganda would have evolved from this idea, if she lived longer and gave birth to sons.²²

Cricius is the only poet who integrates such detailed information about the bride's background. His "Silva" focuses on Barbara,²³ describing how she rides through Cracow and passes through the Wawel palace, her future home (v. 76–91). Two of the shorter poems which follow explicitly address the *felix virgo*: "Cantilena in Thrancziin" and "Cantilena post coronatione(m)". It is hardly surprising that Cricius became the secretary of the queen.

Cricius' wedding poems show that the secretary-cum-poet had excellent connections. In addition to the royal couple, the "Silva" includes also other historical figures in the poetic 'immortalisation'. The poem starts with a description of the happy company approaching the walls of Cracow and introduces three VIPs (cf. Cricius 1888, 21f., also translation and commentary in Brożek, Niedźwiedź 1999). As the paragraph (v. 22–52) stretches over 30 out of 156 verses, this information must have been important. The three identifying references are similar in morphology, further strengthening the rhetoric impact (italics M.R.): "*Naviger* [...] Lucas" (v. 23), "*Christifer*" (v. 28), "*Piniger antistes*" (v. 37). The "pine-bearing bishop" refers to the already mentioned Jan Lubrański, Bishop of Poznań, for whom Cricius worked as secretary. His heraldic sign was the pine tree, the Godziemba clan coat of arms. The "boat-bearing Lucas" is Łukasz II Górka (Lucas de Gorka), whose Łódzia coat of arms included a boat. *Christifer*, "Christ-carrying", refers to the first name of Krzysztof Szydłowiecki, who in 1512 was deputy chancellor (*podkanclerz*). Decius (1521, LXXIX) and the *Acta Tomiciana* (AT II, 2, "Commentarius" for 1512) confirm that Sigismund sent these three high-ranking nobles to Hungary to accompany his future wife.

²¹ I follow Brożek, Niedźwiedź 1999, 491, who interpret this gen. pl. as metaphorical designation for the kings of Hungary.

²² In the already mentioned post-1550 manuscript with Cricius' letters and poems from the Biblioteka Kórnicka, the original illustration on the printed book from 1512 (ill. 3) are replaced by different marital arms (ill. 4) and a suiting heraldic poem, which follow the texts from the original booklet.

²³ Barszcz 2005, 52 speaks of a secondary role (*drugorzędna rola*), a superficial statement.

The poet was personally connected to at least two of these VIPs. The epithalamium praises Jan Lubrański, to whom the speaker (i.e. Cricius) owes “all he has and all that he will achieve” (v. 47f.). The connection to Szydłowiecki is more evident in the paratextual parts of the booklet, which starts with two short poems by Magister Ioannes Solfa (a Silesian, who had studied at Cracow and would later become a physician to Sigismund I) and Iodocus Ludovicus Decius (his secretary and court historian, born in Alsace) praising the poet. They are followed by a two-page preface by Doctor Ioannes Sylvius Amatus Siculus (an Italian expert in Greek teaching at the University of Cracow) addressed to Krzysztof Szydłowiecki. This preface by Siculus explains that the renowned philologist had been asked by Szydłowiecki to give an evaluation of the poems. This preface creates a certain equilibrium in recognition, as Szydłowiecki is mentioned only second among the three counsellors who travelled to Trenčín and the core poem in Cricius’ book dedicates a rather small number of verses to him.

Testament to the political (propagandistic) character of Cricius’ and Dantiscus’ contributions, or at least to the high status both poets reached during their political career, was the fact that the complete content of their wedding publications was included in the *Acta Tomiciana*²⁴. The ‘philological’ epithalamium by Cricius or Hessus’ articulation of Prussian interests were not added – or had already been forgotten, when the documents were collected.

Hessus: Prussian Literary Diplomacy

In 1509, young Helius Eobanus Hessus (1488–1540)²⁵ gave up teaching at the University of Erfurt, due to both the city’s and the university’s financial problems and entered the service of Job (Hiob) von Dobeneck, Bishop of Pomesania (1501–1521). The bishopric of Pomesania with its capital Riesenburg (Prabuty) belonged to the territory of the Teutonic Order and was located on the border with Royal Prussia. This means that from 1509 until 1513, Hessus served as secretary of an important Prussian prelate and politician.²⁶ Von Dobeneck was one of the most influential counsellors to the Grand Master of the Theutonic Order Friedrich of Saxony, who ruled from abroad since 1507, and after his death in December 1510 the bishop even became interim regent (Sach 2002, 56, 171). He held a similar position under the next (and last) Grand Master. Albrecht

²⁴ AT II, 21–30; 30–38; the order of Cricius’ texts is changed. as already mentioned, Stanisław Górski, initiated a separate manuscript collection of Cricius’ letters and poems, and also one with the works of Dantiscus, cf. Marciniak (1984, 75).

