

MAGDALENA KOWALSKA

Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu*



<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4942-5598>



Emigration in Konstanty Gaszyński's Articles Published in "Le Mémorial d'Aix"

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to describe the presence of the phenomenon of emigration in Konstanty Gaszyński's French articles published in "Le Mémorial d'Aix" (1837–1841). The Polish writer recalls the November Uprising and the first experiences of his exile in Belgium, he explores Provence as a land of emigration from ages and introduces immigrants other than those of Polish nationality in a world represented through his short stories and press articles. Gaszyński's main interests focus on historical and urban topics. The content analysis and the remarks about the status of the narrator show that it is the land and culture of Provence that is much often marked by melancholy than the evocation of Polish themes, which are vivid and joyful. Even if more emotional observations about the immigrant life are included, they are indirect, as they are mediated for instance by the voices from precedent ages or mentioned in the footnotes. The presentation leads to the conclusion that the freshness that Gaszyński brings to the Polish Romantic emigration narrative concerns its depiction as less dramatic and sorrowful but also as more universal (e.g., mysterious in the Romantic spirit, experienced not uniquely by the Polish nation) in manner thanks to the combination of two plans, the historical and contemporary, of migration, and his autocreation as the local patriot and the ironic remarks about the rising touristical perspective.

* Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu, Wydział Humanistyczny, Instytut Literaturoznawstwa
ul. Fosa Staromiejska 3, 87-100 Toruń
e-mail: mkowalska@umk.pl

This study was supported by the grant 2591/2020: *Echoes of the nineteenth-century Polish uprisings in the south of France: journalism, poetry, and personal documents* from „The Excellence Initiative — Research University” programme of Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Poland.

Introduction

Romantically speaking, one might say about Konstanty Gaszyński that even though his star belongs to various constellations, it has never shone in full light on the sky of any hemisphere. His name is referred to in the context of the poetry of the November Uprising, Sarmatism, Italianism and, above all, the relations between Poland and Provence, but it is also mentioned in the biographies and interpretations of the works of Zygmunt Krasiński. His work as a translator is sometimes appreciated as well. Despite the frequent, but unimposing and unfathomable presence of Gaszyński — the author using two languages and testing his powers in poetry, prose as well as, less often, in drama — in the Polish literary research, there still is not even a monographic outline of his texts (compare *Lyszczyna* 2000). His emigration period of life sparked the interest of Polish literary scholars (see *Ziejka* 1977; 1986; *Chruściński* 2004; *Kowalska* 2015), but the main obstacle in its accurate assessment (apart from materials not yet obtained from archives) consists in the still undetermined complete list of Gaszyński's texts published by the press in the south of France. Furthermore, they would also need to be the object of an in-depth analysis allowing for them to be classified among the lines of romantic — not only Polish — prose.

The main interpretative problem in my paper will involve the phenomenon of emigration precisely in the French texts by Gaszyński published in “Le Mémorial d’Aix” which he edited. The line of the journal, both according to ‘Prospectus’ from the 31st October 1837¹ and the summary of the two-year period of publication from the 26th October 1839², was to restrain from political matters. Its beginning is associated with the romantic movement

¹ “[...] rester étranger aux discussions politiques” (*Aubin* 1837, 31.10: 1). The journal content can be accessed through the page of *Les Méjanes. Bibliothèques et archives d’Aix-en-Provence*: [https://bibliotheque-numerique.citedulivre-aix.com/records/?refine\[Categories\]\[\]=Presse+ancienne%24%24%24Le+M%C3%A9morial+d%27Aix+%281837-1944%29](https://bibliotheque-numerique.citedulivre-aix.com/records/?refine[Categories][]=Presse+ancienne%24%24%24Le+M%C3%A9morial+d%27Aix+%281837-1944%29) [access: 12.07.2022].

² “Etrangers à la politique et aux passions du moment qui aveuglent quelquefois les hommes les plus raisonnables [...]” (*Gaszynski* 1839e, 26.10: 1).

of creating regional journals³ and according to their main idea was to present local affairs.⁴ The layout of the “Mémorial d’Aix”, this four-page weekly, was as follows: on the first page a summary of both national and local events, documents, e.g., acts of institutions such as the Court, then scientific and literary articles, miscellaneous and announcements on the last page. Gaszyński’s articles in question were most often published on the second or third page. These are literary articles in which one can see the narrator’s compatibility with the character of the author.

It is possible to perceive the emigration theme in „Mémorial d’Aix” from several perspectives. The first and most obvious one is that I will present texts of the author who, at the time of their publication, had been living in France for several years as an immigrant. Therefore, in Gaszyński’s articles, we may expect references to his status, memories of his homeland, stories about the adventures involving the fate of soldiers and refugees and presenting the characters of other Polish-immigrants in France. Secondly, my aim is to focus on how the status of an immigrant functions in his works as a filter for perceiving the region, its history, political, economic, and demographic aspects of living in the south of France, as well as the contemporary urban, artistic, and tourist phenomena. Thirdly, presenting the entire region seems equally interesting — the territory of Provence has been a destination for people moving between the south and north, east, and west of Europe for centuries; the history of cities and the changing boundaries of territorial units testifies to this turbulent history. Will characters of other nationalities, who as well settled in the region as immigrants, in past or present, also find a place in Gaszyński’s texts? Perhaps an analysis of several examples will present new aspects concerning the issue of immigration in the analyzed material.

Uprising and Poland

A story about an event that was deciding in terms of Gaszyński’s life in exile⁵ is the article *Les Deux Prisonniers d’état*. (*Souvenir de la dernière révolution de Pologne 1830*) and was written in 1834 but published a few years later — on April 25, 1840. The story with a “memoir” subtitle is though a poetic and not a documentary description of the November

³ See:

Ces jeunes gens eurent l’orgueil de poétiser la ville d’Aix, et de créer en Provence un mouvement artistique, analogue à celui de Toulouse, avec sa “Revue du Midi”, fondée en 1833. Aussi s’associèrent-ils à la tentative de décentralisation littéraire, qui fut faite en 1834 dans la petite ville d’Apt. A cette initiative est due certainement la création, en 1837, du “Mémorial d’Aix”, bientôt suivi de l’“Ere Nouvelle”, des “Annales Religieuses et Littéraires d’Aix”, de la “Provence”. (Latreille 1914: 84)

Compare Albiison 1997: 350–351.

