Shaping Scholarly Recognition in Early Nineteenth-Century Poland: The Case of the Society of the Friends of Sciences (1800–1832)

Adrian Wesołowski

ABSTRACT

This article addresses the challenges faced by nineteenth-century scholars and scientists, particularly in partitioned Poland, as they navigated the loss of traditional political representation. In a context where political authority was eroded, intellectuals sought new ways to assert their visibility and influence within the public sphere. Focusing on the Warsaw Society of the Friends of Sciences, the study examines how its members positioned themselves as alternative representatives of the Polish public through strategic self-presentation and developing a new discourse on scholarly fame. By promoting a new image of the scholar as both intellectually engaged and socially active, the Society aimed to elevate its public profile and offer Poles a new form of cultural representation amidst political disenfranchisement.

KEYWORDS: Poland, sciences, scholars, Society of the Friends of Sciences, Warsaw

Declaration on Possible Conflicts of Interest
The author has declared that no conflicts of interest exist.

Funding Statement
This research was funded by the National Science Centre of Poland under grant no. 2022/44/C/HS3/00001.

Adrian Wesołowski, PhD, Jagiellonian University, Cracow, adrian.wesolowski@uj.edu.pl,
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2714-1749

Shaping Scholarly Recognition in Early Nineteenth-Century Poland: The Case of the Society of the Friends of Sciences (1800–1832) – ZfO / JECES 73/2024/4
(received 2024-01-09, accepted 2024-05-27)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.25627/202474411569 – eISSN 2701-0449, ISSN 0948-8294

Introduction

In 1804, Jean-Baptiste Albertrandi defended the Society of the Friends of Sciences (Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, TPN) over which he presided against allegations that it had been founded for political purposes. "There were indeed some hotheads," he acknowledged, "who frivolously believed that while not being able to maintain a political entity of our nation we should at the least endow it with a semblance of existence through the guise of an academic society." The nation in question was Poland, which had recently been partitioned, leaving Warsaw, where the TPN was based, under Prussian rule—a regime that looked harshly at any inkling of rebellion. Albertrandi reasserted that the Society was disengaged from political affairs and that it "meticulously refrained from seeking the kind of popular glories that might accrue from vocalizing our grievances about our circumstances."[1] This image was certainly the one the Society wished to convey to the authorities, but it was not entirely accurate.

The TPN's primary objective, as explicitly stated in the Society's statute, was to "sustain Polish culture" through the preservation of the language and the safeguarding of history.[2] In furtherance of this goal, it undertook numerous initiatives, conducting studies on the Polish language, literature, geography, and history, providing support for "socially useful" publications related to industry, and popularizing knowledge and arts, often through organizing commemorative ceremonies and poetry competitions.

While such endeavors contributed to the preservation of Polish culture and identity, none of them was a sensible basis for the accusations Albertrandi found necessary to rebuke. Why would anyone seriously consider that the activities of an academic society could serve as a substitute for a nation's political life? How could science possibly supplant politics? Where, in all of this, were the "hotheads" and the reckless pursuit of popularity alluded to by Albertrandi?

The answer lies in examining how the TPN presented itself within the public sphere. While the Society indeed abstained from engaging in political debates to the point of earning a reputation for self-censorship,[3] they simultaneously offered the politically-minded Polish audience something perhaps deeper than

---

1 Albertrandi's speech preserved in a manuscript, as reprinted in: ALEKSANDER KRAUSHAR: Towarzystwo Warszawskie Przyjaciół Nauk, 1800–1832: Monografia historyczna osnuta na źródłach archiwalnych [Warsaw Society of the Friends of Sciences, 1800–1832: Historical Monograph Based on Archival Sources], vols. 1–4, Kraków—Warszawa 1900–1906, here vol. 1, pp. 123–124.

2 See the Society's statute: Ustawy Towarzystwa Warszawskiego Przyiaciół Nauk, Warszawa 1802, p. 1.

3 Joachim Lelewel, one of the Society's younger members, noted in 1858, that before 1830 "the [Warsaw] university and the Society of the Friends of Sciences were fairly free from censorship, because they had, as it was said, their own censorship for themselves." JOACHIM LELEWEL: Przygody w poszukiwaniach i badaniu rzeczy narodowych polskich [Adventures in Research and Study of Polish National Issues], Poznań 1858, p. 50.

mere agitation—an alternative form of public representation. This does not imply political decision-making but rather the members assuming certain representative roles in the public domain traditionally reserved for public service.[4]

This article aims to understand how the Friends of Sciences established and maintained their distinctive status by delving into their methods of connecting with the Polish public. The analysis explores the deliberate construction and projection of the Society's scholarly image as key in this process. The study draws upon existing literature as well as archival materials, including the Society's internal minutes, contemporary press coverage (encompassing the Society's own publications), and subsequent memoirs from both TPN members and the broader public, to examine the manner in which the Society shaped its public status. In particular, it focuses on analyzing the Society's evolving position within the public discourse in Warsaw as well as in broader Poland, its methodologies in fostering public engagement, and its discourse regarding public recognition of scholars. The Friends of Sciences' new proposals concerning scholarly recognition, i.e., how scholars should be perceived and esteemed within society, constituted the essence of the message they conveyed, articulating a vision of the rightful place of scholars in the public domain and their potential to occupy a space within the imagined "social center."[5]

Examining the efforts of the TPN to align its scholarly role with public representation holds a direct significance for both Polish history and the evolving perception of science in a broader nineteenth-century Europe. While the Society's self-promotion has been the subject of historical investigations, particularly in several recent works, these inquiries have only partially explored the problem, often considering it as an aspect within the context of other focal points.[6] This article seeks to redress this gap by offering a comprehensive ac-

4 This angle already makes the following investigation closer to the ideas of media scholars interested in celebrity, who have given many insights on the "representative" function of famous people. For instance, see the classic works on "mythological" and "discursive" constructions of fame, such as: EDGAR MORIN: Les stars, Paris 1957, and RICHARD DYER: Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society, 2nd ed., London 2004 [1986], or more modern ideas on the famous "representing popular values", like: DAVID P. MARSHALL: Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture, Minneapolis et al. 1997.

5 The idea that particular public people inhabit an imagined center point of society is an established concept in media studies. See: NICK COULDRY: Media Rituals: A Critical Approach, London 2003.

6 The main works on the history of the TPN have remained, despite their relative outdatedness: KRAUSHAR, vols. 1–4; BOGDAN SUCHODOLSKI: Rola Towarzystwa Warszawskiego Przyjaciół Nauk w rozwoju kultury umysłowej w Polsce [The Role of the Warsaw Society of the Friends of Sciences in the Development of Intellectual Culture in Poland], Warszawa 1951; JERZY MICHALSKI: Z dziejów Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk [From the History of the Society of the Friends of Sciences], Warszawa 1953. More recently, the Society's self-stylization has been partially explored in: HANNA JURKOWSKA: Pamięć sentymentalna: Praktyki pamięci w kręgu Towarzystwa Warszawskiego Przyjaciół Nauk i w Puławach Izabeli Czartoryskiej [Sentimental Memory: Practices of

count of these self-promotional practices and providing an interpretation that situates them within the ongoing discourse on scholarly recognition within society, with several indicators that link it with broader European trends.

Moreover, this relevance is further enriched when contextualized within the framework of a burgeoning historiography on fame and celebrity. Scholars in this field argue that cultural attitudes toward fame underwent substantial transformations between 1750 and 1850. During this period of the "democratization" and "mediatization" of fame, European audiences increasingly fixated on immediate and contemporary public figures alongside the traditional posthumous glorification of great ancestors linked to aristocratic legacies.[7] As illustrated in the following text, the Society adeptly capitalized on these societal changes, navigating a novel space for scholarly renown amid constraints on public speech, the diminishing traditional authority of magnate families, and the shifting dynamics of the public sphere.

Navigating Social Distinction in Post-Partition Poland

The TPN was a historically unique institution in Poland. While previous attempts to establish academic societies had occurred during the era of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, it was the first assembly of scholars aspiring to attain the status of a national academy of sciences to become so enduring and influential. Given the specific context of its emergence in the post-partition era, the Society lacked royal patronage or state support; it was a private association of scholars who conducted their activities without compensation, sustaining themselves through the contributions of their members and donations.[8]

The Society found its fate deeply related to that of the city of Warsaw, Poland's historical capital. Following the final partition of the Commonwealth in 1795, Warsaw had fallen under the rule of Prussia, whose policies aiming for the minimization of the Polish language provoked the founding of the Society in 1800. In 1807, the city was reinstated as the capital of the newly formed Duchy of Warsaw, and later, after the Congress of Vienna in 1815, it became

Remembrance in the Circle of the Warsaw Society of the Friends of Sciences and in the Puławy Estate of Izabela Czartoryska], Warszawa 2014, and in: Mikołaj Getka-Kenig: Nagrobek Stanisława Staszica a polityka wizerunkowa Towarzystwa Warszawskiego Przyjaciół Nauk [The Tombstone of Stanislaw Staszic and the Image Policy of the Warsaw Society of the Friends of Sciences], in: Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki 66 (2021), 3, pp. 31–49.

7 These are the main points of, among others: Leo Braudy: The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and Its History, Oxford 1986, and Antoine Lilti: The Invention of Celebrity, London 2017.

8 Ustawy Towarzystwa, 1802. The TPN indeed made efforts and eventually was able to secure royal patronage of the monarchs of Prussia, Saxony (as Duke of Warsaw), and Russia (as King of Poland), which enabled it to include the adjective "royal" in their name, but this patronage was almost purely honorary.

part of the Kingdom of Poland—puppet states under Napoleon's France and Imperial Russia, respectively. A decade and a half later, Warsaw became the place of the eruption of the November Uprising, a revolt against Russian imperialism, and the epicenter of its domestic conflicts.

