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A Dangerous Domain: Bartholomew Keckermann on History and Historiography*

The main purpose of the paper is to present and discuss some Keckermann's thoughts on history and the art of historiography, expressed in the treatise *De natura et proprietatibus historiae commentarius* (Hanovie 1610), published posthumously by his student, David Schumann. According to the humanist from Gdańsk, history is not art, science, or discipline, because it does not have own commonplaces (*loci communes*), regarded as the basis for method. Nevertheless, history plays an important role in teaching of the practical arts such as politics or economy, because it is an inexhaustible source of examples, taken from narratives about the past events to illustrate general rules related to human life and actions. An excellent historian would be only someone who is able to combine searching for the truth with frankness in its telling. Therefore, he is obliged to use a simple style without almost any rhetorical devices. In relation to single events history serves as a tool of description and explication. Thus it provides the necessary illustrative material in the form of examples for the practical disciplines.

Key words: Keckermann, history, historiography, logic, rhetoric

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In 1602 Bartholomew Keckerman¹ was appointed to the post of Professor of Philosophy at the Academic Gymnasium in his home city of Gdańsk, and during the years 1606–1609 he kept himself busy delivering numerous lectures on practical philosophy, both in private and publicly. The number of treatises which came into being within that brief period of time, measured by successive semesters spent in the walls of the Gdańsk school, as well as a wide range of the topics addressed, give us a good idea of the intensity with which he pursued his career as a teacher and a scholar. His lectures on ethics, politics, economics, rhetoric, history, philosophy (an introductory course), astronomy and geography were, in most cases, developed into full-length treatises. The Gdańsk humanist had them successively published shortly after the classes he taught to his students were completed. Their swift publication suggests that the notes he made were very meticulous and required only some small additions and minor editorial changes before being turned over to the publisher and printed. Moreover, they seem to bear no traces of a hasty pen. One might even argue that their author, unshakable in his undivided commitment to the precepts of logic, remains in full control of the thoughts to which his words were meant to give rise, and his method of exposition, informed by the principle of dichotomic division deriving in his opinion straight from Aristotle, provides a precise and well-organized description of different domains of reality.

In 1610, one year after the Gdańsk scholar's death (25 July 1610), one of his students, David Schumann, a participant at two public disputations in which his teacher had been engaged,² published in Hanau

¹ Cf. B. Nadolski, *Życie i działalność naukowa uczonego gdańskiego Bartłomieja Keckermanna. Studium z dziejów Odrodzenia na Pomorzu* (Toruń, 1961), pp. 20–26.

² David Schumann Dantiscanus, *De cura principis externa atque de peregrinis legationibus et legatis deque foederibus* (1 Sept. 1607) and idem, *De principatu sive monarchia Persarum* (19 July 1608). Cf. ibidem, p. 20. Keckermann prepared disputations on practical philosophy he held with his students. The disputations appeared in two volumes: *Disputationes practicae, nempe ethicae, oeconomicae, politicae in Gymnasio Dantiscano intra triennium ad lectionum philosophicarum cursum habitae sub praesidio Bartholomei Keckermanni, philosophiae ibidem professoris, ita scriptae, ut totius philosophiae practicae brevia ac methodica systemata simul et praecipuarum materiarum controversias ac problemata contineant* (Hanoviae, 1608) and *Disputationum politicarum specialium et extraordinarium prima, quae est de principatu sive monarchia Persarum habenda publice in Gimnasio Dantiscano ad 14 Iulii praeside Bartholomeo Keckermanno, philosophiae professoris, respondente Davide Schumanno Dantiscano* (Gedani, 1608).

his late master's treatise, giving it the title *De natura et proprietatibus historiae commentarius*.³ The work contributed to an early modern discussion of the essence of history, the epistemological status of the knowledge of the past and the role of rhetoric in shaping historical accounts.⁴ Many years ago the problem was signalled in an interesting study by Nancy Struever.⁵ The title which Schumann gave to the treatise, *De natura et proprietatibus historiae commentarius*, didn't cover all the issues dealt with in it. It brought into focus only those of them that were crucial for Keckermann's way of understanding the concept of history. The author intended to divide his work into four parts:⁶ 1) a general discussion of the concept of history and its properties, 2) an account of the possible divisions of history adhered to in historiography, 3) particular historians' styles of writing history, 4) guidance regarding ways of reading historical accounts, making notes of them and remembering historical facts.⁷

Keckermann must have believed that the full realization of the programme of practical philosophy required his students to obtain some basic knowledge of history and historiography. Lectures on economics and politics, including on the existing forms of government, constituted an essential part of the course he taught, especially that at that

³ Its full title reads as follows: *De natura et proprietatibus historiae commentarius privatim in Gymnasio Dantiscano propositus a Bartholomeo Keckermanno, philosophiae ibidem professore* (Hanoviae, 1610). All the quotations are taken from this edition. The work was twice reprinted in editions of Keckermann's collected writings: *Systema systematum*, vol. 2 (Hanoviae, 1613), pp. 1817–1880 and *Opera omnia*, vol. 2 (Genevae, 1614), pp. 1309–1388.

⁴ The connection between Keckermann's work and his teaching ideas has been discussed by L. Mokrzecki, "Kształtowanie się dyscypliny historycznej w gdańskim gimnazjum akademickim," *Gdańskie Zeszyty Humanistyczne. Pedagogika, Psychologia, Historia Wychowania* 3 (1969), pp. 141–150.

⁵ Cf. N. Struever, *The Language of History in the Renaissance. Rhetoric and Historical Consciousness in Florentine Humanism* (Princeton, 1970).

⁶ "Partiemur autem hunc tractatum nostrum in quattuor praecipue membra. Quorum primum erit de natura et proprietatibus historiae. Alterum, de distinctione sive divisione historiae. Tertium, de historicis ipsis eorumque proprietatibus et delectu. Denique quarto, de modo sive methodo et ratione historias dextre legendi, notandi et memoriae commendandi"; Keckermann, *De natura et proprietatibus historiae*, p. 6. Unless the contrary is declared, all the quotations have been translated by the author.