⁴ Compare Gaszynski 1839e for the examples of such local affairs; see also Bouvier 1983: 5:

[Journaux locaux] s’intéressent plus aux crimes passionnels qu’aux grands événements de la vie politique; un tableau très précis et nuancé de la vie quotidienne dans une ville, mais surtout pour révéler des façons de vivre, de sentir, des mentalités et des opinions à une certaine époque.

⁵ I will not concentrate on Gaszyński’s biography as the insurgent and bard of November Uprising, typical as well as praiseworthy though, see more about his poetical creation in the days of uprising: Lyszczyna 2000: 67–77 and about his journey from Lithuania to the West of Europe and his notes from this period: Lyszczyna 2019: 307–312.

Uprising.⁶ We may infer that the author's goal was more to stimulate the recipient's emotions, thanks to introducing fast-paced action and to focusing on the phenomena of sound and image, than to help a French reader understand the circumstances of the war events being described. The rhythm of the opening paragraphs is marked by the following cries: "The hour of revenge has struck!", "to arms!", and "freedom!", multiplied as an echo carrying the cries of a crowd into Warsaw at night, which the narrator encourages to look at in a statement addressed directly to the readers: "Look [...]" and which he describes as follows:

It was a beautiful winter night, illuminated by the moonlight, no cloud darkened the horizon, all the streets of Warsaw were filled with people shouting: to arms! Is there a more beautiful and sublime moment than one when enslaved people awake and break free from the shackles of despotism while singing of freedom! (Gaszynski 1840a, 25.04: 2)⁷

The solemn mood of the story's initial general passages, in its second part turns into a typically romantic atmosphere of secrets and mysteries concerning the identity of an individual character — a prisoner — and rumours about his posthumous haunting at one of the defensive buildings. The story of the character remains unknown — was he waiting for death? Did he choose exile? Regardless of his fate, there is one guiding principle that defines his existence, and it is revealed in his words: "I will die as I have lived, faithful to my homeland" (Gaszynski 1840a, 25.04: 3).⁸

Another of Gaszyński's texts, also mainly touches upon Polish topics, and was written a year later than the previously analyzed piece and has a different form. On September 14, 1839, readers of "Le Mémorial d'Aix" had the opportunity to read the Pole's article in the form of a letter addressed to an undefined French friend: *Lettres sur la Pologne adressées à un Français*, and the subtitle introduced the text's main theme: *Les Paysans*. In terms of genre it is similar to "les mœurs et coutumes" which was popular among romantic travelers (see Carnevali 2009: 175–177), however, in his work, the author does not give up the poetization of the vision of the Polish people. Also worth noting is Gaszyński's interesting strategy of sparking the interest of readers in this topic by presenting the addressee of the letter as a devoted listener to a story about Polish culture that he finds fascinating:

You love Poland, you are keenly interested in everything related to this country: you dance our mazurek beautifully and sing our national melodies with such taste and so correctly that one might think that you were born on the banks of the Vistula or Pilica. [...] when I entertained you with our customs, you listened to my story with great attention and interest [...]. (Gaszynski 1839a, 14.09: 3)⁹

⁶ Visible only in the biography of Piotr Wysocki included in the first footnote of the story (Gaszynski 1840a, 25.04: 2).

⁷ "C'était une belle nuit d'hiver, éclairée des brillans rayons de la lune, aucun nuage n'ombrageait l'horizon, toutes les rues de Varsovie étaient remplies de peuple qui criait: aux armes! Y a-t-il un moment plus beau et plus sublime que celui où le peuple opprimé s'éveille et brise les fers du despotisme, aux chants de la liberté!" [The translations from French to English are mine].

⁸ "Je mourrai comme j'ai vécu, fidèle à ma patrie".

⁹ "Vous aimez la Pologne, tout ce qui se rattache à ce pays vous intéresse vivement: vous dansez à merveille notre Mazourka et vous chantez nos airs nationaux avec tant de goût et de justesse, qu'on vous croirait né sur les bords de la Vistule ou de la Pilica. [...] quand je vous entretenais de nos mœurs et de nos usages, votre attention était si grande, vous preniez tant d'intérêt à mon récit, [...]".

The text presents the life of peasants in a picturesque manner (without much detail as far as their status in Polish society is concerned, however); this outlined image boils down the character of the Polish people to their religiousness, diligence, patriotism, and mentions the superstition of peasants and their stereotypes concerning foreigners. However, it is intriguing how descriptions concerning the customs of the Polish countryside coincide with those described by Gaszyński as typical for the people of Provence, described in the article from 26 January 1839. In *L'Hermitage de Saint-Serf (Environs d'Aix)* the reader can find a scene in which, as soon as the inhabitants' calls to the saints in a chapel situated on the slopes of the mountain massifs surrounding Aix-en-Provence come to a stop, couples begin to dance to the sounds of national music, accompanied by traditional instruments. The sellers of delicacies had already prepared their tables for a feast. In a description of a Polish Sunday in the countryside, even the sequence of ceremonial events is repeated: first mass, then joy, feasting and dancing:

If there is no church in the village, as is often the case, the entire family gets on a wagon with one or two horses and goes to the neighbouring village to attend the mass; there, on their knees, everyone is singing songs and prayers but not in Latin, as you do, but in Polish, in a language that everyone understands.