²⁵ Huber-Rebenich, Lütkemeyer (2008) is an excellent guide to Hessus’ publications. Due to the references to primary sources, Krause (1879) is still the best biography. Hessus is a prominent figure in German humanism (Ellinger 1929, 3–23; Kühlmann et al. 1997, 247–337). There has been some actual research in Germany, but the most significant contribution comes from the USA: Vredeveld publishes since 2004 a critical, bilingual edition of “The Poetic Works of Eobanus Hessus” and wrote a biographical article (Vredeveld 1997); his study on Hessus in Cracow (Vredeveld 2002) and an article by Kühlmann and Straube (2001) are excellent literature on Hessus’ years in Prussia.

²⁶ Information on von Dobeneck: Forstreuter (1959).

von Brandenburg²⁷ entered Prussia only 1.5 years after his formal election, and von Dobeneck was the leading figure in the council that replaced the absent ruler (176f.). In 1511, when Albrecht's refusal to swear homage to the king of Poland had provoked new tensions, von Dobeneck negotiated with Jan Łaski, the former Great Chancellor of Poland and archbishop of Gniezno at the time (180ff.; cf. Joachim 1892, No. 39, 191f.).

Letters by Hesus and the report of his biographer Ioachim Camerarius (publ. 1553; bilingual ed. Hesus 2004, 5–91) draw a vivid picture of his life as a secretary at Riesenburg. As we know from his letter to Ludovicus Melsingensus from 1510, Hesus had a profound insight into Prussian-Polish affairs (cf. Krause 1879, I, 93; 95):

Scriptis Iulius Secundus summus Pontifex ad regem, ut reddat ordini quod suum est. Misit Caesar Legationem suam, misit Imperium, miserunt status Imperii, literas omnes ego & vidi & legi, nec solum legi, sed & mea manu exscripsi. [...] Sum enim ego in Cancellaria ea quae sit frequentissima, ubi non possum non quotidie nova & experiri & discere. In causis consistorialibus versor. Valete Musae, non estis de pane lucrando, haha. (Hesus 1543, 11f., quotation 11)

Pope Julius II wrote to the king that he should render to the Order what belongs to them. The Emperor sent his embassy, the Empire sent, the Imperial Estates sent, and I saw and read all these papers, and did not only read them, but copied them also with my own hand. [...] For I am in this most busy chancellery, where it is impossible for me not to experience and not to learn every day something new. I deal with affairs of the imperial chamber. Farewell, Muses, you are not for earning one's bread, hahaha.

In the service of Job von Dobeneck, Hesus composed occasional poetry like his fellow poets in Poland. Besides the “Encomium nuptiale divo Sigismundo” [Nuptial Encomium for the Divine Sigismund], part of his Prussian-Polish literary diplomacy was the poem “Ad Serenissimum Sigismundum Regem Poloniae pro Magistratibus militia Teutonicorum Prussiae in conventu Petricovensi” [To the Most Illustrious Sigismund, King of Poland, on behalf of the Teutonic Order of Prussia at the Sejm of Piotrków]. It reflects the position of the Teutonic Order during the negotiations which took part during the Polish-Lithuanian diet some months later, in November 1512. This context highlights the diplomatic message in Hesus' wedding poem, published in February, and we will return to it in more detail.

According to remarks in a letter by Hesus (to Georgius Spalatinus, 12 IV 1512; Mutianus 1890, 367–369, 368) and in his volume *Silvae* (Hesus 1535, 6 [on top], 9 [v. 21ff.]), Hesus was present in person at the wedding of 1512. Like those of Cricius and Dantiscus, his poetic contribution to the marriage was printed by Johannes Haller. Certainly, the decision for a publisher from Cracow originated in the intention to distribute the text immediately, but it also meant the book would reach primarily an audience in Poland-Lithuania. Indeed, until the 1920s

²⁷ In English, he is often called *Abrecht* or *Albert of Hohenzollern*.

the text of the “Encomium nuptiale” was unknown to German researchers (Vredeveld 2002, 162 “verschollen”; Hessus 2008, 10). Krause (1879, II, 108) only knew that such a print had once existed and draws attention to a significant detail: Hessus did not include his wedding poem in the collections—the *Silvae* (1535) or the *Farragines* (1539)—he prepared in the last decade of his life. Both collections began with a “first, Sarmatian book” (“liber primus qui Sarmaticus inscribitur”, Hessus, 1535, 8). The praise of Sigismund and Barbara would fit into this topic, but there were evidently some unknown reasons against reprinting. The first book of the *Silvae* (reprinted in the *Farragines*) begins with the already mentioned verses “In conventu Petricovensi” from 1512 (Hessus 1535, 8–15). A versified description of Prussia, written in Riesenbourg, follows (called: “Ad Mutianum Rufum Epistola Prussiae descriptionem continens”, 15–20). These two poems form, together with the omitted epithalamium, the core of Hessus’ text on Polish-Prussian relations.

