ODRODZENIE I REFORMACJA W POLSCE ▪ SI 2016 ▪ PL ISSN 0029-8514

Radosław Grześkowiak
Institute of Polish Philology
University of Gdańsk

A Fine Piece of Arse. Solving Jan Kochanowski's *Gadka*

The paper focuses on the literary riddle written in the sixteenth century by Jan Kochanowski (*Fraszki* III 78), concerning an animal with one eye that is shot at with arrows without arrowheads. The answer to the riddle is still debated by exegetic researchers. The author discusses the answers proposed so far (firearm, a homosexual's anus, a female anus, an outhouse), starting with detailed lexical analysis of the epigram. Having discussed the poetics of the Old Polish ambiguous ribald riddle (suggesting indecent associations, but leading to an innocent answer) and the differences in the perception of the female body in the sixteenth century and today, the author shows that the audience of the riddle in the times of Kochanowski reached the conclusion that the answer was a female vagina. This trivial solution still seems to be the most probable answer.

K e y w o r d s: Jan Kochanowski, old sexuality, poetics of a riddle, scatological humour, ribald humour

The publishing house of the Institute of Literary Studies has recently published the book *Wiązanie sobótkowe. Studia o Janie Kochanowskim*, a publication accompanying the commemoration of the 430th anniversary of the great poet's death. The impressive scope of the volume accurately represents the format of the author. Nonetheless, the most striking feature of the book is the introductory character of most of the papers forming its part. Many of them already indicate it in their titles, which include such words as "introduction", "note", "a few thoughts",

http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/OiRwP.2016.SI.06

"a few words", "selected examples"… Kochanowski was a great poet, but the scope of the research devoted to him is rather different. Considering the fact that the book was inspired by the anniversary of the author's death and taking into account the high frequency of its contributors, it can be concluded that the publication is representative of the state of the modern study of Kochanowski. This, in consequence, means that the character of the research decidedly changed at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

One of the works featured in the volume is an interesting paper by Joanna Duska, focusing on the only Polish-language riddle written by the poet (*Fraszki* III 78):

> Jest źwierzę o jednym oku,
> Które zawżdy stoi w kroku:
> Ślepym bełtem w nie strzelają,
> A na oko ugadzają;
> Głos jego by piorunowy,
> A zalot nieprawie zdrowy.[1]

Its solution still poses a difficulty to the readers. Seeing that I have my doubts concerning the answer proposed by the author of the paper, I would like to add a note to her introductory work, thus nicely fitting into the newest paradigm of the study of Kochanowski.

Lexical prolegomena

Considering that there are certain discrepancies in the interpretation of the epigram, it is worth beginning with the explanation of its more complicated passages.

The one-eyed creature always "stoi w kroku", which means it has its legs spread open. Duska describes this poetic image as depicting "a straddled calf or kid, still unable to stand firmly on its spread legs".[2] Former usage of this expression, meanwhile, indicates that it referred to a fighting stance. The collection of proverbs published by Salomon Wysiński in 1618 contains the following sentence: "Więcej się chłop tego boi, co bezpiecznie w kroku stoi".[3] It is a slightly modified

[1] J. Duska, "Tajemnicza 'Gadka' z ksiąg III 'Fraszek' Jana Kochanowskiego. Rozwiązanie zagadki," in: *Wiązanie sobótkowe. Studia o Janie Kochanowskim*, ed. E. Lasocińska, W. Pawlak (Warszawa, 2015), pp. 348–355. All works of the poet quoted from: J. Kochanowski, *Dzieła polskie*, ed. J. Krzyżanowski, 11th edn. (Warszawa, 1980).

[2] Duska, op. cit., p. 352.

[3] S. Rysiński, *Proverbiorum polonicorum… chiliades duae et centuriae duae / Przypowieści polskich… dwa tysiąca i dwieście* (Lubecae ad Chronum, 1621), fol. O_2ver.: no. 1867.

version of the epimythium of Absemius's fable about a peasant who was chased by dogs as long as he kept running from them, but once he bravely faced the animals, he scared them off. Rysiński copied the story, along with over a hundred phrases, from the collection by Biernat of Lublin, which contains the following story entitled *Więcej się chłop onego boi, co stoi*:

> Stąd bojarzy by wzór brali,
> Iżby głupie nie biegali,
> Bowiem którzy mężnie trwają,
> Rzadko bitwę przegrawają.[4]

The same menacing posture is referenced in lists of uses of the phrase dating back to the sixteenth and the seventeenth century,[5] which demonstrates that the creature from Kochanowski's *Gadka* is not a tetrapod wobbling on its spread legs, but rather an animal showing readiness for confrontation. At the same time the phrase "zawżdy stoi w kroku" means that the creature is 'permanently located in the crotch.' The dictionary entry "krok" in *Słownik polszczyzny XVI wieku* mentions primarily medical meanings of the word, but there are naturally others, precisely indicating the object of male interest. It is used like this in the poem *Pannom nabożnym* (vv. 3–4) by Daniel

---

[4] [Biernat from Lublin], *Żywot Ezopa Fryga, mędrca obyczajnego i z przypowieściami jego…* (Kraków, 1578), fol. O_3ver., O_4rec.: 143, title and vv. 13–16; see: A. Brückner, *Ezopy polskie* (Kraków, 1902), p. 179. For more about the connection between Rysiński's paremiographic collection and the oldest Polish version of Aesop's tales see: R. Grześkowiak, "'Próżno się kusić, czym nie dano być'. Jak Salomon Rysiński pasował Biernata z Lublina na pierwszego paremiografa Rzeczypospolitej," in: *Biernat z Lublina a literatura i kultura wczesnego renesansu w Polsce*, ed. J. Dąbkowska-Kujko, A. Nowicka-Struska (Lublin, 2015), pp. 123–153.

[5] In the text from 1566: "szermierz jako rychło broń w rękę weźmie a w kroku stanie, tak wnet poznać, jesli co umie" or „sie i szermować uczył, na potkaniu z towarzyszem, chocia tamten nie wie, co sztuka, hnet stanąwszy w kroku, pokazuje, jakoby miał odbić i potym ciąć na nieprzyjaciela"; Ł. Górnicki, *Dworzanin polski* (Kraków, 1566), fol. F_1ver., I_8ver.–K_1rec. Similarly in the translation by Piotr Kochanowski, Jan's nephew: "Jednak iż wszyscy na to patrzyć mają, / stawił się przedsię mężnie, jako trzeba: / dobywszy broni, którą miał u boku, / nieprzyjaciela czekał, stojąc w kroku"; T. Tasso, *Gofred abo Jeruzalem wyzwolona*, trans. P. Kochanowski (Kraków, 1618), p. 113: V 27, vv. 5–8. See also examples collected in: I. Szlesiński, "Język Samuela Twardowskiego (frazeologia i składnia)," *Rozprawy Komisji Językowej Łódzkiego Towarzystwa Naukowego* 16 (1970), p. 99, or later exemplifications from the writings of Dawid Pilchowski collected in: S.B. Linde, *Słownik języka polskiego*, vol. 1/2: *G–L* (Warszawa, 1808), p. 1155.

Naborowski: "Bo co po pięknej twarzy, co po pięknym oku, / gdybyście też nie mieli owej rzeczy w kroku" or in the anonymous work *Przestrodze od jednej zacnej damy komuś "importune" zalotnemu*: "Przestań tych fochów, przestrzegam cię z boku, / bo cię tym nazwę, co go noszę w kroku"[6] – suggesting that she will call him a muff. The lexeme was used the same way by Kochanowski in his *Fenomena*, where the poet described a star system in the Virgo constellation as follows (vv. 131–132): "Bo krom tych, które w głowie i w łapach gorają, / czterzy co naświetniejsze w kroku miejsce mają". In its first couplet, *Gadka* deftly plays with the ambiguity of the phrase "stanie w kroku" in context of the one-eyed animal: in the crotch and foolhardy; between the legs and audacious. The references to the riddle mentioned in subsequent parts of the paper prove that the readers approved of such an idea.

The phrase "ślepy bełt" [literally: "blind bolt"] also proved to be problematic, as it has been interpreted as "a round bullet and not a sharp arrow" (Krzyżanowski) or "a missile that does not blow up or explode" (Duska), even though neither of these theses find their confirmation in sixteenth-century texts. For Kochanowski – accordingly to the circumstances of the period, in which crossbows were superseded by firearms – "bełt" could have referred to an arrow used either in a traditional bow or in a crossbow, as evidenced by one of his erotic trifle poems: "Ona ku mnie ciągnie rogi, / [– –] / A gdy wszytkich strzał pozbyła, / sama się w bełt obróciła" (*Fraszki* I 8, vv. 13, 15–16). A depiction of arrows devoid of arrowheads can be found on the Bełty coat of arms, as well as in a number of foreign sources, for example an emblematic print from the collection *Amoris divini et humani antipathia* published in 1628. A copy of the print was included in a compilation of emblems accompanied by poems by Zbigniew Morsztyn; he described the detail in question as follows: "A ten, co na wiatr ślepym bełtem bije, / pewnie tu tego serca nie przeszyje".[7] In the seventeenth century, an arrow without arrowhead started to be referred to with the Russian loanword "wereszka", appearing, among others, in the writings of Wacław Potocki: "Tak się go imie, kiedy trafi w miejsce, / wereszka, jako ta, co ma żelejsce", with

[6] D. Naborowski, *Pannom nabożnym*, vv. 3–4; *Przestroga od jednej zacnej damy komuś "importune" zalotnemu*, Lviv, National Vasyl Stefanyk Scientific Library of Ukraine (hereafter: LNSL), Ossolineum Collection, ref. no. 5888/I, p. 385 and 158.