⁷ Cf. For the detailed analysis of Keckermann's treatises see B. Nadolski, "Poglądy na historię uczonego gdańskiego Bartłomieja Keckermanna," *Rocznik Gdański* 17/18 (1960), pp. 253–261.

time schools were required to train mainly state officials. By providing a variety of examples to be used by a teacher as an illustration of the general rules and regularities he was expected to explain, history turned out to have practical use.⁸ Along with the Gdańsk humanist's work on the essence of history and the ideal form of historical narrative, Schumann⁹ published Keckermann's unfinished treatise entitled *Auctarium ad commentarium historicum*. Conceived of as a supplement to what the latter had written in the first text discussed here, the treatise provided a critical review of works on history and historiography that had been published since antiquity. The works he discussed included the *Lives of Saints* by Piotr Skarga whom he accused of tainting the hagiography with too many superstitions and invented stories.¹⁰ In doing so, he declared himself in favour of recounting the true facts of saints' lives rather than the miracles they worked both before and after their deaths. Keckermann entirely neglected to mention the fact that the work of Skarga, Sigismund III Vasa's court preacher, was deliberately written in the tradition of medieval legends in which miracles formed an equally important element of the represented reality. For this reason Skarga's text couldn't meet the strict criteria which Keckermann established for historians to follow in creating their

⁸ See A. Grafton, *What was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 217–227.

⁹ Cf. A fragment from the editor's preface addressed to 'a favourable reader': "Hinc factum est, ut eum ego obnixè rogarem, vellet mihi, quem singulariter complecti cognoveram, suam de nobilissimo hoc argumento sententiam communicare. Quod quidem pro sua benevolentia mihi non denegavit, praelecto de natura historiae hunc, quem vides, commentario. Cui postea auctarium appendere voluit, de historiatarum auctoribus et de ratione cum fructu historiae legendi. Sed illud non absoluit, impeditus valetudine adversa. Quam, ut Deus Optimus Maximus in meliorem vertat, mecum orabunt illi, qui virum norunt. Interea istud auctarium etiam nondum absolutum et quale est, spero pro futurum politicae et historiatarum amatoribus, quos spero hoc meum commentarii istius edendi studium non improbaturos, cum praesertim mihi soli habere eum potuerim, utpote cui pene soli autor praelegit et cui peculiariter destinavit ac dedicavit. Vale"; Keckermann, *De natura et proprietatibus historiae*, pp. 3–4.

¹⁰ Cf.: "Ad apparentem prudentiam ecclesiasticam pertinent vitae sanctorum sparsim a multis pontificiis editae, praesertim a quodam Caesario et deinde in unum quasi corpus collectae, sed lingua polonica a Petro Scharga iesuita, in quibus historiis multa sunt plena superstitionum et fabularum"; *ibidem*, p. 179. See A. Borowski, "Staropolska 'książka dla wszystkich', czyli Żywoty świętych ks. Piotra Skargi SJ," in: *Retoryka a tekst literacki*, ed. M. Hanczakowski, J. Niedźwiedz, vol. 1 (Kraków, 2003), pp. 53–79.

“scientific” historical accounts. In trying to comment on particular texts *sine ira et studio*, he concludes his remarks on John Foxe’s then famous work *Acts and Monuments* (first edition, London 1563) offering a detailed account of the persecution of protestants during the reign of Mary I Tudor with a statement, often repeated by his theology teacher from Heidelberg, Daniel Toussaint (1541–1602) that “except for the Holy Bible, there is no book filling us with greater piety than this *History of Martyrs*”.¹¹

From the treatise *De natura et proprietatibus historiae* we learn that the Gdańsk humanist began to work on a dissertation *Centuriae, seu problemata controversiarum historicarum* in which he attempted to use the tools of logic for resolving historians’ disputes and removing contradictions to be found in historical accounts.¹² Not only do the texts mentioned here give us an idea, necessarily limited and incomplete, of the extent to which Keckermann was interested in the scholarly debate regarding the concept of history, but they also show that he attempted to take an active part in it by offering a new perspective from which to view the knowledge of the past. Following the issues signalled in the title of the treatise published by Schumann in 1610, I will try to discuss some of the issues involved in Keckermann’s approach to history and historiography.

The Gdańsk humanist regarded the meaning of the Greek-derived word *history* as ambiguous (“*historiae vox ambigua est*”)¹³ and

¹¹ Cf.: “Possunt etiam huc referri martyrologia tam veteris, quam recentis temporis, nempe a tempore Iohannis Hussi, cuius etiam historia et martyrium peculiari libro descriptum est et deinde a tempore Lutheri usque ad haec nostra tempora, ut sunt ea, quae Iohannes Foxus Anglus scripsit de martyribus Angliae. Item *Acta Martyrum*, edita a Crispino Genevae et denique magnum martyrologium Germanice editum Hanoviae apud Guiliemum Antonium, cuius epitome ante quoque prodiit Herbornae. De qua *Historia Martyrum*, is quem antea honoris causa citavi, praceptor meus, Daniel Tossanus, solebat dicere: ‘Post Sancta Biblia nullum esse librum, qui maiorem in nobis devotionem possit excitare, quam illa *Historia Martyrum*’; Keckermann, *De natura et proprietatibus historiae*, p. 179. Keckermann also mentions the then well-known work by Jean Crespin, *Acta martyrum* (Genevae, 1556).

¹² Cf.: “Interim tamen diligens meditatio et instrumenta nonnulla artis logicae ad controversias historicas determinandas non parum possunt, id quod in *Centuriis seu problematis controversiarum historicarum* aliquando ostendemus, si Deus et vitam et otium dederit, affectas enim eas habemus, non confectas”; Keckermann, *De natura et proprietatibus historiae*, p. 34.

¹³ Cf.: “*Historiae vox ambigua est* – sumitur enim interdum generalissime pro omni doctrina et scientia, ita historia tam late patet, quam eruditio omnis divina

believed that the way in which it was explained by Plato who in his dialogue *Kratylos* linked it with the ever changing things and the fleeting human memory was apparent rather than true (“illa etymologia Platonica magis videtur allusoria, quam vera”). However, instead of attempting to develop the Greek philosopher’s idea that the human intellect is theoretically able to arrest the fluid reality and make it briefly the object of one’s knowledge, he pointed to the polysemantic nature of the Greek verb *historein* denoting “contemplate”, “consider” (*contemplari et considerare*), “see with one’s own eyes” (*coram spectare*), “examine”, “inquire” (*inquirere*) and discover something (*explorare aliquid*). A reliable historical account can be penned only by those who either took part in the reported events or who got in touch with those who had taken part in them. Thus, the historian is treated as an eyewitness and the account he creates is viewed in terms of a testimony he provides to the reader. In respect of the author’s participation in the reported events, his account can be considered either a direct one (when he is personally involved in the events described) or an indirect one (when his knowledge of specific events comes from eyewitnesses or from other historians’ works). These two relations are strictly connected with two other interrelated questions: a time distance separating the historian from the events he recounts and the accretion of “textual mediations” through which he has to pierce in order to create his own account of the events of an often remote past.