Hessus’ booklet, dedicated to the wedding of Sigismund and Barbara, looks modest in comparison with Cricius’s publication.²⁸ No colleague or friend contributed a dedicatory *epistola* or additional poems. Hessus’ epigram “Ad librum” speaks of great hurry (v. 6) and the dedicatory letter states that the book was written in just four days during the festivities (sentence 14). Of course, such emphasis on the spontaneous and imperfect character of the text complies with the tradition of the genre *sylvae*.

In analysis of the poem, scholars often focus on its ‘literary value’ and have expressed many very critical evaluations of Hessus’ epithalamium, talent and character (Nowak-Dłużewski 1966, 71; Brożek 1995, 50; Niedźwiedź 1999, 31f.; Gorzkowski 2000, 209f.). Without calling the poem—in the spirit of German patriotism—a genial piece of literature, I suggest, in favor of Hessus, that it does fulfil its diplomatic task quite well. The basis of a fair judgement is, in any case, the understanding of a text’s argumentative structure and function. The “Encomium nuptiale” begins with an invocation (v.1–7) and alludes to the existing works of the author (v. 8–19), who was well-known in Erfurt, but not in the Kingdom of Poland. After the encrypted ‘list of publications’, a connecting passage about Poland follows (v. 20–34), before the introduction of place segues into praise of groom and bride (v. 35–104). The main part of Hessus’ encomium deals with the arrival of the bride in the city (day 1, v. 105–305) and the marriage (day 2, v. 306–343). The speaker decides to stop his report at the doors of the bridal chamber (v. 341–343) and leaves the description of the further celebrations to others (v. 344–355). The epithalamium ends with a typical humanist topos of modesty, speaking of the higher talent of these “others”, who are

²⁸ I quote from Vredeveld’s excellent edition (Hessus 2008, 12–37). The introduction (3–10, 10) mentions three existing copies of the book: 1) Zwickau, Ratsschulbibliothek (24.7.24/3); 2) Cracow, Biblioteka Czartoryskich (Cim. 170/II) and 3) Wrocław, Ossolineum (XVI. Qu 3712). The copy of the Biblioteka Czartoryjskich (Hessus 1512) can be accessed online and was used for comparison.

inspired by Apoll (v. 352f.), and excusing some ‘ill-shaped’ own verses (v. 356–367). Three lines against a potential unjust critic close the poem (v. 368–370).

Self-advertisement and Poetic Polemics

Hessus’ provocative invocation of Christ and his relationship to his Polish competitors have attracted the most attention in modern scholarship. The declaration that his poem takes inspiration from Christ, and not from Apollo (“non, Phoebe, veni, sed [...] Christe”, v. 2f.) or the Muses, was understood by both his contemporaries and modern philologists as a polemical side blow against Paulus Crosnensis, Ioannes Dantiscus and Andreas Cricius, who referred in their texts to pagan sources of inspiration (Erato, Apollo). Vredeveld rightly argues that Hessus’ preference for Christ was “motivated less by religious fervor, as he would later claim, than by the spirit of rivalry” (Hessus 2008, 8). He also remarks that Hessus is inconsistent (Vredeveld 2002, 168f.). Indeed—the versified rendering of the wedding speech by Łaski, which is part of Hessus’ epithalamium, even mentions Venus as heavenly power (v. 255)! Vredeveld has outlined in detail the polemics, which evolved from this partisanship for Christ and left long-lasting traces in Hessus’ writing (Vredeveld 2002, 163–172; Hessus 2008, 5–9). In the early 1520s, Hessus polemicized again with Polish poets, who this time mocked an unsuccessful attempt of the Teutonic Order to seize Danzig.²⁹

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that his relationship with Poland and the humanists in Polish service was unambiguously antagonistic (cf. the information collected in Vredeveld 2002, 170f., 174f.; Krause 1879, I, 102–104). Hessus’ first biographer Camerarius draws a positive picture of a “noble rivalry in talent and erudition” between Hessus and Dantiscus, of course, with his friend as winner (Hessus 2004, 32, sentences 2–4). From a remark in the dedicatory letter in Hessus’ volume *Silvae* (Hessus 1535, 6), we know that he sent Dantiscus two elegies during his stay in Cracow. Hessus included these declarations of friendship into the already mentioned “liber primus qui Sarmaticus inscribitur” of his volume *Silvae* (Hessus 1535, 36–40). This first book and the collection of poetry as such opens with a letter dedicating the ‘Sarmatian’ texts to Dantiscus, then Bishop of Chełmno and *administrator Pomesaniensi*³⁰ (Hessus 1535, 3). This abundant praise was motivated by the poet’s wish to acquire some funding for the translation of the Iliad, as mentioned on the last page (7).

By this summary of scholarly discourse otherwise unavailable in the field of Polish Studies, I would like to draw attention to alternative motives for Hessus’ polemics against non-Christian

²⁹ Cf. Vredeveld 2002, 167f. Hessus’ “In poetam bello Sarmatam Germanos ignaviae insimulantem invective” (1523) is published in Hessus (2016, 391–415). It polemicizes with *De bello Prussiano* with verses by Cricius & Dantiscus (it was included in the AT V, 344–347; Vredeveld added them to his edition as appendix: Hessus 2016, 416–425).