The Society ably adapted to these shifting political tides. After seven years of facing accusations of inefficacy for the Polish cause, while on the other hand threatening the dominance of German culture because of its attempts to win over the Prussian monarch, it gained broader legitimacy and increased freedom of expression under the Duchy of Warsaw. Subsequently, it assumed a propagandistic rhetoric meant to exalt the "resurrected" Polish state under Napoleon's leadership, with select members of the Society ascending to central offices.[9] As their rhetoric shifted towards pro-Russian Pan-Slavism, they largely retained their high status during the Congress Kingdom period.[10] Due to their prominent positions, some of the members played crucial roles during the November Uprising, ultimately leading to the Society's dissolution in 1832, orchestrated by Russian authorities in the wake of post-uprising repressions.[11]

The rise of particular Friends of Sciences to positions of authority was not a direct consequence of their affiliation with the Society. Those who attained important state offices typically had prior involvement in politics, as far back as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. They maintained extensive personal networks, including connections with the most influential decision-makers in the Duchy and the Kingdom.[12] A notable number of the Friends of Sciences came from illustrious magnate families who held positions of influence in the former Commonwealth. Early members included members of the Potocki family, particularly Stanisław Kostka Potocki and Aleksander Potocki, both of whom assumed ministerial roles in the Duchy of Warsaw. The list of members also featured names from the Sapieha and the Czartoryski families, although more often as honorary benefactors rather than active participants.[13] The Society's inaugural president was Bishop John Baptist Albertrandi, a former royal librarian and lecturer at the court of King Stanisław August Poniatowski.[14] In

9 SUCHODOLSKI, pp. 193–200.

10 TOMASZ MATLĘGIEWICZ: Idee słowianofilskie w warszawskim Towarzystwie Przyjaciół Nauk (1800–1832) [Slavophile Ideas in the Warsaw Society of the Friends of Sciences (1800–1832)], in: Athenaeum 33 (2012), pp. 97–112.

11 KRAUSHAR, vol. 4, especially pp. 91–101, 124–272; MACIEJ JANOWSKI: The Birth of Intelligentsia, 1750–1831, Frankfurt am Main et al. 2014 (A History of the Polish Intelligentsia, 1), pp. 248–264.

12 SUCHODOLSKI, pp. 54–55, 66–69.

13 It is possible to trace the list of members by following the president's speeches during the public meetings, regularly printed in the press and the Society's yearbooks, as well as in the subsequent printed editions of the Society's statute (*Ustawy Towarzystwa*), published with renewed lists of members in 1802, 1805, 1810, 1814, 1818, 1820, and 1823.

14 KAZIMIERZ CHODYNICKI: Albertrandy Jan Chrzciciel, in: Polski Słownik Biograficzny, vol. 1, Kraków 1935, pp. 45–46.

1808, Albertrandi was succeeded by Stanisław Staszic, a political writer and scientist associated with the Zamoyski family. Despite his non-noble background, Staszic held various state positions, including that of the Duchy of Warsaw's state minister (from 1809) and state councilor (from 1810), as well as the Kingdom of Poland's deputy minister of education (1818–1824) and state minister (after 1824).[15] After Staszic's death in 1826, the leadership of the Society passed to Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, a well-known man of letters and a client of the Czartoryski family, who had previously served as a delegate to the Sejm of the Commonwealth and a member of its Commission of National Education and was Tadeusz Kościuszko's secretary-adjutant during the Polish uprising in 1794.[16]

Such a particular constellation of members resulted not only from the fact that for some aristocrats science remained a popular object of private fascination during this period, but also from a deliberate member selection policy.[17] Although the Society embraced the early nineteenth-century liberal reforms aimed to dismantle the old Polish estate system, as well as symbolically rejecting the use of noble titles in its internal communications,[18] the selection of members remained an important tool for it to gain approval from the changing political elites in the country. The most notable example of this political opportunism was the subsequent selection of Prussian, French, and Russian dignitaries as members.[19] However, the inclusion of Polish elites was an equally calculated nod to traditional hierarchy, which helped enhance the TPN's prestige in a society that still adhered to the old estate mentality.[20]

It should also be noted that specific members of the TPN had already forged a distinct reputation prior to their affiliation with the Society. This reputation was primarily rooted in their involvement in seminal chapters of Polish history

---

15 Maria Czeppe, Zbigniew J. Wójcik: Staszic (Stasic, Staszyc) Stanisław Wawrzyniec, in: Polski Słownik Biograficzny, vol. 42, Warszawa—Kraków 2003–2004, pp. 540–551.

16 Stefan Kieniewicz, Michał Witkowski: Niemcewicz (Ursyn Niemcewicz) h. Rawicz Julian, in: Polski Słownik Biograficzny, vol. 22, Wrocław et al. 1977, pp. 771–780.

17 On aristocratic fascination with science in the era, and more broadly on social position and science in the early modern era up to the late eighteenth century, see: Steven Shapin: The Man of Science, in: Lorraine Daston, Katherine Park (eds.): The Cambridge History of Science. Vol. 3: Early Modern Science, Cambridge 2006, pp. 179–191.

18 The members referred to each other simply as "colleagues," regardless of titulature and social background. Michalski, p. 74; Janowski, pp. 182–183.

19 As discussed passim in: Kraushar, e.g., vol. 2, part 1, pp. 76–77.

20 More on the clash between new political realities and old mentalities in early nineteenth-century Poland can be found in: Mikołaj Getka-Kenig: "Najpierwsze przy tronie dostojeństwo"—Napoleoński centralizm a pojęcie elity w Księstwie Warszawskim ["First at the Throne Dignity"—Napoleonic Centralism and the Concept of Elite in the Duchy of Warsaw, in: Kwartalnik Historyczny 120 (2013), 2, pp. 303–326; Jarosław Czubaty: The Duchy of Warsaw, 1807–1815: A Napoleonic Outpost in Central Europe, London 2016, pp. 139–168.

during the late eighteenth century, such as the reformist Commission of National Education, the Constitution of 3 May 1791, the Four-Year Sejm (1788–1792), and the Kościuszko Uprising. Some of the best examples were the Society's presidents, remembered for their closeness to legendary figures such as Stanisław August and Kościuszko as well as for their political involvement during the Four-Year Sejm. Within this context, the Friends of Sciences began to be perceived as a collective embodiment of the historical legacy of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, serving as the esteemed "custodians of the nation's memory" or as "living relics of Poland."[21] This perception was further accentuated by the growing generational divide between the Society's members and their audience.[22]

While the patriotic aura enveloping certain TPN members undoubtedly enhanced the Society's prestige, it did not inherently grant them the status of public figures. Such recognition necessitated the cultivation of connections with an audience, requiring a visible presence in the public sphere. In the period following the dissolution of Polish statehood in 1795, the opportunity to establish such a status assumed particular importance.

The partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1772, 1793, and 1795 profoundly reshaped the social and cultural fabric of Polish society. Under Prussian rule in Warsaw, established channels of influence held by nobility and clergy were dismantled, following the nationalization of Church properties, the disqualification of Poles from public office, and the stripping of municipal self-governance from the bourgeoisie.[23] Beyond pragmatic concerns, this shift challenged a fundamental cultural reference point, impacting the way individuals could imagine and construct their lives within society. In the eighteenth-century Polish-Lithuanian state, social advancement for noble and bourgeois elites primarily relied on military or public service, both of which were hindered in the new administrative framework overseen by Prussian military officers and civil servants.[24] Consequently, alternative modes of engagement with the public became appealing options for pursuing individual ambitions, catering to both prominent figures seeking to maintain their social status and newcomers looking for opportunities to establish personal standing.

During the early post-partition period a new perspective on public individuality began to take shape. With the dissolution of the estate-based society, the emergence of a novel concept of popular sovereignty, and changing notions about the nation, noble lineage ceased to be a prerequisite for assuming leader-

21 JURKOWSKA, pp. 28–29.

22 SUCHODOLSKI, pp. 84–89.

23 CZUBATY, pp. 5–12.

24 The third notable option being entering the clergy. See: IRENEUSZ IHNATOWICZ, ANTONI MĄCZAK, BENEDYKT ZIENTARA, JANUSZ ŻARNOWSKI: Społeczeństwo polskie od X do XX wieku [Polish Society from Ninth to Twentieth Century], 4th ed., Warszawa 2005, p. 290.

ship roles in society.[25] This shift found formal expression in the constitutions of the Duchy and the Kingdom, which, while preserving noble dominance, notably liberalized the electoral process.[26] This transformation gained momentum within the expanding public sphere, driven by advancements in printing technology and evolving literary sensibilities. The press market, particularly newspapers and periodicals, entered a phase of accelerated development.[27] In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the market was long dominated by a single political-informational newspaper with a royal monopoly, *Gazeta Warszawska*, alongside periodicals affiliated with the enlightened reformist circles close to the royal court.[28] Contrastingly, the early nineteenth century witnessed the proliferation and thematic diversification of publishing initiatives, particularly after 1807 and 1815, with their exponential growth only partially restrained by French propaganda and Russian-imposed censorship.[29] The authorities of the Duchy and the Kingdom increasingly held themselves accountable not to the Sejm but to "public opinion" as the proper representative of the collective will of the nation.[30] The new political framework, the progressive democratization of cultural life, and the growing significance of the public sphere all significantly contributed to the dissemination of Sentimental and Romantic sensibilities. These sensibilities introduced fresh ideas about the role of the individual in society, emphasizing the psychological dimensions of figures portrayed in

---

25 See: CHRISTOPHER BLACKBURN: Napoleon and the Szlachta, New York 1998.

26 TADEUSZ MENCEL: Udział społeczeństwa w życiu politycznym Królestwa Polskiego w latach 1815–1830 (sejmiki i zgromadzenia gminne) [Public Participation in the Political Life of the Kingdom of Poland in the Years 1815–1830 (*sejmiki* and Communal Assemblies), in: Przegląd Historyczny 59 (1968), 4, pp. 629–661; CZUBATY, pp. 42–44.

27 JERZY ŁOJEK: Statystyka prasy polskiej okresu 1661–1831 [Statistics of the Polish Press 1661–1831], in: Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego 3 (1965), 1, pp. 5–22; JERZY ŁOJEK: Polityczna rola prasy polskiej, 1661–1831 [The Political Role of the Polish Press, 1661–1831], in: Kwartalnik Historii Prasy Polskiej 19 (1980), 2, pp. 7–13; JERZY ŁOJEK, JERZY MYŚLIŃSKI, WIESŁAW WŁADYKA: Dzieje prasy polskiej [History of the Polish Press], Warszawa 1988, pp. 28–43.

