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THE STATE AND THE NEED FOR POLISH STUDIES
ON THE HISTORY OF AZERBAIJAN

The Polish studies on the history of Azerbaijan may seem at the first glance to have extremely long traditions as they date back to 15th century. A precursor of these studies may be considered the venerable 15th century historian Jan Długosz. The origins of his interest in the Caucasus affairs were as follows. In 15th century, on the territory of the present Azerbaijan there existed states created by the Turkmen conquerors i.e. the state of the so-called Black Ram (Kara-Koyunwu) and of the White Ram (Ak-Koyunwu)¹.

The state of the White Ram ruled by Uzun Hasan came to play a significant role in the second half of 15th century. Its capital was Tebriz lying in southern Azerbaijan, and its possessions encompassed a considerable part of the Caucasus and parts of the present Iran and Iraq. This state represented a serious counterweight for Ottoman Turkey. In the seventies of 15th century, Uzun Hasan tried to establish diplomatic relations with numerous European states, among others with Jagellonian state and organize the anti-Turkish coalition². Uzun Hasan's envoys arrived at the court of the Polish King Casimir in 1474 proposing an alliance and a marriage of Uzun Hasan's daughter with King Casimir's son. It was to these problems that Długosz devoted a little more of his attention. Anyway, the historian was not too well acquainted with Caucasian-Iranian affairs calling Uzun Hasan erroneously a ruler of the Persian state³.

¹ D. M. Ibragimov, *Feodalnye gosudarstva na territorii Azerbajdzana XV veka*, Baku 1963, p. 37.

² J. M. Machmudov, *Vzaimootnošenija gosudarstva Ak-Kojun'u c Veneciej (60-70 gg. XV veka)*, Baku 1966, p. 21-22.

³ J. Długosz, *Opera omnia*, vol. 14, Cracoviae 1878, p. 601-602.

The proper interest in the peoples of the Caucasus began to be displayed by Poles at the time when starting from 16th and 17th centuries mutual trade relations began to play a growing role and when the Catholic missions of the Jesuits and the Carmelite monks began their activity there. The missions were largely composed of the monks of Polish extraction. One of such monks working in Azerbaijan and Armenia was Tadeusz Krusiński. He stayed in the Caucasus between 1705 and 1726. After his return to Poland he wrote several works in Latin devoted to Persian-Afghan wars describing extensively among others problems connected with the history of the Caucasus in the first half of 18th century and, thus, with the history of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and Dagestan, as well as customs and living conditions of the inhabitants of these countries. Krusiński's works, which were translated into many foreign languages and published in many countries in the times past, are perhaps the most valuable source of information for studies on the Caucasus of that time, although they have been utilized by scholars to an insignificant degree as yet.

A special role in the Polish studies on the Caucasian states and nations was played by the participants in the November Insurrection of 1830 forcefully enlisted into the Russian army and by the members of various patriotic organizations, who after being arrested were usually sentenced to long-term army service in the Caucasus. All in all including soldiers from ordinary conscriptions tens of thousands of Poles stayed in the Caucasian states. Among them there were also educated people such as students, teachers, clerks and representatives of the learned professions. It often happened that the beautiful local landscape, quite different religious beliefs and customs of the Caucasian nations would generate lively interest and sometimes also sympathy among the exiles. As a result there would be written numerous relations, reports, descriptions etc. oftentimes containing a lot of precious information from different spheres of life. Just like the works of Krusiński they generally concerned all the Caucasian states, although to a different degree. Accordingly, the present review will present the silhouettes and reports of only those exiles, which are of the greatest importance for the Polish studies on Azerbaijan.

The long list of such exiles is opened by Hipolit (Jan?) Jaworski sentenced to penal military companies in the Caucasus for participation in the November Insurrection. He spent 11 years there. In the early forties he was promoted to the rank of non-commissioned officer and next to that of officer for his personal bravery. In 1846 he returned to Poland. His fragments of Caucasian reminiscences were publi-

shed in the „Gazeta Codzienna” (Daily Gazette) in the years 1858—1859 and their complete volume entitled „Wspomnienia Kaukazu” (Memories of the Caucasus) came out in Poznań in 1877. Besides a historical introduction he included in his book, among others, descriptions of the nature of the Caucasus, economic relations in Azerbaijan, Indian temples of fire-worshippers at Surukhan, as well as descriptions of many Azerbaijani towns such as Gaku, Shemakha, Kuba, Gandzha and Lenkoran.