³⁰ This connection of the addressee to the place of Hessus’ stay in Prussia deserves attention. According to Jähnig (2014, 24f.), a part of the diocese of Pomesania had become Polish in 1466. As reaction to the conversion of the Teutonic state into a Protestant Duchy in 1525, Sigismund I declared the bishop of nearby Chełmno administrator of Polish (Catholic) Pomesania.

sources of inspirations. First, the opening explained why Hessus took another approach: he did not describe the actions of gods, but concentrated on the praise of Sigismund I (therefore the title: “Encomium nuptiale”, cf. dedicatory letter, sentence 1) and a report of real events.³¹ Second, this preference for Christ rather than Apollo and the Muses refers not only to others, but also to the poet himself and his recent writing: in Pomesania, Hessus worked on a Christian version of Ovid’s *Heroides*.³²

Common Enemy

In contrast to the current interpretation as a provocation with an anti-Polish tendency, the ‘orthodox’ invocation actually emphasizes the common Christian (Catholic) religion as a factor in European politics: both the dedicatory letter and the “Encomium nuptiale” describe the war against infidels as a major task. The emphasis on the unity of faith between Prussia and Poland was part of the political message, emphasized in Hessus’ publication. Instead of dealing with the tensions between the Teutonic Order and the Polish Crown, the epithalamium attributes the role of enemies to ‘others’, the Tatars, Wallachians and Muscovites. The preface contains praise of Sigismund as a pious warrior, whose sword is red with the blood of infidels for the sake of the Christian faith (“Quid enim ensis ille tuus continua infidelium caede rubens nisi pro pietate Christiana”; sentence 9). The “Encomium nuptiale” expresses the same idea of Poland as a protector of Christianity (v. 20–28). The “nations hostile to the cross and with a deep hatred for Christ”, who attack the borders of the realm, are again the Tartars and Wallachians. The poem mentions the “Teutoni” *without* a clear reference to a possible enmity. They and the “Russi” are both portrayed as neighbors, who “hold the vicinity”. What this expression means, is to some degree ambiguous. An attentive reader may note that the Poles are represented as surrounded on all sides, as Vredevel’s translation highlights. But the question, whether *Russi* refers to the inimical Muscovites³³ or not rather to the Eastern Slavs within the Polish-Lithuanian realm rises doubts if an inimical interpretation of *Teutoni* must be preferred. An open thread against Poland in a panegyric poem on behalf of Sigismund I would be displaced.

[...] Quos Tartarus inter
Epoto satiatus equo celeresque Valachi
Fortibus arma movent diverso Marte Polonis,
Qui toties victi nondum cognoscere pacem
Aut nolunt aut non possunt – tam barbara gens est.
Hinc Russi vicina tenent, hinc Teutona pubes.
Martia terra viris, Cerealibus inclyta pratis,
Dives inexhausti pecoris, generosa metallis,

³¹ The same dichotomy of mythological fiction vs. reality uses Hussovianus in “Carmen de bisonte” (Cracow 1523).

³² On this taking sides for Christ as general topos and in Hessus’ writing: Vredeveld 2002, 164.

³³ The prefaces refers to the inimical Eastern Slaves as Muscovites.

Christiferae tutela crucis, quam sepe ruentem
Restituit stravitque armis victricibus hostem. (v. 24–33)

Among those who war against the valiant Poles in far-flung battles are the Tartars, who gorge themselves on draughts of horses' blood, as well as the fleet Walachians, who, defeated time after time, have thus far shown themselves either unwilling or unable to understand peace – so barbarous a people are they. *On the one flank are the Russians* [or: Ruthenians M.R.], *on the other the Germans* [or: Teutonic Knights, M.R.]. The country is renowned for her warriors, celebrated for her grainfields, inexhaustibly rich in livestock, abounding in metals. Protectress of the Christ-bearing cross, she has repeatedly saved it from toppling as the overwhelmed the enemy with her conquering arms. (Transl.: Vredeveld; italics are mine, M.R.)

In v. 32f., Hesus explicitly praises the role of Sigismund's realm in protecting the cross, referring to the idea of *antemurale Christianitatis*. This symbol of Christianity reappears in an equally prominent place: von Dobeneck wears the Knights' white mantle with a black cross (v. 226f., see below), suggesting common grounds in this battle against infidels.

Ceremonial Order

Among the four poetic contributions to the wedding, Hesus' epithalamium does not only put the most emphasis on religion but also pays the most attention to the actual course of the ceremony (cf. Niedźwiedź 1999, 28, 30). Crosnensis and Dantiscus do not refer to the real event and Cricius limits himself to the arrival of the bride and the Polish VIPs in her entourage. As his book was printed first, including a cover illustration and dedications, he seems to have composed the verses in advance. As already mentioned, Hesus wrote his poem during the wedding ceremonies, meaning that he could add specific detail. As the poet devoted a remarkable amount of verses on the account of the various peoples and individual guests, this information must have been important and is worthy of our attention.