[7] *Amoris divini et humani antipathia* (Paris, 1628), fig. from fol. A_2ver.: emblem 2; Z. Morsztyn, *Emblema 102*, vv. 11–12, in: idem, *Emblemata*, ed. J. Pelc, P. Pelc (Warszawa, 2001), p. 211.

the line accompanied by an annotation made by a diligent copyist: "*Wereszka* – a broken arrow".[8]

In Kochanowski's poem, "ślepy bełt" literally means "a blunt arrow without arrowhead", which refers to a hunting bolt with a wooden ball on its tip (such bolts were found, among others, on fourteenth-century archaeological sites in Denmark). One of the illuminations in the Taymouth Hours (first half of the fourteenth century) depicts a woman shooting a hare with that type of arrow.[9] They most probably continued to be used in the later years to hunt fur animals as they did not damage their precious hides – which is why old texts mention them in connection to 'shooting at caps' shows,[10] which were later given a metaphoric meaning by religious emblems. This would also explain the bawdy ideas exploiting the imagery of headless arrows being shot at fur; this metaphor for the penis, which plunges in but does not cause harm, was frequently used by Baroque authors of ribald trifles influenced by the Czarnolas-based poet. Stanisław Samuel Szemiot concluded his indecent *Prośba* with the following confession: "Nie bój się, nie zabiję: chocia bełtem strzelę, / nie będzie żadnej rany w twym pieszczonym ciele".[11] Hieronim Morsztyn, meanwhile, ends his short stemmatic cycle about the coat of arms of a certain lady (the context suggests it was the Odrowąż or Kościesza coat of arms) with an indecent variation with the following conclusion:

> Masz sajdak przyrodzony, strzałęć za herb dano –
> Dopieruchno Kozaka z panny udziałano.
> [– –]
> Toć mi to Zaporowczyk, co w twój cel tak zmierzy,
> Że nie chybi, choć ślepą strzałą weń uderzy.[12]

---

[8] W. Potocki, *Wirginia*, vv. 103–104, LNSL, Ossolineum Collection, ref. no. 5888/I, p. 1003; c.f. also A. Brückner, *Język Wacława Potockiego. Przyczynek do historii języka polskiego* (Kraków, 1900), p. 409.

[9] London, British Library, Yates Thompson, Ms 13, fol. 68ver. Information obtained courtesy of Dr. Lech Marek, to whom I would like to extend my cordial thanks. I am also thankful to Prof. Witold Świętosławski for the possibility to consult him on the history of armament.

[10] Cf. M. Borzymowski, *Morska nawigacyja do Lubeka*, ed. R. Pollak (Gdańsk, 1971), p. 159: vv. 397–414.

[11] S.S. Szemiot, *Prośba*, vv. 5–6, in: idem, *Sumariusz wierszów*, ed. M. Korolko, (Warszawa, 1981), p. 107.

[12] In case of the poems by Hieronim Morsztyn, unless stated otherwise, I use the text recovered on the basis of manuscripts made for the purposes of future edition.

The same concept was used by Potocki in his ribald heraldic variation *Do młodej panny z dziadem herbu Kościesza*, in which "wereszka" is meant to symbolise old age, while the sharp arrowhead ("żeleźce") – the privates of a lascivious young man:

> Proszonym jest na twoje, piękna damo, gody,
> Obiecałem się, jednak żal mi twej urody:
> Że szlachcic, że kawaler starej parentele,
> Świadkiem jest krzyż mieczowy przy herbownej strzele.
> A cóż, kiedy werszka w kołczan się nie godzi?
> [– –]
> Ale ty wedle zwykłej postąp sobie mody:
> Przybież strzałę z żeleźcem do swojej wygody.[13]

The remaining phrases are rather unambiguous: "na oko ugadzają" should be understood not so much as "hitting the spot, not missing" – as Marian Pankowski suggested – but as "hitting the eye" of the animal, "głos [– –] by piorunowy" means "a sound resembling thunder", while the phrase "zalot nieprawie zdrowy", appearing in the last verse, refers to "a strongly (truly) unhealthy smell".[14]

Guessing game: a plethora of answers

Several solutions of *Gadka* have been proposed so far, none of which was devoid of any shortcomings. In the collection of Jan Kochanowski's works entitled *Wydanie pomnikowe,* Józef Przyborowski provided a cautious proposal: "Maybe it is a cannon placed on a platform".[15] It continues to be convincing to a large portion of researchers. It may be supported by the following verse: "Głos jego by piorunowy", mainly because Kochanowski used the same phrase to describe a firearm in a different work (*Pieśń świętojańska o sobótce* 10, vv. 9–12):

---

[13] W. Potocki, *Do młodej panny z dziadem herbu Kościesza*, vv. 1–5, 13–14, in: idem, *Odjemek od "Herbów szlacheckich"*, Kórnik, PAS Library (Biblioteka Polskiej Akademii Nauk, hereafter: BK), ref. no. 495, fol. 99rec. I use the transcription elaborated by Dariusz Piotrowiak M.A., who is in the process of preparing a new edition of the cycle (the edition available now has too many errors to be useful for academic purposes; cf. W. Potocki, *Odjemek od herbów szlacheckich*, ed. M. Łukaszewicz, Z. Pentek [Poznań, 1997], pp. 100–101).

[14] Duska, op. cit., p. 353.

[15] J. Kochanowski, *Dzieła wszystkie. Wydanie pomnikowe*, vol. 2 (Warszawa, 1884), p. 434.

Bodaj wszytkich mąk skosztował,
Kto naprzód wojsko szykował
I wynalazł swoją głową
Strzelbę srogą piorunową.

Stanisław Łempicki suggested a different answer to the riddle with a vague comment – "obscenum" – included in the edition of *Fraszki* published by him in 1928, but he did not go into any embarrassing detail.[16]

In the commentary to Julian Krzyżanowski's popular edition of Kochanowski's works, the guess made by Przyborowski was taken as read: "*źwierzę o jednym oku* – barrel of a musket placed on a rest or a cannon placed on a platform", but was at the same time accompanied by an alternative solution: "The humour of the riddle consists in its ambiguous solution: at first glance, it seems to describe buttocks, but in fact it alludes to a firearm".[17] The academic then explained that this double answer is not a result of the commenter's indecision, but an immanent characteristic of a certain type of literary riddle:

> The introduction of embarrassing subjects into courtly riddles by veiling them under humour serves as a premise for the assumption that courts enjoyed ambiguous riddles, the humour of which consisted in them having two parallel answers, where one was almost obvious, but indecent, while the other one was decent, but far more difficult to guess. A classic, and perhaps the oldest, example of the application of such a trick is Kochanowski's *Gadka* [– –]. The first instinct is to answer it with the word "buttocks", but a less obvious solution, requiring modern readers to have knowledge of old war techniques, is the word "musket", a heavy firearm which was fired after being placed on a special rest.[18]

In 1978 Marian Pankowski, having read the riddle in Krzyżanowski's edition, first pointed out that it does not concern shooting from an animal, but shooting at an animal. This makes firearm an invalid solution,[19] while the other solution should be modified to fit the content

---

[16] Idem, *Fraszki*, ed. S. Łempicki (Lwów, 1928), p. 120.

[17] Idem, *Dzieła polskie*, ed. J. Krzyżanowski (Warszawa, 1955), p. 402.

[18] J. Krzyżanowski, "Zagadka i jej problematyka" [1962], in: idem, *Szkice folklorystyczne*, vol. 3: *Wokół legendy i zagadki. Z zagadnień przysłowioznawstwa* (Kraków, 1980), pp. 28–29; see also: idem, "Zagadka," in: *Słownik folkloru polskiego*, ed. J. Krzyżanowski (Warszawa, 1965), p. 453.

[19] Duska (op. cit., pp. 354–355) also pointed out to the weakness of the military thesis: neither a cannon platform nor a musket rest stand with their "legs" spread open.

of the poem – if it is about buttocks at all, then it alludes to buttocks subjected to sexual harassment:

> Kochanowski wrote numerous erotic trifles, which he kept in a jovial, familiar tone, "for his companions". One of his riddles even describes a body of a homosexual [– –]. Futile are the efforts of the author of notes on Jan Kochanowski's *Dzieła polskie* to convince everyone that the answer to the riddle is… a musket! As long as the world exists, no one has ever shot at a musket with a "blind bolt" without missing![20]

Janusz Pelc, following the path set out by Krzyżanowski (suspected double answer), combined his proposed solution: "J. Krzyżanowski interprets the hidden meaning as a musket placed on a rest or a cannon placed on a platform (if anything it should be the latter!)" with the guess made by Pankowski: "'the body of a homosexual' shown from below and behind (male buttocks)".[21] Pelc did not notice that the two solutions are mutually exclusive, as one consists in the movement towards the eye, *vel* orifice, while the one – away from it. The authors of the work *Homoseksualność staropolska* vetoed Pankowski's hypothesis, but as it so often happens with vetoes, they did not justify their statement, ignoring his valid remark that it was wrong to see a firearm as a solution to the riddle – they, too, interpret *Gadka* as alluding to a musket or a cannon shot at with a "blind bolt".[22]

The dictionary *Słownik polszczyzny Jana Kochanowskiego* mentions only that the word "źwierzę" [animal] was used in *Gadka* in a metaphoric sense, but it does not specify what exactly it could mean. This information seems quite puzzling as no similar annotation is added to the word "eye", which means that according to the Cracow-based lexicographers, the thing that Kochanowski metaphorically called an animal was literally one-eyed.[23] The authors of *Słownik polszczyzny XVI wieku*, meanwhile, provide a partially new answer to the riddle in the entry on the word "eye": "barrel of a firearm and male or female

---

[20] M. Pankowski, "Polska poezja nieokrzesana (próba określenia zjawiska)," *Teksty* no. 4 (1978), p. 45 (Pankowski still supported this solution years later, cf. K. Bielas, *Niesformatowani. Rozmowy* [Kraków, 2007], pp. 282–283).

[21] J. Kochanowski, *Fraszki*, ed. J. Pelc, 2nd corr. edn. (Wrocław, 1991), p. 155, annotation to the title of the poem III 78.

[22] T. Nastulczyk, P. Oczko, *Homoseksualność staropolska. Przyczynek do badań* (Kraków, 2012), pp. 447, 80.

[23] *Słownik polszczyzny Jana Kochanowskiego*, ed. M. Kucała, vol. 3: *N–Pł* (Kraków, 2003), pp. 314–315: "oko"; vol. 5: *T–Ż* (Kraków, 2012), p. 810: "źwierzę".

sex organ".[24] The inheritance of Krzyżanowski is the double answer, while the legacy of Pelc consists in the combination of two mutually exclusive solutions: only a female sex organ, and not a gun barrel or a male sex organ, can be the target of a blind arrow, however it may be understood.[25] Even if the dictionary definition was not fully thought-through, it needs to be noted that the mention of the vagina was quite innovative – six decades needed to pass before Łempicki's enigmatic suggestion materialised in the form of the "female sex organ".