Kazimierz Łapczyński, a construction engineer, found himself in the Caucasus in a similar way. In 1844 he was forcefully enlisted into the tsar's army for his patriotic activity. His route in the Caucasus went first along the coast of the Caspian Sea from Derbent to Sumgait near Baku, and from Baku to Shemakha and Tiflis. As an officer of the engineering corps he was sent to Nakhitchevan, where he was to supervise works on construction of a military hospital. Thus, he was to cross again the territory of Azerbaijan, this time across its western part. On return to Poland, he included, among others, much information about Nakhitchevan, its past and historical monuments in the descriptions of his travels published in the „Tygodnik Ilustrowany” (Illustrated Weekly) in the years 1866—1868.

Azerbaijan received also a great deal of attention in the memoirs of Michał Butowt-Andrzejkiewicz, who did in the Caucasus his penal military service for participation in the conspiracy of Szymon Kownarski. He had first spent several years in Tiflis, and then his military unit was transferred to Temir-Khan-Shura in Dagestan across the territory of Azerbaijan, and namely through Shambor, Gandzha, Shalakh, across the Shyrmansk Plains to Shemakha, and next through Baku, Kuba and Derbent. Michał Butowt-Andrzejkiewicz in his two-volume memoirs entitled *Szkice Kaukazu* (Sketches of the Caucasus) published in Warsaw in 1859 presented his interesting observations of the country and inhabitants of Azerbaijan, their mentality, religious customs along with accurate remarks about the spreading use of the Azerbaijani language, which in the Caucasus and in the area between the Caucasus and India played a role similar to that of the French language in Europe.

Of the greatest importance in this literary works of memoirs and descriptive character is the work of Mateusz Gralewski, a son of a peasant from Mazew village near Łeczyca. He obtained his education owing to protection extended to him by a local leaseholder. Having been arrested for his patriotic activity, he was sentenced to the compulsory military service in the Caucasus in 1844. He was doing

it mainly in Azerbaijan till 1856, and he was promoted to the officer rank in the army headquarters. After his return to Poland, he continued his active social and patriotic work. In 1877, he published his observations in Lvov in a very bulky volume (560 pages) entitled *Kaukaz. Wspomnienia z dwunastoletniej niewoli. Opisanie kraju. Ludność. Zwyczaje i obyczaje* (The Caucasus. Recollections from 12 years' imprisonment. Description of the country. Population. Customs and Traditions).

Mateusz Gralewski described in great detail many towns in which he was doing his army service. Thus, he described in turn e.g. Derbent lying in Dagestan but historically connected with Azerbaijan, its legends, monuments of architecture and folk customs, next — Old and New Kuba, a military settlement at Kusary, Baku — the capital of the present Azerbaijan, the temple at Surukhan, the towns of Shemakh, Nukha and Gandzha. He was also fascinated by and described with precision of an ethnographic report the folk legends and customs and especially, those connected with Moslem beliefs, religious songs and wedding ceremonies. Moreover, he included in his work a great deal of information about the state of roads, fertility of soil, post stations, etc. Taking all this into account, it can be said that Gralewski collected very rich materials giving a good insight into northern Azerbaijan, which has not been fully utilized in scientific studies so far.

The next author describing this region was Juliusz Strutyński who was writing under a pen-name of Sas-Berlicz. As a tsar's officer he was doing his army service in the Caucasus in the forties of 19th century, first at Tiflis, next at Nakhitchevan and other towns of Azerbaijan. It is quite possible that he mastered the Azerbaijani language. He was interested in the past history and the then life of the country, in local songs and legends. One of them became a basis for his literary work about Giul-Shada, which was published in Lvov in 1872. In his other books such as *Miscelanea* published in Vilnius in 1855 and *Kilka badań geologicznych i dziejowych Kaukazu* (Several geological and historical studies of the Caucasus), which came out in Berlin in 1857, he presented a wealth of information from the sphere of geology, older and more recent history, and economic relations in his contemporary Azerbaijan.