28 JERZY ŁOJEK: Problemy rozwoju prasy staropolskiej [Problems of the Development of the Old Polish Press], in: Historia prasy polskiej a kształtowanie się kultury narodowej, vol. 1, Warszawa 1967, pp. 171–188; ŁOJEK, Polityczna rola prasy polskiej, pp. 7–8; ŁOJEK/MYŚLIŃSKI/WŁADYKA, pp. 15–20.

29 ŁOJEK, Polityczna rola prasy polskiej, pp. 12–13; ŁOJEK/MYŚLIŃSKI/WŁADYKA, pp. 28-43; CZUBATY, pp. 130–131.

30 On the rising awareness of the significance of the press, see: JERZY ŁOJEK: Poglądy na rolę prasy w pierwszych latach Królestwa Kongresowego [Views on the Role of the Press in the Early Years of Congress Poland], in: Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego 1 (1962), pp. 70–96, and MARIAN KALLAS: Dzienniki departamentowe w czasach Księstwa Warszawskiego (1808–1815) [Departmental Journals during the Duchy of Warsaw (1808–1815], in: Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego 10 (1971), 1, pp. 5–31.

books and newspapers and promoting a notion of individual genius embodying collective thought.[31]

These changes occurred against the background of a broader European transformation of attitudes towards public individuality. The growing public sphere challenged the traditional notion of posthumous fame, previously reserved for virtuous saints and conquering warriors, now embracing media figures surrounded by contemporary attention.[32] This trajectory, notably rapid in Poland, saw the term "public figure," previously exclusive to titled officials and those in state service, expand to encompass all individuals influencing ongoing collective discourse.[33] This extension reflected changing attitudes towards the idea of the public, no longer confined to state dominance but linked to the growing importance of an independent public opinion shaped by an expanding media market.[34] The definition of a public figure became increasingly intertwined with concerns related to popular representation, media presence, personality, merits, and the delineation of new societal roles in a rapidly changing social landscape.

The members of TPN found themselves grappling with similar questions about their role as scholars. In Polish-Lithuanian traditions, the social role of a learned man lacked a rigid definition. Scholarly acclaim traditionally came posthumously if one's work was judged as outstanding, but during one's life, scholarship alone was certainly not a claim to public influence. Rather, scholarship was often relegated to either an aristocratic pastime or an educational background suitable for specific state functions. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, as the rising requirements of state bureaucratization turned some intellectuals into bureaucrats, the term's connotations varied between the archetypes of a man of letters patronized by the royal court and a civic expert.[35] However, the parallel development of the public sphere and heightened sensi-

---

31 On the shift from the Sentimental to Romantic sensibilities in the cultural life of the era, see: Bogusław Dopart: Kultura polskiego romantyzmu: Dynamika i pluralism [The Polish Culture of Romanticism: Dynamics and Pluralism], in: Bogusław Dopart (ed.): Środowiska kulturotwórcze czasów oświecenia i romantyzmu, Kraków 2013, pp. 89–108, and Anna Jończyk: Sentymentalizm a preromantyzm [Sentimentalism and Pre-Romanticism], in: Konteksty Kultury 11 (2014), 3, pp. 205–216. On the relationship between literary stylization and public individuality at the time, see: Lilti, pp. 13, 217–266.

32 Lilti, pp. 4–9, 86–101.

33 Adrian Wesołowski: Semantyka sfery publicznej na przełomie XVIII i XIX wieku [Semantics of the Public Sphere in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries], in: Klio: Czasopismo poświęcone dziejom Polski i powszechnym 70 (2024), 2, pp. 103–130.

34 Rather than summarizing an entire tradition of the modern history of communication, let me just refer to one of the seminal essays in English on the topic: Anthony La Vopa: Conceiving a Public: Ideas and Society in Eighteenth-Century Europe, in: Journal of Modern History 64 (1992), 1, pp. 79–116.

35 Janowski, especially pp. 27–35, 101–108, 147–157.

tization of the reading audience to cultural experimentation created a new space for establishing one's societal standing through public presence.[36] In these circumstances, the TPN felt compelled to engage in discourse aimed at enhancing its growing role in the evolving societal landscape and defining the rightful place of scholars within the public sphere.

Strategies of Self-Stylization

The most significant counterpoint to Albertrandi's assertion about the Society's non-engagement in the chase after "popular glories" lay in how it openly presented its mission. While its statute established its primary goal as safeguarding the Polish language and history, the TPN members saw their scholarly endeavors also as a way to contribute to the nation's glory and international recognition. According to Jan Paweł Woronicz, the original intent was to "preserve as well as enhance the national fame," the expansion of which was supposed to be the "driving spirit" and the proper legacy of the Society.[37] In this sense, the role of TPN went beyond that of a passive repository of the Polish past to encompass a creative dimension that would enable the nation, despite its statelessness, to compete culturally on the international stage. As explained by another member, Edward Czarnecki, TPN sought to "rival" the neighboring nations "in the pursuit of fame," if not through "valor or politics," then at the very least through "work in the sciences and through useful inventions."[38] This perception of their mission presented the members as the contemporary advocates and creators of the Polish heritage rather than its mere custodians.

As Polish champions in the quest for national fame, the Friends of Sciences diverged from the conventional image of a socially isolated scholar, a departure evident in the Society's communication methods. Unlike eighteenth-century scholars who often dedicated their works to patrons,[39] the Friends of Sciences

---

36 The growing interconnectedness between the republic of letters and the public sphere in the era expressed as a rising "publicity" of scholarship has been recently well discussed in: ANDRÉ HOLENSTEIN, HUBERT STEINKE, MARTIN STUBER: Introduction: Practices of Knowledge and the Figure of the Scholars in the Eighteenth Century, in: ANDRÉ HOLENSTEIN, HUBERT STEINKE et al. (eds.): Scholars in Action: The Practice of Knowledge and the Figure of the Savant in the 18th Century, vol. 1, Leiden—Boston 2013, pp. 1–44.

37 JAN PAWEŁ WORONICZ: Pochwała Jana N. Kossakowskiego [Praise of Jan N. Kossowski], in: Roczniki TWPN 10 (1817), pp. 12–27, here pp. 26–27. A similar message was included in: STANISŁAW KOSTKA POTOCKI: Pochwała Grzegorza Piramowicza [Praise of Grzegorz Piramowicz], in: Roczniki TWPN 2 (1803), pp. 1–82, here p. 67.

38 EDWARD CZARNECKI: Rozprawa o przymiotach i usposobieniu się do stanu nauczycielskiego [Dissertation on Qualities and Disposition for the Teacher's Profession], in: EDWARD CZARNECKI (transl.): Zasady edukacyi i instrukcyi podług Niemeyera, Warszawa 1808, not pag.

39 See the recent discussion of patronage and the social advancement of scholars in the eighteenth century in: IRIS FLESSENKÄMPER: From Aristocratic Support to Academic

adopted the practice of contemporary newspapers, directly addressing the "public" in their communications. The term indicated more than just the immediate audience; it represented the underlying awareness of the entire nation. As highlighted in Albertrandi's speeches, the public was deemed the ultimate judge of the Society's efforts, serving as a "foretaste of posterity's judgment," and the reception of the Society's works allowed the public to "participate in the glory that the distinguished authors rightly deserved."[40] In line with this commitment to public engagement, the Society embarked on an ambitious "popularization campaign," involving financial support and promotion of various publications designed to disseminate knowledge, particularly of a historical nature. Some publications of the TPN were aimed at a readership broader than the typical audience of interested noblemen, taking the more popular formats of song lyrics or musical notes for popular instruments. Their immediate listenership reportedly involved a cross-class audience, including women.[41] Moreover, the more progressive faction within the Society pushed for print, particularly of its yearbooks, to become a more potent instrument for public impact. They aimed to engage in contemporary societal issues and literary criticism, viewing the yearbooks as a potent tool for engaging with the public and shaping the intellectual discourse of the time rather than just a "memento of the Society's activities."[42]

By placing a stronger emphasis on its presence within the collective consciousness and fostering a strong relationship with the public, the Friends of Sciences presented the Polish audience with a compelling vision of publicly engaged scholars shouldering significant responsibilities in representing national interests. In doing so, they conveyed the idea that the proper channel through which to fulfill these duties was the contemporaneous public presence of the Society's members. From this perspective, its efforts can be deemed a success. Later memoirists frequently mentioned the names of TPN members among the most influential figures in early nineteenth-century Poland, precisely because of their work within the Society.[43]

This elevated public standing was therefore not simply a result of their scholarly accomplishments but a product of the identity they presented to the Polish

Office: Patronage and University in the Scottish Enlightenment, in: HOLENSTEIN/STEINKE, pp. 101–122.

40 JAN CHRZCICIEL ALBERTRANDI: Mowa przy zaganieniu czwartego posiedzenia publicznego dnia 16go Listopada 1802 roku [Opening Speech of the Fourth Public Meeting on 16 November 1802], in: Roczniki TWPN 3 (1804), pp. 254–262, here p. 255.

41 As well as supporting publishing, the Society was engaged in making publications more available to ordinary readers by including illustrations and sometimes also publishing targeted poetry and songs together with musical notes. The best known and most successful of such initiatives was: JULIAN URSYN NIEMCEWICZ: Śpiewy historyczne z muzyką i rycinami [Historical Songs with Music and Drawings], Warszawa 1816.

42 SUCHODOLSKI, pp. 181–182.

43 For instance, see: FRANCISZEK DMOCHOWSKI: Wspomnienia od 1806 do 1830 roku [Memories from 1806 to 1830], Warszawa 1858, p. 357.

public. The individual images of the various Friends were carefully crafted to align with this identity. In a recent article, Mikołaj Getka-Kenig writes about the Society's "image policy," using the posthumous portrayal of Staszic as an illustrative example. With a focus on art history, Getka-Kenig explores the discussions surrounding the tomb of the Society's president, revealing how the Friends of Sciences navigated between emphasizing the prestigious nature of the presidency and highlighting its democratic character, as exemplified by Staszic's commoner roots.[44]

Getka-Kenig's demonstration of the tension between traditional aristocratic prestige and the Society's egalitarian aspirations mirrors a prevalent theme in the Society's self-styling practices. Despite aiming its message at the broader public, the Society incorporated self-styling borrowed from classical aristocratic traditions, notably through sculpture and portraiture. Its final headquarters, the Staszic Palace, was funded by the second president and, in part, open to the general public.[45] Housing a substantial library and a collection of historical artifacts evoking Poland's grandeur, its publicly accessible rooms featured decorations alluding to both past and contemporary national history. This included a collection of "fourteen statues of renowned Polish scientists, along with over twenty busts and bas-reliefs representing foreign scholars."[46] The walls displayed portraits of famous scholars and rulers next to those of some present Society members, with busts of Staszic and Niemcewicz publicly exhibited during their lifetimes.[47] The palace's rooms were named after outstanding TPN members.[48] This presentation of exceptional memorabilia related to historical triumphs and tragedies and depictions of monarchs alongside the Society's presidents was meant to create a continuous narrative, to paint a "heterotopic" picture,[49] where the continuity of Polish history was to be realized in the ongoing work of the TPN.

