

**Eckart Schäfer (hrsg.), *Sarbiewski: Der polnische Horaz***, Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 2006 (NeoLatina 11), 322 pp.

There is no doubt that any book on Polish literature published in a foreign language should receive a warm welcome as a useful tool of promoting our culture abroad. So I should start with expressing my joy at the volume entitled *Sarbiewski: Der polnische Horaz*. The situation of studies on Neo-Latin writing is different from that of studies on vernacular literatures. It is impossible to neglect secondary sources published in any language for this simple reason that Neo-Latin writing is interesting for scholars from many countries. In the case of Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski the most important books are published in Polish. Consequently, anybody who intends to conduct studies on this poet is obliged to be able to consult Polish texts. Unfortunately, the first objection against the reviewed book is that bibliography is extremely incomplete. The authors ignored for example books and articles by Elwira Buszewicz, Aleksander W. Mikołajczak, as well as my own *Theologia fabulosa: Commentationes Sarbievianae* (Szczecin 2000). Many Polish names are printed with terrible spelling mistakes and sometimes I have the impression that references in the footnotes are only ornamental and not a real source and partners of discussion.

As a result the eighteen articles published in the *Sarbiewski: Der polnische Horaz* (in German and in French) are situated in a kind of vacuum. Some of them are really interesting and stimulating yet it is highly difficult to put them in the broadest context of research tradition. Moreover, the book is a collection of papers presented at the 7<sup>th</sup> Freiburg Neo-Latin Symposium held in June 2005 and for this reason it would be quite wrong to expect it to be a kind of companion to Sarbiewski (I do believe that such a book in English is very much wanted).

From my point of view the most interesting are two articles on the reception of Sarbiewski's poetry in Germany. The first one, *Die deutsche Sarbiewski-Rezeption in 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* by Peter Drews shows the presence of Sarbiewski's poetry in German works from 1720 until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In comparison with the English reception it starts almost one century later and is the effect of a different kind of poetical sensibility and literary movements. It is similar to English reception inasmuch as some of Sarbiewski's poems were translated by gymnasium professors. It is also an important evidence of Sarbiewski's presence in German speaking countries that the first monograph of his life and work was published in Dresden by Lebrecht Gotthelf Langbein in 1753 (*Commentatio de Mathiae Casimiri Sarbievi S.I. Poloni vita studiis et scriptis*) as well as the Wrocław (Breslau) edition of Sarbiewski's poetry was published in the same year, carefully examined in the reviewed volume by Karl August Neuhausen.

The second and most comprehensive section of the book is a collection of commentaries and interpretative articles. In this case lack of knowledge of Polish research may have positive results as in some cases the authors offer very fresh outlook on the poems. However, there is also the fact that it has not been possible to read the analyzed poems as a part of a whole carefully elaborated by the poet which has its own tradition of reading and commenting.

I really appreciate the paper by Beate Czaplá *Petrarkistischer Diskurs, christliche Mystik und die Umsetzungen der eigenen acutum-Lehre in Sarbiewskis Aloysius-Epigrammen*. Petrarch is a very important author both for ideology and language of Baroque poetry. Unfortunately, his impact on Sarbiewski's poetry has not been described sufficiently. Czaplá comments upon a group of twenty two epigrams spread in the whole *Liber epigrammatum* and shows some of the most important Petrarchian features: outstanding beauty of Aloysius, the contrast between red and white, mistake with God's nature, opposition between fire and ice, comparison of the eyes of the Beloved with fragmentation of the body. Czaplá very clearly describes the combination of Petrarchian language and convention with Christian mysticism, as exemplified by the *Spiritual exercises* by Ignatius Loyola and the *Sermones super Cantica Canticatorum* by St. Bernard of Clairvaux, using

Sarbiewski's own theory of epigram to explain the texts. It should be said that Czaplá does not intend to interpret the analyzed epigrams as a realization of homoerotic sensibility and discourse in Neo-Latin poetry (she could find more similar texts in *Epigrammatum liber*) despite very clear perspective of such interpretation.