The most recent proposed answer focuses on the fact that the text mentions one eye and spread legs, which is supposedly a reference to a portable toilet. In the eighteenth century, such latrines had the form of a chair or armchair with a special hole covered with a lid, with a bucket or metal chamber pot placed underneath. These devices – at times quite uncomfortable, upholstered with leather or velvet – were brought into the bedroom at night, while during the day they were usually kept in a side chamber.[26] In this context, *Gadka*'s "one eye" would refer to the hole inside the toilet, while shooting with "blind bots" would mean defecation. Such a solution has several advantages: it falls in line with the unambiguously anal meaning of the final couplet of the poem and is not an insult to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Nonetheless, it has far more drawbacks. Leaving aside the fact that in case of that particular device it was not necessary to spread one's legs, the thunderous sound in *Gadka* was made not by the person using the object (not the person who "ślepym

[24] *Słownik polszczyzny XVI wieku*, vol. 21: *Ofarbować – Opoślad*, ed. M.R. Mayenowa (Wrocław, 1992), p. 211: "oko".

[25] Phallic associations were invoked solely by the first couplet of the epigram since the concept of one-eyed male privates had already been known to Martial (IX 37), whose riddle was translated into Polish by Jan Andrzej Morsztyn: "Widzi cię kumka, choć o jednym oku", even though he himself added: "I kumka choc[iaż] ślepa, przecię babkę widzi" or: "I chociaż ślepa, przecię babę widzi"; J.A. Morsztyn, *Babie*, vv. 6, 8; *Albo tak*, v. 6, in: idem, *Utwory zebrane*, ed. L. Kukulski (Warszawa, 1971), p. 321. In an earlier poem by Hieronim Morsztyn, the penis is also described as follows: "Bestyja z jednym okiem". Nonetheless, this theme of a Cyclops cannot serve as ground for further associations since it is hampered by the information included in the subsequent verses of Kochanowski's *Gadka*.

[26] J.G. Krünitz, *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, vol. 100: *Nachjahr – Nahme* (Berlin, 1805), pp. 293–305; E. Barylewska-Szymańska, "Czystość i higiena w gdańskich domach mieszczańskich drugiej połowy XVIII wieku," *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej* 53, no. 3/4 (2005), pp. 413–414. I would like to thank Dr Ewa Szymańska for her expertise.

bełtem strzela" [shoots with a blind bolt]), but by the object itself. Considering that portable toilets were usually used at night in order to avoid going to the privy in the dark, their lids were certainly not constructed in a way that made them sound like a firing musket. And finally the most important doubt: in order for anyone to guess what a riddle about a portable toilet was about, it would be necessary for such a device to be commonly used in Poland. The truth is, however, that it was not until a century later that Wacław Potocki described such toilets as a new-fangled import, ostensibly alien to Sarmatian habits:

> Jest lamus, jest spiżarnia, altana we środku,
> Kuchnia, apteka, tylko nie widzę wychodku.
> Postrzegszy, czego szukam, powie mi po cichu
> Wedle francuskiej mody o stolcu na strychu.
> "Niechże – rzekę – Francuzi w twoim domu goszczą,
> Boć go pewnie Polacy osrają i oszczą".[27]

Eufrozyna's clitoris

What the attempts to solve Kochanowski's riddle up to this point have in common is the fact that very few of them take into account the historical and literary circumstances of the poem written four centuries ago. The proposed answers have been very much embedded in the Zeitgeist, but usually the Zeitgeist of the era in which they were proposed. Half a century ago, Pankowski came up with the idea that the answer to Kochanowski's trifle could be a homosexual's anus. Nowadays, the first association coming to mind in case of one sommatic orifice having both faecal and erotic function would be rather different – after all, anal sex no longer implies solely homosexual intercourse, but also heterosexual one. The problem is that such a solution once again reflects modern morals rather than the reality of the period which Kochanowski's trifle was written in. It is no wonder that the idea of a female anus as the definitive answer to *Gadka* only now emerged in academic literature on the subject.[28]

---

[27] W. Potocki, *Anielskie mieszkanie*, vv. 13–16, in: idem, *Ogród fraszek*, vol. 1, ed. A. Brückner (Lwów, 1907), p. 154: I 337 (c.f. also the trifle poem *Na budynki nowomodne*, in: ibidem, p. 190: I 404). It is worth mentioning that the title of Potocki's trifle poem is an allusion to the proverbial saying: "Anielskie tam mieszkanie, gdzie jadają a nie fejdają" (Rysiński, op. cit., fol. C_3rec.: no. 13), which in this case refers to a manor house without the usual outhouse.

[28] Such a possibility (while still not approved) was for the first time mentioned by Duska (op. cit., p. 355): "having rejected the homosexual version, why [– –]

One of the examples of the dangers of ahistorical analysis of Old Polish ribald riddles is the case of Eufrozyna's clitoris. Marcin Szwanwic's epithalamic print published in 1716 contains the following riddle about the bride:

> Ma EufrOzyna coś osobliwego,
> Co wierszem podam na zdanie każdego:
> W śrzodku okrągłe na kształt złotej sfery,
> A z każdej strony dyjamenty cztery.
> Dawid to nie ma, jednak kontent będzie,
> Gdy złoty afekt tę sferę osiędzie.
> Niech ci ten cyrkuł znaczy szczęścia koło,
> Na tym pojeżdżaj rzyźwo i wesoło.

The riddle has its devoted researcher: both this trifle poem and around a dozen other riddles gathered by Stanisław Salmonowicz from epithalamic Toruń prints have been studied and written about by Krzysztof Obremski.[29] Despite his intense research, the riddle still did not seem completely clear to the exegete:

> An element of this erudition can be found in the riddle: "Dawid to nie ma". His presence here, however, seems strange, it is not certain why – can it be only to preserve the rhyme? After all, it does not make any sense [– –]. Analogically: "dyjamenty cztery" – what kind? where from? why? They are just as dysfunctional as Dawid.[30]

In the modern explanation, these fragments were some of the unknowns. When it came to what was known, one issue remained indisputable – since the text of the poem was printed in the form of a trapezium (which can be associated with a circle, which in turn

---

would all these unspecified men hit a woman's anus several times when she has a much more adequate orifice?"

[29] *Gadki toruńskie czyli zagadki weselne z przełomu XVII i XVIII w.*, ed. S. Salmonowicz (Toruń, 1980); see K. Obremski, "'Ma Eufrozyna coś osobliwego'. Poetyka toruńskiej zagadki weselnej przełomu XVII i XVIII w.," *Barok* 15, no. 1 (2008), pp. 173–188; idem, "O alternatywnych rozwiązaniach toruńskich zagadek weselnych," *Literatura Ludowa* no. 2, (2012), pp. 25–31; idem, "Toruńskie zagadki weselne: porównania – obrazowanie – obyczajność," *Pamiętnik Literacki* 104, no. 3 (2013), pp. 99–118. The author promised to continue the research, announcing the works *Szlachta, księża (?), chłopi i mieszczanie. Ponadstanowa wspólnota poetyckiej wyobraźni erotycznej: zagadka* and *Obrazowość przedstawień słownych w toruńskiej zagadce weselnej*.

[30] Idem, "'Ma Eufrozyna coś osobliwego'," p. 183, n. 35.

brings only one association to mind), while the letter "o" in the name of Eufrozyna was noticeably larger than the rest of the capitals in the word, the researcher of the riddle concluded: "It will probably not be over-interpretation to assume that the enlarged letter 'o' was included in the bride's name as a meaningful element referring to the clitoris".[31] We do not have information on any other part of the body of Eufrozyna Litkówka, the mayor's daughter, while the alleged text representation of her clitoris has so far been published and discussed in at least three academic periodicals! Many pitfalls await authors who aim to solve an Old Polish riddle using modern associations – if one is in for a penny, then one should also be in for a pound and consequently interpret "dyjamenty cztery" as luxurious piercing placed on both sides of the clitoris, which would be a way to invest capital in a place located beyond the scope of the regulations of old sumptuary law…

In reality, Eufrozyna's uniqueness praised in the riddle did not consist in the woman's clitoris. The things described as "w środku okrągłe" "coś osobliwego" is in fact the "o" in her name, which was enlarged on purpose so that the reader would not miss it; the line "z każdej strony dyjamenty cztery" refers to four letters surrounding the "o" from each side. Dawid, meanwhile, is not as useless as Pilate in the Apostles' Creed, nor is it erudition illegible to today's readers, but the groom, Dawid Brauer – whose name does not contain the letter "o" and thus he has to marry Eufrozyna to possess it. Naturally the "o" in the middle of Eufrozyna (whose name originates from Greek and means "joy") – referred to as "złota sfera" and "cyrkuł", "szczęścia koło" allowing for energetic, joyful rides – also has clearly erotic metaphorical sense; no wonder it is located in the centre of the bride. It is the "thing" to which Dawid did not have access earlier and which he could enjoy as much as he wished after the wedding.

The person believed to have discovered the clitoris and its significance for the female sexuality is Realdo Colombo, a professor of anatomy from Padua.[32] Nonetheless, long time had to pass before the

[31] Idem, "Toruńskie zagadki weselne," p. 100; cf. also: idem, "'Ma Eufrozyna coś osobliwego'," p. 185; idem, "O alternatywnych rozwiązaniach," p. 28.

[32] In the treatise *De re anatomica*, published in 1559 right after the author's death, he described the yet unexplored: "pewien niezwykły niewielki narząd w górnej partii żeńskich narządów płciowych. I to, szlachetny czytelniku, jest w pierwszej kolejności źródło kobiecej rozkoszy kobiet, gdy uprawiają miłość. [– –] Ponieważ nie było dotychczas nikogo, kto by dostrzegł ten narząd i jego funkcję, to jeśli

knowledge of the discovery spread in Poland.[33] The Polish name for the clitoris started to appear in medical treatises as late as in 1775,[34] but it started to be commonly used much later – the first Polish literary texts to mention both the referent and its specialist name are probably Fredro's obscene writings. Lack of a name for an organ should not be equal to lack of the organ itself, but if we assume that language reflects our perception of the world, then whatever is unnamed does not exist in the public conscience. In the Old Polish period, the erotic map of the female body differed significantly from the one we know today. It is no accident that the atrophy of the clitoris was compensated with "drażnięta", which was an affectionate name for nipples and was sometimes used to refer to entire female breasts, which at the time performed the sexual function of the "here be dragons" that the clitoris was at the time and which would long remain unexplored by Sarmatian Columbuses. This is unequivocally confirmed by old obscene texts, starting from quite innocent lewd works of the sixteenth and seventeenth century up to the eighteenth-century Fescennine writing, marking the origins of Polish pornographic literature.[35] Kochanowski's riddle also referred to a body mapped differently than we do nowadays, which may be the source of the difficulties in finding a proper answer to the ribald poem.