First, Hesus is the only poet who mentions the presence of foreigners. His description of the arrival of the bride begins with a procession of warlike and ferocious-looking Polish knights with swords (v. 144: "Belliger ante alios, duro ferus ense, Polonus") on splendid horses and clothed in gold and purple. They are followed by the "Teuton" in mail and with heavy weapons (v. 153). Vredeveld translates 'German' (and not 'Teutonic Knight'), and he seems to subsume the Silesians and probably also the Moravians into this German collective (v. 154–156). Next are the Hungarians, Bohemians, Russians or Ruthenians (Vredeveld: 'Russians', v. 163; Niedźwiedź's article in ZSIPh: 'Ruthenians'), Livonians from the Baltic and peoples from the South-East.³⁴ That the "Teuton" wears weapons might be interpreted as a threatening gesture, but several of the others have no less bellicose attributes: "pugnax [...] Ungarus" (v.159), "Teutonico doctus ritu pugnare Bohemus" (v. 162), and, of course, the ferocious Poles (see above). In contrast to Crosnensis and

³⁴ Cf. the ethnogeographical comments in Jakub Niedźwiedź's article in this volume.

Dantiscus, who celebrate the beginning of an age of peace (and despite of Hessus' own reference to a Polish *pax augusta*, v. 39), the doors of the temple of Janus seem to be cracked open.

A second remarkable feature is Hessus' representation of the ceremonial order of the procession. The poem puts the Hungarians—the escort of the bride—in the parade of the different peoples behind the Poles and, additionally, *behind* the Germans. A significant change occurs also in the list of VIPs heading for Cracow in v. 219–274, as the comparison with Polish sources suggests. Hessus' begins with the envoy of the Pope (Bishop Giovanni Stafileo, cf. the commentary in Hessus 2008, 29). Then follows a Hungarian bishop (Petrus Berislavus, *ibid.*), who accompanied the bride as representative of King Ladislaus of Bohemia and Hungary. Immediately behind, Job von Dobeneck:

Tertius et merito sequeris, pater optime, nigra
Pallia signatus cruce candida, Presul Iobe,
Inclyta cui celebres titulus Pomesania foecit,
Teutonicae ductor fortissime militiai. (v. 226–229)

You, eminent father, followed in third place—and rightly so!—your white mantle blazoned with the black cross, O Bishop Job, to whom renowned Pomesania has granted your distinguished title, powerful Commander of the Teutonic Order. (Trans. Vredeveld)

Jan Łaski, archbishop of Gniezno and the highest-ranking member of the Polish clergy only follows *after* the bishop of Pomesania.³⁵ Hessus' enumeration continues with the archbishop of Lwów, the bishops of Przemyśl, Cracow, Płock, Poznań and Warmia (v. 262–274). V. 275–277 state that further high clergy was present. The epithalamium does not mention secular *szlachta*.

The ceremonial order in the annual overview for 1512 in the *Acta Tomiciana* (AT II, 3, below) is different and von Dobeneck's position in the hierarchy much lower. The list of the attendees of the wedding begins with the relatives of the bride and groom. Then the legate of Pope Julius II is listed, followed by two representatives of King Ladislaus of Bohemia and Hungary (Sigismund's brother), Duke Friedrich of Legnica/Liegnitz (who would marry Sigismund's sister in 1515 and his niece in 1518, cf. Pentry 1961), then numerous representatives of the Polish-Lithuanian clergy, and *after* them Job von Dobeneck and a second representative of the Teutonic Order. The guest list continues with the Duke of Silesia and the widowed Duchesses of Masovia and Racibórz, envoys of the archbishop of Estergom, the patriarch of Constantinople, the bishop of Pécs etc. Most parts of Silesia were a Bohemian fief and Masovia was subordinated to the Polish Crown. Thus, from the perspective of the *Acta Tomiciana*, the status of the Teutonic Order was that of an

³⁵ Perhaps counterbalancing this transgression of the protocol, Hessus fills 10 verses with praise of Łaski (v. 231–240) and further 16 verses with a welcome speech of the archbishop for Barbara (v. 244–259); there is also a second speech by the archbishop during the marriage ceremony (v. 310–322). This pre-eminent role of Łaski in the poem certainly stems from his position as negotiator in the Prussian-Polish conflicts and his contact with von Dobeneck (v. 239 refers to this meeting with Łaski in Thorn).

entity between domestic church prelates and Jagiellonian vassals. That the real-life Grand Master Albrecht, like his predecessor, had refused the oath of fealty—a condition of the Peace of Thorn (1466)—was one reason for the ongoing Polish-Prussian conflict, which lasted until 1525.