Up to that point, all thoughts were directed towards God; but upon leaving the church, the peasant begins to think about himself: he wants to enjoy himself and to redeem himself with pleasures, for how much he suffered amid hardships and sacrifices during the week. [...] Now, everyone, after fulfilling their Christian duties, enter [...] into the inn [...]. A violinist, paid for by the community, sits at the long table and plays mazurek and krakowiak on a simple violin he made himself. Meanwhile, the elders drink and the young dance. (Gaszynski 1839a, 14.09: 3–4)¹⁰

However, the character of the ending of these scenes is different: the description of the Polish folk festival remains in a joyful atmosphere until the end, perhaps because such a convention was imposed by the narrator in the designed situation of reception, in which he determined that the purpose of the letter is to dispel the boredom of the addressee. At the end of the text, the narrator, deeply reflecting on Polish folk poetry, awakens and shouts: “[...] I forgot about our peasants who are having fun! Oh! Let them have fun, my friend, because they love to dance and they have so little time to enjoy it! Soon the sun will rise and their pleasures will end” (Gaszynski 1839a, 14.09: 4).¹¹ Whereas, in the text about French celebrations, the reader is transported from the lively atmosphere of a holiday —

¹⁰ “S’il n’y a pas d’église dans le village, ce qui arrive bien souvent, toute la famille monte dans une charrette attelée d’un ou de deux chevaux et s’en va au village voisin entendre la messe; là tout le monde agenouillé chante des cantiques et des prières, non pas en latin comme chez vous, mais en polonais qui est compris par tous.

Jusqu’à présent toutes pensées ont été pour Dieu; mais au sortir de l’église, le paysan commence à songer à lui-même: il veut se réjouir et se payer largement en plaisirs ce qu’il a souffert en privations et en peines durant la semaine. [...] Or, tout le monde, après avoir accompli ses devoirs de chrétien, entre, [...] à l’auberge [...]. Un ménétrier, payé par la commune, s’assied derrière une longue table, et joue la Mazourka ou la Cracovienne sur un violon grossier, qu’il a fait lui-même. Pendant ce temps les vieillards boivent et les jeunes gens dansent en chantant”.

¹¹ “J’ai oublié nos paysans qui s’amuse! Oh! laissez-les se réjouir, mon ami, car ils aiment tant la danse et ont si peu de temps à jouir! car bientôt le soleil va se lever et leur plaisir va finir”.

from a noisy, dancing, feasting crowd — to the image of the setting sun, whose rays fall on the once again deserted, silent surroundings, described in the earlier fragments as “a naked and monotonous landscape, barren land devoid of vegetation”¹²:

If you are looking for the beauty of nature, there is no point in visiting these places; these locations have no attractive features: the landscape is as austere and majestic as the life of people who run away from the pleasures of the evanescent world to pray in solitude, who reflect on human misery looking at the barren soil and dream of a future life contemplating the clean and transparent sky hanging over their heads. (Gaszynski 1839b, 26.01: 1)¹³

Therefore, the Provençal landscape seen by Gaszyński appears to be unanimated, and even its short revival during the holiday calendar, local tradition, must come to an end. A clear symbol of finality, the sun in sunset, encourages the reader to reflect on the desolate surroundings, disappearing traditions, and the passage of time. In turn, the recorded habits, and scenes of everyday life in Poland remain timeless, happening in an unlimited time, before the eyes of the narrator who already begins to tell a different story, never ending the previous one.

Summarizing Gaszyński's texts mentioned in this subchapter, it should be noted that the most current Polish theme is not presented here only in a dramatic manner, as it is typical of Romantic narrative of this era. The November Uprising has been described as an outburst of great enthusiasm, and the story of a prisoner emphasizes primarily the character's steadfastness and aims to interest the readers with the universal aura of an unexplained identity. In texts from 1839, it is the French landscape that is marked more by melancholy than the Polish one, the perception of which has no clear end and remains an open theme, enlivening, joyful, and interesting for foreigners.

Beginning of immigration — Belgium

In some of Gaszyński's stories published in “Le Mémorial d'Aix” Provence does not play the leading role, but is rather just one of the many presented locations, playing a supporting role to properly present a given part of the story. The combination of the theme of Provence and Belgium turns out to be particularly important for the Polish Romantic.

The state of mind of lonely newcomers from Poland at the beginning of their migration across Europe was presented by Gaszyński in a story from 1841, entitled *Deux cauchemars (Souvenirs de Belgique)*: “In 1832 I lived in Brussels. Some time after my arrival in this city, on a beautiful June day, wanting to dispel the boredom that usually followed a foreigner, alone, thrown into a world far from his country, I got into a stagecoach [...]” (Gaszynski 1841a, 17.10: 1).¹⁴ However, on his way to Waterloo in a story entitled *Une rencontre, ou histoire d'un clou et d'un tableau* that has a similar subtitle: *Souvenirs de Belgique et Provence*

¹² “un paysage nu et monotone, une campagne aride et dépouillée de verdure”.

¹³ “Si vous cherchez la belle nature n'allez point visiter ces lieux; ce site n'a rien d'attrayant: il est austère et majestueux comme la vie de ces hommes qui fuyaient les joies du monde pour prier dans la solitude, qui méditaient sur les misères humaines en regardant le sol aride qui les environnait, et rêvaient la vie future en contemplant le ciel pur et transparent suspendu sur leurs têtes”.

¹⁴ “En 1832, j'habitais Bruxelles. Quelque temps après mon arrivée dans cette ville, un beau jour du mois de juin, voulant dissiper l'ennui qui poursuit ordinairement un étranger, seul, jeté loin de son pays, je montai dans une diligence [...]”.

(published on 29 June 1839) the narrator reaches back to his memories of 1832 and to a trip to the Waterloo Battlefield and he is not alone: he is accompanied by other Poles. The ending of the story moves to Aix-en-Provence, and the entire piece is bound by the figure of an Englishman, William, first met in an omnibus to Brussels, and a few years later in the town of King René in Provence.

The tour program at Waterloo includes seeing the battle sites, lunch at an inn, and buying souvenirs. The driving force behind the story consists in different views and heated discussions: first concerning the losers and victors with a guide (this is a character often appearing in Gaszyński's stories, taking on different forms), then in terms of the authenticity of the souvenirs sold by the residents — this conversation is initiated on the way back after meeting a young man from the British Isles. He is passionate about antiques and is waiting for his uncle to die, since the old man's inheritance would provide him with the financial means to take his dream trip to Italy and France. Six years later, the narrator meets William in Aix-en-Provence — he is after a three-year *tour* across the continent, returns from Italy and willingly presents his collections to the Pole in one of the hotels in Aix, the former place of Napoleon Bonaparte's stay in the city. The narrator reveals to the readers the forgeries that William has not discovered in terms of the authenticity of the purchased items — for example he points to the alleged self-portrait of King René, acquired by the Englishman in Marseille, when in fact it is kept at Aix. The narrator leaves William unaware: the story ends with the narrator's advice for the Englishman to hang the painting on a nail purchased six years ago in Brussels — a nail on which Napoleon is said to have hung his hat as he discussed his battle plans.