The relations about Azerbaijan written by Aleksander Chodźko were conceived in a somewhat different way. He was a friend of Adam Mickiewicz, and a talented poet as well as a distinguished Polish orientalist. Chodźko studied the Eastern languages in Petersburg, where one of his lecturers was Djafar Mirza Topchybasha, an Azer-

baijani. In 1829 he was sent to Tebriz, where he was to be a translator in the Russian consulate. While staying in Baku he sent several reports, which in their Russian translation appeared in a magazine „Literaturnaja Gazeta“. They contained descriptions of Baku and its architectonic monuments, descriptions of its environs, including among others the temple at Surukhan, and the legends and stories belonging to the Azerbaijani folklore. His interest in the material culture and, especially, in the folklore of the Azerbaijani villages and towns grew even stronger in Tebriz, where he wrote down many legends and folk songs, among others about a noble highland robber Kōroghl or *Syn ślepca* (Son of a blind man). He made a good use of them later on in his numerous scientific studies published for their most part in France and England.

Relationships between the Polish and the Azerbaijani literature started also in the second quarter of 19th century. Their pioneer can be said to be a young Polish orientalist and a talented poet Władysław Spitznagel, a friend of Juliusz Słowacki. While studying the Eastern languages in Petersburg under supervision of Djafar Mirza Toptchybasha he translated into French a big fragment of the classical work *Iskander Name* by Nizami from Gandzha, one of the first Azerbaijani poets from 12th century. The great achievement of Spitznagel lay in the fact that his translation was one of the earliest translations of any of Nizami's poems into a European language.

Some of the Poles staying in the Caucasus possessed literary talents. Consequently, apart from descriptions and reports, there were also written numerous literary works such as poems, stories, short stories, and novels, which would sometimes present the social and cultural situation in Transcaucasia during that epoch. The works of this kind deserve a special mention here due to their strong impact on readers and the fact that they shaped in this way a certain stereotype image of the Caucasian states. The writers were attracted first of all by exotic elements of the Moslem Azerbaijan.

The story of Juliusz Strutyński entitled *Obrazy z natury. Giuł-Szada. Powieść wschodnia* (Pictures from nature. Giuł-Shada. The eastern story) was also of a literary character. It was based on the life of an Azerbaijani — Mehmed Hadja and his beautiful wife — Giuł-Shada. However, in this type of literary output it was Władysław Strzelnicki who distinguished himself. For his conspirational activity during his academic studies in Kiev he was sentenced to penal army service in Dagestan and Azerbaijan. He died in his young age, but despite that he mastered the Azerbaijani language and left quite a significant literary

output, in which the first place is held by his controversial novel *Mahmudək*. This novel was published twice in Polish in 1847 and 1860, and its Russian translation came out in Tiflis in 1848. When describing complicated adventures of the title hero, Strzelnicki presented in a satirical way the relations in Azerbaijan at the time of transformations occurring under influence of this country's contact with the European culture.

In the second half of 19th century, soldiers continued to represent a bigger part of all Poles staying in Transcaucasia. According to the population census from 1897, the number of Poles reached 15 000 there, with most of them living in the Georgian guberniyas and in Karsk district. More than two-thirds of all Poles were soldiers and members of their families. In Baku and Elizavetpol guberniyas, which were incorporated into Azerbaijan later on, there were over 2000 Poles, with soldiers and members of their families accounting for only one-third of them. This indicates that towards the end of 19th century, two-thirds of all Poles came to Azerbaijan of their own free will. In other parts of Transcaucasia, the share of Poles staying there for professional and personal reasons was lower but, for example, in Tiflis alone and its district there were over 3000 Poles for these reasons. That was due to the fact that at that time the Caucasus was becoming a destination point of numerous tourist trips and travels for a cure to health and mineral resorts gaining certain popularity already then. However, the main motive behind a growing inflow of Poles were economic and professional considerations. Thus, for example, Transcaucasia was an important sales market for goods produced by textile industry in Łódź and a supply source of cotton, which made it necessary for industrialists to maintain quite a big number of their employees on the spot.

