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## Grottger and His Shadow<sup>1</sup>

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**A**rtur Grottger's famous series of paintings are a canon unto themselves, an ideal subject of research, fixed in place by an interpretative framework (i.e. the structure of the series, its sequence, elements appropriated from iconography, intentions of the artist, position of the audience) established already in the 19th century; but they are not defenseless and resist claims of "theoretical protectionism"<sup>2</sup> on account of their fragmentary nature, the looseness of the structure, and the technique fortifying them against "ultimate explanation" and being read "in a comprehensive manner." The persistence with which generations of researchers have colonized Grottger's oeuvre to plant their quickly fading victory banners on the still living body of art (long live chronology! long live contrast and antithesis! long live slivers of sense!) inspires suspicion that these "pockets of resistance" are only there to confuse the pursuit, so that people find the

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1 The title references Bożena Umińska's *Figure With a Shadow. Portraits of Jewesses in Polish Literature from the End of the 19th Century to 1939* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sic!, 2001).

2 Cf. Anna Burzyńska, "Lekturografia. Filozofia czytania według Jacquesa Derridy," *Pamiętnik Literacki* 1 (2000).

grip of a saber where they were expecting to, but one placed there by a woman dressed up in masculine clothing.

Grottger's work and his biography were shrouded in legend even in his lifetime, whereas his epistolographic legacy came under the control of his fiancée, Wanda Młodnicka née Monné, who introduced far reaching changes to the manuscripts before they went to print. That is probably why Grottger, according to Mariusz Bryl—author of the most recent analysis of the painter's work—ticks all the typical boxes of a “model biographic legend of an artist.”<sup>3</sup> We can easily list them all in one breath: Grottger was a 19th century Polish painter who used his work to further the cause of Polish independence, the characters in his series supposedly reflect the sentiments of the painter himself, Grottger's life bears numerous marks of his deliberate self-stylization (artist-national leader), while his biography contains an easily identifiable watershed moment. The latter is obviously his work on the *Warsaw I* series which he began in 1861. Bryl writes that “even his appearance changed, his clothing and behavior became solemn. To show solidarity with his compatriots, he began wearing a black chimere.”<sup>4</sup> The biography-cum-legend remained incomplete for a very long time, gained new characters, recollections of past events and fragments of conversations. Bryl goes so far as to claim that even some authors writing about Grottger managed to “intertwine” themselves with the artist's legend. This role was played expertly by Wanda Monné, who remained the primary depository of the legend for the rest of her life, the legend she later continued to spin. The grandson of Wanda, Artur Młodnicki, remembers her thus:

Grandmother was at the very top of the family pyramid, she had the last word on all important family matters. [...] First and foremost, she loved the mythology [...] she believed herself the muse without whom Grottger would never amount to anything or would never have [...] painted the paintings he has under her influence. She believed that if it wasn't for her, we wouldn't have had Grottger the painter. [...] Naturally, everything she did was supposed to reinforce that myth. She even wore the black chimere herself.<sup>5</sup>

The appropriation of Grottger's biography was a cross-generational affair: after Wanda Młodnicka, who ordered the destruction of the entire unsold

3 Mariusz Bryl, *Cykle Artura Grottgera. Poetyka i recepcja* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 1994), 326–348.

4 Ibid., 331.

5 Ibid.

print run of the catalogue for the 1906 monographic L'viv exhibition, came her descendants who limited their corrective influence to censoring Grottger's letters and notes before their publication in *Arthur i Wanda. Dzieje miłości Arthura Grottgera i Wandy Monné* [*Arthur and Wanda. On the Relationship of Arthur Grottger and Wanda Monné*].

The young Wanda's diary published therein is considered to this very day to be the most credible and most exhaustive source of insight – aside from his letters to Wanda and his notes – on Grottger's life and creative process. Wanda ended up annexing not only Grottger's legend but also his own voice. Grottger speaks – insofar as Wanda allows him to – on the journal's pages with Wanda's voice, while Wanda herself is a vehicle for the legend. In the soliloquy delivered by Wanda, whom – anticipating, to some extent, his post mortem biography – the artist affectionately called “the professor,” the legend often references Grottger's love of his Motherland: “love for his homeland ran in his blood. It was a gauge against which he measured deeds and people. When a Polish book lacked Polish inclinations, lacked a fondness for tradition and national customs then he considered it unworthy of his time.”<sup>6</sup> Sometimes, the legend tried to imitate Grottger himself: “O Child, if you only knew how this insurrection has lifted my spirit, how it woke me, pulled me from the depths of anguish! Reinvigorated me and inspired me to work!”<sup>7</sup> In an earlier passage, the legend compels Wanda to employ more melodramatic means of expression: “Oh, what passion burned in his voice when he spoke of his impressions and memories of 1863! He always regretted having only his pencils to fight with for Polish independence, oh, how he envied his brother's Siberian exile!”<sup>8</sup>

In the artist's deliberately constructed biography – were we to assume the perspective of Wanda/the professor, Wanda speaking with the voice of legend – there appears from time to time a tone that is slightly too emphatic, the overly sonorous tone of zealous assurance. One example of such a tone can be found in the passage describing how the love of his Motherland “ran in his blood.” Wanda, who was often told she was “more boy than girl,” met Grottger in 1865, at the Shooting Association ball in L'viv. “I looked up,” she noted, “and there was above me this tall figure wearing Polish attire.”<sup>9</sup>

6 Maryla Wolska and Michał Pawlikowski, *Arthur i Wanda. Dzieje miłości Arthura Grottgera i Wandy Monné. Listy—Pamiętniki* (Medyka–Lwów: Biblioteka Medycka, 1928) 1:150.

7 Ibid.

8 Antoni Potocki will later say that Grottger “used his art as weapon,” see Antoni Potocki, *Grottger* (Lwów: H. Altenberg, 1907), 210–211 as quoted in Bryl, *Cykle*, 327.