To conclude, it should be noted how important in the discussed story by Gaszyński is that the narrator appears as a "local" figure from Provence, that he is presented as a resident who knows this region perfectly and who can serve as a guide, able to tell anecdotes about artistic details. One can even consider this to be a deliberately emphasized absence of the Polish topic, mentioned only at the beginning of the story, when he goes on a trip with his compatriots.

In Provence: the emigrants of old centuries

In all Gaszyński's works, not only in prose, dating back to the French immigration period, we may note his interest in the urban landscape. The proximity of museums, the omnipresence of cafes, and the possibility of observing various human reactions constituted an inexhaustible source of inspiration for him. In many works he depicts chronicles of the towns of Provence, for instance in sonnets about Aix-en-Provence, or in a short story titled *Arles*. A kind of veduta, "quick sketch" (Gaszynski 1840b, 22.02: 3),¹⁵ as Gaszyński calls his text, consists in an article entitled simply *La ville d'Apt* and published on 22 February 1840. In its initial paragraphs the author personifies the town; he notes that all towns, like people, have their own individual character. He emphasizes that those that are located close to larger centres, and whose population is constantly changing, due to the influx and outflow of people related to economy or science, resemble a person who begins to behave like others, adopting their style of dressing and spending free time, etc. Others, far from the centre of life, surrounded by the mountains:

¹⁵ "une rapide esquisse".

[...] do not have an immigrant population, this mighty measure of moral equality in a country inhabited by various races. These towns, closed behind their walls like a hedgehog in its armour, jealously guard their traditions and lovingly keep the old customs of their fathers, clothes, and their own language, they hardly allow themselves to be conquered by new ideas and fashions that the capital imposes on provinces away from it. In this way, a traveller who enjoys observing and discovering countries is eager to make a detour here to visit one of the cities that, while retaining their peculiar physiognomy, will interest someone whose spirit lacks entertainment. (Gaszynski 1840b, 22.02: 2)¹⁶

Apt, where Gaszyński emphasizes such features as: location between mountains and waterways, ancient pedigree, openness both in terms of architecture (gates, glazing) as well as in the attitude of residents, lack of unnecessary glitz in the narrow streets, reminds him of a good and pious burgher. He loves peace, but when in bed he looks not only at a crucifix hanging above him, but also at a crossbow and a partisan. These old combat traditions serve to evoke the theme of the story of Apt, repeating numerous conquests. Gaszyński reaches back to antiquity, pointing out that even before the invasion of the Romans in Gaul it was already a significant town, this important centre of Celtic peoples was then conquered by Julius Caesar, who established his *Colonia Apta Iula Vulgentis* colony there. In this text, similarly as in *Arles* and *L'Église cathédrale de Saint-Sauveur à Aix* (both texts date back earlier, to 1836) a cathedral serves as a local stone chronicle: "Each generation has added a few stones to this venerable building: Roman wall, Byzantine ceiling, Gothic pointed arch, Renaissance dome, and the modern mortar touch closely and constitute different pages of the local chronicle" (Gaszynski 1840b, 22.02: 3).¹⁷

A different aspect of Provence, as a conquered land that is the subject of war operations, was presented by Gaszyński in the story *Charles-Quint à Aix*, published December 6, 1840. It depicts the fate of an individual who, although ruling over the empire, on August 10, 1536 also proclaims himself as the King of Arles — King Charles V. In the story, Gaszyński presents the age-old mechanisms of gaining power: distributing lands and offices to people who favour the ruler, an immediate change of the historical name *Aquae Sextiae* to *Aquae Carolinoe*, dismantling the current system by removing the parliament, tribunals, and consuls, and replacing them with a senate including senators nominated by the king. The new government destroys the fabric of the city, forcing fierce entrepreneurs, intelligentsia, and officials to flee, and at the same time handing the city over to a foreign army: "At the time, Aix was handed over to the mercy of soldiers of various nationalities, who knew no restraints or discipline [...]" (Gaszynski 1840c. 6.12: 1).¹⁸

¹⁶ "[...] n'ont pas de population flottante, ce puissant moyen du nivellement moral, dans un pays composé de races hétérogènes. Celles-là, renfermées dans leurs murailles comme le hérisson dans sa cuirasse, jalouses de leurs propres traditions conservent avec amour les vieux usages de leurs pères, le costume et l'idiome natal, et se laissent difficilement envahir par les idées et les modes nouvelles que la capitale impose aux provinces les plus éloignées. Aussi, tout voyageur qui aime à observer et à étudier un pays, fait-il volontiers un détour, pour visiter une de ces villes qui, ayant gardé leur physionomie particulière, offrent un intérêt quelconque à son esprit avide de distractions".

¹⁷ "Chaque génération ajoutait quelques pierres de plus à cette édifice vénérable: la muraille romaine, le plein-cintre bysantin, l'ogive gothique, la coupole de la renaissance et le plâtre moderne, se touchent de près et forment en quelque sorte diverses pages de la chronique locale".

¹⁸ "Pendant ce temps là, la ville d'Aix était livrée presque à la merci des soldats de différentes nations ne connaissant ni frein, ni discipline [...]".

When the atmosphere of war settled a bit and the lack of food began to be a nuisance for the troops of Charles V, the decision was made to siege Marseille. It failed, forcing the army to withdraw. The end of this episode of mutual history, tragic for local history, and therefore the real horror of whose purpose was exclusively to satisfy the pride of the man in power, is introduced into the story indirectly by quoting the words of Du Bellay, an eyewitness of the events, according to whom the destruction evoked such feelings as those of Joseph after the destruction of Jerusalem and of Thucydides after the Peloponnesian War.