In the case of Azerbaijan, an attractive factor was a rapid development of the oil industry at the end of 19th century and a hope for making big money. Equally promising were opportunities to find employment in the state administration, in some kinds of the learned professions, and in construction of railway lines. From among these Poles, a great renown was won by Witold Zglenicki, an engineer and a geologist, who from 1891 was a manager of Baku Essay Office. He worked out improved methods of oil drillings and scientific methods of prospecting for oil deposits. He gained the greatest fame for his pioneer method of deep-sea drillings. A part of his incomes from oil sites, which he had purchased at the beginning of 20th century, was left in his last will for the so-called Mianowski Fund in Warsaw, a social institution holding patronage over the Polish culture and science. Due to this bequest, the

Foundation received a total of almost 1.4 million rubles, which was a huge amount of money by the then standards. Witold Zglenicki was called „the Polish Nobel”, and the publicity given to this event aroused the interest in the Caucasus among the Polish society.

The above review shows that till the outbreak of the First World War, these were mainly the Poles who by fate decree found themselves in that area that were dealing first of all with studies on the history of Azerbaijan, and more widely with the history and relations in Transcaucasian states. However, already in the second half of 19th century there began the second trend in the Polish studies on Transcaucasia, when the problems of that area became an object of the Polish historians' interest. A beginning to such studies was made by a number of the authors, who focussed their attention on relationships between Poland and the state of Saphavides. Naturally, some doubts could be entertained as regards the fact whether the state should be considered to be Azerbaijani or Iranian. Most certainly the first rulers were local Azerbaijani dynasts, who represented the folk religion, which was shiism in those days. However, having conquered the entire Persia they moved their capital from Azerbaijani Ardebil to Isfahan. To an increasingly bigger degree, this state began to adopt a character of a Persian monarchy, although a decisive role was played by Azerbaijani elements in it. It appears that this state, especially in 17th century, was maintaining vivid diplomatic contacts with Poland. On the area of the present Azerbaijan, and namely in Gandzha and other towns, there were operating Polish Catholic missions. These problems were an object of scientific studies in the second half of 19th century conducted by Antoni Muchliński⁴, an orientalist and a historian, and researchers dealing with history of the Jesuit Order, first of all — Stanisław Załęski⁵. Some time later, these problems received the attention of Jan Sygański⁶, an orientalist Tadeusz Kowalski⁷, a Karaite priest

⁴ A. Muchliński, *Materiały do dziejów Kościoła polskiego w językach wschodnich pobrane* [Materials for the history of the Polish church collected in eastern languages], „Pamiętnik Religijno-Moralny” 1861, vol. 7, p. 531—553.

⁵ S. Załęski, *Misje w Persji w XVI i XVII wieku pod protektoratem Polski* [Missions in Persia in 16th and 17th centuries under Poland's patronage], „Misje Katolickie” 1882, vol. 1, p. 3—10, 25—31, 49—66.

⁶ J. Sygański, *Z notatek podróżnych o Michała Wieczorkowskiego, misjonarza apostołskiego w Persji 1715—1720* [Some travel notes of Rev. Michał Wieczorkowski, apostolic missionary in Persia 1715—1720], Kraków 1912.

⁷ T. Kowalski, *O ks. Michała Wieczorkowskiego T. J. misjonarza perskiego pracach tureckich* [Turkish works of Rev. Michał Wieczorkowski — Persian missionary], „Rocznik Orientalistyczny” 1935, vol. 12, p. 1—27.

Serai Szapszał⁸, and of historians Stanisław Brzeziński⁹ and Stanisław Kościałkowski¹⁰.

To some extent, with Azerbaijan's history was connected a short treatise of Bolesław Stachoń concerning attempts to establish relations by Poland with the White Ram state existing in the second half of 15th century on the territory of today's Azerbaijan¹¹, which was recorded by Jan Długosz in his annals. Another thing is that being poorly acquainted with ethnic problems of the Middle East, this author did not quite realize the difference which existed at that time between Iranian Persians and Turkish Azerbaijanis and Turkmen, to which belonged the tribes composing the state of the White and Black Ram.