The etymological analysis designed to tackle the issue of the reliability of historical narrative led Keckermann to define history “to be the knowledge and explanation of things that are individual. [The knowledge] is built in order to grasp, and to attain a better understanding of, that which is general and universal in them”.¹⁴ Keckermann’s way of clarifying the concept of history involves a concise description of both its subject-matter (individual things) and its essence – history is knowledge of the facts of the past and the historian’s task is to discover and explain them. A research strategy to be employed by the author of a historical work centres around the passage from a description of a past event to the discovery of its universal component, the

et humana. Interdum vere sumitur strictius, pro explicatione sive doctrina et notitia singularium sive individuorum, et ea significatio tamquam magis propria, huc potissimum pertinet”; *ibidem*, p. 7.

¹⁴ Cf.: “est explicatio et notitia rerum singularium, sive individuorum, eo fine suscepta, ut universalialia ex iis, evidentius a nobis intelligi et confirmari possint”; *ibidem*, p. 8.

one that is independent of the circumstances of a given time and place. History can become the teacher of life (*magistra vitae*), the beacon of truth (*lux veritatis*), or the witness of times past (*nuntia vetustatis*) – to mention just the three of Cicero’s well-known phrases (*De orat.* II.9.36)¹⁵ – but only in so far as the view of it is supported by the anthropological assumption that human nature is ahistorical and, as such, can only to a small degree be modified by the passage of time. Historical analysis that sets itself the task of revealing the universal in the particular leads to the conclusion that people acting under similar circumstances tend to adopt similar attitudes (they succumb to their passions, crave power, but also show selfless devotion, remain true to their beliefs and strive for “good fame”). It is worth noting that Cicero’s praise of history, expressed in almost topical terms, established historical narratives’ dependence on the art of rhetoric. History’s ability to fulfil the mission of teaching life lessons and revealing the truth of the past is thus made to rest on the historian’s rhetorical skills. In his analysis of different models of renaissance historiography, Krzysztof Pomian has indicated the transition from the humanistic conception of history writing, based on rhetoric, to the model of erudite and “scientific” historiography in which rhetorical elements of historical discourse, especially those bound up with figural language, were at the dawn of the seventeenth century subject to regulation and limitations.¹⁶

Because it is concerned with explaining individual facts, history provides the most limited form of cognition.¹⁷ From this it follows,

¹⁵ Cf.: “Historia vero testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae, nuntia vetustatis, qua voce alia nisi oratoris immortalitati commendatur?”; Cic. *De orat.* II.2.36 (By what other voice, too, than that of the orator, is history, the witness of time, the light of truth, the life of memory, the mistress of life, the herald of antiquity, committed to immortality?).

¹⁶ Cf. K. Pomian, “Historia między retoryką a teologią. Niektóre problemy myśli historycznej doby Odrodzenia i Reformacji,” *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 9 (1964), pp. 23–74.

¹⁷ Cf.: “Genus historiae est notitia determinatissima, sive explicatio individualis. Unde sequitur primo historiam non esse disciplinam atque adeo nec esse scientiam, nec prudentiam, nec artem, quia omnis disciplina est rerum seu praeceptorum catholicorum et universalium, atque adeo generum et specierum. Historia autem non est rerum, seu praeceptorum universalium, sive non est notitia universalis, sed singularis, restricta et determinata ad individua et ad circumstantias temporum, locorum et personarum”; Keckermann, *De natura et proprietatibus historiae*, pp. 8–9.

says Keckermann, that it can't be considered a discipline (*disciplina*), a science (*scientia*), a prudence (*prudentia*) or an art (*ars*). All the autonomous scientific disciplines deal with things and rules that are general and universal (*rerum seu praeceptorum catholicorum et universalium*) and this concern those that are both general and individual. History, on the other hand, deals with people and places that are specific. Its interest is limited to the unique and individual. "Its essential goal is to produce the most limited kind of knowledge, the one that concerns individual things. This view, on which the correct idea of history is based and from which it originates, allows us to understand the enormity of the error of those who attempt to organize the past according to a specific method, independent of the methods employed by other disciplines. And every method belongs to the discipline of which it is a form. From the fact that history isn't a discipline, it follows that it doesn't have a method proper to itself and different from other disciplines. For this reason, it is easy to discern the error of those who indicate some particular historical places, different from those characterizing other disciplines, whereas common places are nothing but the basis for method. If history isn't a discipline and doesn't have a method of its own, then it also doesn't have the basis for its method, that is, its own common places".¹⁸

According to Jacopo Zabarella's interpretation of the methodical aspects of particular *artes*, the status of an independent scientific discipline is granted based on the discipline's ability to formulate general rules, (derived from a case-by-case analysis but applicable to the whole field of a particular discipline) and on its reliance on a specific method to be understood as a research strategy the elaboration of which is made possible owing to the specification of a list of

¹⁸ Cf.: "Genus historiae est notitia determinatissima, sive explicatio individualis. [– –] Primum et fundamentum dextri iudicii de historia pendet ab hoc aphorismo. Nam primo ex eo apparet quantus sit error eorum, qui historiam conantur disponere propria quadam methodo, non pendente a methodo aliarum disciplinarum, cum tamen methodus nullibi sit nisi in disciplinis, quarum est forma. Cum ergo historia non sit disciplina, evidenter sequitur quod non habeat methodum, seu formam propriam et distinctam a disciplinis, unde et alter error facile agnoscitur eorum nempe, qui peculiare quosdam locos historicos, distinctos a locis aliarum disciplinarum sibi fingunt, cum interim loci communes nil aliud sint quam capita methodi. Cum ergo historia non sit disciplina atque adeo non habeat peculiarem methodum sequitur, quod etiam non habeat capita methodi, id est, locos communes peculiare ac distinctos"; ibidem, pp. 8–9.

“commonplaces”¹⁹ characteristic of a given discipline.²⁰ The possibility of describing and organizing the *topica* of a particular art implies the use of one of the two methods: synthesis (theoretical disciplines) or analysis (practical arts), and neither of them can be applied to historical narratives. One can say, in full awareness of the sin of anachronism committed here, that the broadly understood *topica*, properly described and organized, constitutes the methodological basis for all practical arts; it provides them with their respective ways of analysis and the meta-language each of them use to problematize their methods, characterizing the latter’s essential components and determining the limits of their application. However, the *commonplaces*, as understood by Keckermann, aren’t limited in their function to the poetics and rhetoric (Rodolphus Agricola, Petrus Ramus), or even to the dialectics and theology (to mention here the case of Philip Melancton, Joachim Périon and Melchior Cano), but are treated as providing a way of viewing, describing and categorizing reality.