9 Ibid., 1:131.

On the 50th anniversary of the painter's death, Wojciech Kossak recounted his first meeting with Grottger and, according to Mariusz Bryl, the account is a typical example of others insinuating themselves into the legend (Janusz, Wojciech's father, taught young Artur to draw): "In either 1865 or 1866 [...] my father's workshop [...] was graced with the presence of a young insurrectionist. Slender, vivacious, his profile resembling a bird of prey but his eyes black and gentle, wearing a burka and an insurrectionist russet overcoat; there he was, an embodiment of sprightly and bellicose youth."<sup>10</sup>

Grottger's portraits and self-portraits – he liked to draw himself, even in a cartoonish manner – that employ "Polish attire" are widely known. Both passages mentioned earlier, the entry in young Wanda Monné's journal and Wojciech Kossak's account from 1917, indicate a sort of metamorphosis, a double disguise. Here, "Polish attire" functions as both an outfit/costume for a special occasion (the ball) as well as a sort of patriotic display. This metamorphosis 50 years after the painter's death reveals what was previously hidden (concealed) "under the veneer" of the ball: in Grottger entering his father's workshop, Kossak sees a "consummate masquerade," the image of an insurrectionist. In the monograph on Grottger released in 1886 in Kraków, Stanisław Tarnowski also recounts "those movements, that distinctive outfit."<sup>11</sup> Bołoz tries to persuade us that "we see him wearing only Polish attire in photographs taken between 1860 and 1866."<sup>12</sup> The "Polish attire" did not separate the public from the private.

Heart aflutter, I entered the neighboring room [...] packed with easels and barely started paintings – recounts Władysław Fedorowicz – and Grottger stood there in front of an easel with a palette in one hand, a brush in the other [...] He was wearing typical Polish attire, i.e. tall boots, broad pants, and a chimere with braided ribbons.<sup>13</sup>

But let's get back to books. To Polish books, to be exact.

I don't know how Sacher Masoch's pamphlet on Radziwiłł found its way to our home – frowns Wanda, channeling the legend; "Have you read it?" he asked, agitated. "Not yet." – In one fluid motion, he chuckled the books out the open window. "Then you won't. It's foul drivel, some cursed

10 As quoted in Bryl, *Cykle*, 337.

11 Stanisław Tarnowski, *Artur Grottger* (Kraków: S. Cichocki, 1886), 5.

12 Jan Bołoz-Antoniewicz, *Grottger* (Lwów: n.d., 1910), 220.

13 Ibid., 221-222.

drifter decided to write about Polish customs of which he has not the faintest idea. Remember, child, if you ever come upon this author's works again, don't read them, it's a sin!<sup>14</sup>

Regardless of what the contents of Masoch's pamphlet were, we cannot rid our ears of that "drifter" (in Polish, the essay used the term "zawłoka," a pejorative term which, according to Karłowicz's dictionary of Polish dialects,<sup>15</sup> meant "vagrant," "nomad" – ed.), by definition a stranger, an other, someone worthless, and by implication someone who cannot have a grasp of Polish customs and whose books stray into Polish homes (the pamphlet "found its way") – as does the author himself. Even if that passage is more Wanda's fantasy than reality, why did imaginary Grottger have to react so fiercely and emotionally?

We know quite a lot about what Grottger was reading, his poetic and literary inspirations were studied by a number of scholars, the painter himself provided illustrations to many books published in his era. His illustrations for *The School of the Polish Nobility*<sup>16</sup> represent the Neo-Sarmatism school. The series comprised four watercolor paintings: *First Drills*, *Admonition*, *Excursion*, and *Last Warning*.<sup>17</sup> The reviewer for the Krakow-based periodical "Czas," Lucjan Siemieński, thus described the individual pieces:

One depicts a stripling practicing archery, the second painting portrays him as a strapping lad being reproached by his father after some sort of mischief; the third instalment features the two men on horseback, riding side by side, with the father delivering martial instructions to the son, whereas the fourth painting depicts the youngster as a man grown, kneeling, receiving his final blessings from his father dying on the battlefield.<sup>18</sup>

In his monograph on Grottger, Jan Bołoz-Antoniewicz comments on the series: "No woman either hastens or delays this normal progression of the

14 Wolska and Pawlikowski, *Arthur i Wanda*, 1:150.

15 Jan Karłowicz, *Słownik Gwar Polskich* (Kraków: PAU, 1911), 6:336.

16 The paintings were exhibited as an independent cycle at the 1858 Fine Arts Association Exhibition in Krakow.

17 In the catalogue of the National Museum in Wrocław, the paintings in the series were titled: *Archery*, *Reproach*, *Before the Battle*, and *Father's Blessing*, see: Waldemar Okoń, *Sztuka i narracja. O narracji wizualnej w malarstwie polskim drugiej połowy XIX wieku* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1988), 59.

18 Lucjan Siemieński, "Wystawa Towarzystwa Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie," *Czas* 104 (1858): 1.

male life"<sup>19</sup> and later adds: "In 1894, after looking at the series every day for four months, I was reminded of the polonaise-like rhythm of *The Haunted Manor*: "No women in our abode / *Vivat semper* the bachelor life!"<sup>20</sup>

Scholars investigating the work of Grotter will quickly reach one of the "points of resistance," often called "cracks" or "inconsistencies" in the series. "The narrative continuity breaks between the second and third link, the structure of the series is divided into two antithetical pairs of paintings: the first-illustrating a carefree and safe childhood, while the other portrays tragic, heroic maturity," notes Irena Dżurkowska-Kossowska.<sup>21</sup> A similar interpretation of the series was posited a hundred years prior by Bołoz-Antoniewicz in his passages on transition "from the idyllic to the tragic, from the bright years of childhood to the first, grand sorrow of our lives, to the death of a parent on the field of battle."<sup>22</sup>

Let's take a closer look at the paintings. Admonition and instruction seem to be the common theme for all four pictures: the nobleman – first as child, then as adolescent – appears in a subordinate role, as a not necessarily bright or disciplined student. These scenes of overt humiliation can be treated as an illustration of the rite of passage that the 21-year-old Grotter relived within the confines of his own fantasy in 1858. In the third installment of the series, the young noble, still probably wet behind the ears and inexperienced in combat, has to listen to his father's interminable lectures. The tension of young flesh encased in armor is transferred onto the horse, which stiffens and digs its hooves into the muddy ground. The last warning of the dying father may sound like Kornel Ujejski's *A Father's Prayer at His Son's Christening*: "Let him not know happiness, nor sleep, nor peace, / 'Til he knows victory or in battle / learns the glory of martyrdom."<sup>23</sup> The goal of the rite, according to Michel Tournier, is to separate the boy from the environment he heretofore inhabited, an environment dominated by women, and integrate him with a new, masculine group. For the boy, the rite of passage is

19 Bołoz-Antoniewicz, *Grotter*, 184.

20 Ibid.

21 Irena Dżurkowska-Kossowska, "Koncepcja dzieła cyklicznego w twórczości Artura Grottera" in *Artur Grotter; Materiały z sesji zorganizowanej w 150 rocznicę urodzin i 120 rocznicę śmierci artysty*, ed. Piotr Łukasiewicz (Wrocław: Muzeum Narodowe we Wrocławiu, 1991), 42.