The article by Jolanta Wiendlocha ("*Ad divam Elisabetham*". Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski, Urban VIII. und die Brevierreform) is also very interesting. The author is a specialist in, and an editor of, Urban VIII's poetry. So her return to a well-known topic seems very intriguing. The contribution of Sarbiewski to the reform of the Breviary was a well-established legend which was started by a statement in the Paris edition of Sarbiewski by J. Barbou in 1759. However, the common opinion in last decades was that it is impossible that Sarbiewski was a member of the committee because he had left Rome before its establishing (Gładysz, Warszawski). In her article Wiendlocha analyzes poems on St. Elisabeth by Sarbiewski and Urban VIII and concludes:

Hätte Sarbiewski die Ode für das Brevier geschrieben, hätte er von solcher Ausschmückung – wie Urban VIII. in seinen beiden Hymnen – Abstand nehmen müssen. Sarbiewski weicht aber in seinem Stück stark von den Vorgaben für die Reform des Breviers ab. *Ad divam Elisabetham* kann also nicht in diesem Zusammenhang geschrieben worden sein und bringt deshalb auch keinen neuen Hinweis für die Mitarbeit Sarbiewskis an der Brevierreform (p. 18).

If I understand Wiendlocha's argumentation correctly Sarbiewski's cooperation in the reform of the Breviary remains a legend.

I tried to read the reviewed book as a material for a monograph and editorial commentary. So among valuable analytical articles the following should be listed: *Fürstenlob und Dichterwettbewerb: Zu Sarbiewskis Maecenas-Figur Papst Urban VIII.* by Gesine Manuwald; *La "Carmen Seculare" de Sarbiewski comparé au "Carmen Saeculare" et à l'ode I, 35 d'Horace: imitatio, aemulatio, contaminatio* by Gérald Freyburger; *Vollendete (neu)lateinische Lyrik: Sarbiewskis Ode Lyr. 4, 35* by Florian Hurka; *Parodien des Horaz: Lyr. 3, 2; 2, 18 und 2, 26* by Thomas Baier; *Sarbiewski und das Hohelied* by Stefanie Grewe.

Comparative articles are also interesting. I should start by mentioning two articles by Eckard Lefèvre: *Die joniker-Gedichte von Alkaios (Fr. 10 V), Horaz (Carm. 3, 12), Celtis (Od. 3, 18), Sarbiewski (Lyr. 2, 28) und Balde (Lyr. 2, 12). Ein literarischer Dialog durch über zwei Jahrtausende* as well as *Die wandernden Musen: Jakobs Baldes Huldigung an Sarbiewski (Sylv. 5, 19)*. The next two articles compare Sarbiewski's poems with the poems by "Polish Horace" Jan Kochanowski. Aleksandra Olszynka writes about the motive of flying in both authors and Horace (unfortunately she does not know the excellent commentary on Kochanowski's *Pieśń II 24* by Jerzy Ziomek and his comments on its relation to Plato's *Phaedo*) and Eckart Schäfer writes on patriotic poems.

Two articles must be judged as just presentation of Sarbiewski's works in German, i.e. Thorsten Burkard's contribution on *Characteres lyrici, seu Horatius et Pindarus* (unfortunately, the author is not able to read Polish studies on this topic) and Mariusz Zagórski on the mythographic treatise *Dii gentium* (alas, the author omits basic Polish bibliography). I cannot understand the main idea of the paper by Lore Benz on the *Silviludia* also for the reason that he ignores Italian works on Bettini, an author of the text re-worked by Sarbiewski (I do not mention my own study on this topic).

After a careful reading of the *Sarbiewski: Der polnische Horaz*, it seems a very valuable volume despite some objections raised in the beginning of this review. Many papers cannot be omitted by anybody working on a commentary or a comprehensive study on Sarbiewski. Especially interesting are the papers which describe relations between Sarbiewski's poetry and other poets, especially Jacob Balde; they are important as material to establish *similia* as well as to promote intertextual reading of Neo-Latin poetry. Everybody should appreciate many German translations of the poems of Sarbiewski which are a kind of commentary. I should also say that the title can

be a little bit confusing because the expression “Polish Horace” is traditionally reserved for Jan Kochanowski whereas Sarbiewski is rather called “Sarmatian Horace”.

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