In a textbook *Gymnasium logicum* Keckermann characterizes the commonplaces in terms of their usefulness for knowing the rules of particular disciplines. He describes them as headings (*tituli*) that are methodically organized, that is, according to the previously adopted rule to which we turn in the process of reading and thinking. They can be bound up either with words or with things themselves.²¹ Among the various *loci*, characteristic of particular arts, Keckermann also mentions historical places (*loci historici*) and, displaying his natural commitment to conceptual precision, divides them into simple and complex ones.

Simple historical places include virtues, vices, punishments and rewards, all of which need to be arranged according to ethical systems.

¹⁹ Cf. i.a.: P. Mack, *Renaissance Argument. Valla and Agricola in the Traditions of Rhetoric and Dialectic* (Leiden and New York, 1993); A. Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford, 1996).

²⁰ See D. Facca, *Bartłomiej Keckermann i filozofia* (Warszawa, 2005), pp. 25–32.

²¹ Cf.: “Loci communes sunt tituli methodice dispositi, ad quos lecta et meditata referuntur. Suntque vel verborum vel rerum. Quidquid enim legimus et meditamus, id omne ad haec duo reducitur, res nimirum et signa rerum, itaque omnis locus communis seu titulus erit vel rei ipsius, vel verbi alicuius titulus; verborum autem locos propono, quia cum sint signa rerum, sensui sunt viciniora atque adeo notiora nobis, quo accedit, quod in aetate puerili et adolescentia verborum studium prius a nobis tractetur, antequam aetate et iudicio maturescente admittamur ad res ipsas”; B. Keckermann, *Gymnasium logicum, id est de usu et exercitatione logicae artis absolutiori et pleniori libri tres* (Londini, 1606), p. 175.

I call these places simple because virtues, vices, rewards and punishments are simple terms and, consequently, their examples are simple things. An example is an individual instance of a species forming part of a genus. Complex historical places headings of aphorisms to be found in the field of ethics, economics, politics and church affairs and the arguments adduced in their favour are based, just like practical conclusions, on their examples, as if by induction.²²

The concept of a *commonplace* is in both cases linked by the Gdańsk humanist with examples (*exempla*) which, subjected to individuation according to species and genus, are used to illustrate the conclusions drawn almost inductively from practical disciplines. Historical places are also bound up with the subject-matters of the disciplines that deal with human actions and their effects and that is why, defined as simple, these places are linked with the key ethical concepts of virtue and vice and can be organized according to ethical systems.

To reiterate, the historian deals with individual facts of the past and rather refrains from general judgments capable of being applied to the analysis of other facts. Because of its specific subject-matter, history is denied a status of an independent discipline and, consequently, can no longer be regarded as belonging in the realm of arts. It is devoid of a method requiring for its existence general and analytically applicable rules and *commonplaces* different from those characteristic of other disciplines. In the following parts of the treatise, Keckermann's categorical opinions about history's lack of method, and of its *topica*, are accompanied by his demands that it be taught in a more methodical way. As Izydora Dąmbska²³ has noted, these apparently contradictory views can be rendered more consistent. The Gdańsk humanist's claim about the unmethodical nature of *Clio* is made to imply that there are no logical operations useful for discovering and justifying historical judgments. Syllogistic reasoning is

²² Cf.: "Simplices loci historici sunt exempla virtutum, vitiorum, poenarum et praemiorum, quorum dispositio instituenda est secundum systema ethicum. Simples hoc locos propterea voco, quia virtus, vitium, praemia, poenae sunt termini simplices, ideo et horum exempla erunt res simplices; exemplum enim est individuum speciei subiecti. [– –] Loci historici compositi sunt tituli aphorismorum ethicorum, oeconomicorum, politicorum et ecclesiasticorum, qui ceu conclusiones practicae suis exemplis velut inductione probantur"; ibidem, pp. 186–187.

²³ See I. Dąmbska, "Logika w Gimnazjum Akademickim w Gdańsku w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku," in: eadem, *Znaki i myśli. Wybór pism z semiotyki, teorii nauki i filozofii* (Warszawa, 1975), pp. 239–241.

helpless in confrontation with historical facts that resist translation into the unambiguous language of logical categories and refuse to lend themselves to easy generalizations. The reintroduction of method into historical discourse refers most probably to the way of constructing a historical narrative – we shall return to the problem later. The same can be said of “historical places”. History doesn’t have specific *loci* of its own, determining the elaboration of its *topica*. However, the concept can be applied to history as long as they are treated as a kind of call-names which, because of their easily recognizable phrase, will indicate specific practical issues to be systematically and exhaustively described only by proper disciplines.²⁴

A negative point of reference for Keckermann’s idea of history and historiography is Jean Bodin’s treatise (published in 1566) *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*²⁵ in which the French humanist attempted to characterize a discipline referred to as *ars historica*, although his focus shifted from the issue of writing history, that is, from rhetorical questions, to that of reading and interpreting historical works, that is, to a broad pragmatic perspective in which the knowledge of history is considered indispensable for the study of social philosophy.²⁶ Keckermann charges Bodin with an artificial and unjustified introduction into the field of history of the concepts of method and “commonplaces” that are structurally and functionally foreign to it and that are obviously at odds with history’s focus on individual facts. In raising this criticism, he forgets that Bodin relies on a different understanding of history, referring to it by an imprecise formula a “true narrative” (*narratio vera*) and, consequently, highlighting its immersion in language and rhetoric. The Gdańsk humanist also criticises the practice of beginning one’s education with historical works²⁷ that provide examples from the field of ethics, economics and

²⁴ Cf. Facca, *Bartłomiej Keckermann*, pp. 110–116.

²⁵ Bodin’s treatise is discussed by Grafton, *What was History?*, pp. 167–180.

²⁶ See G. Labuda, *Rozwój metod dziejopisarskich od starożytności do współczesności*, pt. 1 (Warszawa, 2003), pp. 26–32.