The most impressive decorations adorned the meeting room, a space reserved for sessions open to the general public—events that are key for understanding the Friends of Sciences' self-styling efforts. While the open meetings of the Society have been described by historians previously, their broad impact has often been brushed off as a passing trend, even by scholars, such as Getka-

44 GETKA-KENIG, Nagrobek Stanisława Staszica, pp. 31–49.

45 SUCHODOLSKI, pp. 178–180.

46 KRAUSHAR, vol. 1, p. 317.

47 KRAUSHAR, vol. 2, part 1, pp. 56, 236–237, and vol. 3, part 2, pp. 19–20. Albertrandi's bust joined them but only after the first president's death. See: KRAUSHAR, vol. 2, part 1, pp. 120–121.

48 KRAUSHAR, vol. 1, p. 317, and vol. 3, part 1, pp. 228–229.

49 See the term applied to the building by: ALEKSANDRA WÓJTOWICZ: Pałac Staszica jako heterotopia afektywna—refleksja humanistyczna w planowaniu przestrzennym [The Staszic Palace as an Affective Heterotopia—Humanist Thought in Spatial Planning], in: Teksty Drugie (2014), 6 (150), pp. 305–320.

Kenig, who show some interest in the Society's reputation management.[50] I believe such an assessment overlooks the significant influence that the open sessions exerted in the Warsaw public sphere. Conducted regularly twice a year since 1800, the meetings became an integral part of Warsaw's communal life. Under the Prussian partition, they stood out as one of few platforms where public discourse could be conducted in Polish, with the sole alternative being theatre. Consequently, many later memoirists regarded the public sessions as the era's most crucial counterweight to the burgeoning yet still modest newspaper market.[51]

These open meetings significantly shaped the wider perception of TPN members as public figures. It was during these meetings that they had an opportunity to engage directly with their audience and actively mold their own public image. On the surface, the sessions appeared to be primarily focused on presenting updates regarding the Society's ongoing academic endeavors and organizational affairs, typically provided in comprehensive summaries by the Society's president and individual lectures by its members. However, in reality, they served as a platform for elaborate performative practices. In a work that stands out in Polish historiography, Hanna Jurkowska describes the public sessions with the unique sensitivity of a cultural theorist. As she points out, although highly ritualized and involving many scripted elements, the meetings allowed for much spontaneity and were overwhelmingly centered around oratory, rhetoric, and persuasion, resembling salon performances more than conventional scholarly gatherings.[52]

The significance of speeches before an audience as a means for the Friends to shape their image was by no means coincidental. In the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the nobility's education placed a special emphasis on rhetoric, stemming from its practical application during local *sejmiki* and the central Sejm, where persuasion held particular political significance.[53] In addition to academic reports, which were often criticized by members as being too "dry" and "boring," the public sessions featured presentations of historical works and recitations of poetry with elaborate rhetorical displays. Furthermore,

---

50 MIKOŁAJ GETKA-KENIG: Pomniki publiczne i dyskurs zasługi w dobie "wskrzeszonej" Polski lat 1807–1830, Kraków 2017, p. 230, calls the sessions a "fashion," which was not supposed to indicate in any way the extent of the Society's influence. He ascribes greater significance to the artistic stylization, as in the example of Staszic's gravestone. See: GETKA-KENIG, Nagrobek Stanisława Staszica.

51 DMOCHOWSKI, Wspomnienia, p. 356, writes that in the face of a relatively underdeveloped journalism, "there were two main points of expression for the contemporary fascination in writing and literature: the theatre and the Society of the Friends of Sciences' public meetings."

52 JURKOWSKA, pp. 23–24.

53 On the place of rhetorical education in Jesuit colleges, a prevailing mode of noble schooling in the Commonwealth, see: TADEUSZ BIEŃKOWSKI: Szkoły w kulturze staropolskiej: Wnioski i refleksje [Schools in Ancient Polish Culture: Conclusions and Reflections], in: Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty 25 (1983), pp. 3–14.

the TPN made concerted efforts to ensure a selection of topics and forms of expression that would be appealing to the public.[54] There were several attempts to reform internal regulations to shift the content of the sessions toward subjects that would resonate more with the audience. The use of rhetorical flair, notable for its unusual sophistication, eventually became the main point of contention among the Society's members. Younger members often saw speeches as an opportunity to enhance their status,[55] while some older members complained about the "empty rhetoric" and "flowery displays of erudition and persuasion," which in their opinion overshadowed the "moral truth" that should have been the focus of the presentations.[56] This being said, the same critics were also applauded as speakers, which suggests that the conflict concerned a difference in style rather than the fact of engaging in persuasion during the meetings itself.

Jurkowska places particular emphasis on the similarity of the public sessions to theatre. She underlines the topographical proximity of the Society's successive venues to Warsaw's theatres and points out that they shared similar audiences.[57] She also notes a resemblance in the relationship between the speakers and listeners during the meetings to that of actors and theatre audiences. This similarity was evident in the way they interpreted communication, which could not openly convey political content. Drawing from their experiences in the theatre, both the audience and the scholars had adopted certain "conventional behaviors" and "models of emotional responses" to facilitate communication and detect specific gestures and words that concealed allusions to patriotic themes within the speeches, akin to recognizing the "dramatic points" in acting. This rehearsed expression and well-practiced interpretation served to "strengthen the social bond" between the listeners and the speakers who shared a secretive understanding.[58]

The public sessions made a strong and lasting impression on the attendees. Later memoirists describe them as striking spectacles during which the audience had the opportunity to express their emotions in a fit of collective effer-

---

54 Here I refer to discussions around reforming public meetings to emphasize topics more appealing to the public such as poetry and readings of historical dissertations. They are noted in the Society's minutes, e.g.: Protokół posiedzeń ogólnych i wyborowych Towarzystwa [Minutes of General and Elective Meetings of the Society], in: Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych (AGAD) [Central Archives of Historical Documents], sign. 1/199/0/-/62, pp. 24–26, 121–122.

55 Fryderyk Skarbek: Pamiętniki [Memoirs], Poznań 1878, pp. 56, 92, 101, makes for a good example of this trend, often linking his public speeches with an opportunity for social advancement.

56 Wielisław [Eugeniusz Skrodzki]: Ze wspomnień o Staszicu [From the Memories of Staszic], in: Tygodnik Ilustrowany 4 (1861), 102, p. 383. For a similar opinion of Skrodzki himself, see: Eugeniusz Skrodzki: Wieczory piątkowe i inne gawędy [Friday Evenings and Other Storytelling], ed. by Mieczysław Opałek, Warszawa 1962, pp. 101–102.

57 Jurkowska, p. 20.

58 Ibid., pp. 21–22, 25–26.

vescence. Some dramatic reactions, like spontaneous applause, caused concern among older members of the Society who lamented the introduction of a practice reminiscent of theatre into a scholarly assembly.[59] Participants who later recollected the meetings described elevated heartbeats, tears and sighs among the audience, and more sensitive attendees succumbing to fainting spells.[60] "Each of us, the youth, rushed to these public gatherings with a pounding heart, considering them a true intellectual feast because we were certain that we would hear new thoughts and ideas," wrote Kazimierz Wójcicki, who attended the meetings as a student. After one particularly memorable session, Wójcicki recalled being "so moved, so thrilled" that he desired to "die without crossing the threshold of that room," assuring he would "remember the experience to the grave."[61]

Comparable impressions resurfaced in a contemporary letter from Tadeusz Czacki to Jan Śniadecki, who had delivered a speech on the biography of Nicolaus Copernicus during one of the public sessions. Czacki sought to substantiate the extraordinary popularity of the address, emphasizing his firsthand experience as a listener. He noted that although the session lasted for four hours, the audience remained captivated: "The profound silence of the crowd was occasionally interrupted only by involuntary expressions of admiration […]. Not a single scoff tainted the solemnity, and, apart from a few individuals who had to leave because of the immense crowd, when a bench broke, no one moved." Staszic, whose speech followed Śniadecki's, reportedly picked up on this electrifying atmosphere. "He wanted to be obedient to your wish and to be brief," wrote Czacki, "but when the enthusiasm knew no bounds, he could hardly conclude."[62]

Importantly, these collective experiences were not confined solely to the halls of the Society's meeting rooms but spilled over into other gathering places, public institutions, and collective discourse—or more simply, into the broader public sphere. Czacki pointed out in his letter that "people talked about this session on the streets and in the churches, at homes and in the courts." Furthermore, the enthusiasm transcended social boundaries: "Monks and fashionable ladies, scholars and commoners, jurists and mathematicians, all listened attentively, all were equally moved." Indeed, although the open meetings initially attracted Warsaw's social elite, they soon opened their doors to a broader audience, regularly drawing students and casual observers. Subsequent venues belonging to the TPN could accommodate several hundred people. Eventually, tickets for the sessions began to be printed and were usually limited

---

59 KAZIMIERZ WÓJCICKI: Pamiętniki dziecka Warszawy i inne wspomnienia warszawskie [A Child's Memoirs of Warsaw and Other Warsaw Memories], vol. 2, Warszawa 1974, pp. 54–55.

60 Ibid. See also: JURKOWSKA, p. 24.

61 WÓJCICKI, pp. 53–54, 60.

62 The letter was eventually published by Ludwik Zielinski in: Zbiór pism róznych autorów (1835), 1, p. 27.

to around a hundred to mitigate overcrowding during the meetings.[63] This kind of popularity and inclusivity, which momentarily united individuals from diverse social groups, elevated the open sessions of the Society into a crucial reference point in Warsaw's public life, cutting across the city's entire social fabric.