As the “*Commentarius*” stems from the third redaction of the AT (cf. the abbreviations on the margins), which was completed in the 1560s, its reconstruction of the order may be influenced by a later perspective and it is advisable to compare it with the rendering of the events in Decius’ history of Poland and the Jagiellonians published in 1521. Here, the enumeration of VIPs does not follow a strict order by status but is connected to certain actions. First, Barbara’s relatives accompanied the bride to Poland. Then Sigismund, in the company of the Papal legate, Sigismund’s sister, the Duchess of Mazovia, and Georg Duke of Brieg,³⁶ met his bride in Łobzów. Archbishop Jan Łaski and the Pope’s legate welcomed Barbara with speeches in Cracow. On February 8th the coronation took place and Decius mentions Archbishop Jan Łaski, who led the ceremony, other bishops, and high Polish clergy in general. Then followed foreign bishops, beginning with the papal legate Ioannes Staphileus, the Bohemian and Hungarian bishops, who represented King Ladislaus, and finally the Bishop of Pomesania with a “*collega ex Prussis*”, representing the Teutonic Order. At the very end come the dukes of Brieg, Silesia, Masovia, Ratiborz, and several secular and ecclesiastic nobles from abroad. Thus, Decius attributes to the representatives of the Grandmaster also a position in the middle; on the one hand, behind the Polish high clergy, on the other *between* the bishops, who represent King Ladislaus, and secular nobles.

The comparison with these two reports shows that Hessus’ “*Encomium nuptiale*” highlights the presence of the Teutonic Order and defines a much more central and higher position for his patron, the Bishop of Pomesania. These small changes classify the Teutonic Order as a sovereign territory, as its representative von Dobeneck stands one step behind the envoys of the Pope and the King of Bohemia and Hungary, ahead of the Polish clergy, and of the secular vassals, who are not mentioned. After this bold interpretation due praise of Sigismund’s qualities follows, suggesting excellent Prussian-Polish relations.

Polish-Prussian Negotiations

In a time of conflict, the participation of a representative of the Teutonic Order in the wedding festivities was an important gesture³⁷ and probably provided a possibility for negotiations. The main points of disagreement were the status of ‘Royal Prussia’, which had been Teutonic, and the

³⁶ Georg of Brieg was the younger brother of Friedrich of Liegnitz (Pentry 1961). The AT do not mention Georg, but Friedrich as guest; this could be a mistake or a conscious change, as Georg died in 1521, whereas Friedrich later married two Jagiellonian princesses. The duchies of Brieg and Liegnitz/Legnica were located in Silesia, where Sigismund had ruled before becoming King and Grand Duchy.

³⁷ Due to rising tensions, the Grand Master was not invited to Sigismund’s second wedding in 1518; instead, he organized a splendid tournament in Königsberg/Królewiec (Hubatsch 1960, 65f.).

obligation of the Grand Master to swear homage; both conditions had been agreed on in 1466 in the second Peace of Thorn but were contested by the Order. This context is crucial for other verse texts, written during Hesus' employment at Riesenburg.

A first-hand insight in the state of diplomatic affairs is possible thanks to the edition of documents from the Prussian archives by Joachim (1892). Among these is a report by von Dobeneck with details of the so-called 'Rezess von Thorn' [Compromise of Thorn] (No. 42, 194f.). In December 1511, i.e. some weeks prior to the wedding, Polish and Prussian negotiators led by von Dobeneck and Łaski, worked out this proposition to unite the Crown with the Teutonic state, combining the offices of King and Grand Master (!). As head of a religious order, Sigismund would need a papal dispensation because of his marriage; the subsequent kings-and-grand masters would have to live in celibacy: a triumph for elective monarchy. The ideas expressed in Hesus' second text on "Prussian-Polish affairs" are much less radical. It was written after the wedding, on the occasion of a sejm of Piotrków in November 1512, as expressed in the title: "Ad serenissimum Sigismundum Regem Poloniae pro Magistratibus militiae Teutonicorum Prussiae in conventu Petricoviensi" [To the Most Illustrious Sigismund, King of Poland, on Behalf of the Masters of the Teutonic Order at the Occasion of the Sejm of Piotrków] (Hesus 1535, 8–15).³⁸ Albrecht von Brandenburg sent his brother Casimir to this sejm and both sides agreed on a further unsatisfactory compromise (Hubatsch 1960, 42; 44f.; Sach 2002, 187f.). This 'Petrikauer Rezess' (Joachim 1892, No. 61, 216–219) generally repeated the conditions of the second treaty of Thorn of 1466. (The Grand Master, however, did not consent.)

Hesus' Piotrków poem disguises the Order's chief aim in these negotiations (i.e. to get Royal Prussia back) in polite and diplomatic arguments. It explains the decline of the Teutonic state and the loss of its territory to Poland as the result of inner weakness and the eternal circle of history.