22 Bołoz-Antoniewicz, *Grotter*, 186.

23 Kornel Ujejski, *Poezje Kornela Ujejskiego* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1866), 1-2: 32, as quoted in Krystyna Poklewska, "Grotter a proza" in *Artur Grotter; Materiały z sesji zorganizowanej w 150 rocznicę urodzin i 120 rocznicę śmierci artysty*, 121.

supposed to revalidate his societal status.<sup>24</sup> In all four of the paintings, entry into the masculine world does not happen without friction: the armor does not yet fully cover the warrior. In the words of Maria Janion, “the enchantment with the paternal sphere”<sup>25</sup> is not fully consummated. The process of “revalidation of status” breaks down midway: the dying father sees not a man grown before him, but a sniffling child.

On January 13, 1858, Grottger wrote the following entry in his journal: “Today I feel like nothing, and why is that? Unfortunately, I can’t call myself a man of character, I can’t say to be developing qualities that would contribute to that character! I’m no more than a child!”<sup>26</sup> In the last scene from *The School of the Polish Nobility*, the protagonist does not behave like a noble but rather like a sniveling child or a woman, and bursts into tears.

Insofar as the “idyllic” interpretation of the childhood scenes from the beginning of the century tells us about the enduring rites of passage from boyhood to manhood in a patriarchal society, the emergence of the “joyful, safe childhood” *topos* in contemporary analyses seems to be rather a projection of modern child rearing theories that undermine the absolute, unyielding authority of the Father. Contemporary scholars may have fallen prey to the suggestive opinions of Wanda Monné (the Wanda channeling the Legend) who, as we know, shaped Grottger’s biography to make it fit the popular idea of the bard’s life. The “idyllic, bucolic” childhood theme can be found in her diaries:

When he worked, he often spoke to me about his early life. His “idyllic, bucolic” childhood was also the scene of an unrelenting struggle, his powerful spirit wrestling with his weak body, his physicality nearly giving up under the burden of his mind’s intellectual effort. When he was only 8 years old, he was already drawing for a couple of hours every single day [...], a labor encouraged by his beloved father. He took his lessons with a passion like no other, ambition spurring him ever onwards. He spoke of playing with his siblings, of ridings horses, the latter a pastime for which his father has been preparing him since infancy.—God forbid I would grime after falling down. He harshly punished such displays of weakness,

24 Michel Tournier, *Coq de bruyère* (the passage was quoted in a lecture delivered by Katarzyna Kłosińska at the School of Social Sciences at the Polish Academy of Science’s Institute of Philosophy and Sociology in 2001).

25 Maria Janion, unpublished lecture delivered at a PhD seminar.

26 Arthur Grottger’s journals, entry from January 13, 1858 as quoted in Wolska and Pawlikowski, *Arthur i Wanda*, 1:114

saying, "Boys grow up to be knights. Giving someone a reason to call you a crybaby is tantamount to slapping you in the face."<sup>27</sup>

Pawlikowski describes the father-son relationship in a similar vein: "He was slender for his age, a frail stripling who did not really have the stomach for his father's disciplinarian bent and often fell ill."<sup>28</sup> Bołoz-Antoniewicz also notes that: "unfortunately, he was delicate and feeble since birth. Even back then he often suffered from a sore throat, eczema attacked his face, his arms swelled and itched, like in Vienna in 1855 and twelve years later in Paris, when he was working on *War*."<sup>29</sup> It is possible that after suffering yet another fall from a horse, the 9-year-old Artur painted his first watercolor, *The Execution of a Spy*, portraying the death of an evil father threatening castration.

Grottger was born on December 11, 1837 in Ottyniowice, a year after the nuptials of his parents: Krystyna née Blahao de Chodietow who, as noted by Pawlikowski, "was only sixteen" on the day of the wedding and Jan who was "nearing fifty,"<sup>30</sup> Jan Józef Grottger, protégé of Count Hilary Siemianowski, was a "patriot through and through, a reserve officer until his last breath, rider, hippophile, hunter, painter, a true man of the world;"<sup>31</sup> Jan was the illegitimate child of the Count and a French or Swiss governess named Grottger after whom he was named.<sup>32</sup> As noted by Felicja Boberska née Wasilewska, Hilary treated his only legitimate child, his daughter Laura, very harshly. "The daughter feared him even in infancy. He pushed away all displays of affection she had towards him and often warned her that he «despises sentiment and exaltation»." The convoluted genealogy of the artist forced Bołoz-Antoniewicz and other biographers to proffer numerous reassurances that in

27 Ibid., 1:147.

28 Michał Pawlikowski, "Prolog" in Wolska and Pawlikowski, *Arthur i Wanda*, 1:8.

29 Bołoz-Antoniewicz, *Grottger*, 35.

30 Pawlikowski, "Prolog" in: Wolska and Pawlikowski, *Arthur i Wanda*, 1:5.

31 Ibid.

32 Pawlikowski elucidated Grottger's provenance thusly: "When he was a young man, Count Hilary Siemianowski of the Grzymała coat of arms, heir to vast estates of then Galicia had a natural born son with Miss Grottger, a governess of French extraction who arrived at the estate of the Siemianowski family from Switzerland. The son, Hilary Grottger, given his father's Christian name and his mother's family name, and reared and educated at his father's expense," was Artur's grandfather. Pawlikowski later adds: "Sixty years prior, the elder Grottger's pedigree was something of a secret [...] but in Artur's times, his provenance was a matter of public knowledge." Wolska and Pawlikowski, *Arthur i Wanda*, Annex A, 474.



spite of a German-sounding name, Grottger's father Jan Józef (Pawlikowski will later describe him as an idealist, insurrectionist, and artist) was a "Pole down to his very core."