A significant role in this process was played by the daily press. Within the media landscape of Warsaw, which held considerable sway over the reading audience of the entire divided nation during that era, the Society's public sessions quickly secured a consistent presence. Following the dynamic growth of the Polish newspaper market after 1807, regular reports about them began to feature on the front pages of major and an increasing number of other newspapers and periodicals, often spanning multiple issues. The public sessions stood out as the sole recurring media event in the Polish press at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[64] The TPN was aware of this impact and sought to actively shape it. Members coordinated the content of reports printed in friendly newspapers, while also making the more commercially driven and independent publications dependent on the submission of their accounts. This occasionally led to disputes between editors and Society members who negotiated control over the published content.[65] Furthermore, the press served as a tool through which the Society bolstered the message it delivered during the public sessions. It harnessed the press to facilitate grassroots scientific activities, announce competitions, and secure funding for its projects through subscription drives.[66]

Jurkowska's repeated use of the term "public individuals" (*człowiek publiczny*, *publiczne jednostki*) likely refers to this very aspect of the Society's public presence.[67] Although she never explicitly defines the concept, Jurkowska appears to employ it rather freely, especially in contrast to the prevailing historiography, which has never directly attributed such a role to the TPN. The "social bond" that, according to her, was created during the meetings was not confined to a local, narrow circle of regular attendees at the Society's meetings. It transcended local confines and united people from diverse backgrounds and regions, extending beyond those who physically attended the gatherings to include those who learned about them through news reports and word of mouth. In other words, it was a public bond that connected the Society's members as public figures whose status largely rested on the attention they commanded with its broad audience, the members of which shared and propagated stories, slogans, and witty expressions overheard during the public sessions.

---

63 KRAUSHAR, vol. 3, part 1, p. 11.

64 WESOŁOWSKI, Semantyka sfery publicznej.

65 TYMOTEUSZ LIPIŃSKI: Zapiski z lat 1825–1831 [Notes from the Years 1825–1831], Kraków 1883, pp. 91, 133.

66 SUCHODOLSKI, pp. 172–173, 178–180.

67 JURKOWSKA, passim; in her usage, Jurkowska cites Richard Sennett's comparison of an "eighteenth-century public man" to an "actor on the stage" (p. 22).

Discourse of Scholarly Recognition

It was also during the open sessions that the public role of scholars was most directly conceptualized in the eulogies for deceased members. According to the Society's foundational statute, each member was entitled to a posthumous tribute delivered at a public meeting and later published in the Society's yearbooks.[68] This practice drew inspiration from the model adopted by the French Académie des Sciences and was rooted in classical traditions of ancient rhetoric and Christian eulogy.[69] Despite adhering to this conventional formula, the tributes underscored a notable tension and ambiguity associated with the idea of celebrating scholars, a tension that the speakers aimed to confront. In addressing this tension, the speakers reached for some fresh cultural meanings linked to the notions of fame and contemporaneous social recognition. They discussed what fame was and its various manifestations. They debated who deserved to be famous, and the criteria by which fame should be valued. This happened in order to better conceptualize the social recognition of scholars and to carve out their place in the collective imagination.

In many regards, the notion of societal distinction articulated by the Society's members in the eulogies resonated with established ideals of the Enlightenment pedagogy. The kind of fame advocated by the speakers was "useful fame," one designed to mold a valuable citizen. The subjects of praise were individuals intended to serve as good examples and socially beneficial role models. Thus, the primary goal of the speeches, frequently cited alongside the tasks of "collecting materials for the National Biography" and "justifying one's works to the public," was to "present the virtues and merits of deceased members for the encouragement of the living."[70] "It is indeed true and fitting that those who have contributed most to humanity claim the greatest posthumous fame," wrote Michał Bergonzoni, "this reward, immortalizing the names of deserving men, serves as an incentive for future generations to strive to emulate

68 See: Ustawy Towarzystwa, 1802, p. 2.

69 See: CHARLES B. PAUL: Science and Immortality: The Éloges of the Paris Academy of Sciences (1699–1791), Berkeley 1980, especially pp. 5–8, 13–27.

70 FRANCISZEK KSAWERY SZANIAWSKI: Pamiątka Bartłomieja Szuleckiego [A Memoir of Bartłomiej Szulecki], in: Roczniki TWPN 8 (1812), pp. 152–165, here pp. 152–153. Similar phrasing occurs very often in the speeches, featuring in: PIOTR MALESZEWSKI: Mowa na obchód pamiątki Ignacego Zaborowskiego [Speech for the Memorial Celebration of Ignacy Zaborowski], in: Roczniki TWPN 2 (1803), pp. 277–291; FRANCISZEK KSAWERY SZANIAWSKI: Pochwała Bartłomieja Szuleckiego [Praise of Bartłomiej Szulecki], in: Roczniki TWPN 7 (1811), pp. 152–165; LEOPOLD DE LAFONTAINE: Pochwała Walentego Gagatkiewicza [Praise of Walenty Gagatkiewicz], in: Roczniki TWPN 7 (1811), pp. 39–62; FRANCISZEK KSAWERY BOHUSZ: Życie literackie x. Marcina Poczobuta [The Literary Life of Marcin Poczobut], in: Roczniki TWPN 9 (1816), pp. 405–419; MICHAŁ BERGONZONI: Rzecz o życiu i pismach Franciszka Scheidt [On the Life and Writings of Franciszek Scheidt], in: Roczniki TWPN 9 (1816), pp. 459–470, and others.

them and secure similar commendation in the future."[71] In this context, the notions of usefulness and virtue, as conceived by the speakers, were linked not only to civic conduct per se but also to the notion of patriotic commitment. In the waning years of the eighteenth century, notably during the vibrant public deliberations of the Four-Year Sejm, the concept of "virtue" regained a central role in Polish political discourse, something it had lost in the preceding century. Influenced by the surging popularity of Montesquieu and Rousseau's philosophies, virtue ceased to be equated solely with private morality and became synonymous with complete dedication to the community, embodying the "dissolution" of individual identity in the service to the nation.[72]

Alongside this axiology, rooted in ancient rhetoric but revitalized by Enlightenment philosophy, the eulogies for Society members also revealed newer lines of tension. The recurring concern was the idea of publicly honoring scholars, whose cult, as previously mentioned, lacked a widespread tradition in the prevailing Sarmatian ideology of Poland-Lithuania. The Society attempted to challenge this status quo. For instance, they had undertaken a campaign to erect a monument in honor of Nicolaus Copernicus. Getka-Konig observes that within a cultural context where commemorating individuals with monuments was "infrequent even in the case of monarchs, let alone ordinary non-political figures," through this act the Society unmistakably "worked to reshape the established paradigm of merit."[73] Beyond mere promotional endeavors, arguably the more pressing task was to provide a solid ideological foundation for this veneration of scholars. Such justification necessitated delineating their social role in a way that would not only define their place within society but would also warrant public expressions of respect and admiration. The realization of this goal demanded articulating a fundamental logic governing the dynamics of fame, a framework within which the rightful place of scholars could be discerned.

The speakers who had taken on this task often began with the contrast between the concept of "Hero," a martial conqueror revered as the epitome of greatness in the eighteenth-century discourse, and the novel and hitherto unrecognized heroic status of the scholar. Assigning to scholars a level of heroism comparable to military feats was a recurrent theme in eulogies. The speakers routinely conflated the two realms of achievement, portraying the Friends of Sciences as the "fathers of the nation" (*mężowie ojczyzny*) whose contributions were as fundamental to the existence of Polish nationality as the deeds of "heroes who, through valiant acts, continually demonstrated its enduring na-

---

71 Michał Bergonzoni: Rzecz o życiu Leopolda Lafontena [About the Life of Leopold Lafontaine], in: Roczniki TWPN 10 (1817), pp. 173–193, here p. 175.

72 Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz: Dyskurs polityczny Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów: Pojęcia i idee [The Political Discourse of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: Concepts and Ideas], Toruń 2018, pp. 285–293.

73 Getka-Kenig, Pomniki publiczne, pp. 160, 163–164.

ture."[74] As argued, while the renown of military figures typically captivated contemporaneous attention, the scholar's silent and unwavering dedication to the good of the country, often recognized only posthumously, merited equal, if not greater, acclaim. In scholarly pursuits, one could find a "second immortality," arguably more enduring, as the evanescent "name will disappear," but the useful knowledge and the gratitude of successive generations, the "love and merit," would endure.[75]

Such comparisons grew bolder and more assertive when buttressed with examples from the ancient world—a classical repository of exemplary social solutions frequently invoked in eighteenth-century rhetoric. In 1812, Ludwik Osiński asserted that the provision for eulogies to deceased members was inscribed into the Society's statute because its members "felt the superiority of glory derived from learning," drawing inspiration from the ancient Athenian belief that "when other types of greatness vanish, the glory of learning endures forever."[76] Kajetan Koźmian claimed a few years later that "Greece celebrated its wise men equally with its warriors" and cited Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, who "thanked the gods not for giving him a son but for giving him one in the lifetime of Aristotle," questioning whether "there will come a fortunate moment for the sciences, or rather for the entire world, when the earth's mighty will base their happiness and glory on the promotion of scholars?"[77] And already in 1802, Stanisław Kostka Potocki pointed to Socrates as an exemplary scholar, whose fame, he argued, would be so enduring that "when the names of the world's destroyers, in enlightened ages, will fall into disdain and oblivion, the glory of Socrates will grow with the spread of virtue and true reason."[78]

According to Potocki, Socrates was elevated "above all the world's conquerors" by his personal qualities—virtue and reason—animated by genius, the "nobler part of the soul" and a "spark of divinity" within a person. The concept of genius appeared remarkably often in eulogies for deceased members of TPN, many of whom were seemingly presumed to possess it. Feliks Bentkowski

---

74 Feliks Łubieński: Pochwała Jana Albertrandego [Praise of Jan Albertrandi], in: Roczniki TWPN 13 (1820), pp. 1–17, here pp. 16–17.

