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THE LYRIC TESTIMONY
OF "PUSTY GRÓB" ("THE EMPTY SEPULCHRE")

Let us return, in this Jubilee Year,¹ to the night visit of Słowacki to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, and more specifically to his contact with the Holy Sepulchre itself;² the contact resulted in the lyric fragment (January 1837) which clearly shows the transformation of the consciousness of the subject caused by the unusual place and the night scenery. This lyric fragment relies on the stylistic of transforming conversion and of the confession on the scale of St. Augustine:

I porzuciwszy drogę światowych omamień,
I wysłuchawszy serca - gdy rzekło: Jam czyste!
Tu rzuciłem się z wielką rozpaczą na kamień.
Pod którym - trzy dni martwy leżałeś, o Chryste!
Skarżyłem się grobowi - a ta skarga była
Ani przeciwko ludziom - ani przeciw Bogu.³

¹ This is the final part of the paper "Liryczne wędrowania Juliusza Słowackiego z Krzemieńca w świat" ("The Lyrical Wanderings of Juliusz Słowacki from Krzemieniec to the World") delivered by Marian Maciejewski during the session in Krzemieniec, Ukraine in 1999, celebrating the 150th Anniversary of Słowacki's death.

² See, M. Bizan, *Ziemia Święta, Zapiski z podróży 1988-1998*, Warszawa 2000. 9-10.

³ *I porzuciwszy drogę światowych omamień...* in *Dzieła*, ed. by J Krzyżanowski, vol. 1 *Liryki i inne wiersza*. Other quotations in this text will come from this volume as well. / "And having discarded the way of the worldly beguilement, / And having listened to the heart which stated: I am pure! / Here I threw myself in deep despair on the stone, / Under which you lay for three days, O Christ! / I complained to the Sepulchre - and this complaint was neither against people nor against God. "

The heart became calm and quiet in the manner of Psalm 131:

O Lord, my heart is not lifted up;
my eyes are not raised too high;
I do not occupy myself with things
too great and too marvellous for me.
But I have calmed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child is my soul within me.⁴

Only the experience of enormous, disinterested love can cause the attitude of the heart which feels pure, without any qualms of conscience. The poet complained, but it was not a complaint against God, or against people. So, against whom? It could have been an accusation of himself, deep kenosis, possible only when a man feels that he is loved in a disinterested way. Such love heals all wounds, opens new ways, is a driving engine of all actions, including the area of artistic creation.

Perhaps this experience was necessary for the imagination to become totally free, to travel into the Cosmos, into infinity.

In the lyric poetry about the November Uprising, in the poetic letters from Egypt, there existed the need for historiosophy explaining the crossing out of Poland from the map of Europe in the context of the history of the world and the history of salvation.

Słowacki's ideas of Genesis were grounded in global history. The subject received the status of the Spirit "sailing in the broad seas, where the wind chases it." This Cosmic journey was a journey to the solar being, to ultimate goals. The body and the matter are continuously transformed, so the Soul will not become slothful.

Noc, nachylona ku nowemu dniowi,
Fala, wznosząca na wiatr szybę szklaną.
("Jest najsmutniejsza godzina na Ziemi", "The Saddest Hour on the Earth")⁵

⁴ Psalm 131, English Standard Version.

⁵ "The night leaning towards the new day,/The wave raising the glass onto the wind."

There is just one 'but' and one obstacle: one cannot forget about one town "które dzwoni nad szmeranym potokiem".⁶

⁶ Cf., I. Opacki, *Jeżeli kiedy – w tej mojej krainie...*, in *Juliusza Słowackiego rym błyskawicowy. Analizy i interpretacje*, ed. by S. Makowski, Warszawa, 123-126. And M. Maciejewski, "Pejzaż ukraiński w liryce Słowackiego", in *Słowacki i Ukraina*, ed. by M. Woźniakiewicz-Dziakosz, Lublin 2003, 23-26. "which tolls over the whispering spring."