---

miałbym nazwać swoje odkrycie, użyłbym terminów 'miłostka Wenery' lub 'rozkosz Wenery'"; R. Columbus, *De re anatomica libri XV* (Venetiis, 1559), p. 243 (trans. into the Polish J. Pokrzywnicki). See, e.g., M. D. Stringer, I. Becker, "Colombo and the Clitoris," *European Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Reproductive Biology* 151, no. 2 (2010), pp. 130–133.

[33] It is no coincidence that Hieronim Morsztyn, an Early Baroque writer and enthusiast of the theme and praises of the vagina, did not even once mention the clitoris in his lyrical account of the public autopsy of female sex organs carried out by the Padua-based anatomy professor, which he attended in 1618; see R. Grześkowiak, "Lekcje anatomii," in: idem, *Amor curiosus. Studia o osobliwych tematach dawnej poezji erotycznej* (Warszawa, 2013), pp. 203–248.

[34] See A. Bańkowski, *Etymologiczny słownik języka polskiego*, vol. 2: *L–P* (Warszawa, 2000), p. 97: "łechtaczka".

[35] See, e.g., R. Krzywy, "Rokokowe epitalamiony Stanisława Trembeckiego wobec tradycji gatunku," *Wiek Oświecenia* 20 (2004), pp. 121–142; idem, "Eros wyzwolony. Obscena Daniela Naborowskiego w kontekście kulturowym i literackim," in: *Daniel Naborowski. Krakowianin – Litwin – Europejczyk*, ed. K. Follprecht, K. Gajdka (Katowice, 2008), pp. 27–44.

Old Polish ribald riddle: introduction to the history of the genre

Before getting to the point, I would like to clarify why I believe that Krzyżanowski was wrong. The history of the Old Polish riddle, in this case the obscene riddle, is too little known to form any definitive opinions on the subject, but Kochanowski's works seem to have been written too early to be exemplary of such literary experiments as a double answer to the ribald riddle.

Published in 1584, *Fraszki* in a way promoted obscene themes, reinforcing and nobilitating the literary strategy of writing ribald jokes in the form of a rhyme, known for instance from some of the riddles incorporated in Mikołaj Rej's *Figliki*: it was enough for the author to suggest erotic intimacy to be able to write about sex with the use of absolutely innocent terms referring to craft, food, combat, or hunting. The associations were easily made due to the fact that trifle poems were not written about feelings or even more sophisticated eroticism, but about the banal act of copulation or its indecent proposal.[36]

Folk art of the later years drew inspiration for the purposes of the above mentioned strategy from farming and domestic activities. Noble writers, in turn, focused on the themes that felt closer to them, for example on hunting.[37] When the protagonist of Rej's poem cannot get the female pointer dog carried in a woman's apron, he asks for a black pointer from under the apron. Considering the fact that such breeds were used for hunting, it is not difficult to guess what happened next:

> Bo mam wygę laguza tak zawiesistego,
> Że uszy równo z gębą wisają u niego,
> A za lisem do jamy aż za ogon wywlec
> I z nim bych ją uchował, by się też i miał wściec.

The exact same set of associations was used by poets writing a century later:

> Wyżła nie ma-ż, który by twe pole strychował,
> Żeby przepiórkę z bruzdy, lub zapadnie w dołek,

[36] See J. Birczyńska, "Słownik erotyczny 'Fraszek' Jana Kochanowskiego," in: *Jan Kochanowski i epoka renesansu. W 450 rocznicę urodzin poety (1530–1980)*, ed. T. Michałowska (Warszawa, 1984), pp. 334–348.

[37] See M. Hanusiewicz, *Pięć stopni miłości. O wyobraźni erotycznej w polskiej poezji barokowej* (Warszawa, 2004), pp. 142–166.

Podnosił, żeby nad nią stawał jako kołek.
Nie racz gardzić, daruję legawego do niéj.[38]

It was not until the strategy of describing the sexual act in a roundabout way solidified that any modification could be introduced to the pattern, which led to the popularity of obscene associations in the genre of the riddle. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, Adam Korczyński wrote *Gadka*, which began as follows (vv. 1–6):

Co-li to za rzemięsło – wiem, nie kożdy zgada –
I co za warsztat, który biała płeć przysiada?
Dziur dwie przytkanych: spodnia jedna bywa goła,
Druga na niej pod pasem kosmata dokoła.
Z tych jednę chłop wywierciał, a drugą prócz święta
W kożdy dzień zrobi świeżą bez świdra kobieta.

The reader's associations obstinately suggest only one interpretation. It is no wonder that the first publisher of Korczyński's work, Roman Pollak, decided not to print this bold riddle[39]. The author, meanwhile, suggested a purely innocent solution with two subsequent trifle poems: "a sliver".[40] The earliest known example of such literary amusement is *Gadka* written by Hieronim Morsztyn in early seventeenth century:

Dwojga ludzi potrzeba do jednej zabawy,
Z których jeden na wierzchu pilen swojej sprawy,
Drugi na spodku – a ten więcej cierpieć musi,
Bo go zwierzchni robotnik niepomału dusi.
Spodni nogi rozkłada, a zwierzchni je ściska,
A zadkiem i ten, i ów na przemiany ciska.

---

[38] M. Rej, *Pani, co wyżliczki dać nie chciała*, vv. 5–8, in: idem, *Figliki*, ed. M. Bokszczanin, introd. J. Krzyżanowski (Warszawa, 1974), p. 76: no. 70; W. Potocki, *Do panny herbu Krogulec*, vv. 6–9, in: idem, *Odjemek od "Herbów szlacheckich"*, BK, ref. no. 495, fol. 78ver.

[39] *Gadka* was classified as "vile" and therefore not included both in the youth edition (A. Korczyński, *Fraszki*, ed. R. Pollak [Wrocław, 1950], p. 45) and the specialist edition (R. Pollak, "Notatki na marginesie utworów A. Korczyńskiego," *Pamiętnik Literacki* 43 [1952], pp. 599–603).

[40] A. Korczyński, *Wizerunk złocistej przyjaźnią zdrady*, ed. R. Grześkowiak (Warszawa, 2000), pp. 172–173: IX 9–11. The poet used the same gimmick in the first collection of trifle poems, where he solved similar *Gadka* with two rebuses with innocent answer: "lute" or "bandura", ibidem, pp. 34–35: I 6–8.

Zwierzchni tak bardzo wpycha, aż z dziury się kurzy,
A dziura tym przestrzeńsza, im w nię wpycha dłużéj.[41]

The copies of the poem usually provide the same answer: "lumberjacks". This type of riddle, popular throughout the seventeenth century, exploits the readers' knowledge of the convention and leads them astray only to ridicule the lewd associations of the recipient and suggest a neutral answer.[42] With time, however, the convention became so well-worn that in case of more detailed descriptions suggesting a sex organ or the sexual act it was sporadically possible to omit the decent solution to the riddle. A variation on Morsztyn's poem about lumberjacks was used by Toruń-based wordsmith Piotr Szenknecht (1657–1721) in his epithalamic work written in 1716, in which he did not mention the well-known solution.[43] Other wedding panegyrics written at the beginning of the eighteenth century in Toruń also include riddles which suggested indecent associations but turned out to have prudent solutions. The relaxed character of Fescennine poems, appropriate for the circumstances of a wedding, allowed for such riddles to enter the public sphere, as most participants of the celebrations were convinced that the official answer should be neutral. It is no coincidence that most such prints were authored by Szenknecht, who wrote a collection of crude satirical denunciations of deep cleavages called *Płaszczyk niestrojnej damie… albo 64 epigrammata na obnażone piersi* and would therefore not be eager to expose body parts that are even more shameful and hidden – unless when toying with allusive ambiguity.[44]

---

[41] *Zagadki rozmaite i pytania służące zabawie i nauce. Antologia polskiej zagadki literackiej*, ed. J.M. Kasjan (Toruń, 1994), p. 50.

[42] Apart from the rhymed versions, with time wordsmiths also started to create simpler prosaic riddles based on the same principle: "W co by pannę pchnąć, żeby z niej w[o]da ciekła?" – „W studnię"; "Co by pannie czynić, żeby dziecię mia[ła]?" – „Dać jej go"; LNSL, Baworowski Collection, ref. no. 1332, p. 419.

[43] *Gadki toruńskie*, p. 23.

[44] See: S. Salmonowicz, "Piotr Szenknecht – satyryk i wierszopis frywolny w XVIII-wiecznym Toruniu," in: idem, *Szkice toruńskie z XVII–XVIII wieku* (Toruń, 1992), pp. 46–60. Selection of epigrams from *Płaszczyk* available in: *Cztery wieki fraszki polskiej*, ed. J. Tuwim, introd. A. Brückner, 2nd edn. (Warszawa, 1957), pp. 157–160. Riddles included in Toruń epithalamic prints do not have solutions. Some answers have been proposed by Jan Kasjan (*Zagadki rozmaite*, pp. 174–175). Several of Kasjan's proposed solutions were disputed by Obremski ("O alternatywnych rozwiązaniach," pp. 29–30), in my opinion unfairly so.