²⁷ Cf.: “Tertius error est imprimis vulgatus et interim valde damnosus iuventuti, quae voluptate et iucunditate studii historici ducta, historias ex professo incipit legere plerumque, antequam disciplinas et praecepta ea cognoverit, quibus methodus inest et loci communes illi, ad quos historiae reduci debent, quod quidem valde est praeposterum et facile intelligi potest ex comparatione aliarum disciplinarum, exempli gratia grammaticae, logicae, etc. Sicut enim absurdus fuerit, qui exempla grammaticae, logicae, rhetoricae velit cognoscere et notare antequam didicerit praecepta, ita absurdissimus haberi debet, qui historias, id est

politics, since in his opinion students should analyse them only after being introduced to disciplines that rely on methods of their own. Only then can they be expected to benefit from studying works of history, referring in their analysis to the *loci communes* of grammar, rhetoric and logic. The knowledge of methodically elaborated principles (*praecepta*), adhered to in particular disciplines, must precede the consideration of examples (*exempla*) they provide.

At this point in Keckermann's discussion of a problematic status of history there appears the following issue: is history part of grammar ("an historia sit pars grammaticae")? The controversy originates in Quintilian's division (*Inst. orat.* I.9.1) of the first of the arts that make up what is known as *trivium*.²⁸ The author just mentioned isolated two grammars: methodical (*methodicen*) and historical (*historicen*). Following Scaliger's understanding of this fragment, which appears to be rather obvious and easy to interpret, of the treatise by the Roman theoretician of eloquence, the Gdańsk humanist considers the historical part of grammar to be concerned with the interpretation of works by particular authors. Doubts, it seems, were raised here about the very phrase "historical" which, it is worth noting, was, not only in the context of grammar, regarded as "referring to the past", and above all as being "critical and explanatory". This way of understanding the phrase was additionally highlighted by Quintilian's use of the proper adjective, Greek *historicen* instead of Latin *historica* semantically less rich than its Greek counterpart that is understood here in its basic, etymological sense.

Reflection on the nature of history involves a discussion of the so-called triggering causes and the instruments which the historian has at his disposal in recounting the facts of the past. These tools of explication (*instrumenta explicationis*), which are used both to conceptualize particular events and to give them their final narrative form, are derived from the art of logic. It is certain – says Keckermann – that only those who are good logicians will be able to write

exempla ethica, oeconomica, politica, serio et ex professo velit legere et notare, antequam habeat perspectam methodum praeceptorum ethicorum, oeconomorum, politicorum, etc."; Keckermann, *De natura et proprietatibus historiae*, pp. 9–10.

²⁸ Cf.: "Et finitae quidem sunt partes duae, quas haec professio pollicetur, id est ratio loquendi et enarratio auctorum, quarum illam methodicen, hanc historicen vocant. Adiciamus tamen eorum curae quaedam dicendi primordia, quibus aetatis nondum rhetorem capientis instituant"; Quin. *Inst. orat.* I.9.1.

history properly”.²⁹ The use of logical tools in the creation of historical accounts is bound up with the analysis of the so-called specific topics: “The tools of historical explanation are nothing other than the arguments and logical concepts used to discuss and explain specific topics that involve both the essence and the properties, the ones and the others together and separately. Those who want to deal with history should use these tools, but shouldn’t define them. They should hide them, as is often the case, in order to ensure the existence of the difference between logical and historical clarity, using, in addition to the tools of logic, some rhetorical embellishments”.³⁰

Historical facts are, by analogy, treated here as a kind of specific topics (*thema singulare*) in which, relying on tools of logic, it is also possible to isolate both their “substantial” parts, those forming their essential structure, as well as the parts that are accidental and subject to change. At the stage of creating a historical narrative logical rules enable the historian to produce a coherent tale to which rhetorical tropes lend a certain glamour. The narrative also constitutes a persuasive speech act requiring the reader to accept the version of events it presents. It is then necessary to take into consideration some of its constant arguments: “It is essential for all history to consider and search for exterior arguments, including especially the circumstances of time and place. For this reason one is justified in saying that the history that remains unrelated to any specific circumstances isn’t a history at all. Circumstances are for history what bars are for singing, and bars are like lines followed by harmony”.³¹

Arguments exterior to the facts themselves are built on the description of particular events’ time and place. If the description of the

²⁹ Cf.: “Certa res est, neminem posse historiam recte scribere, qui non sit bonus logicus”; Keckermann, *De natura et proprietatibus historiae*, p. 15.

³⁰ Cf.: “Instrumenta explicationis historiae nil aliud sunt, quam argumenta et termini logici, quibus themata singularia, tam substantialia, quam accidentalia et utraque, tam separata, quam combinata, tractantur et explicantur. Haec instrumenta accurate usurpare debet is, qui vult historiam tenere, sed non debet eos expresse ponere, verum dissimulare prudenter quantum fieri potest, ut sit discrimen inter purum logicum et historicum, qui ut ante monuimus, praeter logicae instrumenta, etiam aliqua ornamenta rhetoricae assumit”; *ibidem*, p. 16.

³¹ Cf.: “Ad omnem historiam in universum pertinet diligens inventio et tractatio argumentorum externorum, inprimis vero circumstantiarum loci et temporibus, ita ut vere dici possit eam historiam, quae circumstantialis non est, historiam non esse. Circumstantiae id sunt in historiis, quod in cantus modi. Modi enim sunt instar regulae, cuius ductu harmonia dirigitur”; *ibidem*, p. 17.

circumstances is based on these two parameters (*locus, tempus*), then topography and chronology must be included among Clio's descriptive and interpretive tools.³² One must also mention here prosopography (*prosopographia*) that involves description of people and genealogies. Keckermann explicitly links it mainly with princes, kings and emperors.³³ People's love of genealogies arise from their natural fondness for discovering the origins and causes of things, for the "dignity of the origin and cause adds dignity to its effect" ("dignitas originis et causae addat etiam dignitatem effectui"). If the man who is descended from Adam is the image of God and the latter is eternal, then the man loves all things eternal, including the antiquity of his descent.

History which, according to Keckermann, doesn't have its own specific method based on the carefully elaborated catalogue of *loci communes* – which is characteristic of particular disciplines – is reduced to nothing but *appendix artium*. Dealing with individual cases, it is unable to formulate universal rules applicable to wider contexts: History in itself doesn't have a method of its own, since every method has its own field and limits, and because there is an infinite number of facts it is impossible to subject them to one method, at least as long as we consider them all together".³⁴

Historical facts, which don't lend themselves to the procedure of generalization, have a significant role to play in ethics, economics and politics, constituting a rich source of examples (*exempla*) these disciplines rely on for the illustration of their abstract rules. History is thus hardly useful for the disciplines that strive to grasp the universal but invaluable for those that focus on active work (*praxis*). This is so because it complements schematic descriptions with the indication of the way in which particular ideas and particular human attitudes are realized.