75 Kazimierz Brodziński: Na zgon Xięcia Adama Czartoryskiego Generała Ziem Podolskich [On the Occasion of the Death of Prince Adam Czartoryski, General of Podolia], in: Roczniki TWPN 17 (1824), pp. 109–113. A similar contrast is described in prose in: Walenty Skorochód Majewski: Pochwała Jana Krystyna Schucha [Praise of Jan Chrystian Schuch], in: Roczniki TWPN 12 (1818), pp. 162–181.

76 Ludwik Osiński: O życiu i pismach Franciszka Dmochowskiego [On the Life and Writings of Franciszek Dmochowski], in: Roczniki TWPN 8 (1812), pp. 120–143, here pp. 121–122.

77 Kajetan Koźmian: Mowa o życiu i pismach x. Ignacego Nagurczewskiego [Speech on the Life and Writings of Ignacy Nagurczewski], in: Roczniki TWPN 9 (1816), pp. 233–250, here pp. 233–234.

78 Stanisław Kostka Potocki: Pochwała Józefa Szymanowskiego [Praise of Józef Szymanowski], in: Roczniki TWPN 1 (1802), pp. 42–104, here p. 44.

noted that "every person elevated above the commonality in their later life must have been brought into the world with a special and innate genius."[79] Speakers such as Franciszek Ksawery Szaniawski argued for the inseparable connection between the public acclaim of reason and virtue and the natural occurrence of a certain number of geniuses in society, who "comprehend with their extensive attention the convergence of countless circumstances" and whose "superiority" was "necessary for the common good." In this sense, praises for deceased members, or the existence of the Society as a whole, were envisioned as a unique platform for discovering particularly brilliant individuals and showering them with attention as "markers of the Society's dignity."[80]

The concept of genius was an appealing notion for those members who hoped not only to elevate their circle but also to find a foothold for a new idea of scholarly fame, fundamentally different from the established forms of societal recognition. Speakers often argued against fame associated with high birth, or claims to recognition based on illustrious ancestors, aristocratic titles, wealth, and social connections, best realized through holding high office or a military career.[81] As frequently emphasized, judgments about individuals based on genius, an individualized and personal trait, were meant to contrast with those based on deceptive "pretenses" and "prejudices,"[82] the fleeting virtues of "power, wealth, or birth," which may "sometimes dazzle less attentive eyes" but inevitably "in death return to the obscurity from which they unjustly sought to escape."[83] On the contrary, "if anything in human affairs can claim a right to immortality," wrote Franciszek Dmochowski, "it is surely genius." Genius had a meritocratic value, independent of the surrounding pomp, and was closely linked to intellectual labor. Even virtue, the "first and greatest good among humans," could be forgotten unless "the pen of genius wrests it from oblivion and inscribes it in the book of immortality." "Genius alone lives of itself," continued Dmochowski, "it is both the object and the agent of its glory; it creates

79 Feliks Bentkowski: O życiu i zasługach Jana Liweta [On the Life and Merits of Jan Liwet], in: Roczniki TWPN 10 (1817), pp. 150–164, here p. 150.

80 Franciszek Ksawery Szaniawski: Pamiątka Krzysztofa Wilhelma Chlebowskiego [A Memory of Krzysztof Wilhelm Chlebowski], in: Roczniki TWPN 7 (1811), pp. 339–357, here p. 357.

81 In doing so, they were part of a pan-European shift toward the perception of "genius" as an increasingly democratized concept, associated with individual talent rather than good birth. See: Darrin M. McMahon: Divine Fury: A History of Genius, New York 2013, pp. 78–103. Cf. to the notion of "glory" contrasted with "celebrity": Lilti, especially pp. 4–7.

82 Szaniawski, Pamiątka Krzysztofa Wilhelma Chlebowskiego, p. 357.

83 Franciszek Dmochowski: Mowa na obchód pamiątki Ignacego Krasickiego [Speech for Ignacy Krasicki's Memorial Celebration], in: Roczniki TWPN 1 (1802), pp. 278–312, here p. 278.

works worthy of the ages, and these same works become its indelible memory."[84]

This kind of shift in the interpretation of the proper roots of fame should not be mistaken for an entirely democratic one. Despite moving away from the aristocratic origins of social distinction, the concept of genius was frequently employed by members of the Society to underscore their particular social position, specifically in contrast to the "common people." "Upon a steep and lofty scale stands the temple of fame," wrote Kostka Potocki, an eminent orator hailing from a distinguished magnate family, "when the common folk crawl at its feet, those over whom genius presides advance boldly towards it."[85] Similarly, Count Fryderyk Skarbek argued that "to perceive the lofty vistas of the scholarly profession," one must be "endowed with a higher conception, one must feel within oneself that spark of eternal life that ignites beyond the transience of earthly existence," as if being "called to worldly significance and surrounded by splendor." According to Skarbek, this was unachievable for the "common mind," which always thoughtlessly chose the path where "honor, significance, and all the glittering trinkets of life are seen" and which would inevitably "forget and scorn the path where no title and no symbols distinguish it from the common folk."[86] If the merits of the Society member alone were not deemed sufficient, there was no hesitation in emphasizing that they were not a "genius" and a "great man" but merely a person of a "middling class."[87]

In the minds of the Society's members, the meritocratic value of genius was further enriched by its strongly individualistic character. In contrast to aristocratic glory, which pertained to an inherited status based on the cumulative merits of ancestors, genius was the domain of the individual and the root of their personal achievements. A derivative of this mode of thinking was the recurring theme in posthumous speeches concerning the personality of the individual. The ambition for the speeches to contribute to the construction of the "national biography" relied not only on the description of merits and achievements but also of the specific character of the person who became the subject of a "biographical" account. In this spirit, in one of his speeches, Jan Woronicz asked: "If we preserve the faces and silhouettes of our favorite figures in a silent

---

84 Ibid., pp. 278–279. Seven years later, in his praise of Dmochowski, Ludwik Osiński echoed a similar argument: "the genius alone, without anyone else's help, passes into immortality, thereby gaining eternity," in: Osiński, pp. 120, 143.

85 Potocki, Pochwała Grzegorza Piramowicza, pp. 79–80.

86 Fryderyk Skarbek: Rys zasług naukowych śp. Xięcia Adama Czartoryskiego [Outline of the Scientific Merits of the Late Count Adam Czartoryski], in: Roczniki TWPN 18 (1825), pp. 254–286, here pp. 254–256.

87 Adam Prażmowski: Mowa na obchód pamiątki Andrzeja Reptowskiego [Speech for Andrzej Reptowski's Memorial Celebration], in: Roczniki TWPN 4 (1807), pp. 172–179, here pp. 178–179.

painting, why should we not contemplate the souls that were the agents of all their greatness?"[88]

This matter received extensive consideration in Potocki's 1815 work on rhetoric, a text frequently referenced by the Society's members.[89] In the treatise, Potocki dedicated a significant section to eulogies honoring scholars. He urged for these speeches to be infused with rich and evocative rhetoric, which could be achieved by highlighting the character of the deceased. According to Potocki, in such speeches, the "art of eloquence" is "quite limited" since the life of a scholar "rarely presents anything obviously splendid," and their glory is "almost entirely confined to their works."[90] Faced with this concealment of merits, the speaker should direct their attention to the "personal qualities and virtues of the praised writers" as a potential domain for rhetorical flourish and emphasize "tenderness in some and greatness of character in others," based on which option would better "favor the eloquence."[91] For Potocki, concentrating on the personal character of the deceased was a necessary complement to describing scholarly achievements. "Even knowledge loses its brilliance," he argued, "when, by emphasizing only their skills, we disdain the human behind them."[92] This was because a dry list of merits and achievements was deemed insufficient to steer speakers toward the proper goal of eulogies, which was to instill into the audience the desire to emulate useful examples:

> "It is not enough to speak to reason; one must also speak strongly to the heart […]. Through comparing great deeds with great obstacles, through exemplifying the influence of one man over his nation, through masculine and vivid features that depict virtue, through tender features that portray national or personal gratitude, […] through turning towards his age, towards his needs, towards his weaknesses, [the speaker] stirs sluggish souls and […] instills, at the very least in some people, enthusiasm and admiration for what is virtuous and great."[93]

According to Potocki, it was only through the application of appropriate rhetorical tools that a speaker could gain "enough power and allure" to "captivate and enchant" the audience, thus making evident that "he who contributes most to the common good and the happiness of people deserves the highest degree of love and fame." Elevating the modest life of a scholar to a heroic status, according to Potocki, was a way to rectify the disparity between the deserving men of science, whose "genuine glory is not immediately apparent," and the Heroes—the "oppressors of humanity," who easily gain "a false but an easy radiance."[94]

---

88 Woronicz, p. 26.
89 Stanisław Kostka Potocki: O wymowie i stylu, vol. 2, part 1, Warszawa 1815.
90 Ibid., p. 103.
91 Ibid., pp. 103–104.
92 Ibid., p. 106.
93 Ibid., pp. 108–109.
94 Ibid., pp. 114–115.

Innate and individualistic, genius was meant to be a kind of natural predisposition to greatness independent of social status.[95] However, speakers within the Society believed that its actual impact on one's position in public life had long been suppressed and recognized the crucial role of ongoing social change as a catalyst for its growing significance. In the same speech, Dmochowski presented the contrast between aristocratic glory and merit-based fame grounded in individual predispositions as a recent transformation:

> "Today, we live in an age when public opinion, turned toward the rules of nature and reason, values people according to their personal worth. The source of those splendid praises, once so generously bestowed and listened to with weariness, has dried up today. People no longer inquire about how long a line of ancestors one can count but about who someone was and what they have achieved. Truly, it is a fortunate change that, while overthrowing the weak foundations on the basis of which the proud idols of old appropriated the rights to the world's honors, prompts the search for genuine glory in talents, merits, and virtue."[96]

Writing in 1801, Dmochowski clearly referred to the beginning nineteenth century, which in his view was to demark a cultural departure from the Sarmatian ideology criticized by the Polish Enlightenment. But at the same time, he saw this departure as symbolic of an even broader cultural turn from a hierarchical feudal society to a new epoch of meritocracy, embodied in the contrast between appreciation of heroic and aristocratic ancestry and the fame of scholars based on personal talents and merits.