Another recurring theme in Grottger's biography is his eye-catching superficiality. As recounted by Bołoz, in 1860, when he was already an established artist in Vienna, Grottger was already making his way around the city "in a chimere, cocked hat with sheepskin trimming, swarthy like a Gypsy, slender and lithe like a reed, his eyes aglitter, swaggering through the streets with a huge greyhound at his side, thin and pointy like his master."<sup>33</sup> "From his mother he inherited the Hungarian swarthinness of his body, delicate of limb, with frail bones, shapely, oblong feet and hands, his head small and narrow with a razor-thin nose and skull as if made out of wood,"<sup>34</sup> Bołoz recounts tenderly, while his description of the 1858 watercolor *Fallen Knight* sounds somewhat like a homoerotic confession: "It's his own type, not plucked from history or experience, but borne of poetry and fantasy. How strange it is to look at this face, this handsome profile, the dapper mustache, the fancy goatee, his curly, silken hair. [...] That's no corpse!"<sup>35</sup> A similarly emphatic tone can be found in his description of the missing lithograph depicting the "heroic episode at Malegnano." "Grottger has been employing a specific type of protagonist ever since. His body slender, light, lithe, its movements quick, nimble, full of youthful energy. The artist will reveal its Greek beauty to his audience in the opening images of *Polonia*."<sup>36</sup> Horses drawn by the young Grottger are also slender, light, and lithe; Bołoz notes: "Grottger's horse is lean, long, nervous, anxious, the ultimate result of a long selection process, always smelling the air, trying to suss something out, [...] always ready to vault with the Cherkess into the abyss."<sup>37</sup> In these respects, it's quite different from Kossak's horse: "The horses in Kossak's paintings are of pure but cold blood, well fed, loose, somewhat playful and not too bright, yet still elegant, and something of a *bon vivant* – like its master."<sup>38</sup> Nervous and apprehensive, smelling something on the wind, permanently agitated (hysterical horse?) "ready at any given moment to vault [...] into the midst of savage battle" – that

33 Bołoz-Antoniewicz, *Grottger*, 220.

34 *Ibid.*, 32.

35 *Ibid.*, 189.

36 *Ibid.*, 291.

37 *Ibid.*, 49.

38 *Ibid.*

is Grottger. The concealed masculine/feminine binary (lean/well-fed; nervous/cold blooded) reveals itself in Grottger's work as two opposite psychic elements: heroism and sentimentality. In the words of Bolož, "as one of the ur-themes dominates the other, so does Grottger's work become either masculine or feminine. Both ur-themes are created and develop independently of themselves. They converge and intermingle here and there only briefly, each one develops into a separate filiation of themes and works." Both are melded in a "temporary union" in Grottger's *Polonia*.<sup>39</sup>

Grottger spent his childhood listening to the war stories of his father who fought in the November Uprising, stories which he "undoubtedly knew by heart," like the one recounted by Ludwik Jabłonowski, his father's comrade-in-arms, in his book *Złote czasy i wywczasy* [*The Good Old Days and Holidays*] (L'viv, 1920). Reportedly, in February of 1831, the elder Grottger "facing Warsaw, suddenly cried at the sight of a mysterious, blinding light,"<sup>40</sup> which later turned out to be nothing more than an illumination flare. In another, more dramatic story about the Battle of Wawer, Jabłonowski recounts: "Grottger cursed in French and slid off his horse with an injured thigh; a bugler was at his side as soon as he hit the ground and an ambulance was nearby as well, so in a couple of minutes they had him leaving for Warsaw in a carriage spattered with the blood of the gravely wounded."<sup>41</sup>

In the quoted passages, the elder Grottger inadvertently becomes a comic figure, a caricature of himself. His martial exploits are limited to cursing and exclamations that one may even consider unsoldierly. Jabłonowski juxtaposes his thigh injury with the blood of those who suffered much more serious wounds. The elder Grottger has not ritually concluded the "education of the young nobleman," a prerequisite of his initiation. The fall from his horse and his injury were a prefiguration of his death which in reality had nothing in common with the heroic archetype he lauded. Wanda remembers it thus:

His beloved father died a horrible death. His beloved mount was wounded by a rabid dog. The father cleaned out and cauterized the wound, but during the operation the horse threw itself at him and bit his hand, breaking bones. He struggled for nine months but ultimately succumbed to the illness. Artur was at school in Krakow when his father passed. The manner of his father's death was kept a secret from him for quite a long time.<sup>42</sup>

39 Ibid., 268.

40 As quoted in Pawlikowski, "Prolog" in Wolska and Pawlikowski, *Arthur i Wanda*, 1:9.

41 Ibid.

42 Wolska and Pawlikowski, *Arthur i Wanda*, 1:150.

We don't know when and in what circumstances he learned of his father's death; we can only assume that his stern "Mark my words" from his 1852 letter to Artur (when his son was 15 years old) and his unyielding, harsh tone were ringing in the painter's ears, as he barked out a series of commands: "You were at the Rzeszów market few times, you saw a lot of scenes, some may have stuck with you – try to make them into a couple of sketches;"<sup>43</sup> the same voice that during the holidays in 1855 ordered the young Grottger to draw scenes and take up themes that his friends and patrons of his father were interested in and enjoyed. During his stay with the Larysz-Niedzielski family, Grottger paints the *Sale of a Horse in Śledziejowice* (1855, National Museum in Krakow), a watercolor making extensive use of contrasts that Grottger so enjoyed. Bołoz denotes: "The antithesis of colors and physical types is a sort of prerequisite for Grottger, an eye-catching external symptom of the antitheses of characters, situations, and psychological states."<sup>44</sup>



In the album *Żydzi w Polsce: obraz i słowo* [*Jews in Poland. Images and Words*], the reproduction of the watercolor was accompanied by extensive commentary:

43 Letter to Artur Grottger from his father, dated May 7, 1852 in Wolska and Pawlikowski, *Arthur i Wanda*, 1:11.

44 Bołoz-Antoniewicz, *Grottger*, 181.

In front of an inn in Wieliczka, a group of Jews is engaging Erazm Larysz-Niedzielski, the heir of the Śledziejowice estate, trying to sell him a horse that is visibly quite old, although its appearance suggests past beauty. The neatly saddled mount, coaxed by shouts, clapping, whip cracking, its head bowed, ears lowered – when they should be clipped – trots ridiculously under a Jew dressed head to toe like a hetman. The innkeeper lauds the horse's merits to persuade his critically inclined lord and his bailiff. Grotter witnessed the event when he was a guest in Śledziejowice and transformed it into a grotesque depiction of Polish-Jewish relations, a scene beautifully complemented by a plaque with the misspelled words: "VODKA BEER MEAD" hanging on the side of the inn. In the background we can see Śledziejowice.<sup>45</sup>