Krzyżanowski was convinced that Kochanowski's *Gadka* should have two solutions due to his experiences with folk riddles created in later centuries. The issue was more thoroughly discussed by Jan Mirosław Kasjan:

> Riddles of this kind are in fact a particular type of bawdy jokes, which one can "get away with" telling with an innocent expression, accusing the listener of having lewd thoughts. They are different from other riddles not only in their themes, but also their intent, since they are not meant to test the acuteness of the listener's mind, but to trick them, suggesting a seemingly wrong solution. "Seemingly", because after all, the models of the substitutive imagery in such riddles are objects and situations deriving from the obscene.[45]

Folk riddles adapted the strategy used in literature to their own needs and were not officially acknowledged until early seventeenth century. Even then, they were used only in the form of obscene enigmas, with all "gadkas" written at the time having unambiguous answers, for example: "Niżej pęka, wyżej kolan / jest tam dziorka, co w nię kolą" czy: „Jest owoc, który tak rości, / jak ziarno w kosmatym ości; / a kiedy go ma kto zrywać, / musi przedtym chwilę kiwać".[46] Kasjan, meanwhile, extrapolated his conclusions to all types of obscene riddles and started to come up with their alternative, prudent solutions. Hieronim Morsztyn wrote a banal riddle reading as follows:

> Szyja jak u gąsiora, głowa jak u szczygła,
> Bestyja z jednym okiem ponty nie przystrzygła,
> W głąb się jako kret ryje, do góry się wznosi,
> W ręku rości. Co to jest – zgadnąć przecię Zosi.

Kasjan takes over from Zosia and guesses: "No answer is provided along with the text, but it is certain that this is a riddle with two answers, one prudent (asparagus) and one indecent (penis)".[47] Krzysztof Obremski was not able to hold back and retorted: "The first answer is blatantly contradictory to the text of the riddle: an asparagus does not grow on hands of any sorts!"[48] Kasjan also found a decent answer to

---

[45] J.M. Kasjan, *Polska zagadka ludowa* (Wrocław, 1983), p. 26.
[46] LNSL, Baworowski Collection, ref. no. 1332, p. 419; kept in Cracow, Jagiellonian Library (Biblioteka Jagiellońska, hereafter: BJ), ref. no. Ms.Slav.Fol.9, fol. 61ver.
[47] *Zagadki rozmaite*, pp. 49, 167.
[48] Obremski, "O alternatywnych rozwiązaniach," p. 31.

another riddle by Morsztyn, conceding defeat only at the third one: "Easily noticeable obscene allusion, prudent solution unknown".[49] As we can see, only the ribald associations are never ending.

This lengthy elucidation was necessary to show that Krzyżanowski's hypothesis of double answer to Kochanowski's *Gadka* is hard to defend in view of the documented history of the genre. Firstly, the rules of obscene discourse based on ambiguities used in trifle poems were still evolving in the second half of the sixteenth century and several decades of intensive poetic production needed to pass before it could give birth to a new type of ribald riddle. Secondly, one of the main elements of the literary strategy of the riddle, which intertwines a prudent answer with indecent associations, consists in the eventual reveal of a less obvious, neutral solution, which is not present in Kochanowski's work. And finally, even though ribald riddles gained double meaning aimed at ridiculing lazy train of thought of the recipient, old scatological riddles always had only one solution. Such is the case of *Gadki* found in a French collection by Charles Cotin, translated by Jan Morsztyn for his sister Teofilia, where one of the riddles has the answer: "A privy, latrine" (please note that despite the riddle being a literary import, the answer was not the novelty that was the portable toilet), while another: "voice from the rear" or "flatulence". The same solution appears in the riddle about "a human wind", incorporated into the drama piece *Opatrzności Boskiej dzieło* by Urszula Radziwiłłowa, wife of the provincial governor of Vilnius:

> Nikczemna jest rzecz, a w zapachu szczera,
> W ten się punkt rodzi, w który wraz umiera,
> A w tchu ostatnim głośny dźwięk zawiera.[50]

In this context, it can be seen that the idea of a double answer is not applicable to Kochanowski's *Gadka* for a number of reasons.

The inferior orifice

The commentators suggesting that *Gadka* could be about anal sex, either homo- or heterosexual, did not take into account the attitude towards sodomy prevalent among the first recipients of Kochanowski's

[49] *Zagadki rozmaite*, p. 167.

[50] J.A. Morsztyn, *Gadka piąta*, *Gadka ósma*, in: idem, *Utwory zebrane*, pp. 192, 194, and solutions: pp. 875, 877; U. Radziwiłłowa, *Komedyje i tragedyje…* (Żółkiew, 1754), Pt. 2, fol. G_1ver.; see Krzyżanowski, "Zagadka i jej problematyka," pp. 27–28.

volume. The riddle *O księdzu* (I 54) was published in the first print of *Fraszki* (1584) only to permanently disappear from the subsequent Old Polish editions of the collection due to the poem tackling the theme of a clergyman enjoying traditional sex. If anyone at the time had suspected that *Gadka* made a joke out of a sin that cries to Heaven for Vengeance, to would have been erased out of the collection even faster than the trifle *O księdzu*.

Anal sex was considered sodomy – imperfect sodomy if it was engaged in with a woman. The basic problem arising in the study of the phenomenon in the context of Old Poland consists in the fact that sodomy used to be one of the so-called mute sins that should never be spoken of. As explained by Adam Gdacjusz, a Lutheran preacher: "Sodomija [– –] jest to występek taki, o który się nie godzi przed uczciwymi uszyma mówić, zaczym się zowie *peccatum mutum* – grzechem niemym, ponieważ się o nim nic wiedzieć, nic widzieć i nic mówić nie ma".[51] There is a story about how Mikołaj Oleśnicki would not even stand close to an Orthodox priest who confessed to him that, having 12 children already, he had decided to perform anal sex with his wife as a form of birth control. The person who wrote the story down used it to describe the mentality of Russians: "Grzech sodomski, acz mają sobie jakoby za grzech, ale sromoty w popełnieniu go jakoby żadnej, *communiter* [powszechnie] o niem mówiąc i przyznawają się sami do tego bez wstydu, którzy go pełnią".[52] The issue, therefore, was not so much the priest's wrongdoing itself, but rather his ability to freely talk about the "mute sin", which should not be mentioned in a conversation.

In consequence, the literary mentions of imperfect sodomy are very scarce and appear only in a very specific type of texts. Hieronim Morsztyn writes about the practitioners of such type of carnal pleasure in his work entitled *Nagrobek piczy*:

> Ci zaś, co za żywota mało o cię dbali,
> A raczej się sąsiadą twoją zabawiali,
> Śmiech sobie z tego czynią, a złość nieużyta
> Cudzą szkodę za własny pożytek poczyta.[53]

[51] A. Gdacjusz, *Dyszkurs o grzechach szóstego przykazania Bożego…* (Brzeg, 1682), p. 23; see also Nastulczyk, Oczko, op. cit., pp. 198–199.

[52] S. Niemojewski, *Diariusz drogi spisanej i różnych przypadków pociesznych i żałosnych prowadząc córkę Jerzego Mniszka, Marynę, Dymitrowi Iwanowiczowi w roku 1606*, ed. R. Krzywy (Warszawa, 2006), p. 116.

[53] H. Morsztyn, *Nagrobek piczy*, vv. 53–56, in: idem, *Wiersze padewskie*, ed. R. Grześkowiak (Warszawa, 2014), p. 149.

The poet made use of a well-known funerary concept: while in Jan Andrzej Morsztyn's *Nadgrobek Perlisi*, translated from a Latin source, the death of a female dog is mourned by everyone and everything and only snow is happy that it now will be the fairest, in *Nagrobek piczy* the grief of the male world is juxtaposed with the satisfaction of the enthusiasts of anal sex. Hieronim inserted the fragment right after enumerating the inhabitants of Europe, Asia, America, and Africa, a typical *descriptio gentium*, but he did not make a connection between the sodomite deed and any of the listed nations. A different strategy was adopted by Jan Andrzej, who was inspired by his relative's obscene epicedium and wrote *Nadgrobek kusiowi*. Imitating Hieronim's enumerations, he used a list of women from all around the world mourning a defunct penis to present a catalogue of erotic preferences:

> Płacze jurna Hiszpanka, co sobie kiep goli,
> I Francuzka, co pewnie kusia niż chleb woli,
> Płacze Włoszka, u której miewał dwie piwnice.[54]

Jan Andrzej, therefore, considered oral sex to be French love, but saw anal sex as typically Italian.[55] Prominent Polish pornographers of the seventeenth century were aware of the existence of such a phenomenon, but preferred to assign it to other nations.

When looking for the answer for Kochanowski's *Gadka*, it is important not to forget about the clearly pejorative meaning of the anus. Showing someone your bare bum was a deeply insulting gesture. After all, the last straw that broke Solomon's back was "fat and bawdy" Marcolf mooning him in a way that "showed his buttocks, arse, penis, and testicles". One of the practical jokes played by Till Owlglass in his childhood also consisted in showing people his buttocks: "Sowiźrzał, podkasawszy się dobrze, wypiął zadek na ludzi [– –]. Ujźrzawszy tę niecnotę jego, sąsiedzi z żonami swymi wszyscy wespołek za nimi bieżeli, łając a przeklinając go, że tak niestatecznym był".[56]

---

[54] J.A. Morsztyn, *Nadgrobek kusiowi*, vv. 93–95, in: idem, *Utwory zebrane*, p. 315.

[55] It is no coincidence that the courtisan protagonist of one Italian novel claims: "Z okazji mego męskiego stroju pozwoliłam mu pobawić się ze mną jak z chłopcem (ogromnie był łasy na takie igraszki)"; P. Aretino, *Żywoty kurtyzan*, trans. E. Boyé (Warszawa, 1958), pp. 103–104.

[56] *Rozmowy Salomona z Marchołtem*, trans. and ed. M. Eder (Wrocław, 2014), p. 74; *Sowiźrzał krotochwilny i śmieszny. Krytyczna edycja staropolskiego przekładu "Ulenspiegla"*, ed. R. Grześkowiak, E. Kizik (Gdańsk, 2005), p. 8.

The offensive gesture has persevered throughout centuries and continues to be insulting to this day. Even more importantly, it was just as disrespectful when perpetrated by a woman. Adam Władysławiusz wrote a trifle poem about the enthusiasts of feminine charms who, noticing women doing laundry on the riverbank, offered to pay them for showing them the "seal" from under their dresses:

> Wnet podniosła podołka kurewska ochota:
> "Napatrzcie się, mój panie, mnie zapłatę dajcie,
> A o mojej pieczęci z sobą rozmawiajcie".
> A skoro jej zapłacił on wielki niestatek,
> Zaraz zadek wypięła: "Nęż wama przydatek!"
> Tam obadwa plunąwszy, pojechali w drogę.