³² Cf.: "Cum autem circumstantiarum argumenta duo sint, nempe locus et tempus, ideo recte dicitur duo esse lumina et duos velut oculos historiae, nempe topographiam et chronologiam, id est annotationem loci, in quo aliquid factum et temporis, quo factum sit"; *ibidem*, p. 18.

³³ Cf.: "Ad personarum explicationem pertinet genealogia, quae tamen in privatis personis raro texti solet, cum pertineat potissimum ad personas magnas et publicas, ut sunt principes, reges, imperatores"; *ibidem*, p. 19.

³⁴ Cf.: "historia per se nullam habeat methodum proprie dictam, quia omnis methodus habet certam determinationem et finitudinem; singularia autem sunt infinita, ideo methodum non recipiunt, si nempe omnia simul considerentur"; *ibidem*, p. 23.

If history deals with the individual facts of the past, which are countless in number, then the knowledge acquired by the historian is always incomplete and fragmentary. The kind of the subject-matter determines the knowledge of it, or, in Keckermann's words, "like the subject-matter like the knowledge of it" ("qualis autem res est, talis est notitia rei"). The latter can never be certain because the number of individual facts on which it is based is too great for the human mind to comprehend. The absolute certainty of historical narratives is also ruled out because of the impossibility of the historian's participation in the events he recounts. The reliance on the testimonies of others increases the probability of error and narrows down the number of circumstances whose reconstruction is necessary to obtain a complete picture of what really happened. Eyewitnesses can err or can testify in a way which, in Keckerman's words, is affected by their emotions. All these limitations don't concern the sacred history (*historia sacra*, *historia biblica*) where the imperfection of human memory is compensated by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The ancient theory of eloquence, as laid out mainly in Cicero's youthful work *De Inventione* and the anonymous treatise *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, which this author was wrongly attributed in the Middle Ages, conceived of history in terms of a special type of narrative representing a probable course of events (*res gestae*) that took place in a remote past. Considered of key importance were here two facts bound to each other by the question of modality: the fact of being brought into existence in a specific time and place, attested to by the source material, and that of being probable, denoting not so much conformity to the truth as the possibility or impossibility of actualization. Based on these two criteria, the following types of narrative were specified: the *argumentum* (a narrative regarding things that are made up but probable) and the *fabula* (a narrative regarding things that are made up and improbable, both incapable of existence and incredible). In Keckermann's opinion, the greatest threat for the credibility of historical narratives lies in their fabularization: "Lucian, as is his wont, provides us with a historical work consisting of two books and entitled *True Stories*. It is a collection of the most spurious and preposterous things, including everything from how he got to the moon to how he saw a flea that was bigger than twelve elephants. This is his way of jeering at historians who are too presumptuous in their claims to unshakeable credibility which can't be acknowledged because of both the essence and the properties of history or, rather,

because of man's helpless inability to understand all the individual events and phenomena".³⁵

Through the work's title the author makes the reader the promise that the text will turn out to be consistent with the title inscription, and the desires and expectations it arouses will be at least in part satisfied. This approach is immediately seen to be responsible for the mistake made by Keckermann who took the dialogue *A True Story* by Lucian of Samosata to be a historical work, literally relying on the title and failing to be wary and critical of the adjective "true". Why should one add this adjective if the probability is an inherent part of the type of narrative referred to as history? The assumption of the role of a naïve reader is a heuristic strategy adopted by the Gdańsk humanist who correctly interprets Lucian's work. The title of the latter's work announces a historical tale. However, what we are actually given is, introduced through the backdoor, the *fabula*-type narrative. *Res gestae* turn out to be *res fictae* and the probability gives way to the writer's unfettered imagination. The author of the dialogue laughs not only at historians who lay claims to unshakable credibility but also, perhaps above all, at the readers who are unable to preserve a critical distance from what they are reading. As an author making dexterous use of irony, Lucian makes the reader a false promise. Already at the moment of making it, he knows that it won't be fulfilled.

The question of the credibility of historical narrative concerns both the historians who are under obligation to ensure the truthfulness of their accounts and the readers who are required to adopt a critical attitude toward the texts they are reading.

The proverb has it that there are three kinds of men who seem to be allowed to lie with impunity: firstly, those who are recounting the events that took place in a remote past and seem to have taken place

³⁵ Cf.: "Lucianus more suo traducit historias duobus libris scriptis, quibus titulum dedit *Verarum historiarum*, in quibus falsissima et absurdissima quaeque colligit, quomodo nempe ad orbem Lunae transfretaverit et viderit pulicem duodecim elephantis maiorem etc. Ita nempe more suo ludit in historicos, qui nimis arroganter certam sibi fidem arrogant, quae tamen ex natura et proprietate historiae, vel potius ex imbecillitate hominis, singularia omnia non valentis exacte cognoscere, statui non debebat"; *ibidem*, p. 25. Hereinafter I rely on the following translation of a fragment of Keckerman's treatise: 'Properties of history' trans. by F. Wujtewicz, in: *Filozofia i mysl społeczna XVII wieku*, Pt. 2, selection, ed., introd. and notes Z. Ogonowski (Warszawa, 1979), pp. 11–30. The quoted fragment is to be found in page 18.

in a different world; secondly, those who are old and whom, even if they are lying, we are prepared to trust because of their age and experience and, thirdly, travellers. In the first book of his *True Stories*, Lucian, having told lots of lies about what allegedly had happened in some remote areas, adds in conclusion: "If you don't believe this, go there and see things for yourself". To this the other replies: "I would rather believe you than go [to find out for myself]".³⁶

The increased criticism of the historians' works arises from the impossibility of verifying the facts they report, and the reader's difficult situation is made even more difficult by numerous disagreements between authors recounting the same events. The misrepresentation of particular events can be excused as long as it isn't deliberate, but arises from the general impossibility of avoiding mistakes in describing individual events that are so different and numerous. However, it should be criticised and condemned when it was done on purpose, when the historian allowed himself to taint his narrative with untrue and fictitious elements: "Because history is so dangerous a domain, one should rebuke the authors who deliberately invent stories similar to those that are so widespread today, especially those written in German language. For this reason Gorreus and the likes of him who invented Amadis and other lies were strongly chastised by Bodin in his work *On Historical Method* (in chapters 37, 47 and 52) where we can read: 'Gorreus of Paris must have expected his stories about Amadis to be viewed as equal in reliability to those written by Jovius'. However, it seems that Bodin himself often failed to keep his recommendations in mind if he wrote in chapter 4: 'One is allowed to add significance to his countrymen by telling an ennobling lie'. In one of his letters regarding the science of history, Lipsius divides history into 'fabulous' and 'real', but I can't accept this division".³⁷