A separate mention should be made of two other literary works, which in some way are connected with the subject in question. In 1838, there came out in Warsaw, published by Azerbejdżańskie Wydawnictwo Naukowe (Azerbaijani Scientific Publishers) a book written by a Caucasian emigrant Mehmed Emin Resul-Zade and entitled *Azerbejdżan w walce o niepodległość* (Azerbaijan in its struggle for independence). It was written in a distinctly anti-Soviet spirit, but it contained a great deal of information about the latest history of Azerbaijan. It should be noted, however, that this book although published in Polish was written by an Azerbaijani author and, hence, it hardly fits into the range of the present analysis. On the other hand, it is worth adding that an introduction to this book was written by a well-known politician from the „sanacja” regime (i.e. Piłsudski's followers after 1926) — Stanisław Siedlecki.

In turn, endeavours of Wydawnictwo Oddziału Kultury i Prasy II Korpusu (The Publishing House of the Department of Culture and Press of 2nd Corps) resulted in publication of a book in Polish entitled *Azerbejdżan* (Azerbaijan) in Rome. The author's name was given as Jusuf Jancza. It is hard to say whether he was an Azerbaijani emigrant

⁸ S. Szapszał, *Wyobrażenia świętych muzułmańskich a wpływy ikonograficzne katolickie w Persji i stosunki polsko-perskie za Zygmunta III* [Images of muslim saints and catholic iconographic influences in Persia — Polish-Persian relations at the time of King Sigismund III], Wilno 1934, p. 156—157.

⁹ S. Brzeziński, *Misjonarze i dyplomaci Polscy w Persji w XVII i XVIII wieku* [Polish missionaries and diplomats in Persia in 17th and 18th centuries], „*Annales Missiologicae*” 1935, vol. 7, p. 89—163.

¹⁰ S. Kościałkowski, *L'Iran et la Pologne á travers les siècles*, Teheran 1943.

¹¹ B. Stachoń, *Polska wobec weneckich projektów użycia Persji i Tatarów przeciw Turcji w drugiej połowie XVI w.* [Poland's attitude to Venetian plans of using Persia and Tartars against Turkey in the second half of 16th century], [in:] *Prace historyczne wydane na uczczenie 50-lecia Akademickiego Koła Historyków Uniwersytetu Jana Kazimierza we Lwowie*, Lwów 1929, p. 151—159.

or it was just a pen-name of some Polish author. The book was written in an anti-Soviet spirit. It contains, however, quite a lot of information about the history of this country.

After the Second World War, the studies on Azerbaijan's problems were greatly expanded in Poland. The biggest successes in this field have been scored by Jan Reychman, a professor of Oriental studies at Warsaw University, who has been interested in the problems of the Caucasus for a long time. He has published a number of books about the Poles, who stayed in Azerbaijan in 19th century, and about the Polish-Azerbaijani cultural relations in that century. As regards the former subject, there could be mentioned here his work about the Polish climbers conquering the Caucasus summits published in 1954¹², and a book about the Polish travellers in the Middle East in 19th century published in 1972¹³. With regard to the latter subject, there could be listed here several works about mutual relations between Adam Mickiewicz and Djafar Mirza Toptchybasha — an Azerbaijani and an orientalist from Petersburg¹⁴, or about relationships between Tadeusz Łada-Zabłocki — a Polish poet doing his army service in the Caucasus and a well-known Azerbaijani intellectual — Abbas Kali-Khan Bakikhanov¹⁵.

Another book worth mentioning here is that written by a well-known literature historian Waław Kubacki about the Poles in the Caucasus, which was published in 1969¹⁶. This book although in a literary form is based, however, on through scientific studies.

¹² J. Reychman, *Polacy w górach Kaukazu do końca XIX w.* [Poles in the Caucasus till the end of 19th century], „Wierchy” 1954, vol. 23, p. 19—58.