Władysławiusz's story caught Potocki's fancy and inspired him to write a similar narrative, with the changes he introduced consisting in decimating the women to only one and replacing travelling men with the village elder, which gave a whiff of erotic intimacy to the description of the indecent transaction. The ending remained the same, with the indignant protagonist running away.[57] Both texts, written, respectively, in the first and in the second half of the seventeenth century, leave no place for doubt: the view of the girl's naked buttocks utterly ruined the erotic satisfaction deriving from looking at her bosom. The pejorative perception of anal sex in the Old Polish period derived not only from religious restrictions or a deed against nature, but also from the insulting value of the anus (in Władysławiusz's story, the riders had to spit to reverse the hex and get rid of the bad taste in their mouths!).

In the context of Kochanowski's *Gadka*, only Duska stood in defence of the female sex, concluding that the anus in the trifle poem does not necessarily have to belong it a man, it may as well belong to a woman.[58] Such a concept would solve all exegetic problems: it does not reach beyond the heteronormativity of Kochanowski's erotic writings and connects the faecal character of the one-eyed creature (vv. 5–6) with it being the target of a "blind bolt" (vv. 3–4).

---

[57] A. Władysławiusz, *O dwu, co jechali w drogę*, vv. 10–15, in: *Polska fraszka mieszczańska. Minucje sowiźrzalskie. Utwory wyłączone z pierwszego wydania zbiorowego*, ed. K. Badecki (Kraków, 1948), p. 11: I [130]; W. Potocki, *Nazbyt łaski*, in: idem, *Ogród fraszek*, vol. 2, ed. A. Brückner (Lwów, 1907), p. 353: IV 405.

[58] Duska, op. cit., p. 355.

Nonetheless, in view of the above deliberations it is hard to accept it. Sodomy, however imperfect it may be, is still sodomy.

In spite of ambivalence: the praise of the vagina

It is time to pose the question of how *Gadka* was interpreted by the audience it was aimed at. Up until mid-seventeenth century, Kochanowski's collection of trifle poems was published in large amounts of copies, in 13 editions in total, the first thing that should be done is therefore to check whether any of the former owners of the book wrote down the answer to the riddle on its pages. Courtesy of a number of library workers, over 120 copies of Old Polish editions of Kochanowski's work have been reviewed for the purposes of this paper, only to discover that there have merely been several cases in which the readers could not resist the urge to add a note on the margins of the page containing *Gadka*.[59] None of these comments, however, contain a clear answer to the riddle. "But what? Where? What is this?" – inquired the confused owner of one of the copies of the 1612 edition, unwittingly providing an apt motto for the research presented in this paper.[60] In one of the books published in the 1617 edition, its former owner (anteceding Łempicki's thesis by three centuries) decided that the poem was an "Obscenum".[61] Another reader of the collection must have followed a similar train of thought when he embellished his 1629 copy of *Fraszki* with an exorcising exclamation

[59] The search encompassed copies of old editions of *Fraszki* from the collections of the following libraries: National in Warsaw, PAS in Gdańsk, PAS in Kórnik, PAL and PAS in Cracow, Ossoliński in Wrocław, Raczyński in Poznań, Institute of Literary Studies in Warsaw, Jagiellonian in Cracow, University in Warsaw, and of the following universities: University of Łódź, University of Silesia in Katowice, University of Wrocław, as well as in Poznań and Toruń, Catholic University of Lublin, Płock Scientific Society, Poznań Scientific Society, Metropolitan Higher Seminary in Warsaw, Public Libraries in Lublin, Łódź, Opole, Tarnów, and Warsaw, Cieszyn Library, Copernican Library in Toruń, Pomeranian Library in Szczecin, and in the collection of the National Museum in Cracow, District Museum in Rzeszów, Przypkowscy Museum in Jędrzejów, Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warsaw. I would like to sincerely thank all the librarians and museum employees I troubled for their understanding and extensive help.

[60] J. Kochanowski, *Fraszki* (Kraków, 1612), p. 80 (copy Wrocław, Ossoliński Library [Biblioteka Ossolińskich], ref. no. XVII.1143/II).

[61] Ibidem (Kraków, 1617), p. 80 (copy Warsaw, National Library [Biblioteka Narodowa], ref. no. XVII.3.2863 adl.).

on the margins: "Santa Maria!".[62] The more time passed since the riddle was written down for the first time, the more appalled the readers were by its anal conclusion. An eighteenth-century owner of an older edition of the book made a rhyming annotation to the final verse of the poem: "A zalot nieprawie zdrowy" – "Pierdelowy" [Fart-like],[63] with his opinion shared by the owner of another edition in the later years, who summed up the riddle with only a couple of strokes of a pencil: "A riddle from N.'s underpants".[64] Even with such uneven reception of the poem, two separate periods can be noticed, with each of them focusing on a different sommatic hole.

As if out of spite, the note of the author of a seventeenth-century *silva rerum* who not only wrote down Kochanowski's riddle, but also provided an answer ("Significant:"), is impossible to decipher. In the best case scenario, it could be the word "KEP"[65] written backwards (as solutions to riddles were usually provided in manuscripts), that is "kiep" – the female sex organ.

Having no luck with ordinary readers, we need to turn to literary writers. A certain poetical *silva rerum* contains a small collection of riddles, out of which four, appearing together under the common title *Nożenki* ('a little vagina'), refer to the female sex organ. Two of them are derivative of Kochanowski's trifle poem:

> Kosmaty jako satyr a o jednym oku,
> Stoi zawsze gotowym do potrzeby w kroku,
> Wyzywając na rękę tego, w kim się kocha –
> Gadajcież mi, co to jest za bestyja płocha.
>
> **Albo taż tak**
> Stoi jako bojownik zajuszony w kroku –
> Gadajcież mi, co to jest franc o jednym oku.[66]

Another poem owing a lot to Kochanowski's riddle was *Gadka* by Szemiot, which is particularly valuable given the fact that it was penned by a hack writer devoid of poetic inventiveness, who was most eager to use his rhymes to convey obvious truths and ideas:

---

[62] Ibidem (Kraków, 1629), p. 80 (copy Toruń, University Library [Biblioteka Uniwersytecka], ref. no. Pol. 7.II.5858 adl.).
[63] Ibidem (Kraków, 1612), p. 80 (copy Rzeszów, District Museum [Muzeum Okręgowe], ref. no. 28812).
[64] Ibidem (Kraków, 1612) [actually: after 1617], p. 80 (copy BJ, ref. no. 585608 I).
[65] BJ, ref. no. 116, fol. 155rec.
[66] LNSL, Baworowski Collection, ref. no. 1332, p. 419.

Jest zwierzę jednookie, a przecie brodate,
Że w niskich miejscach siada, taką ma prywatę:
Nie ryczy ani szczeka, tylko łzy wylewa,
Nie ma rąk, nóg nie widać, a chodzi przez drzewa.
Pospolicie takim go kształtem pożywają,
Że pilnują – a w nocy strzałę wypuszczają.
Tej gadki nikt nie zgadnie, póki wyżła swego
Nie zapuści do lasu po zwierza takiego.[67]

The associations invoked by both these works were unequivocally vaginal. It is worth to put them in the spotlight since the possibility of the female vagina being the answer to Kochanowski's poem is the easiest and, at the same time, the most viable solution. However, I would like to point out that in all the three seventeenth-century variations of the poem, the anal themes appearing in Kochanowski's original were carefully disguised lest they disturb the pleasure derived from reading a riddle unambiguously alluding to the vagina. It is worth examining whether the situation could have been different in the sixteenth century.

Over the turn of the century, people would often repeat the proverbial saying "Whatever stinks, harms, or hurts should not be joked about", which exorcised scatological humour, earlier widely popular among the elites. The concept of courtly jokes, which towards the end of the sixteenth century was associated with blunt erotic humour, at the beginning of the century had also encompassed faecal jests. The Renaissance apotheosis of the material bodily lower stratum, discussed by Mikhail Bachtin and appearing in Old Polish texts written in the period, brought scatological and sexual themes closer to each other, making both equally prone to mockery and parody.[68] The books *Facecje polskie* and *Figliki*, inspired by Western collections of anecdotes, feature plentiful jokes about faeces, with the same type of humour also appearing in the imported tales of the picaresque career of Till Owlglass, printed even before 1540.

The defecation-themed jokes largely enjoyed by the representatives of the early humanist formation lost their value over no more than several decades: in *Figliki*, published in early 1660s, several obscene riddles were largely outnumbered by scatological anecdotes, but these proportions switched in *Fraszki*, published two decades later, and

[67] S.S. Szemiot, *Gadka*, in: idem, *Sumariusz wierszów*, p. 110.

[68] See M. Bachtin, *Twórczość Franciszka Rabelais'go a kultura ludowa średniowiecza i renesansu*, trans. A. Goreń, A. Goreń, introd. S. Balbus (Kraków, 1975).

it was not until Kochanowski's volume that the popularity of jokes about "whatever stinks" resurged.[69] At the same time, the collection of trifle poems had some new value *in statu nascendi*, which is why it was possible for *Gadka* – provided that the answer to it was, as indicated by its first readers, the vagina – to include a mention of the organ's anal neighbour, which was then erased by Kochanowski's middlebrow copycats, for instance Szemiot, so that it would not squash erotic appetites. Such view of the subject matter would later return in pornographic literature (in Aleksander Fredro's *Sztuka obłapiania*, one of the essential elements accompanying virginity loss is a "blaring fart" or "forceful fart" of the girl who is becoming a woman!).

One of the most avid Old Polish eulogists of the vagina was Hieronim Morsztyn, who sang its praises on every possible occasion: "Tak nam ten kęs natura w kroku osłodziła, / że w jednym członku wszytek smak nasz uwięziła" (*Kiep*, vv. 7–8) or: "Utrapionych pociecha, rzeczypospolitych / podpora, żywe źrzódło rozkoszy obfitych" (*Nagrobek piczy*, vv. 23–24). His passion, however, was permanently tinted with the awareness of its ambivalent location: "kiep własny, co u dupy siada" (*Kiep*, cycle *Problemata polskie*, v. 27), "choć u dupy siedzi ta bestyja, / musiałem się w nim tak zakochać i ja" (*Smaczny kąsek*, vv. 9–10), "pyje głupie / nie dba, byle się bawiło przy dupie" (*"Melius est nubere, quam uri"*, vv. 7–8). This close vicinity had varied outcome. We have already mentioned the stark difference between the female buttocks and the vagina. There have been, however, certain instances of the literary discourse bringing the two orifices closer together despite these barriers. When Jan Andrzej Morsztyn compared the vagina to an abyss fuming with toxic vapours when writing about the phallus in the context of sexual intercourse, he tackled the subject of the female organ in somewhat anal terms:

> On się na żadną przepaść nic nie wzdryga ani
> Smrodliwej jak Kurcyjusz poważa otchłani;
> Nurka takiego nie ma-ż, bo że w tyle czuje
> Dwa pęcherze, wskoczy tam, gdzie i nie zgruntuje.