The first article signed by Gaszyński and published in “Le Mémorial d’Aix”, is *Quentin Metsys à Aix (Histoire de 1475)*. It was published in several issues dated at the end of 1837 and the beginning of 1838, as it is a lengthy story with both main and episodic protagonists. The fragments opening Gaszyński’s story and one of the mottos may suggest that it is the famous ruler of Provence, René d’Anjou, who will be his main character, and not the title character. That is because before getting to know Quentin himself, the reader learns that the story takes place in a region whose nationality is endangered. Contrary to the dim future, Aix-en-Provence of that time is presented to us as a fairy-tale land of prosperity. Only at this point, the characters of the two Flemish people, Hans Overloop and Quentin Metsys, are introduced. A similar structure will be used in the second part of the story, where the reader will first follow the course of discussions of supporters of various political parties in a Provençal inn, then is going to be able to look inside the chambers belonging to René himself and take a look at his artistic works in order to finally listen to what Hans and Quentin have to say. Such a composition of the story may suggest that even though the author’s initial intention was to present the history of a specific character related to the Provençal town, he actually managed to illustrate a general phenomenon with it, to present the story of people whose fate is distorted by historical and political circumstances, treated not as “background” for the plot but its integral and equal element.

The title character is a young man who follows a path known from a popular plot pattern: rejected by his beloved’s father as a candidate for her hand, he sets out from his hometown to gain fame, which is to be obtained through education in the field of painting and which is to bring him the wealth needed to convince the future father-in-law as to the truthfulness of his feelings and the righteousness of his intentions. On the way, he meets mentors, gains experience, discovers the world — which he discusses with Hans during their walk around Aix, when he mentions at which atelier and with whom he studied in Florence and Venice. We learn just as much about Hans Overloop, and he may appear to be an even more interesting character with a more complex story. He is a foreigner who made Provence his home: he has a wife from that region, runs an inn, is cherished by the local community and widely known (he is simply referred to as “Flemish” or “Christ”, because during the traditional procession at the Feast of Corpus Christi he plays the role of the Son of God). His character is supposed to evoke uniquely positive emotions, he is described as “good”, “calm”, and “as open as the plains of his country” (Gaszynski 1837, 23.12: 1).¹⁹ Being a foreigner does not constitute any obstacle for his life in harmony with the local community, e.g., even though he massacres the Provençal dialect with his native words on a daily basis, together with his guest and his wife they talk, if necessary, in three languages: Dutch, French, and Italian. Many of his statements, as well as the events in which he participates, concern re-

¹⁹ “sa bonne figure flamande tranquille et ouverte comme une plaine de son pays”.

flecting on the fate of a man who had to leave his homeland. When receiving the news that his memory has not been lost in the country, Hans says: "I am remembered in my country; I have not forgotten it either, although it has been fifteen years since I left it!" (Gaszynski 1837, 23.12: 2).²⁰ Learning about the death of a relative, he concludes: "at least his remains rest in the native land: who knows where mine will rest!" (Gaszynski 1837, 23.12: 1).²¹ He also confesses: "I, an old man, if I could go back, I would agree, if I had to go barefoot or on my knees to see the house I used to play in as a child again and die in the room where my father closed his eyes" (Gaszynski 1837, 23.12: 1).²²

The narrator also uses the statements of other persons to express general remarks concerning living in exile and longing for the homeland: saying goodbye to Quentin returning to Margritten, is the moment in which: "Hans became sad, remembering his homeland, returning to which he did not believe, and a kind of understandable jealousy aroused in his heart! Embracing the friend's son, it seemed to him as if he was leaving his country for the second time" (Gaszynski 1838, 13.01: 2).²³ When greeting Hans before, Quentin himself recalled that even though he had been abroad for only two years, he missed his country and enjoyed meeting his fellow countryman and his native language. The story of Hans is the story of a man whose fate was determined twice by the people who were greater than him, people in power — and the reason for their interest was as trivial as the physical trait of the character, independent of his will and decisions, i.e., Hans's tall stature. However, while the ruling of the Duke of Burgundy, Charles, had an impact on the decision to flee the country in order to avoid being drafted into a foreign army, René's interest in hiring Hans for the role of Christ in a traditional procession may appear to be an extremely successful twist of fate. Thus, he had a chance to finally acclimatize in a foreign country, to feel belonging to the local tradition, and he owed his success as an immigrant to hard work and honesty. Despite the fact that Flemish's life in Provence has been presented as successful, there was still an unhealed wound of the necessity to live outside the homeland and to part with his family. The story ends happily not only for Quentin, but also for Hans — the older one returns to the country when the historical situation allows for it, so after the death of Charles the Bold.

In this story the narrator often manifests its presence, the made comments suggest that he is a representative of modern times known to readers and that he recognizes the history of locations and works of art he talks about.²⁴ Some of his reflections may suggest that the fate and experiences of immigrants are not unknown to him, but they are too general to be sure of that. Let us recall the scene of Quentin's return to his family:

²⁰ "On se rappelle de moi dans le pays; moi, je ne l'ai pas oublié non plus, quoi qu'il y ait quinze ans que je l'ai quitté!"

²¹ "Au moins ses restes reposent dans la terre natale: qui sait ou reposeront les miens!"

²² "Moi vieux, si je pouvais y retourner, je consentirais à marcher pieds nus, à me trainer à genoux, s'il le fallait, pour revoir la maison où j'ai joué enfant, et mourir dans la chambre où j'ai fermé les yeux de mon père."

²³ "C'est alors que Hans s'attrista, en se rappelant la patrie qu'il ne croyait plus revoir, et une espèce d'envie excusable s'éveilla dans son cœur! En embrassant le fils de son ami, il lui semblait qu'il abandonnait son pays pour la seconde fois."

²⁴ In the footnote we read: "nous avons encore aujourd'hui à Aix la promenade [...] appelée la cheminée du roi René" (Gaszynski 1837, 23.12: 1); „Ce tableau fut transféré plus tard à l'église de Saint Sauveur où l'on peut le voir encore aujourd'hui" (Gaszynski 1838, 27.01: 2).

How will I describe to you the meeting between a son and his mother? The excess of happiness does not allow me to express myself well with words: your hearts will understand! Is there any greater happiness, pleasure that would make the heart beat faster than that to see the hometown after long years of absence? With each step, emotions grow, tears flood the wanderer's eyes at the sight of bell towers and roofs that seem to come out of the ground and grow with each passing moment to be noticed sooner!