[Prussia; M.R.] Floruit et plures late dominata per annos
Deliciis tandem languit ipsa suis
Atq(ue) ut cunctarum rerum est mutabilis ordo
Fortunae instabilem sensit & illa rotam
Sic illa emerito cum iam polleret honore
Deflueretq(ue) opibus molliter ipsa suis
Magnarum veteres rerum est imitata ruinas
Visa nec exemplo est interiisse novo. (v.83–90)

[Prussia] flourished during many years / but then she became weak herself from
her luxuries / and, as the order of all things is inconstant, / she felt the instable
wheel of Fortuna / so she thrived with already retired honour / and slid down

³⁸ Edition with a translation into German: Kühlmann, Straube (2001, 693–702); their source was the collection *Farragines* (Hesus 1539). The poem is also mentioned in Krause (1879, I, 101f.), Hubatsch (1960, 44), and in Brożek, Niedźwiedz (1999, 484).

smoothly with her deeds, / she imitated the previous falls of mighty states³⁹ / and seemed to disappear not as some *new* example.

(Hessus' description of Prussia in verses, printed in 1514, contains an identical paragraph [Hessus 1514, 8f., v. 163ff.]⁴⁰)

As Krause (1879, I, 100) and Kühlmann and Straube (2001, 673ff.) rightly emphasize, the poet-cum-diplomat does not interpret the loss as an unjust act but as a deserved punishment for moral decay, cf. also "In conventu Petricovensi" (Hessus 1535), v. 99–104. Instead of laying accusations or claims, the poem asks Sigismund to "cure the fever" (v.105) and "expel the illnesses" (v.112). Thus Sigismund-the-healer would reform and restore the drawn-into-pieces Prussian body (v.107–110). To return the amputated territory, Royal Prussia, would strengthen the Teutonic state and the Crown would gain a powerful Christian ally against the infidels (v. 133ff.). The cross is an even more central *leitmotif* than in the epithalamium; for example, it must be saved from tumbling down (v. 123) and the fusion of (Teutonic) cross and (Polish) crown are predicted to create a powerful weapon (v. 143ff.). This argumentation sounds naïve, but it conforms to considerations found in diplomatic sources and the metaphoric arguments express strategic considerations regarding political alliances.

Despite their diplomatic qualities, Hessus' texts had little political impact and did not change the course of events. Peaceful means ultimately failed and in 1519–1521 both sides let their weapons do the talking (on the Polish-Prussian war: Hubatsch 1960, 58–137). A (radical) solution was only found in 1525, with the Prussian Homage that saw the Order transformed into a secular Protestant state.

The possibilities of panegyric literature to change the course of history are obviously limited. We should also not forget that there is no information about the *modus praesentandi* of Hessus occasional poetry or the response, if any, from the addressee, King Sigismund. Also, in respect of the poem "In conventu Petricoviensi" there is the possibility that the oldest version available (pr. 1535) may differ from the initial version. The reprinted "Prussiae descriptio" shows that Hessus revised his writing: he not only shortened or enlarged the text and improved stylistic-metric details, but also censored the negative evaluation of the 'treacherous' city of Danzig.⁴¹ Whether he

³⁹ I follow the proposition from Kühlmann, Straube 2001, 697: "mächtige Staaten".

⁴⁰ Cf. "Prussiae descriptio" (Hessus 1514; v. 51–58, 63f., 163–178) and "In conventu Petricoviense" from the *Silvae* (Hessus 1535, 8–15; v. 71–77, 78–80, 83–98). The identical text was either eliminated from the reprint of the description of Prussia in the *Silvae* (Hessus 1535, 15–20) to avoid a repetition (Kühlmann, Straube 2001 call it "revised and abridged"); or the opposite, as Vredevelde (2008, 55–57) proposes: the *Silvae* may contain older versions, which had been combined for the (enlarged) "Prussiae descriptio" in 1514. The primary text of the "Description of Prussia" was part of a (lost, but obviously real) verse epistle, addressed to Hessus' mentor and friend Mutianus Rufus, written in 1510 (arguments: Hessus 2008, 57).

⁴¹ Hessus (1514) has the verses (v. 131–134): "Urbs dominis ingrata suis nisi forte fuisset, / Fortunis certe visa beata suis. / Quae postqu(am) sacro defecit ab ordine, summa / Excisa nigram propulit arce crucem." ["If that city hadn't been ungrateful to her rulers, she could certainly be considered blessed with good fortune. After breaking with the holy order, she demolished the towering castle and expelled the black cross.,"; transl.: Vredevelde 2008, 81].

did not include the epithalamium into the collections because of political motives is unclear, but it was not because of a general anti-Polish attitude. Not only is the whole collection addressed to Dantiscus, but “In conventu Petricoviensi”, the first piece of poetry in Hessus’ *Silvae*, is dedicated to the most illustrious King Sigismund and opens with 46 panegyric verses.⁴² The illustrated initial S of the first line is even reminiscent of Sigismund’s heraldic logo, although an eagle does not feature among the ornamental figures.