[69] For more information on the subject see: R. Grześkowiak, E. Kizik, "Wstęp," in: *Sowiźrzał krotochwilny i śmieszny*, pp. XXVI–XXXVII; R. Grześkowiak, "Przysłowia 'są jakoby szpikiem niejakim bystrego rozumu i głębokiego dowcipu ludzkiego'. Nieznane wydanie 'Przypowieści polskich, od Solomona Rysińskiego zebranych, dwa tysiąca i dwieście' z roku 1621," in: *Sarmackie theatrum VII. W kręgu rodziny i prywatności*, ed. M. Jarczykowa, R. Ryba (Katowice, 2014), pp. 117–123.

The fragment was shortly followed by a mention stating that the penis does not care about the scars made by urine, made caustic by ammonia.[70]

Some texts written in the seventeenth century combine the two frames of reference, the scatological and the erotic one, into a coherent discourse serving the purpose of romantic persuasion. One of them was the anonymous trifle poem *Miłość ogniem dziwnym a niepospolitym*:

> Chociaż to ludzie miłość ogniem nazywają,
> Czemuż się od miłości włosy nie spalają?
> Temu, że jest wygodna w tej mierze natura:
> Tam wodę postawiła, gdzie miłości dziura,

another was the work *Na panny* written by a poet of magnitude comparable to Jan Andrzej Morsztyn:

> Trzy rzeczy czynią wdzięczne lecie chłody:
> Gęsty cień i wiatr, i wilgotne wody.
> A przecię panny mają ciepłe udy
> (Co wie, kto się ich dotknął bez obłudy),
> Choć tam przez ciemne płyną rzeki gaje
> I choć miech tylny wietrzyku dodaje.[71]

---

[70] J.A. Morsztyn, *Nadgrobek kusiowi*, vv. 47–50, 64, in: idem, *Utwory zebrane*, pp. 314–315. The case of the Old Polish adaptation of Lodovico Domenichi's anecdote is quite telling in this context. Mikołaj Rej created its Polish version in the epigram about a traveller who made the following joke when he saw a shirt tucked between a woman's buttocks: "Łakomy tył masz, otoć zje koszulę", to which he received a sharp retort: "Utrzeć sie to chciała, / iżeś ją miał całować, tak sie nadziewała"; idem, *Dziewce uwiązła koszula w pośladku*, vv. 3, 5–6, in: idem, *Figliki*, p. 51: no. 20. Wacław Potocki would not be himself if he had not repeated the old chestnut, but in his version, the shirt was stuck not in the back of the woman, but in her front: "'Niedobrześ go chowała – rzecze – w mięsopusty, / kiedy w poście, jak widzę, twój kiep jada chusty'. / 'Wiem ja – odpowie dziewka – jako go mam chować, / a to głupi rozumie, że masz go całować, / dlatego się uciera i szoruje zęby. / Godna twarzy serweta, a twarz waszej gęby'," W. Potocki, *Rozmowa chędoga*, vv. 5–10, in: idem, *Ogród fraszek*, vol. 2, p. 353: IV 404.

[71] LNSL, Ossolineum Collection, ref. no. 5888/I, p. 63; J.A. Morsztyn, *Na panny*, in: idem, *Utwory zebrane*, p. 90. Thus at the beginning of the seventeenth century it was possible to write obscene poems which tackled urophilia under the guise of diminutives: "Nie wiem, jak cię wołają, czy Zosiu, czy Zusiu, / słyszę tylko, że imię kończy się na siu-siu. / Choćbyś się też pode mną nawet posiusiała, / czyń co chcesz, byleś tylko pode mną leżała". This trifle poem by Hieronim Morsztyn was mistakenly published under the name of Jan Andrzej (J.A. Morsztyn, *Utwory zebrane*, p. 348); the attribution was corrected in: R. Grześkowiak,

Thunder and unhealthy stench have been replaced by a refreshing breeze, but the idea seems similar. Once again we reach the point of clearly seeing how differently various private parts of the female body were mapped in the Old Polish period.

The difficulty in solving Kochanowski's *Gadka* may be a result of excessive pedantry of academics. When we look under a female dress through a sage's lens and attempt to meticulously differentiate between the orifices we find there, it is easy to forget that they are so close to one another that when one stinks, the stench will not get any better several centimetres away, and when one of them lets out a thunder, the human ear will not be able to tell which one. Kochanowski wrote a trifle poem called *Na Barbarę* (I 37), in which he covered up indecent rhymes with prudent phrasing: "Ale ty wżdy nie bądź głupia, / nieznajomym nie daj du[pia]" (vv. 9–10). The phrase "pani daje dupy", referring to a woman giving herself up for sex, is known from, for instance, a trifle poem by Nieborowski; Władysławusz used similar phrasing to write about harlots of Cracow, who "przekupują dupą" [bribe men with their arse] when they sell their bodies. The word "zadek" was used in similar fashion, for instance by Jan Daniecki in his trifle poems or by Jan Gawiński in his work *O zgoleniu brody dla dziewczej urody*: "Źleś się, bracie, frymarczył, tak pięknego statku / iżeś pozbył bez skutku dla dziewczego zadku".[72] This is why the girl who lost her virginity in the poem by Hieronim Morsztyn could confess: "Ja w sercu cnotę chowam, tegom nie wiedziała, / jeśliby w zadku druga cnota pałac miała" (*Wałach tłusty*, vv. 67–68),[73] with

"Zawsze po nim. Leszek Kukulski jako wydawca 'Utworów zebranych' Jana Andrzeja Morsztyna," in: idem, *Barokowy tekst i jego twórcy. Studia o edycji i atrybucji poezji "wieku rękopisów"* (Gdańsk, 2003), pp. 43–46.

[72] D. Naborowski, *Na pana Śledzia*, v. 3, LNSL, Ossolineum Collection, ref. no. 5888/I, p. 381; A. Władysławiusz, *Na swe księgi*, v. 2, in: *Polska fraszka mieszczańska*, p. 10: I [129]; J. Daniecki, *Wymówka*, v. 6, in: idem, *Żabawy* (Kraków 1606), p. 30: III [19]; J. Gawiński, *O zgoleniu brody dla dziewczej urody*, vv. 5–6, Warsaw, University Library (Biblioteka Uniwersytecka), ref. no. 190, fol. 212ver.

[73] The citations were necessary to prove that the Polish idiom "dać dupy (komu)", which remains in use to the present day, was already widely used at the turn of the seventeenth century, but it is not mentioned in the on-line dictionary *Słownik polszczyzny XVII i pierwszej połowy XVIII w.*, and Andrzej Bańkowski wrongfully assumed that the vaginal meaning of the word "dupa" did not appear until the eighteenth century, idem, *Etymologiczny słownik języka polskiego*, vol. 1: *A–K* (Warszawa, 2000), p. 311: "dupa". The face of lexicographers was saved

not even a single person suggesting that any of the texts referring to female buttocks or arse could be an allusion to anal sex. Only one step behind is enough to replace two different female orifices with the one that is proper. It is enough to stop looking through the sage's lens to see that after all, we all know that the anus is definitely not what is most attractive about the female rear.

Bibliography

Archival sources

Cracow, Jagiellonian Library (Biblioteka Jagiellońska), sign. 116
Kórnik, PAS Library (Biblioteka Polskiej Akademii Nauk), sign. 495
London, British Library, Yates Thompson, Ms 13
Lviv, National Vasyl Stefanyk Scientific Library of Ukraine, Baworowski Collection (Zbiór Baworowskich), sign. 1332 (kept at BJ, sign. Ms.Slav. Fol.9); Ossolineum Collection (Zbiory Ossolineum), sign. 5888/I
Warsaw, University Library (Biblioteka Uniwersytecka), sign. 190

Printed sources

Amoris divini et humani antipathia (Paris, 1628)
[Biernat from Lublin], *Żywot Ezopa Fryga, mędrca obyczajnego i z przypowieściami jego…* (Kraków, 1578)
Borzymowski M., *Morska nawigacyja do Lubeka*, ed. R. Pollak (Gdańsk, 1971)
Columbus R., *De re anatomica libri XV* (Venetiis, 1559)
Cztery wieki fraszki polskiej, ed. J. Tuwim, introd. A. Brückner, 2nd edn. (Warszawa, 1957)
Daniecki J., *Zabawy* (Kraków, 1606)
Gadki toruńskie czyli zagadki weselne z przełomu XVII i XVIII w., ed. S. Salmonowicz (Toruń, 1980)
Gdacjusz A., *Dyszkurs o grzechach szóstego przykazania Bożego…* (Brzeg, 1682)
Górnicki Ł., *Dworzanin polski* (Kraków, 1566)

by Samuel Bogumił Linde (idem, *Słownik języka polskiego*, vol. 1/1: *A–F* [Lwów, 1807], p. 550: "dup, dupa, dupka") and linguists from Cracow (*Słownik polszczyzny Jana Kochanowskiego*, vol. 1: *A–H* [Kraków, 1994], p. 442: "dup, dupie"). Nota bene, the proverbial phrase used in the original Polish title of this paper ["o dupie Maryni"], exploiting analogous meaning of the word, also derives from early seventeenth century; T. Ulewicz, "O najstarszych i późniejszych zapożyczeniach językowych w Polsce: glosa historyczno-kulturalna," *Terminus* 1/2 (2000), pp. 25–26.