³⁶ Keckermann, 'Properties of history' p. 18. Cf.: "Dici proverbio solet trium hominum mendacia esse velut impunita, primo eorum, qui res longinquas et procul a nobis remotas ac velut in altero orbe gestas narrant, secundo, senum, quibus creditur propter aetatem et experientiam, etiamsi mentiantur, tertio, peregrinantium. Lucianus libro primo *Verae historiae*, cum multa mendacia narrasset earum rerum, quae in longe dissitis regionibus accidissent, tandem addit: 'tu si non credis illi, rem exploratum abi'. Ibi respondet alter: 'Credam tibi potius, quam ut eo eam'; idem, *De natura et proprietatibus historiae*, p. 31.

³⁷ Idem, 'Properties of history', p. 20. Cf.: "Caeterum quia historia tam periculosa est, ideo graviter reprehendendi sunt illi, qui vel de industria falsas historias comminiscuntur, quales hodie plurimi circumferuntur in lingua praesertim Germanica. Gorreus quidem et similes autores, qui Amadisum et alia fictitia

History actually is a dangerous domain because both history writers who recount facts from their own subjective perspective and careless readers who are an easy prey to historical misrepresentations face the risk of making easy mistakes. Accusing Bodin of inconsistency, Keckermann drew a remarkable example of “false history” from the former’s frequently criticised treatise. Jacques Gohorry translated into French the tenth book of the adventures of a brave knight Amadis of Wales and the history of his love for the beautiful lady by the name of Oriana, written by Felician de Silva and entitled *Florisel de Niquea*. It is hard to say whether the author of the French translation hoped that his work would be looked upon as a history book. This supposition seems rather doubtful. Recorded and prepared for publication by Garcia Rodríguez de Montalvo, the story of Amadis of Wales was at that time the most famous knight romance. Since its appearance in Saragossa in 1508, it had been growing in popularity also outside the Iberian Peninsula. In standing against Amadis, Keckermann probably didn’t expect to become a partner of the author from a remote Spain who, little known at that time, turned to parody in his fight against the disgraced literary genre. In 1605 in Madrid, one year before the Gdańsk humanist begun his lectures on practical philosophy, there had appeared the work whose title *Ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* sounded familiar in the ears of those who were knowledgeable about the chivalrous romance genre. Cervantes created a full-dimensional portrait of the reader who was as uncritical of the stories of knights errant as he was charming in his maladjustment to reality that had suddenly lost its conceptual clarity, although – as seems to be suggested by the narrator endowed with a sense of a sober and cheerful irony – it can’t be ruled out that it had never been possessed of it.

The disconcerting rapprochement between history and myth is discerned by Keckermann in the division of history offered by Justus Lipsius who in his letter to Nicolas de Hacqueville drew a distinction between *mythistory* and *history*. The Gdańsk humanist referred to the first of the two categories as *fabulosa* and to the second one

commenti sunt, graviter taxantur a Bodino, pagina 37 et 47 et 52 *Methodi historiae*, ubi inquit: ‘Gorreuus Parisiensis suas quas scripsit Amadisi fabulas, non minus veras ac probabiles, quam Iovii scripta fore confidit’, qui tamen ipse parum memor sui fuisse videtur, quando capite 4. inquit: ‘Licet suorum popularium dignitatem honesto mendacio tueri’. Lipsius in *Epistola* quadam de studio historico dividit historiam in fabulosam et veram, quam partitionem probare non possum”; idem, *De natura et proprietatibus historiae*, p. 34.

as *vera*.³⁸ Elaborated by the scholar of Leuven, the category *fabulous history* was used to refer to poetic narratives regarding things that were made up but probable. In compliance with poetry's allegoric nature, they were additionally concealed through the use of sophisticated language and poetic images that didn't lend themselves to unambiguous interpretation. Striving to be precise and unequivocal in his description of particular disciplines, Keckermann couldn't approve of the concept *historia fabulosa*. In the context of his analyses, it was in his opinion contradictory as it contained in itself two terms (fiction and reality) that stood in a relation of stark opposition to each other.

Keckermann divides his remarks on the attributes of history into the material ones, that is, those concerning the epistemological status of the knowledge of the past, and the formal ones, that is, those that centre around the model style of writing history (*stilus historicus*). The latter are interspersed with attempts to characterize the perfect historian, which testifies to the treatment of the concept of style as an anthropological category. Thrown into relief here is the issue of the veracity of historical accounts which is understood to mean the correspondence to reality, according to the correspondence theory of truth. "One more property worth remembering is that the account of individual events, that is, history is a logical rather than a rhetorical work. That is why just as the logician neither embellishes and extols nor tries to use a colourful language, the historian also shouldn't use any ornaments and rhetorical tricks".³⁹

³⁸ Cf.: "Ad historiam cum dare te coepisti, fateris haerere in prima via et confusione rerum aut temporum ignorantia eorum, quae et quando legenda aut eligenda sint, pedem figere, imo taedio aut desperatione paene referre. Non fiat, mi Hacquevilli, opem imploras pro copia mea dabo et si non plene ductor (occupatio et valetudo nunc abnuunt), tamen director ero et digitum intendam, quo et qua contendas. Historia nobis proposita, quae et cuiusmodi? Nam variat et summa eius divisio est mythistoria et historia. Illa, quae fabulas vero mixtas, ista quae purum et merum verum habet. In illa poetae sunt et id genus, qui oblectamenta auribus animisque quaerunt et florida ista veste ornant et augment corpus hoc veritatis. Veteres poetae et rex eorum Homerus, pulchre et saepe utiliter fecerunt, cum arcanos sensus aut altiora dogmata hoc quasi velo obnubunt et tegunt"; Iustus Lipsius, *Epistolarum selectarum centuria tertia miscellanea* (Antverpiae: ex officina Plantiniana, apud Ioannem Moretum, 1605), p. 62.