The commentary makes a joke out of what was most likely intended to be one, the "eye-catching external antithesis of characters," as the painting revolves around a dishonest transaction (the sale of an old, worn out horse; we can see what good quality mounts should look like in the background of the painting, where the heir's horses are quietly waiting). Not only is the intention of the merchants "contrastive" or "antithetical," especially in light of the horse's true value, but so are their movements, their theatrical gestures and their over-eagerness, their exaggerated appearance and clothing, their crooked legs resembling the emaciated limbs of the horse too old to be of any further use on a farm.<sup>46</sup>

The composition itself – the trot of the horse reflected in the rhythm of the peddlers' limbs – melds the two elements into a whole marred by a specific flaw: the shortcomings of the horse are compensated by the profusion of the Jews' gestures, an overabundance of sense which we have trouble dealing with, as evidenced by the ostensibly neutral work of Marek Rostworowski even to this very day. The Jews of Śledziejowice depicted in Grotter's watercolor do not "stand their ground" like the landowner and his bailiff, two phallic, rigid figures whose potency and power are reflected and magnified in the rhythm of the poplar trees, upright and unyielding stewards of the roadway; they bring

45 Marek Rostworowski, *Żydzi w Polsce: obraz i słowo*, (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Interpress, 1993), 181.

46 In *The Hunter's Rhapsody*, a droll poem he wrote for his fiancée in 1866, Grotter lampoons himself: "Here is Arthur the Brave/How crooked the legs of this knave/With misshapen legs and head/In rebels he inspires dread/Hiding in forest and cave." The poem was furnished with a caricature of Artur as a hunter, standing ramrod straight in high boots with his "misshapen legs." Artur Grotter, a letter to Wanda Monné dated March 13, 1866 as quoted in Wolska and Pawlikowski, *Arthur i Wanda*.

a measure of order into the chaos of the transaction: they belong—as does the left side of the scene—to the culture and tradition of order, the culture of the Polish country estate, of which the columns comprising the inn's arcade, weak and frail like the legs of the emaciated nag or the feverish Jews, are only a poor copy. But this game of reflection, repetition, and contrast has one more player, the shadows: tense and compact, the shadows cast by the prospective buyers are starkly different from those cast by the Jew astride the horse and his helpers, the latter spilling into an arabesque of two similar shapes: neither horse, nor camel. Like the Devil of von Chamisso, the shadows of the feverish peddlers are figures lacking “any distinguishing features.”<sup>47</sup> They are quivering and amorphous, like the shadow of the Wandering Jew penned by Paul Gavarni for Eugène Sue's 1844 novel under the same name. As Lavater teaches us, and what Stoichiță reconfirms in *A Short History of the Shadow*, is that “what the person conceals, the shadow reveals.”<sup>48</sup>

The landowner and his bailiff, “standing straight and tall”<sup>49</sup> witness a spectacle of the grotesque body. “The classical body is closed, static, and contains a person. The grotesque body is open, multifaceted, manifold, prone to mutation. Grotesque is related otherness, to a fascination with identity marred with repulsion. Grotesque indicates the feminine.”<sup>50</sup> It also indicates the Jew, another important figure of 19th century exclusionary discourse.<sup>51</sup>

The Śledziejowice watercolor can be considered a record of reasons dictating the inability of incorporating the Jews into spheres we consider our own: their attire, their horse riding in incorrect shoes<sup>52</sup> or other anatomical details, like their bandy legs and their distinct gait, different from the way with which members of Polish nobility carry themselves and revealing them as afflicted

47 Victor Ieronim Stoichiță, *A Short History of the Shadow*, (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), 111.

48 Ibid., 159.

49 The list of figures standing “straight and tall” in 19th century iconography and literature is incredibly long; even the “ideal” described by Stanisław Tarnowski is “standing straight and tall with a slightly crooked leg.”

50 Anne-Marie Christine, “Rhétorique et typographie, la lettre et le sens,” *Revue d'esthétique*, 1-2 (1979): 297-322.

51 Following in Sander Gilman's footsteps, Bożena Umińska comments on the phenomenon: “The woman represented [...] an inclusive depiction of the Other, a portrayal that can be incorporated in spheres we consider our own, if only because women are essential to reproduction. Jews, on the other hand, were the very image of the Other, someone who can be excluded as they are not in any sense indispensable,” Umińska, *Figure*, 37.

52 Irena Turnau, “Ubiór żydowski w Polsce w XVI-XVIII w.,” *Przegląd Orientalistyczny* 3 (1987): 309.

with the so-called Jewish foot. As Gilman notes,<sup>53</sup> analysis of Jewish sexuality always leads to accentuating the otherness of the Jew, the object of menace. In the 19th Century, medical discourse monopolized the rhetoric of otherness in its treatment of the Jewish body. In late 18th century, the foot typical for “second-rate citizens” of the new nation states became the pathogenic organ to look out for. The Jewish foot stigmatizes all who suffer from it as infected with innate ineptitude and excludes them from society. In 1804, a sketch published by Joseph Roher, depicting the role of Jews in the Austrian Monarchy, clearly emphasized their frail physique, a trait quickly identifiable by their “crippled, deformed feet.” The leading accusation pertained to the Jews’ service in the army. In stateless Poland, this translated into exclusion from history grounded in a trinity almost Oedipal in nature: Fatherland, Knight, and horse.

Maria Janion dedicated an extensive study to the undesirable presence of Jewish heroes in Polish heroic discourse.

Heroic and martial bearing or behaviors were considered to be absent among Israelites; their “nature” was generally thought to be careful, cowardly, timid, “disposed” towards escape and hiding in the face of adversity, their dislike towards military service was to be “innate,” while their cosmopolitanism and egoism made it impossible for them to align themselves with a specific motherland and sacrifice for the good of a greater cause. By his nature, the Jew was predestined for the role of spy and traitor. “Jews in the military” or “Jewish formations” were a perennial punchline in a variety of jokes and caricatures.<sup>54</sup>

The elder Kossak’s *Jew on a Horse* was also a part of the repertoire of taunts and mockery. The Jew depicted in the painting (National Museum, Krakow) not only rides the horse bareback but also smokes a pipe. In Rostworowski’s album, the painting is presented with commentary that tries its best to alleviate the illustration’s openly anti-Semitic overtones:

This humorous portrayal evokes a nursery rhyme told to children playing “horsey” with their parents: *There rides a master, on his horsey faster, / There rides a hick, on his horsey quick, / There rides a Jew, on his horsey askew, / And after him Jewesses, making awful messes / Oy vey!* As they drew towards the final verse, the parents shook their knees with increasing force, resulting in the child

53 Sander L. Gilman, *L'autre et le moi: stéréotypes occidentaux de la race, de la sexualité et de la maladie* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1996), 163–164.