¹³ J. Reychman, *Podróżnicy polscy na Bliskim Wschodzie w XIX w.* [Polish travellers in the Middle East in 19th century], Warszawa 1972.

¹⁴ J. Reychman, *Mickiewicz i Mirza Dżafar Topczybaszy. Kartki z dziejów polsko-azerbejdżańskich związków literackich* [Mickiewicz and Djafar Mirza Toptchybasha. An episode in the Polish-Azerbaijani literary relationships], „Świat” 1954, No. 21, p. 19; idem, *Zainteresowania orientalistyczne w środowisku mickiewiczowskim w Wilnie i Petersburgu* [Orientalist interests in the environment of Mickiewicz in Wilno and Petersburg], [in:] *Szkice z dziejów polskiej orientalistyki*, ed. S. Strelcyn, vol. 1, Warszawa 1957, p. 83—84.

¹⁵ J. Reychman, *Tadeusz Łada-Zabłocki i Abbas Kuli-chan Bakikhanov*, „Akademia Nauk SSR. Kratkie Soobšženija Instituta Vostokovedenija” 1960, vol. 38, p. 12—14; idem, *Stosunki literackie polsko-azerbejdżańskie w XIX wieku* [Polish-Azerbaijani literary relations in 19th century], „Przegląd Humanistyczny” 1963, No. 6, p. 123—128; idem, *Kilka azerbejdżańskich piosenek ludowych zapisanych przez Polaków na Zakaukaziu w pierwszej połowie XIX wieku* [Some Azerbaijani folk songs written down by Poles in Transcaucasia in the first half of 19th century], „Przegląd Orientalistyczny” 1963, vol. 22, No. 2, p. 52—53.

¹⁶ W. Kubacki, *Małwy na Kaukazie*, [Mallows in the Caucasus], Warszawa 1969.

The last ten years witnessed a big increase in the number of studies dealing with the Caucasian problems. An important contribution here are the works of Andrzej Chodubski, and first of all his monograph about Witold Zglenicki published in 1984¹⁷. However, the main trend of these studies has been connected recently with the scientific output of Bohdan Baranowski, professor of the University of Łódź, who in this way expresses his earlier interest in problems of the Orient. At present, his interests are dominated by Azerbaijan's problems. He has written an outline of this country's history presented as an introduction to the anthology of the Azerbaijani poetry edited by Tadeusz Chruścielewski¹⁸. Next, professor Baranowski has published a report on the studies carried out in a research centre in Baku and devoted to the history of the Polish-Azerbaijani cultural relations¹⁹. He has also written a book dealing with contacts, which were established between Poland and the Caucasus in 17th century, which means with the territory occupied by the present Azerbaijan²⁰. The same scholar has also written an article on descriptions of Azerbaijan and on the Polish-Azerbaijani relations in the past, which were provided by Mateusz Gralewski doing his penal army service in the Caucasus about the mid-19th century²¹. At the same time, there came out his book about the Polish-Azerbaijani cultural relations in the first half of 19th century²². Finally, together with Krzysztof Baranowski, he has published the

¹⁷ A. Chodubski, *Witold Zglenicki — „Polski Nobel” (1850—1904)*, [Witold Zglenicki — „Polish Nobel” (1850—1904)], Płock 1984.

¹⁸ B. Baranowski, *Słowo wstępne* [Foreword], [in:] *Złote kamienie. Dawne i nowe wiersze Azerbejdżanu* [Golden stones. Old and new poems of Azerbaijan], Łódź 1975, p. 5—20.

¹⁹ B. Baranowski, *Badania bakińskiego ośrodka nad polsko-azerbejdżańskimi stosunkami literackimi w XIX w.* [Studies of Baku Centre on the Polish-Azerbaijani Literary Relations in 19th Century], „Acta Universitatis Lodziensis” 1979, ser. I, No. 47, p. 137—144.

²⁰ B. Baranowski, *Kaukaz i Pol'sa v XVII v.*, [in:] *Rossija, Pol'sa i Pričernomor'e v XV—XVIII vv.*, ed. B. A. Rybakov, Moskva 1979, p. 248—262.