³⁹ Keckermann, 'Properties of history', p. 23. Cf.: "Est et alia proprietas imprimis memorabilis, quod narratio singularium, sive historiae, magis sit logicum opus, quam rhetoricum et quod idcirco sicut logicus, non amplificat neque exaggerat neque prolixas orationes curat, ita nec historicus debeat esse deditus

If the creation of historical narratives is based on logic, providing a reliable method of discussing and explaining individual topics, then the logic forces us to use a language that is simple and devoid of sophisticated rhetorical figures. To write a logic-based account of particular events is to enumerate and explain their causes and to describe their subjects, objects and their circumstances. Keckermann concludes his description of the style proper to the representation of historical events with the following remark: “Because history is a kind of logical exposition typified by simplicity, it shouldn’t be written in an elevated style. Nor should it be given a form that is either effusive and Asiatic or concise and laconic. It should be written in a way that is attic and ‘of medium character’, suitable for teaching and having limited effect upon one’s emotions”.⁴⁰

The choice of the medium character marked by simplicity and by the limited use of the figures of speech is the result of the recognition of history as a kind of logical exposition. According to the Gdańsk humanist, the historian who is too concerned about the language he uses often displays little concern about the facts and events he recounts. The idea of the impartial historical account requires the author to restrain his own emotions and to limit the use of persuasive measures designed to affect the emotions of the reader. The only style that can rise to the standards set for historical discourse is the one of medium character (again stylistic and anthropological category) oscillating between succinctness and verbosity or simplicity and rhetorical sophistication. The perfect historian is guided in his conduct both by the search for truth (*studium veritatis*) and by the freedom of speech (*libertas dicendi*): “Other authors claim that the essence or, as they say, the form of what the historian does involves the fulfilling of two conditions. The first is *parrhesia*, that is, the freedom of speech; it concerns the historian’s courage to write the truth. The second is *aletheia*, that is, the love of truth, regarding the historian’s rejection to make things up”.⁴¹

amplificationibus, exaggerationibus et similis aliis rhetoricismis”; idem, *De natura et proprietatibus historiae*, p. 37.

⁴⁰ Idem, ‘Properties of history’, p. 27. Cf.: “Quia historia est explicatio quaedam logica et quia simplicitas est propria historiae, ideo stylus historicus non debet esse grandis, nec diffusus aut Asiaticus, nec nimis strictus aut Laconicus, sed Atticus, medii characteris, ut vocant, aptus ad docendum et qui animi affectis non nimis concutiat”; idem, *De natura et proprietatibus historiae*, p. 44.

⁴¹ Idem, ‘Properties of history’, p. 26. Cf.: “et alii autores duas leges praescribunt historico, quas velut eius formam esse dicunt, quarum prima est *parrhesia*, id est

Not only does *parrhesia* denote an ethical attitude bound up with the courage to express one's own beliefs, especially under unfavourable conditions, but it also refers to one of the rhetorical figures of a specific status. Quintilian calls it *oratio libera*, that is, "free speech".⁴² It consists in a deliberate abandonment of figuration and, as such, constitutes the "zero degree" of figural language. It is often announced by the speaker in a comment of a meta-text character, which paradoxically weakens its persuasive power, for *parrhesia* (just like irony), once named and revealed before the listener (and the reader) irretrievably loses its spontaneous openness of speaking in favour of the carefully planned rhetorical strategy. Noteworthy in the context of the historian's work is the meaning of the Greek concept *aletheia*. It relates to uncovering what has remained hidden (which in turn is connected by the dialectics of surface and depth with covering what has remained unveiled) and to bringing to light what has been shrouded in the gloom of oblivion.

Given the potentially countless number of the individual facts of a more or less remote past, history, as viewed in the context of Keckermann's philosophy, can't be granted a status of an independent discipline. It remains devoid of its own commonplaces, for it continues to be dependent on the ever changing reference frame characterized by the parameters of time and place. According to Keckermann, who follows Zabarella in his approach to the issue of method, the *topica* is what the method of every art is based on. However, he doesn't go so far as to exclude history from the extensive field of human knowledge. The author's categorical view that history is an appendix to practical disciplines can be countered by his insistence to practice it in a more methodical fashion and by the importance he obviously attached to it as he decided to include the so-called *logical chronology* (concerning the past of logic) in his treatise *Praecognita logica*.

The role of history is to describe and explain individual facts. In this way it provides examples that serve as an illustrative material for practical disciplines. According to Keckermann, only logic is able to exercise conceptual control over this domain, dangerous in its eluding all attempts at an unambiguous description and generalization

libertas loquendi, ne quid veri non audeat scribere, secunda est *aletheia*, id est studium veritatis, ne quid falsi audeat dicere"; idem, *De natura et proprietatibus historiae*, p. 42.

⁴² Cf. M. Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, ed. J. Pearson (Los Angeles, 2001), pp. 20–24.

(*res periculosa*). History can only imitate logic, and the same is the case with a historical style modelled on logical reasoning. The Gdańsk scholar's view of history and historiography distinguishes itself by considering history's method to be based on logic and by taking historical accounts to have an especially important role to play in teaching practical disciplines (pragmatic approach). In its pragmatic dimension it becomes a *sedes exemplorum*, a storehouse of examples preserving and commemorating experiences of past generations. Some of the examples are considered to be worth following. One of them was pointed out by Keckermann in a letter from 22 September 1603 to a city councillor Gwalter ab Holten. The letter, reprinted in the handbook of logic *Gymnasium logicum* (1605),⁴³ commemorates an exchange its author had with the letter's addressee while sailing down the river Vistula in a river boat. The discussion they held concerned Bodin's views of the function performed by *loci communes* in teaching history. One might say: never enough of history and historiography.

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⁴³ Cf.: "Cum pro tua benevolentia me ad propugnaculum, quo maris ostium patria nostra munit, non ita pridem duceres et Vistula una veheremur, sermones fallendo itineri habebas varios, indices apud me eximiae doctrinae tuae et multiplicis lectionis et memoriae insuper felicissimae. Aperiebas ibi tum celebratissimam illam, quam viae comitem esse volueras, Ioannis Bodini *Methodum historicam*, ex cuius capite tertio verba legi iubebas ea, quibus consilium suum exponit de instituendis communibus, ut vocant, historiatarum locis, de quibus, quid sentirem et qualiter consilium istud certo quodam fructu usurpari posse existimarem, ita tum ex me quaerebas, ut si minus in itinere sententiam meam promptly dicere vellem, aut possem, cogitandi tempus aliquod etiam longiusculum indulgeres"; Keckermann, *Gymnasium logicum*, p. 188. Cf. Nadolski, *Życie i działalność*, p. 63.

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