54 Maria Janion, “Polscy Machabeusze,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, April 16–17, 2001, 18.

falling off. The general belief was that the Jews were poor horse riders who wobble in their saddles.<sup>55</sup>

How different equestrian portraiture was for representative figures we can see in the case of the 1861 post-mortem portrait of Berek Joselewicz, the legendary founder of the “Jewish cavalry regiment,” hero of the Battle of Kock of 1809, and “funereal character” in true Romantic fashion, painted by an unknown author after a likeness drawn up by Janusz Kossak. Maria Janion writes: “The inclusion of a Jew into this mythos required the suppression of entrenched stereotypes about the military, war, combat, and losing oneself in the struggle for freedom, until death if necessary.”<sup>56</sup>

The one thing that separates both equestrian portraits is death. Berek Joselewicz is accorded all the insignia of his status: the uniform of the 5th Mounted Rifles Regiment, the Legion of Honor on his chest and a cutlass in his hand, reflecting Kraszewski’s famous line about “acquiring civic rights through sacrifice,”<sup>57</sup> including the right to properly ride horses. Heroic death nullifies the difference – for a moment, Berek loses his Otherness. His stance and the beautiful mount are all part and parcel of a typical portrait of a valiant leader. His symbolic “enfranchisement” takes place somewhere between Grottger’s 1863 woodcut, *Death of Insurrectionist General Czachowski*, and Henryk Pillati’s 1867 oil painting *Death of Berek Joselewicz in the Battle of Kock* (National Museum, Warsaw), the latter patterned after the former.

Grottger himself modeled his scene after a woodcut by Hans Ulrich Frank from the *Thirty Years’ War* series. “He modified the original in order to, on one hand, imbue the death of the famous insurrectionist with a measure of nobility and highlight the savagery of his killers on the other.” He doubled the number of the general’s enemies and wiped any traces of terror from his face. As noted by Mariusz Bryl: “He knew full well that the act of heroizing a character is always spoiled by any indication that the character was involved in any sort of collaboration with the detested enemy.”<sup>58</sup> That is why the Polish hero had to be mortally wounded before falling off the horse and into enemy hands.

Pillati’s Berek Joselewicz finds himself confronted by three adversaries, with a fourth one, mounted on a horse, riding towards him from the background. The death of the Polish-Jewish champion is a superfluity of heroism, with his last blow looking somewhat like a public pledge: with

55 Rostworowski, *Żydzi w Polsce*

56 Janion, “Machabeusze,” 20.

57 “Sacrifice is the best method of acquiring civil rights,” as quoted in Janion, “Machabeusze,” 20.

58 Bryl, *Cykle*, 63.



his last breath, kneeling, he turns to the audience. His inclusion into the nation's collective history may happen only under specific conditions. In another Pillati painting, *The Funeral of the Five Killed at the February 27, 1861 Manifestation in Warsaw* (National Museum, Krakow), the historic "confederation of all faiths and classes" is seen spilling out of the Church of the Holy Cross in the equalizing rhythms of isocephaly; still, as noted by Kazimiera Szczuka,<sup>59</sup> a group of Jews, with mouldy faces and clothes, stands out from the crowd. The Jews, although participants in the mourning, have been visually singled out, a mute Other with four faces. Another painting from the same period, *The Funeral of Five Victims of the 1861 Warsaw Manifestation* (National Museum, Krakow), created by Aleksander Lesser in 1867, a painter born into a family of assimilated Jewry, transforms the communal prayer into a collective portrait: next to one another, immediately recognizable to contemporary audiences, stand Archbishop Fijałkowski and Rabbis Ber Miesels and Markus Jastrow.

Grottger also placed a group of *Warsaw Jews* on one of the panels making up *Warsaw I* (it is generally assumed that the scene on this particular panel refers to the funeral of Archbishop Fijałkowski that took place in 1861).

It's hard to agree with Mariusz Bryl that the portrait of Ber Meisels reflects the "historical veracity of the figure."<sup>60</sup> The rabbi looks more like the wrathful prophets of the Old Testament and seems to fit a type, reflecting depictions widespread among the general population. In the words of Tamar Garb: "The Jew functions as a sum of stereotypical cultural projections that describe him, put him on display, and incessantly reproduces him."<sup>61</sup> This hypothesis is supported at the very least by Stanisław Tarnowski's admiration of the "distinct typicality of these Eastern faces" and "Grottger's beautiful idea."<sup>62</sup>

For people trying to interpret it, *Warsaw I* is a series bearing a flaw – something about it chafes us, rubs us the wrong way. The assertion that it's "inconsistent and contains ideological and compositional defects" had been stubbornly repeated ever since Bołoz-Antoniewicz.<sup>63</sup> Only Mariusz Bryl managed

59 A notion articulated at the aforementioned seminar at the School of Social Sciences.

60 Bryl, *Cykle*, 56.

61 Tamar Garb, "Modernity, Identity, Textuality," in *The Jew In The Text. Modernity and the Construction of Identity*, ed. Linda Nochlin and Tamar Garb, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 28

62 Tarnowski, *Artur*, 14.

63 He writes: "The first half consists of four panels, while the other has three. The first images in each half gravitate towards the right side, the last ones towards the left," 347, and links this division to differences in contents of both halves of the series (religious-solidarity-related // martyrologic-heroic), see Dżurkowska-Kossowska, "Koncepcja," 46.



to pull them together into a consistent whole by organizing all the elements of the series into an apse-like arrangement, a sort of panorama enveloping the audience.<sup>64</sup> According to Bryl, focusing the gaze on the representatives of the peasants and nobles (Plate III, *A Peasant with Nobles*) indicates the historic “confederation of the classes”: “The peasant looks up at the standard he holds, while both nobles look «inwards», nothing attracts their gaze, their closed eyelids communicating their engrossment in the significance of the moment, a reflection that needs to be protracted *ad infinitum*.”<sup>65</sup>

From the perspective of “the significance of the moment,” the figures of the Jews seem to be doubly out of place. They do not “look inwards” and it’s hard to say that “nothing attracts their gaze.” The eyes of the last person in the rabbi’s entourage are clearly looking at the person looking at the painting, trying to engage them. The first can be seen talking to the rabbi. Bryl adds: “In the background, between the heads of the rabbi and the Jew on the right-hand side we can see the face of the fourth Jew casting an evidently anxious glance to his right, looking beyond the imagined space. Undoubtedly some danger, something unexpected and menacing is lurking therein. Thus prepared, the person viewing the painting is ready to experience the next scene, the meeting with “the first victim” (the fifth panel).”<sup>66</sup> The proverbial apprehension of the Jewish figures (similar in that regard to the nervous and apprehensive Grottger horse, “perpetually smelling something on the wind”) excludes them from experiencing the pathetic symbiosis of the Polish community. Speech results in the exclusion from a silent community.