²¹ B. Baranowski, *Azerbejdżańskie relacje chłopskiego syna z łeczyckiego Mazewa („Kaukaz” Mateusza Gralewskiego)* [Azerbaijani Relations of a Peasant Son from Mazew in Leczyca District („Caucasus” of Mateusz Gralewski)], „Acta Universitatis Lodziensis” 1979, ser. I, No. 52, p. 3—15.

²² B. Baranowski, *Polsko-azerbejdżańskie stosunki kulturalne w pierwszej połowie XIX wieku* [Polish-Azerbaijani Cultural Relations in the First Half of 19th Century], Łódź 1979; idem, *„W żołdacy na Kaukaz”. Położenie polskich działaczy politycznych wysłanych karnie do służby wojskowej na Kaukazie w drugim trzydziestolecu XIX w.* [„Compulsory army service in the Caucasus”. Situation of Polish political activists sent to penal army service in the Caucasus in mid-19th century], „Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska” 1982, sec. F, vol. 37, No. 15, p. 279—295.

book entitled *Polaków kaukaskie drogi* (Caucasian routes of Poles)²³ covering the time period from the mid-15th century till the present times. This book written in a popular form and published in a big number of copies will undoubtedly play a great role in popularizing the history of Poland's various contacts with the peoples of the Caucasus. The next major undertaking of professor Baranowski in this field is *Historia Azerbejdżanu* (The history of Azerbaijan) being in print now.

Of great importance for the future of the problems discussed here are certain measures of the organizational nature. It is worth noting here that on the initiative of professor Baranowski there has been set up at the University of Łódź Interdisciplinary Research Unit for Polish-Transcaucasian Research. The task of this unit is to co-ordinate different researches on problems of Transcaucasian countries, organize the Polish-Transcaucasian co-operation and popularize these problems in Łódź environment. The unit edits its journal „Folia caucasica” published by Łódź University Press.

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STAN I POTRZEBY POLSKICH BADAŃ NAD HISTORIĄ AZERBEJDŻANU

Polskie zainteresowania Azerbejdżanem są częścią kontaktów z krajami i narodami kaukaskimi. Ich początek sięga drugiej połowy XV w., kiedy na dwór Kazimierza Jagiellończyka przybyło poselstwo Uzun Hasana, władcy państwa Białego Barana ze stolicą w Tebrizie, obejmującego m. in. znaczną część Kaukazu. Starania posłów o zawarcie koalicji antytureckiej zostały opisane przez Jana Długosza.

W następnych wiekach wiadomości o krajach Zakaukazia docierały do Polski za pośrednictwem kupców bądź zakonników polskich działających w misjach katolickich w państwie Safawidów. Spośród tych zakonników najbardziej znany jest Tadeusz Krusiński, przebywający na tamym obszarze w pierwszej ćwierci XVIII w. Po powrocie do kraju napisał on kilka obszernych dzieł, których fragmenty lub przeróbki były wielokrotnie wydawane w różnych krajach, będąc przez wiele lat ważnym źródłem wiadomości o tym regionie Bliskiego Wschodu.

W pierwszej połowie XIX w. przez kraje Kaukazu przewinęło się kilkadziesiąt tysięcy Polaków. Kaukaz był bowiem wtedy głównym regionem, dokąd wysyłano wcielonych do armii rosyjskiej jeńców wojennych po przegranych kampaniach, młodych mężczyzn wziętych do wojska w drodze corocznego poboru oraz aresztowa-

²³ B. Baranowski, K. Baranowski, *Polaków kaukaskie drogi* [Caucasian routes of Poles], Łódź 1985.

nych za działalność w konspiracyjnych organizacjach i skazanych na odbycie w rejonie Kaukazu wieloletniej służby wojskowej. Wśród działaczy politycznych było wielu ludzi wykształconych, którzy dzięki osobistym zasługom awansowali do stopni oficerskich. Zdarzało się często, że piękny krajobraz, całkiem odmienne wierzenia i obyczaje tamtych narodów wywoływały u Polaków żywe zainteresowanie, a czasem i sympatię. W rezultacie powstawały liczne wspomnienia, reportaże i opisy zawierające wiele cennego materiału dotyczącego najrozmaitszych dziedzin. Podobnie jak w przypadku prac Krusińskiego, dotyczyły one na ogół kilku krajów, w których kolejno ich autorzy odbywali służbę, chociaż w różnym stopniu.