Blessed is the one who never left his country! However, he will not be able to comprehend the sweet sensation that awoke in Quentin Metsys's chest when he saw the tall and slender flèches of Antwerp outlined in the distance on a hazy horizon like ship masts appearing to a shipwrecked man! (Gaszynski 1838, 27.01: 1)²⁵

The story entitled *Une pierre tumulaire dans l'église Saint-Laurent à Salon* due to its structure may resemble *Une rencontre, ou histoire d'un clou et d'un tableau* from the same year, however, because it touches upon visitors to old Provence, this time from the 17th-century, I introduce it directly after the story of Flemish in Aix-en-Provence. Similarly, as in the memory from Belgium, this story recalls the events of a trip made by a narrator a few years earlier, this time in a nearby area, to another Provençal city, which follows a model often described by Gaszyński: a journey via an appropriate means of transport, during which the narrator gets to know his companions, a short tour, lunch at an inn, and an informative exchange of views. This time, a walk around Salon-de-Provence is made more pleasant by the presence of a lady (who also plays a role of a *cicerone*, so different from the guide from Waterloo) and an aficionado of antiques (it is also a frequently appearing character in Gaszyński's stories). The narrator is depicted primarily as a tourist, taking a sightseeing trip and an art aficionado, at first his nationality does not matter much for the story: "A nice conversation and a pair of beautiful eyes, two things that a tourist does not always have the opportunity to come across during the trips, seemed to me to be a real gift from the heavens to dispel the boredom of a monotonous journey" (Gaszynski 1839c, 9.03: 1).²⁶ The fact of being Polish becomes crucial though for the developing story especially at the moment when the tourists notice a tomb with a Polish surname while visiting a local church. The narrator of the story tells about a trip to Salon-de-Provence, where an immigrant is witness to many traumatic historical events (as evidenced by the remark about many other graves of his countrymen that he recently had the opportunity to see), it tells the story of the courtiers of Jan Kazimierz. In the said "story within a story", Gaszyński creates a touching point between the plans of the historical and contemporary Polish emigration — apart from the tomb over which the story is told, in the layer of events — in the text layer a footnote to

²⁵ "Comment vous décrirai-je la rencontre du fils et de la mère? je sens trop ce bonheur désiré pour l'exprimer en paroles: vos cœurs le comprendront!; Est-il un bonheur plus grand, un plaisir qui fasse plus vivement battre le cœur, que celui d'apercevoir de loin sa ville natale, après de longues années d'absence? A chaque pas l'émotion augmente: les larmes mouillent les yeux du voyageur, à la vue des clochers et des toits qui semblent sortir de la terre et grandir à chaque instant pour le revoir plutôt!;

Bienheureux est celui qui n'a jamais quitté son pays! mais il ne pourra concevoir la douce sensation qui s'éveilla dans le sein de Quentin Metsys, lorsqu'il aperçut les hautes et minces flèches d'Antwerpen se dessiner dans le lointain sur l'horizon brumeux, comme les mâts d'un vaisseau apparaissant à un naufragé!";

²⁶ "Une conversation agréable et une couple de beaux yeux, deux choses qu'un touriste ne rencontre pas toujours dans ses excursions, me semblèrent un véritable présent du ciel, pour chasser l'ennui d'une route monotonne".

the text: "A significant number of Poles forming the Duke's entourage has been sent back to Avignon, in which they preceded Polish refugees to whom the French government assigned this city as a place of residence in 1832" (Gaszynski 1839c, 9.03: 1).²⁷

The strategy of neutralizing the emotional impact most often accompanying the Polish approach to migration, used in this text, is similar to the Belgian story. The story ends with a courtesy comeback, a compliment to the lady — in the narrator's view she is supposed to be an angel who mitigates the evil spell of the former prison manager, recognizing him as a Pole. The drama of the issue of Polish fate is summarized by a sublime note, ending a successful trip, including balanced proportions of sightseeing, historical knowledge, pleasure of the palate, and salon conversation.

The English in contemporary Provence

Le passage des Anglais of November 17, 1838, a short text in the convention of a column concerning a certain social phenomenon, immediately puts the reader at the centre of this article's topic: the issue of "people without a homeland" — thanks to a quotation from Heine used as a motto — however, it is presented in an ironic light: "These people have no homeland: they perceive England as the land under their feet, France as a social lounge, and Italy as their home in the countryside" (Gaszynski 1838, 17.11: 3).²⁸ The characters of the English appear in many articles by Gaszyński, often referred to as "travellers from the North". The characters of the "invaders" from England in Provence allow him to comment on migration also in a humorous, and not only dramatic manner. It is possible for him by talking about another country, about newcomers from the islands: "This is an extraordinary influx from the English Channel, we would say a forced migration; if this continues, then Queen Victoria will soon become the ruler of a desert island!" (Gaszynski 1838, 17.11: 3).²⁹ It is also worth mentioning that at the beginning of this article he calls the English by the names of bird species that fly through the city on their way to Italy. However, ultimately he gives them the name of "migratory birds". It is a popular French term for people travelling great distances, but the Polish romantic had to remember Jasmin's work *Les Oiseaux de passage, ou les Polonais en France*, written in the Languedoc dialect sung in Agen by locals and Poles at the Société des amis de l'Ordre meeting.³⁰

Being a local patriot

Being a journalist, in many of his articles Gaszyński not only repeatedly mentioned the region's specialties and its tourist qualities, but also adopted local traditions and imitated the behaviour typical for the people of Provence. Such a ritual of transition to the community of Aixois may consist in taking a trip to the Marseille exhibition. He shared his impressions and comments on visiting it for several hours in an article dated 12 September 1840

²⁷ "La plus grande partie des Polonais, composant la suite du prince, fut envoyé à Avignon, ou ils précèdent les réfugiés polonais auxquels en 1832, le gouvernement français a désigné cette ville pour le lieu de leur séjour".

²⁸ "Ces gens-là n'ont pas de patrie; ils regardent l'Angleterre comme leur pied-à-terre, la France comme leur salon de compagnie, et l'Italie comme leur maison de campagne".