Kochanowski J., *Dzieła polskie*, ed. J. Krzyżanowski (Warszawa, 1955)
Kochanowski J., *Dzieła polskie*, ed. J. Krzyżanowski, 11th edn. (Warszawa, 1980)
Kochanowski J., *Dzieła wszystkie. Wydanie pomnikowe*, vol. 2 (Warszawa, 1884)
Kochanowski J., *Fraszki* (Kraków, 1612)
Kochanowski J., *Fraszki* (Kraków, 1617)
Kochanowski J., *Fraszki* (Kraków, 1629)
Kochanowski J., *Fraszki*, ed. S. Łempicki (Lwów, 1928)
Kochanowski J., *Fraszki*, ed. J. Pelc, 2nd. corr. edn. (Wrocław, 1991)
Korczyński A., *Fraszki*, ed. R. Pollak (Wrocław, 1950)
Korczyński A., *Wizerunk złocistej przyjaźnią zdrady*, ed. R. Grześkowiak (Warszawa, 2000)
Krünitz J.G., *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, vol. 100: *Nachjahr – Nahme* (Berlin, 1805)
Morsztyn H., *Wiersze padewskie*, ed. R. Grześkowiak (Warszawa, 2014)
Morsztyn J.A., *Utwory zebrane*, ed. L. Kukulski (Warszawa, 1971)
Morsztyn Z., *Emblemata*, ed. J. Pelc, P. Pelc (Warszawa, 2001)
Niemojewski S., *Diariusz drogi spisanej i różnych przypadków pociesznych i żałosnych prowadząc córkę Jerzego Mniszka, Marynę, Dymitrowi Iwanowiczowi w roku 1606*, ed. R. Krzywy (Warszawa, 2006)
Polska fraszka mieszczańska. Minucje sowiźrzalskie. Utwory wyłączone z pierwszego wydania zbiorowego, ed. K. Badecki (Kraków, 1948)
Potocki W., *Ogród fraszek*, ed. A. Brückner, vol. 1–2 (Lwów, 1907)
Radziwiłłowa U., *Komedyje i tragedyje…* (Żółkiew, 1754)
Rej M., *Figliki*, ed. M. Bokszczanin, introd. J. Krzyżanowski (Warszawa, 1974)
Rozmowy Salomona z Marchołtem, trans. and ed. M. Eder (Wrocław, 2014)
Rysiński S., *Proverbiorum polonicorum… chiliades duae et centuriae duae / Przypowieści polskich… dwa tysiąca i dwieście* (Lubecae ad Chronum, 1621)
Szemiot S.S., *Sumariusz wierszów*, ed. M. Korolko (Warszawa, 1981)
Tasso T., *Gofred abo Jeruzalem wyzwolona*, trans. P. Kochanowski (Kraków, 1618)
Zagadki rozmaite i pytania służące zabawie i nauce. Antologia polskiej zagadki literackiej, ed. J.M. Kasjan (Toruń, 1994)

Secondary literature

Bachtin M., *Twórczość Franciszka Rabelais'go a kultura ludowa średniowiecza i renesansu*, trans. A. Goreń, A. Goreń, introd. S. Balbus (Kraków, 1975)
Bańkowski A., *Etymologiczny słownik języka polskiego*, vol. 1–2 (Warszawa, 2000)
Barylewska-Szymańska E., "Czystość i higiena w gdańskich domach mieszczańskich drugiej połowy XVIII wieku," *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej* 53, no. 3/4 (2005), pp. 411–422

Bielas K., *Niesformatowani. Rozmowy* (Kraków, 2007)
Birczyńska J., "Słownik erotyczny 'Fraszek' Jana Kochanowskiego," in: *Jan Kochanowski i epoka renesansu. W 450 rocznicę urodzin poety (1530–1980)*, ed. T. Michałowska (Warszawa, 1984), pp. 334–348
Brückner A., *Ezopy polskie* (Kraków, 1902)
Brückner A., *Język Wacława Potockiego. Przyczynek do historii języka polskiego* (Kraków, 1900)
Duska J., "Tajemnicza 'Gadka' z ksiąg III 'Fraszek' Jana Kochanowskiego. Rozwiązanie zagadki," in: *Wiązanie sobótkowe. Studia o Janie Kochanowskim*, ed. E. Lasocińska, W. Pawlak (Warszawa, 2015), pp. 348–355
Grześkowiak R., *Amor curiosus. Studia o osobliwych tematach dawnej poezji erotycznej* (Warszawa, 2013)
Grześkowiak R., *Barokowy tekst i jego twórcy. Studia o edycji i atrybucji poezji "wieku rękopisów"* (Gdańsk, 2003)
Grześkowiak R., "'Próżno się kusić, czym nie dano być'. Jak Salomon Rysiński pasował Biernata z Lublina na pierwszego paremiografa Rzeczypospolitej," in: *Biernat z Lublina a literatura i kultura wczesnego renesansu w Polsce*, ed. J. Dąbkowska-Kujko, A. Nowicka-Struska (Lublin, 2015), pp. 123–153
Grześkowiak R., "Przysłowia 'są jakoby szpikiem niejakim bystrego rozumu i głębokiego dowcipu ludzkiego'. Nieznane wydanie 'Przypowieści polskich, od Solomona Rysińskiego zebranych, dwa tysiąca i dwieście' z roku 1621," in: *Sarmackie theatrum VII. W kręgu rodziny i prywatności*, ed. M. Jarczykowa, R. Ryba (Katowice, 2014), pp. 117–123
Hanusiewicz M., *Pięć stopni miłości. O wyobraźni erotycznej w polskiej poezji barokowej* (Warszawa, 2004)
Kasjan J.M., *Polska zagadka ludowa* (Wrocław, 1983)
Krzywy R., "Eros wyzwolony. Obscena Daniela Naborowskiego w kontekście kulturowym i literackim," in: *Daniel Naborowski. Krakowianin – Litwin – Europejczyk*, ed. K. Follprecht, K. Gajdka (Katowice, 2008), pp. 27–44
Krzywy R., "Rokokowe epitalamiony Stanisława Trembeckiego wobec tradycji gatunku," *Wiek Oświecenia* 20 (2004), pp. 121–142
Krzyżanowski J., "Zagadka i jej problematyka," in: idem, *Szkice folklorystyczne*, vol. 3: *Wokół legendy i zagadki. Z zagadnień przysłowioznawstwa* (Kraków, 1980), pp. 16–36
Linde S.B., *Słownik języka polskiego*, vol. 1/1–2 (Lwów, 1807–1808)
Nastulczyk T., Oczko P., *Homoseksualność staropolska. Przyczynek do badań* (Kraków, 2012)
Obremski K., "'Ma Eufrozyna coś osobliwego'. Poetyka toruńskiej zagadki weselnej przełomu XVII i XVIII w.," *Barok* 15, no. 1 (2008), pp. 173–188
Obremski K., "O alternatywnych rozwiązaniach toruńskich zagadek weselnych," *Literatura Ludowa* no. 2 (2012), pp. 25–31
Obremski K., "Toruńskie zagadki weselne: porównania – obrazowanie – obyczajność," *Pamiętnik Literacki* 104, no. 3 (2013), pp. 99–118

Pankowski M., "Polska poezja nieokrzesana (próba określenia zjawiska)," *Teksty* no. 4 (1978), pp. 30–46
Pollak R., "Notatki na marginesie utworów A. Korczyńskiego," *Pamiętnik Literacki* 43 (1952), pp. 599–603
Salmonowicz S., *Szkice toruńskie z XVII–XVIII wieku* (Toruń, 1992)
Słownik folkloru polskiego, ed. J. Krzyżanowski (Warszawa, 1965)
Słownik polszczyzny Jana Kochanowskiego, vol. 1–5, ed. M. Kucała (Kraków, 1994–2012)
Słownik polszczyzny XVI wieku, vol. 21, ed. M.R. Mayenowa (Wrocław, 1992)
Sowiźrzał krotochwilny i śmieszny. Krytyczna edycja staropolskiego przekładu "Ulenspiegla", ed. R. Grześkowiak, E. Kizik (Gdańsk, 2005)
Stringer M.D., Becker I., "Colombo and the Clitoris," *European Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Reproductive Biology* 151, no. 2 (2010), pp. 130–133
Szlesiński I., "Język Samuela Twardowskiego (frazeologia i składnia)," *Rozprawy Komisji Językowej Łódzkiego Towarzystwa Naukowego* 16 (1970), pp. 87–120
Ulewicz T., "O najstarszych i późniejszych zapożyczeniach językowych w Polsce: glosa historyczno-kulturalna," *Terminus* 1/2 (2000), pp. 19–26

Abstract

The collection of *Fraszki* by Kochanowski contains one riddle (III 78), the answer to which is still widely debated by researchers. The curtly described animal "with just one eye, / standing between a thigh and a thigh" has been interpreted as a musket resting on a stand, a cannon on a platform, but also a homosexual's anus, a female anus, a penis, a vagina, recently also an old-fashioned outhouse. The paper discusses the poetics of the Old Polish ribald riddle, which suggested indecent associations but eventually provided an innocent answer and embarrassed its recipients for their unseemly thoughts. It turns out, however, that in contrast to the theses put forward up to now, Kochanowski's Gadka is not such a type of text and should have an unambiguous answer. Detailed lexical analysis of the epigram debunks some of the answers proposed so far (it cannot be a firearm, a penis or an outhouse). The idea according to which the epigram refers to a female anus, despite its inarguable advantages (it does not breach the heteronormativity present in Kochanowski's erotic poems and constitutes a syncretic combination of erotic and fecal themes of the riddle), is eventually exposed as unacceptable in view of past attitudes towards sodomy, the understanding of which also comprised anal sex. The seventeenth-century imitators of Gadka – the anonymous author of two variations on the riddle and Stanisław Samuel Szemiot

– believed the answer to the riddle was the female reproductive organ. The author of this paper also supports this thesis, giving it grounds by providing comprehensive comparative data on Old Polish erotic riddles concerning the vagina.

Radosław Grześkowiak, professor at the University of Gdańsk, head of the Department of the History of Literature at the Institute of Polish Philology. His academic interests encompass Old Polish literature, editing, and emblematics.
E-mail: radoslaw.grzeskowiak@ug.edu.pl

Trans. by Natalia Kłopotek

First published as: "O dupie Maryni. Rozwiązywanie *Gadki* Jana Kochanowskiego," *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 60 (2016), pp. 111–141
The publication of this English translation has received additional funding from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Poland