Kajetan Koźmian loftily compared the contrast between the Hero and the Sage to the course of a river. The former enjoyed "homages of resounding praise" both in life and after death, resembling "a splendid vast land traversing the river." On the other hand, the latter, "quietly advancing with little praise," can expect the "wreath of merits" only at the tomb, like a stream that "flows in a quiet and storm-free valley, quenching the shepherd's thirst and exposing its pure, crystal-like bosom for reflection." Their difference, however, was not so much about merit itself but that Heroes actively sought glory, while glory found Sages spontaneously.[97]

Jan Paweł Woronicz deviated from the discussion that divided glory between the grand figures of the Hero and the Scholar, presenting a much more diversified vision of fame. According to Woronicz, the "degrees and kinds of fame" are as diverse as the "elements and needs of different human societies." Even in the "most distant antiquity," recognition was given not only to military leaders but also to "wise lawmakers" and "all others who, in any way, improved services, governance, education, the pleasures of life, and the entire range of freedoms of human society." The egalitarian undertone of this typology was evident in the broad qualifiers used by the speaker. According to Woronicz, virtually anyone who was not a "deadweight to society" had an "open path to

95 McMahon, pp. 78–91.

96 Dmochowski, Mowa, pp. 279–280.

97 Koźmian, p. 235.

the glorious profession of fame" and, as long as they contributed to its "genuine good," deserved the "name of true glory." The only difference, as maintained by Woronicz, was between fame dictated by "sensual earthliness," "personal considerations and ambitions," or by being "vain to the trifle of a shiny glamour," and the true glory was in "escaping from the shallow sight to the unattainable expanses of eternity." The latter was, of course, particularly associated with the useful mission of the scholar.[98]

In the above passages, both Koźmian and Woronicz deviated from the ambition to demonstrate the true value of the scholar through the comparison with other types of fame in favor of outlining the difference between fame during life and posthumous fame. In their words, they had to be cautious—both wrote during the period of the Duchy of Warsaw, immersed in the cult of Napoleon[99]—nonetheless, they sought to express a certain critique of premature adulation of the living. According to Koźmian and Woronicz, there was something fundamentally wrong with fame during life: Its acquisition was dictated by a desire for immediate elevation. It was a "quest for glory" directed towards "sensual earthliness" rather than a desire for the deserved immortality of virtue. This discourse seemingly reflected the old and present warning in the eighteenth-century discourse against premature glorification.[100]

However, it in fact concealed a deep-seated sense of injustice surrounding the belated recognition of scholars' true worth, emerging only after their demise. This discontent found direct expression in Fryderyk Skarbek's tribute to Adam Czartoryski. Beyond his association with the TPN, Czartoryski was a distinguished statesman, allowing Skarbek to draw a parallel between the public acclaim attendant upon both of his roles. A substantial portion of Skarbek's oration revolved around a poignant lament that a career in academia carried a "kind of glory often scorned by the upper echelons of society." In contrast, public service, enveloped in "splendid prospects of privilege and significance," readily garnered widespread adulation, gathering around the one engaged in such service "those who bow before them and bring offerings of homage and submission" and enabling them to "without difficulty and special ability" realize "any ambition dictated by one's pride." The comparison served as a prelude to Skarbek's poignant reflection on the challenges faced by scholars. The aca-

98 Woronicz, pp. 12–16.

99 See, for instance: Stefan Treugutt: Napoleon Bonaparte jako bohater polskiego romantyzmu [Napoleon Bonaparte as a Hero of Polish Romanticism], in: Teksty: Teoria literatury, krytyka, interpretacja 17 (1974), 5, pp. 37–44, or, for a more recent English text: Anna Kuligowska-Korzeniowska: The Apotheosis of Napoleon in the National Theatre in Warsaw (1807), in: Revue Canadienne des Slavistes 49 (2007), 3–4, pp. 171–184.

100 For the late eighteenth-century discussion about the contrast between the celebration before and after death, see: James Creech: Diderot and the Pleasure of the Other: Friends, Readers, and Posterity, in: Eighteenth-Century Studies 11 (1978), 4, pp. 439–456; McMahon, pp. 99–100; Jessica Goodman: Between Celebrity and Glory? Textual After-Image in Late Eighteenth-Century France, in: Celebrity Studies 7 (2016), 4, pp. 545–560; Lilti, pp. 89–90, 101.

demic path, he contended, was fraught with barriers from the outset; it was an "arduous journey that tests the mettle of anyone who embarks upon it." It is interesting to note to what extent Skarbek emphasized here the role of the reception of the scientist's work. "You do not have those splendid prospects that herald pleasures and freedoms; you do not have a crowd of worshipers who would welcome the wanderer with applause and the voice of adulation," he underscored with a tone tinged with bitterness, "only talent and perseverance in work can lead you to the goal where glory and gratitude await you." Even as Skarbek concluded his discourse, he was not satisfied with the ultimate reward for a scholar being posthumous fame. The "glory that is not of this world" fails to satisfy the human desire to witness the acknowledgment of one's merits during their lifetime: "A man wants to make use of the freedom of life, wants to see his merits acknowledged." "True talent often grows numb and zeal cools down," he bitterly complained, "when instead of admiration humiliation meets you on this path of life."[101]

Insights and Implications

In undertaking an unprecedented campaign of public engagement, propelled by a deliberate strategy of image-building and the cultivation of a discourse centered around scholarly recognition, the TPN emerges as a distinctive and forward-thinking cohort of public intellectuals. This reinterpretation challenges conventional historical perspectives that often pigeonhole its members as mere patriots navigating the intersection of salon traditions and the promotion of "useful science."[102] It introduces another layer of the Society's initiatives, its approach to its members' own public standing as a problem of scholarly recognition.

Throughout this article, I have aimed to demonstrate that the Friends of Sciences occupied the role of genuine public figures in the Polish public sphere of their era. This stature was not solely attributable to their official positions within the authorities; rather, it was rooted in their dynamic relationship with the public. This relationship was nurtured through diverse channels, including public outreach, initiatives aimed to engage the broad public, publications tailored to audience preferences, and notably, public gatherings compared by the contemporaries to theatrical performances. Moreover, the Friends of Sciences consistently endeavored to offer the public nuanced interpretations of their social roles, framing their scholarly mission as an extension of national glory and a matter of public presence rather than a posthumous legacy.

But beyond the question of the Society's public standing in its own right, the analysis reveals the extent to which evolving societal attitudes toward distinc-

101 SKARBEK, Rys zasług naukowych, pp. 263–264.

102 The fact that this was a matter of important argument within the Society, whose members argued about the proper extent of public engagement, was first noticed in: SUCHODOLSKI, pp. 90–127.

tion found expression in their endeavors to establish themselves. While drawing from aristocratic traditions of posthumous recognition through portraiture, busts, and monuments, the Society of the Friends of Sciences simultaneously embraced newer and more egalitarian notions. Notably, the Friends indicated public presence and popular engagement as the primary venue for the realization of their scholarly mission. Eulogies for departed members underscored the nuanced and negotiated approach the Society took toward scholarly renown. Dissatisfied with relegating scholarly achievements to the silent praise of posterity, they equated scholars to war heroes, framing scholarly work as pivotal for nation-building. Moreover, the Society embraced innovative concepts that helped portray living scholars as deserving contemporaneous recognition: the idea of genius, underscoring the meritocratic value of scholarly work, the emphasis on personality, making scholarly figures closer to contemporary audiences, and a direct rejection of confining scholarly renown solely to the realm of posthumous fame.

Bibliography

Unpublished Sources

Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych (AGAD)
sign. 1/199/0/-/62.

Literature

ALBERTRANDI, JAN CHRZCICIEL: Mowa przy zaganieniu czwartego posiedzenia publicznego dnia 16go Listopada 1802 Roku, in: Roczniki TWPN 3 (1804), pp. 254–262.

BENTKOWSKI, FELIKS: O życiu i zasługach Jana Liweta, in: Roczniki TWPN 10 (1817), pp. 150–164.

BERGONZONI, MICHAŁ: Rzecz o życiu i pismach Franciszka Scheidt, in: Roczniki TWPN 9 (1816), pp. 459–470.

BERGONZONI, MICHAŁ: Rzecz o życiu Leopolda Lafontena, in: Roczniki TWPN 10 (1817), pp. 173–193.

BIEŃKOWSKI, TADEUSZ: Szkoły w kulturze staropolskiej: Wnioski i refleksje, in: Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty 25 (1983), pp. 3–14.

BOHUSZ, FRANCISZEK KSAWERY: Życie literackie x. Marcina Poczobuta, in: Roczniki TWPN 9 (1816), pp. 405–419.

BRAUDY, LEO: The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and Its History, Oxford 1986.

BRODZIŃSKI, KAZIMIERZ: Na zgon Xięcia Adama Czartoryskiego Generała Ziem Podolskich, in: Roczniki TWPN 17 (1824), pp. 109–113.

CHODYNICKI, KAZIMIERZ: Albertrandy Jan Chrzciciel, in: Polski Słownik Biograficzny, vol. 1, Kraków 1935, pp. 45–46.

COULDRY, NICK: Media Rituals: A Critical Approach, London 2003.

CREECH, JAMES: Diderot and the Pleasure of the Other: Friends, Readers, and Posterity, in: Eighteenth-Century Studies 11 (1978), 4, pp. 439–456.

CZARNECKI, EDWARD: Rozprawa o przymiotach i usposobieniu się do stanu nauczycielskiego, in: EDWARD CZARNECKI (transl.): Zasady edukacyi i instrukcyi podług Niemeyera, Warszawa 1808, not pag.