²⁹ "C'est un flux extraordinaire de la Manche, on dirait une émigration forcée; et si cela continue dans peu de temps the maiden queen Victoria se trouvera souveraine d'une île déserte!"

³⁰ This was reported by, inter alia, "Le Polonais. Le Journal des intérêts de la Pologne", 1833, p. 77.

titled *Une journée à Marseille. La foire — l'exposition*. He began it with remarks concerning those activities without which he cannot imagine the life of “a true child of this country” (Gaszynski 1840d, 12.09: 1).³¹ They include, for example, participating in the Corpus Christi processions and showing off with loved ones at the St. Lazarus fair in Marseille. The day has come when Gaszyński plays the role of a native inhabitant of the region:

So I went, as a true child of Aix, to take a tournée of the St. Lazarus fair, [...] I've mingled with this great crowd that flows in tight waves at any time, carelessly wasting their money and time. It was necessary to stop, like the others, in front of boutiques [...]. It was then necessary to open our eyes wide before neon signs presenting the inhabitants of the moon! A gigantic serpent choking three grenadiers! And, as an ingenious contrast, before wild beasts caressing their guardian!!! (Gaszynski 1840d, 12.09: 1)³²

On the basis of even this fragment, it is possible to notice a hyperbolization and exaltation, manifested in numerous exclamations, in epithets emphasizing the volume, in the description of the crowd and mob, in repeating that “it was necessary” to perform a certain action, in emphasizing that it is done “as others do”. This feeling of excess, overload of impressions concerns primarily herd behaviour and the types of entertainment available at the fair, the author exposes the ridiculousness of this custom, recognizing that what attracts crowds of *Aixois* to Marseille is “making sure that the human species still exists” (Gaszynski 1840d, 12.09: 1)³³ and elsewhere he praises that among the *curiosités* of the fair, he met Turks and Bedouins, as well as the inhabitants of Aix — his journalistic texts confirm that in fact they provided him with materials for articles on various interesting issues. Gaszyński reveals his ironic attitude with the exception of one fragment: the one concerning a painting exhibition, which is accompanied by sincere enthusiasm, to which he admits without hesitation.

The definition of patriotism has been presented by the 19th-century Polish emigrant in the south of France, Gaszyński, while remembering Marquis de Méjanès, to whom Aix-en-Provence owes its public library:

The country will forever remember the generous donor and his name will never be forgotten, because public recognition constitutes the most beautiful monument, more durable than marble and bronze: *aere perennius!* This kind of patriotism is as praiseworthy as it rarely happens. To leave your country a heritage that, apart from material value, possesses a much higher moral value, it is philanthropy in the broadest and most appropriate sense of the word. (Gaszynski 1839d, 28.09: 3)³⁴

³¹ “un véritable enfant du pays”.

³² “Je suis donc allé en véritable enfant d'Aix, faire ma tournée à la foire de St Lazare, [...] je me suis mêlé à cette foule immense qui à toute heure du jour circule en flots pressés, dépensant gaiement son argent et son temps. Il a fallu s'arrêter comme les autres, devant les boutiques [...]. Il a fallu plus loin, ouvrir des gros yeux devant les enseignes [...], représentant des habitants de la lune! un serpent gigantesque étouffant trois grenadiers!!! Et comme un contraste ingénieux de bêtes féroces caressant leur cornac!!!”

³³ “s'assurer si l'espèce humaine existe encore”.

³⁴ “Le pays se souviendra-l-il toujours du généreux donataire et son nom ne sera jamais oublié car la reconnaissance publique est le monument le plus beau, plus durable que le marbre et l'airain: aere perennius! Un patriotisme de ce genre est d'autant plus louable qu'il est rare, [...]. Doter son pays d'un legs, qui outre la valeur matérielle a une valeur morale bien plus grande, c'est la philanthropic la plus large et la mieux comprise”.

Gaszyński described his work as the editor-in-chief of "Le Mémorial d'Aix" in a similar manner — he treated it as a gift for the city, serving it in a material and moral sense: "we have only one goal: the prosperity of our city, its moral and material future, as well as its past glory" (Gaszynski 1839e, 26.10: 1)³⁵, about which he wrote in an article that appeared a month later, on 26 October 1839, calling the paper a work of patriotism, not of interests, which ensured its existence before it gained recognition and popularity, and also brought profits. Interestingly enough, and with charm characteristic for his style, he completed his important remarks concerning patriotism in the same paragraph with elements of a promotional strategy: he informed about a gift for those who will subscribe or extended their subscription, which consisted in an annual of the illustrated literary magazine "Musée des familles. Lectures du soir", interesting and useful, as he claimed, the value of which constitutes half of the yearly subscription.

Conclusion

The pages of Gaszyński's stories are populated by many characters: historical, such as King René and other rulers having an impact on the fate of the region, contemporary types, such as *voyageur du Nord*, *guide* — sometimes a beautiful lady, sometimes a guide by profession, sometimes a local enthusiast, or an art aficionado. The image of an immigrant is highly diverse, the person may turn out to be a man of the 15th, 17th, and 19th centuries, a text's narrator or protagonist, longing for the homeland, but for whom the time spent in exile is a creative period. The stay in Provence, the life experience as an emigrant, allowed Gaszyński not only to gain knowledge, but also to develop a sense of observation — of local customs, differences in national characters, richness of the landscape, mechanisms of crowd behaviour, and individual profiles. Referring to Małgorzata Czermińska's classification of narrative statements created when various cultural circles meet, it should be noted that in Gaszyński's narrative the second situation takes place often, namely "one about what's different to his own" (Czermińska 2004: 12). As a resident of Aix-en-Provence, for his readers he comments on the phenomena that can be observed in the town, such as the seasonal influx of the inhabitants of the British Isles, he reminds them of ancient history of *Aquae Sextiae* and other centres of Provence, as well as the medieval history, he explains fun architectural and sculptural facts unknown to them. Gaszyński sometimes takes advantage of the initial situation, which is "one about his own to others", for example in a story about the November Uprising and in a letter to a French man about Poland. However, Czermińska's third situation in which the narrator talks about a world that is not his — about what's different to others — never appears in Gaszyński's articles. Gaszyński's "I", the Pole-immigrant, does not want to be in a situation where he talks about what is foreign to him, only to present his opinion on a chosen topic to strangers. It is often impossible to notice this situation of the meeting between different cultural circles in the romantic writings: it seems that the author communicates with the local community, which is his own, for the public good, on matters important to them. The status of Gaszyński-Pole, Gaszyński-insurgent, and Gaszyński-immigrant is rather scantily disclosed in the articles subject to our discussion. It must be admitted that in his texts a certain burden has been removed from the image of the uprising and migration, and the issue has been handled in a universal manner — the most moving fragments