Mariusz Bryl calls The chapter dedicated to exploring *Sanctuary*, the fifth panel of Grottger’s *Polonia* series, “Sanctuary: The Jew That Speaks.”<sup>67</sup> As the author writes, the title is a paraphrase of Wojciech Suchocki’s *A Horse That Speaks*. The anti-Semitic context of the title is further reinforced by the interchangeability of the Jew and the horse implied in Grottger’s Śledziejowice illustration.

Let’s take a closer look at the figure of the Jew in *Sanctuary*. The Jewish innkeeper runs up to the insurrectionists with his son, to warn them of approaching enemy troops. His face is twisted with terror, while his gestures and behavior emphasize the urgency of the matter. The reaction

64 Bryl, *Cykle*, 170.

65 Ibid., footnote no. 10, 161.

66 Ibid., 165.

67 Ibid., 30.

of the main insurrectionist character is what's most striking about it – he gazes intensely in the direction pointed out by the Jew but does not share in his emotional experience.



The woman standing next to the insurrectionist “looks apprehensively in the direction of the impending danger but she is not afraid for her own life like the Jew is. Instead she frets for the life of the insurrectionist.”<sup>68</sup> The Grotter scene was patterned after two paintings: Robert Smirke’s *The Earl of Sandwich Refusing to Abandon His Ship During the Battle of Solebay* (ca. 1800) and Josef Dannhauser’s *The Rich Spendthrift*, painted around 1836 (also known as *The Rich Man and Lazarus*).

Aside from analogies in composition, character arrangement, and similarities in the characters’ gestures, we can quickly identify differences in “speaking” characters between the pictures. In Smirke’s painting, the Earl speaks with a young soldier. In Danhauser’s painting, the old beggar, half-hidden behind the curtain, is asking the amused *bon vivants* for money. Surprised, Bryl

68 Ibid.

posits a question: "How did it happen that the handsome young man, a soldier no less, was transformed into an old Jew if Grottger was intent on remaining as faithful as possible to the original painting? Why, for example, was the soldier not replaced with a farm hand or even an insurrectionist, running up to his comrades to deliver grave news?"<sup>69</sup> The answer can be found in Danhauser's painting: before becoming an old Jew, the young soldier also had to pass the stage of being a beggar (a vagrant?). Metamorphosis in the other direction was simply not possible.

In the *Polonia* series, the interchangeable pair of the Jew and horse is augmented with the woman – another interchangeable element. As noticed by Katarzyna Kłosińska,<sup>70</sup> in *Sanctuary*, both the woman and the Jew are bound together by the sheer terror enveloping them, bound by a terror which knows, and thus speaks, like one of the Jewish figures in the panels of *Warsaw I*.

From the perspective of dramatic narrative, scenes featuring Jews herald the culmination of events: *First Victim* in *Warsaw I* and *The Defense of the Manor* in *Polonia*. In the latter, as noticed by Monika Grodzka,<sup>71</sup> two separate chronologies can be said to coexist: the heroic chronology and the chronology of the Jew and the woman. The two latter figures are united by over-exaggerated gesticulation and expression: a community of gesture. The hunch of the Jew is reflected in the woman recoiling away: what he already knows, she begins to comprehend. The slant of their shoulders, the line of their bodies, and primarily their wide-legged stance – similar to the pose of the horse peddlers from Śledziejowice – are strikingly symmetrical, and unexpectedly so. The location of the woman is fairly unnatural, we cannot immediately see her foot, sticking out far beyond the hem of her skirts. The insurrectionist's right leg nearly stomps on her foot, barring anyone from reaching out to her; his lowered rifle, aimed at the "others," pushes the Jewish elder and his child away from the country estate. For them, sanctuary remains unreachable.

In 1886, Stanisław Tarnowski describes this scene in the context of exclusionary discourse: "Breathless and terrified, the Jew informs the soldiers that the Russians are close [...] but the haste and dread of the informant, yet the brilliant, proud, serene courage of the insurrectionist [...] an expression of persevering resolution, the

69 Ibid.

70 A notion articulated at the aforementioned Maria Janion seminar.

71 Bryl, *Cykle*.

cold blood, and the hate that permeate his gaze as he fixes it on the enemy.”<sup>72</sup> Krystyna Kłosińska rightly noted that in Bryl’s book, the Jew finds himself at the lowest tier in the hierarchy of entities. Even the dog, “the loyal companion of the valiant insurrectionists,” as it’s called by the quoted author, looks at the approaching Russian menace “with fear but also with great obstinacy.”

Grottger often used characters defined by qualities such as doggedness, self-control, tranquility. They had beautiful bodies, their figures ramrod straight, their shapely calves clad in top boots (“Shiny lacquered boots wrap around the rounded calves of the young insurrectionists,” to quote Uniłowski<sup>73</sup> and pleats of leather arranged like wounds.) The idealization of the masculine body in Grottger’s work, his overinvestment in the masculine body, immobile and confined within the pathetic gestures against dramatic or tragic events, was commented upon and examined already in the 19th century.<sup>74</sup> The insurrectionists clumped together in *The Battle*, the fourth panel of *Polonia*, resemble, in a way that’s distant and somewhat masked by contemporary costume, the works of Jean-Louis David (Grottger’s father was a student of David in Vienna; the title card of the 1863 series *Polonia* also bears neoclassicist stylings). Similar, unnaturally twisted bodies, stripped of their symbolic costume