CZEPPE, MARIA—WÓJCIK, ZBIGNIEW J.: Staszic (Stasic, Staszyc) Stanisław Wawrzyniec, in: Polski Słownik Biograficzny, vol. 42, Warszawa—Kraków 2003–2004, pp. 540–551.
CZUBATY, JAROSŁAW: The Duchy of Warsaw, 1807–1815: A Napoleonic Outpost in Central Europe, London 2016.
DMOCHOWSKI, FRANCISZEK: Mowa na obchód pamiątki Ignacego Krasickiego, in: Roczniki TWPN 1 (1802), pp. 278–312.
DOPART, BOGUSŁAW: Kultura polskiego romantyzmu: Dynamika i pluralism, in: BOGUSŁAW DOPART (ed.): Środowiska kulturotwórcze czasów oświecenia i romantyzmu, Kraków 2013, pp. 89–108.
DYER, RICHARD: Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society, 2nd ed., London 2004 [1986].
FLESSENKÄMPER, IRIS: From Aristocratic Support to Academic Office: Patronage and University in the Scottish Enlightenment, in: HOLENSTEIN/STEINKE, pp. 101–122.
GETKA-KENIG, MIKOŁAJ: "Najpierwsze przy tronie dostojeństwo"—Napoleoński centralizm a pojęcie elity w Księstwie Warszawskim, in: Kwartalnik Historyczny 120 (2013), 2, pp. 303–326.
GETKA-KENIG, MIKOŁAJ: Pomniki publiczne i dyskurs zasługi w dobie "wskrzeszonej" Polski lat 1807–1830, Kraków 2017.
GETKA-KENIG, MIKOŁAJ: Nagrobek Stanisława Staszica a polityka wizerunkowa Towarzystwa Warszawskiego Przyjaciół Nauk, in: Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki 66 (2021), 3, pp. 31–49.
GOODMAN, JESSICA: Between Celebrity and Glory? Textual After-Image in Late Eighteenth-Century France, in: Celebrity Studies 7 (2016), 4, pp. 545–560.
GRZEŚKOWIAK-KRWAWICZ, ANNA: Dyskurs polityczny Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów: Pojęcia i idee, Toruń 2018.
HOLENSTEIN, ANDRÉ—STEINKE, HUBERT—STUBER, MARTIN: Introduction: Practices of Knowledge and the Figure of the Scholars in the Eighteenth Century, in: ANDRÉ HOLENSTEIN, HUBERT STEINKE et al. (eds.): Scholars in Action: The Practice of Knowledge and the Figure of the Savant in the 18th Century, vol. 1, Leiden—Boston 2013, pp. 1–44.
IHNATOWICZ, IRENEUSZ—MĄCZAK, ANTONI—ZIENTARA, BENEDYKT—ŻARNOWSKI, JANUSZ: Społeczeństwo polskie od X do XX wieku, 4th ed., Warszawa 2005.
JANOWSKI, MACIEJ: The Birth of Intelligentsia, 1750–1831, Frankfurt am Main et al. 2014 (A History of the Polish Intelligentsia, 1).
JOŃCZYK, ANNA: Sentymentalizm a preromantyzm, in: Konteksty Kultury 11 (2014), 3, pp. 205–216.
JURKOWSKA, HANNA: Pamięć sentymentalna: Praktyki pamięci w kręgu Towarzystwa Warszawskiego Przyjaciół Nauk i w Puławach Izabeli Czartoryskiej, Warszawa 2014.
KALLAS, MARIAN: Dzienniki departamentowe w czasach Księstwa Warszawskiego (1808–1815), in: Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego 10 (1971), 1, pp. 5–31.
KIENIEWICZ, STEFAN—WITKOWSKI, MICHAŁ: Niemcewicz (Ursyn Niemcewicz) h. Rawicz Julian, in: Polski Słownik Biograficzny, vol. 22, Wrocław et al. 1977, pp. 771–780.
KOŹMIAN, KAJETAN: Mowa o życiu i pismach x. Ignacego Nagurczewskiego, pp. 233–250.
KRAUSHAR, ALEKSANDER: Towarzystwo Warszawskie Przyjaciół Nauk, 1800–1832: Monografia historyczna osnuta na źródłach archiwalnych, vols. 1–4, Kraków—Warszawa 1900–1906.
KULIGOWSKA-KORZENIOWSKA, ANNA: The Apotheosis of Napoleon in the National Theatre in Warsaw (1807), in: Revue Canadienne des Slavistes 49 (2007), 3–4, pp. 171–184.
LA VOPA, ANTHONY: Conceiving a Public: Ideas and Society in Eighteenth-Century Europe, in: Journal of Modern History 64 (1992), 1, pp. 79–116.
LAFONTAINE, LEOPOLD DE: Pochwała Walentego Gagatkiewicza, in: Roczniki TWPN 7 (1811), pp. 39–62.
LELEWEL, JOACHIM: Przygody w poszukiwaniach i badaniu rzeczy narodowych polskich, Poznań 1858.
LILTI, ANTOINE: The Invention of Celebrity, London 2017.

LIPIŃSKI, TYMOTEUSZ: Zapiski z lat 1825–1831, Kraków 1883.
ŁOJEK, JERZY: Poglądy na rolę prasy w pierwszych latach Królestwa Kongresowego, in: Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego 1 (1962), pp. 70–96.
ŁOJEK, JERZY: Statystyka prasy polskiej okresu 1661–1831, in: Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego 3 (1965), 1, pp. 5–22.
ŁOJEK, JERZY: Problemy rozwoju prasy staropolskiej, vol. 1, Warszawa 1967.
ŁOJEK, JERZY: Polityczna rola prasy polskiej, 1661–1831, in: Kwartalnik Historii Prasy Polskiej 19 (1980), 2, pp. 7–13.
ŁOJEK, JERZY—MYŚLIŃSKI, JERZY—WŁADYKA, WIESŁAW: Dzieje prasy polskiej, Warszawa 1988.
ŁUBIEŃSKI, FELIKS: Pochwała Jana Albertrandego, in: Roczniki TWPN 13 (1820), pp. 1–17.
MALESZEWSKI, PIOTR: Mowa na obchód pamiątki Ignacego Zaborowskiego, in: Roczniki TWPN 2 (1803), pp. 277–291.
MARSHALL, DAVID P.: Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture, Minneapolis et al. 1997.
MATLĘGIEWICZ, TOMASZ: Idee słowianofilskie w warszawskim Towarzystwie Przyjaciół Nauk (1800–1832), in: Athenaeum 33 (2012), pp. 97–112.
MCMAHON, DARRIN M.: Divine Fury: A History of Genius, New York 2013.
MENCEL, TADEUSZ: Udział społeczeństwa w życiu politycznym Królestwa Polskiego w latach 1815–1830 (sejmiki i zgromadzenia gminne), in: Przegląd Historyczny 59 (1968), 4, pp. 629–661.
MICHALSKI, JERZY: Z dziejów Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk, Warszawa 1953.
MORIN, EDGAR: Les stars, Paris 1957.
NIEMCEWICZ, JULIAN URSYN: Śpiewy historyczne z muzyką i rycinami, Warszawa 1816.
OSIŃSKI, LUDWIK: O życiu i pismach Franciszka Dmochowskiego, in: Roczniki TWPN 8 (1812), pp. 120–143.
PAUL, CHARLES B.: Science and Immortality: The Éloges of the Paris Academy of Sciences (1699–1791), Berkeley 1980.
POTOCKI, STANISŁAW KOSTKA: Pochwała Józefa Szymanowskiego, in: Roczniki TWPN 1 (1802), pp. 42–104.
POTOCKI, STANISŁAW KOSTKA: Pochwała Grzegorza Piramowicza, in: Roczniki TWPN 2 (1803), pp. 1–82.
POTOCKI, STANISŁAW KOSTKA: O wymowie i stylu, vol. 2, part 1, Warszawa 1815.
PRAŻMOWSKI, ADAM: Mowa na obchód pamiątki Andrzeja Reptowskiego, in: Roczniki TWPN 4 (1807), pp. 172–179.
SHAPIN, STEVEN: The Man of Science, in: LORRAINE DASTON, KATHERINE PARK (eds.): The Cambridge History of Science. Vol. 3: Early Modern Science, Cambridge 2006, pp. 179–191.
SKARBEK, FRYDERYK: Rys zasług naukowych śp. Xięcia Adama Czartoryskiego, in: Roczniki TWPN 18 (1825), pp. 254–286.
SKARBEK, FRYDERYK: Pamiętniki, Poznań 1878.
SKOROCHÓD MAJEWSKI, WALENTY: Pochwała Jana Krystyna Schucha, in: Roczniki TWPN 12 (1818), pp. 162–181.
SKRODZKI, EUGENIUSZ: Wieczory piątkowe i inne gawędy, ed. by MIECZYSŁAW OPAŁEK, Warszawa 1962.
SUCHODOLSKI, BOGDAN: Rola Towarzystwa Warszawskiego Przyjaciół Nauk w rozwoju kultury umysłowej w Polsce, Warszawa 1951.
SZANIAWSKI, FRANCISZEK KSAWERY: Pamiątka Krzysztofa Wilhelma Chlebowskiego, in: Roczniki TWPN 7 (1811), pp. 339–357.
SZANIAWSKI, FRANCISZEK KSAWERY: Pochwała Bartłomieja Szuleckiego, in: Roczniki TWPN 7 (1811), pp. 152–165.
SZANIAWSKI, FRANCISZEK KSAWERY: Pamiątka Bartłomieja Szuleckiego, in: Roczniki TWPN 8 (1812), pp. 152–165.

TREUGUTT, STEFAN: Napoleon Bonaparte jako bohater polskiego romantyzmu, in: Teksty: Teoria literatury, krytyka, interpretacja 17 (1974), 5, pp. 37–44.
Ustawy Towarzystwa Warszawskiego Przyiaciół Nauk, Warszawa 1802.
WESOŁOWSKI, ADRIAN: Semantyka sfery publicznej na przełomie XVIII i XIX wieku, in: Klio: Czasopismo poświęcone dziejom Polski i powszechnym 70 (2024), 2, pp. 103–130.
WIELISŁAW [EUGENIUSZ SKRODZKI]: Ze wspomnień o Staszicu, in: Tygodnik Ilustrowany 4 (1861), 102, p. 383.
WÓJCICKI, KAZIMIERZ: Pamiętniki dziecka Warszawy i inne wspomnienia warszawskie, vol. 2, Warszawa 1974.
WÓJTOWICZ, ALEKSANDRA: Pałac Staszica jako heterotopia afektywna—refleksja humanistyczna w planowaniu przestrzennym, in: Teksty Drugie (2014), 6 (150), pp. 305–320.
WORONICZ, JAN PAWEŁ: Pochwała Jana N. Kossakowskiego, in: Roczniki TWPN 10 (1817), pp. 12–27.