Azerbejdżanowi dużo miejsca poświęcili w swych wspomnieniach i relacjach zesłani do służby wojskowej Hipolit Jaworski, Kazimierz Łapczyński, Michał Butowt-Andrzejkowicz, Mateusz Gralewski i Władysław Strzeliński. O Azerbejdżanie pisał też Juliusz Strutyński, oficer w carskiej służbie i Aleksander Chodźko, orientalista, pełniący przez jakiś czas obowiązki tłumacza w konsulacie rosyjskim w Tebrizie. Polaków interesowała przeszłość kraju, opisywali zabytki architektury, warunki naturalne, miasta, stosunki społeczne i gospodarcze ówczesnego Azerbejdżanu. Z największą uwagą opisywali też mieszkańców kraju, ich mentalność, wierzenia, legendy i zwyczaje ludowe, zwłaszcza związane z wierzeniami muzułmańskimi, pieśni religijne i uroczystości weselne, czyli folklor azerbejdżańskich wsi i miasteczek.

Niektórzy spośród tych Polaków byli obdarzeni talentem literackim. Tworzyli więc dzieła poetyckie, opowiadania i powieści osnute na realiach kulturowych ówczesnego Azerbejdżanu, jak opowieść o Giuł-Szadzie, napisana przez Juliusza Strutyńskiego czy *Mahmudę* Władysława Strzelińskiego. Związki literackie polsko-azerbejdżańskie zapoczątkował wcześniej Ludwik Władysław Spitznagel, który pod wpływem wybitnego Azerbejdżanina Mirzy Dżafara Topczybaszy, profesora języków wschodnich w Petersburgu, przełożył na język francuski fragment poematu *Iskander Name* Nizamięgo z Gandży.

W drugiej połowie XIX w. obok Polaków odbywających służbę wojskową, którzy nadal licznie przeważali, do Gruzji i Azerbejdżanu przybywało wielu naszych rodaków z motywów osobistych i zawodowych. Największy rozgłos osiągnął wśród nich Witold Zglenicki, inżynier i geolog, bardzo zasłużony dla rozwoju azerbejdżańskiego przemysłu naftowego. Zapisem części dochodów z działek naftowych na rzecz Kasy im. Mianowskiego zyskał sobie zaszczytne miano „Polskiego Nobla”.

Od drugiej połowy XIX w. problematyka krajów Zakaukazia, w tym Azerbejdżanu, stała się przedmiotem badań historyków i orientalistów zajmujących się dziejami misji katolickich na wschodzie i stosunkami polsko-perskimi. Należy tu wymienić prace Antoniego Muchlińskiego, Stanisława Załęskiego, Jana Sygańskiego, Tadeusza Kowalskiego, Stanisława Brzezińskiego, Bolesława Stachonia i innych. W okresie międzywojennym i po II wojnie światowej wiele prac napisał na ten temat Jan Reychman. Dotyczyły one przede wszystkim związków literackich polsko-azerbejdżańskich oraz twórczości i losów Polaków, którzy z różnych powodów znaleźli się na tamtym obszarze.

W ostatnich latach sprawom polsko-kaukaskim poświęca wiele uwagi profesor Bohdan Baranowski, który w ten sposób daje nowy wyraz swym wcześniejszym zainteresowaniom sprawami Orientu. Współpracuje on z ośrodkami naukowymi w Azerbejdżanie i w innych krajach Zakaukazia, nadając tej współpracy na gruncie łódzkim formy organizacyjne. W rezultacie powstało wiele prac, które ukazują długą tradycję współpracy Polski z tym regionem, ukazują wkład Polaków w rozwój różnych dziedzin życia tego kraju, a przede wszystkim ujawniają źródłową wartość świadectw polskich dla wzbogacenia wiedzy o przeszłości i stosunkach w dziełnastowiecznym Azerbejdżanie.