Results

The epithalamia from 1512, the earliest examples from the Kingdom of Poland, show the entanglement between literature and politics in the early modern period. The poems and paratextual material do not only represent the artistic ambitions of poets, but also the political interests of patrons who financed most of the literary production in the 16th–17th century. The analyzed literary contributions all had clear propaganda goals and served as a means of international diplomacy. The poems and books celebrated the newlyweds, but also immortalized other figures. In the case of Dantiscus, the bridegroom and patron were identical: the secretary-cum-poet produced positive propaganda for his employer, Sigismund I, and crowned the book with an *allusio ad stemmata* that already was or became the king’s ‘corporate identity’. Cricius’ book concentrated on the bride, Barbara Zápolya, and reminds us that there were also *patronesses* of the arts. The dedicatory letter and poems prove that the young poet had excellent connections to the political as well as humanist elite. The case of Cricius also demonstrates the methodological gains from the availability of digital representations. The heraldic woodcut that illustrates his book highlights the interpretation of the marriage as a Jagiellonian-Piast union and led to intriguing comparisons with similar heraldic material.

In contrast to the younger generation who strove for court careers and would be rewarded with bishoprics, the university lecturer Paulus Crosnensis kept his distance from reality and did not even include his first-hand knowledge about Hungary. Crosnensis preferred general ideas, one of them being the topos of the (new) golden age. However, this re-enactment of Roman propaganda was very meaningful for Polish policy—and it was successful, because we remember the reign of Sigismund the Old and Sigismund II Augustus indeed as *złoty wiek*. The dedicatory poems that frame the epithalamium show that Paulus was supported by Bishop Jan Lubrański, one of the leading supporters of the marriage project.

My article consciously moved Hessus’ contribution to the wedding to the center of the discussion, as researchers generally stick to national frames, even though all poets wrote in Latin

⁴² Kühlmann, Straube (2001, 693) omitted these verses (!).

(cf. the praise of Cricius as the very first “genuine Polish” Renaissance poet in Barszcz 2005, 51). There is also a practical bias, as the national languages of contemporary research are an obstacle for the circulation of ideas. Helius Eobanus Hessus, a native of one of the many territories of the Holy Roman Empire, wrote his “Encomium nuptiale” on behalf of Job von Dobeneck, an influential politician in Teutonic Prussia. The foreigner among the four poets (the contribution of a fifth, writing on behalf of a council member of Danzig, is lost) was a very important Neo-Latin author and research literature contains valuable information about his time in Prussia, his contacts with Dantiscus among others, and further texts, written with tensions between the Teutonic Order and the Polish Crown in the background. That poetry was a vital instrument in Prussian politics is highlighted by a second poem by Hessus, dealing with the Sejm of Piotrków (November 1512). Both poems emphasize the unity in faith and the need to fight common enemies. A small detail of great importance in the poet’s epithalamium were the changes in his “versified guest list”, which attributed a much higher (and sovereign) status to the Order, compared to the order in the Polish reports. Most remarkable is that Hessus not only assembled occasional poetry into a ‘Sarmatian’ book in the 1530s, but that he *dedicated* the ‘Collected Works’ in which it entered to Ioannes Dantiscus and began the first poem with an appraisal of the *Serenissimus Rex Poloniae*. The practice to turn humanists into ‘patriots’ definitely has its limits.

Passau

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⁴³ Last access for all links: 24.05.2019.

⁴⁴ According to Cricius (1888, XIII).

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Panegyrik und Politik. Drei polnische und ein preußisches Epithalamium anlässlich der Hochzeit von Sigismund I. und Barbara Zápolya im Jahr 1512

Hochzeitsgedichte waren im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit eine überaus wichtige Gattung. Die ersten Epithalamia entstanden im Königreiche Polen im Jahr 1512; sie gehören zu den frühesten Beispielen jagiellonischer Literaturpropaganda. Die Texte bzw. die sie enthaltenden okkasionalen

Drucke begleiten die Hochzeit von Sigismund I. und seiner ungarischen Braut, Barbara Zápolya. Unter den Autoren sind drei der wichtigsten Literaten der polnischen Frührenaissance – Paulus Crosnensis, Ioannes Dantiscus und Andreas Cricius. Bei dem vierten, der in der polonistischen Forschung am Rande steht, handelt es sich um einen nicht weniger bedeutenden Dichter aus dem Reich, Eobanus Hessus, damals als Sekretär des Bischofs von Pomesanien im Ordensland tätig. (Ein fünfter Beitrag aus Danzig ist verloren.) Der politische Inhalt der Texte hängt eng mit den Personen zusammen, die die Dichter als Mäzene unterstützten und auf die die publizierten Textensembles verweisen: König, Königin, Bischof Jan Lubrański, Vizekanzler Krzysztof Szydłowecki, etc. Hessus' Auftragswerk erweist sich dabei als aufschlussreiches Beispiel für die literarische Diplomatie des Deutschen Ordens in einer Krisenzeit.

Der Aufsatz verbindet Textanalyse mit einer breiteren historischen Perspektive. Er rekurriert auf die frühen Drucke sowie Manuskripte aus dem 16. Jahrhundert, die Digitalisierungsprojekte bequem zugänglich machen. Die digitalen Faksimiles lenken den Blick, anders als die vorhandenen Editionen, auf die Textarrangements sowie auf die visuelle Gestaltung der Bücher, die wichtige Dimensionen der Dichter-Mäzen-Netzwerke sichtbar machen.