72 Tarnowski, *Artur*, 17.

73 Zbigniew Uniłowski, *Człowiek w oknie* (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1957).

74 Grottger himself was fully aware of the physical perfection and the idealization of the male body in his work. He describes the main character of *The Draft Lottery* (1866–67), the third panel of *War*, in the following words: “The protagonist of my current painting [...] is so handsome, never before have I created anyone this beautiful. Apolline, calm, filled with male pride,” Artur Grottger, letter to Wanda Monné, dated October 16, 1886, as quoted in: Wolska and Pawlikowski, *Arthur i Wanda*, 1:411. Antoni Potocki said that Grottger’s protagonists are “beautiful with the hopeless and fatal allure of martyrdom.” cf. Potocki, *Grottger*, 118. The role of the “identification matrix” of Grottger’s characters is best seen in the political polarization of the 1920s. For the right wing, Grottger’s insurrectionists were the embodiment of the male national ideal: “Wonderful types, of supreme Polish stock: broad chests, unbending necks, wind-blown burkas, eagle eyes.” Cf. Eligjusz Niewiadomski, *Malarstwo polskie XIX i XX wieku* (Warszawa: Wydawn. M. Arcta, 1926), 95. One significant analogy for the composition of the scene was discovered by Stanisław Czekalski in a French engraving from the 19th century entitled *Woman Accused of Magic in the Middle Ages Braving Through Torture Without a Trace of Pain*: the place of the handsome recruit is here occupied by a woman. Cf. Stanisław Czekalski, “Grottger, czarownice i metoda. O *Losowaniu rekrutów*, intencji artystycznej i dialogu międzyobrazowym. Uwagi na marginesie książki Mariusza Bryla,” *Artium Quaestiones* 9 (1998): 203–228. Similar analogies will surely be abundant, for example in academic art; one only has to bring up Jean-Leon Gérôme’s *Phryne Before the Areopagus*, wherein a naked woman becomes the object of an erotic game of gazes played by men surrounding her in a semicircle. The French illustration brought up by Czekalski points to a secondary, concealed aspect of Grottger’s panel: torture and pain.



("Polish attire") can be found in the contemporary works of Zofia Kulik (*Archives of Gestures*, 1987-1990); her naked model – a Grottggerian *écorchée* – is forced to incessantly repeat heroic gestures: ridiculous meaningless gestures that reveals a masochistic streak in its 19th century archetype as well as in Polish culture, founded upon the mythology of sacrifice and martyrdom. The conclusions that Ewa Lajer-Burcharth, the author of a very insightful analysis of Kulik's oeuvre, arrived at can also be applied to the work of Grottger: not only is the iconography of his series masochistic, but the psychosexual logic concealed by the formal qualities of his compositions also has a logic of masochism.<sup>75</sup> After analyzing Kulik's photomontages, the American scholar assumes the perspective laid out by Deleuze who treated masochism as a peculiar type of formalism (suspended motion, lack of narration, extensive

75 Cf. Ewa Lajer-Burcharth, "Old Histories: Zofia Kulik's Ironic Recollections," in *New Histories*, ed. Milena Kalinowska (Boston: The Institute, 1996). Many thanks to Dr. Izabela Kowalczyk for sharing the text with me.

stylizations), rather than erotic or moral economy (of pleasure/pain or guilt/punishment).

The “freezing of characters” (“cold blood”) within the confines of the imagined actions, like in *Sanctuary*, or immobilizing them and pushing them into a tight mass of combatants in *The Battle*, the lack of gestures, and the static nature of *Polonia*, these are all evidently Deleuzian tropes. We would also find them if we were to look for analogies between Grottger’s panels and David’s canvases.

The character of Romulus in David’s *The Intervention of the Sabine Women* (1799, Louvre, Paris) is very important in the context of the examined scenes; his body is smooth and polished, echoing Lajer-Burcharth,<sup>76</sup> who also thoroughly analyzed the output of the French painter. A patriarchal reconstruction of male identity destabilized after *la Terreur*, as well as an attempt at restoring the male subject, and David himself, as the privileged signifier, perform a similar role in the composition as the insurrectionist does in *Sanctuary*. We can consider him a visual, narcissistic representation of Grottger himself, the idealized bodies of his male characters compensating for his own flaws: his illegitimate genealogy, marred by the feminine, the very unheroic death of his father (a father who talked the talk but was no valiant soldier), his delicate feet and misshapen legs, or his own participation in the Uprising with “just his pencils.” Therefore, the hunched, “melancholic” figure of the Jew featured in *Sanctuary* can be considered to represent his repressed past, spoiling the heroic character of the scene with the touch of defeat.

There are many more surprising analogies between the works (and even biographies) of the two artists. I would like to highlight only those that can be considered the most significant for both scenes. Case in point: David’s *Intervention* and one of the panels of Grottger’s *Battle* feature a specific detail: a dead man laying at the feet of the combatants, his body half-concealed by their legs.<sup>77</sup> Both feature erect, taut characters standing straight and

76 Ewa Lajer-Burcharth, *Necklines. The Art of Jacques-Louis David After the Terror* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). Subsection 8 of Chapter 3, *The Revolution «Glacée»* was especially inspiring for me,” 216–235. Ewa Lajer’s work suggests a hint that may be particularly important in interpreting the oeuvre of Grottger as a traumatic attempt at constructing one’s own identity. Stanisław Tarnowski compared Grottger to Słowacki. A vagrant, he called him, “a stranger in his own motherland.” Given Grottger’s posthumous Legend, the attempt turned out to be successful.

77 An additional, iconographic analogy that is important to my deliberations was identified by Mariusz Bryl. He writes: “Kaulbach’s illustration features an identical theme, but the valiant soldier is replaced by a terribly frightened girl, who hides from danger in a tight circle made up by her companions.” The quote discusses Wilhelm von Kaulbach’s *Faithful Eckart* (ca. 1800) from the *Goethe-Galerie* cycle. see: Bryl, *Cykle*, 28, footnote 18.

t all in the foreground (in the *Intervention* it's Romulus with his back to us, in *Battle* it's the insurrectionist with his lowered rifle. The bodies of those still alive straining for that final struggle is, according to Lajer-Burcharth, the corporeal ideal in a state of erection: immune to loss.

But the narrative of *Polonia* continues, culminating in the defeat depicted in *The Battlefield* (panel nine). The identity briefly made whole is shattered and fragmented; what is repressed returns as the "other," yields and collapses under the weight of the female, and arranges itself in another narrative, one that the male, heroic side (the side of Legends) simply cannot internalize.

*Translation: Jan Szelągiewicz*