³⁵ "nous n'avons qu'un seul but: la prospérité de notre ville, son avenir moral et matériel et sa gloire passée".

concerning the hardships of being separated from the country and family come from the story about the fate of a Flemish man in the 15th century. It is the reader who, aware of Gaszyński's story, is able to interpret certain words differently, see new meanings in them, for example in Hans' exclamation "Just God! He will restore the homeland to an exile", or in a specific presentation of patriotism: a praise of offering the homeland not only a temporal gift, but also providing future generations with something that will enrich them spiritually. Returning to King René on the pages of subsequent articles Gaszyński perhaps wanted to make the recipients aware or remind them that eternal fame can be gained not only thanks to victorious battles and territorial conquests, but also by cultivating arts or caring for beauty. This is how he wrote about Aix-en-Provence: "Fallen from its dignity and political significance, the former capital of Provence still shines bright rays around it that distinguish it from other Mediterranean cities and behind its walls hides numerous and rich art collections worthy of attracting the attention of connoisseurs" (Gaszynski 1841b, 16.05: 1).³⁶ Gaszyński's attempts, i.e. to maintain the line of the journal, as publishing primarily "literary creations arousing patriotic affection for what is related to Provence", and at the same time expanding the circles it delineated to include "reviving, explaining, illustrating memories of the homeland" not only of Provence (Aubin 1837, 31.10: 3)³⁷, but also of Poland and homeland of other protagonists of his literary articles, proved the finesse of his literary craft.

The above presentation of articles from "Le Mémorial d'Aix" also proves that research concerning Gaszyński's works requires the courage to set out new research paths, to regard his texts in the context of Western European romanticism, but also regional romanticism — because his work during that period was directly influenced by local surroundings, contact with the figures of the scientific, spiritual, and cultural world of Aix-en-Provence — a city whose contribution to creating the panorama of romanticism in France was negligible. The freshness that Gaszyński brings to the romantic travel-writing prose consists in a combination of two plans, historical and contemporary, of migration, also taking into consideration the issues of tourism.

Bibliography

- Albisson Max (1997), *Le romantisme et les débuts de la presse locale à Apt en Provence: la "Revue aptésienne" 1834–1836* [in:] *L'occitanie romantique*, ed. C. Torreilles, Pau, Bordes.
- Aubin Dominique (1837), *Prospectus*, "Le Mémorial d'Aix", 31.10.

³⁶ "Déchue aujourd'hui de sa splendeur et de son importance politique, l'ancienne capitale de la Provence répand encore autour d'elle des rayons lumineux qui la font distinguer parmi les cités méridionales, et renferme dans ses murs, de nombreuses et riches collections artistiques, dignes de fixer l'attention des connaisseurs".

³⁷ "[...] les productions littéraires et scientifiques du pays auront toujours une légitime préférence et une patriotique sympathie nous portera toujours vers tout ce qui se rattachera à la Provence; A exhumer, a éclaircir, a illustrer les souvenirs de la patrie".

- Bouvier Jean-Claude (1983), *Préface* [in:] *Aix-en-Provence au XIXe siècle. Chroniques et faits divers du "Mémorial d'Aix" de 1837 à 1871*, Aix-en-Provence, Edisud.
- Carnevali Barbara (2009), *L'observatoire des mœurs. Les coutumes et les caractères, entre littérature et morale* [in:] *Pensée morale et genres littéraires*, ed. J.-C. Darmon, P. Desan, Paris.
- Chruściński Kazimierz (2004), *Konstanty Gaszyński — współtwórca kultury w Prowansji: przyczynek do biografii poety*, "Słupskie Prace Filologiczne. Seria Filologia Polska" no 3.
- Czermińska Małgorzata (2004), „Punkt widzenia” jako kategoria antropologiczna i narracyjna w prozie niefikcyjnej [in:] *Opowiadanie w perspektywie badań porównawczych*, ed. Z. Mitosek, Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, Kraków.
- Gaszynski Constantin (1837–1838), *Quentin Metsys à Aix (Histoire de 1475)*, "Le Mémorial d'Aix".
- Gaszynski Constantin (1838), *Le passage des Anglais*, "Le Mémorial d'Aix".
- Gaszynski Constantin (1839a), *Lettres sur la Pologne adressées à un Français. I Les Paysans*, "Le Mémorial d'Aix", 14.09.
- Gaszynski Constantin (1839b), *L'Hermitage de Saint-Serf (Environs d'Aix)*, "Le Mémorial d'Aix", 26.01.
- Gaszynski Constantin (1839c), *Une pierre tumulaire dans l'église Saint-Laurent à Salon*, "Le Mémorial d'Aix", 9.03.
- Gaszynski Constantin (1839d), *Un livre de la bibliothèque Méjanes, à Aix*, "Le Mémorial d'Aix", 28.09.
- Gaszynski Constantin (1839e), *A nos Abonnés*, "Le Mémorial d'Aix", 26.10.
- Gaszynski Constantin (1840a), *Les Deux Prisonniers d'état. (Souvenir de la dernière révolution de Pologne 1830)*, "Le Mémorial d'Aix", 25.04.
- Gaszynski Constantin (1840b), *La ville d'Apt*, "Le Mémorial d'Aix", 22.02.
- Gaszynski Constantin (1840c), *Charles-Quint à Aix*, "Le Mémorial d'Aix", 6.12.
- Gaszynski Constantin (1840d), *Une journée à Marseille. La foire—l'exposition*, "Le Mémorial d'Aix", 12.09.
- Gaszynski Constantin (1841a), *Deux cauchemars (Souvenirs de Belgique)*, "Le Mémorial d'Aix", 17.10.
- Gaszynski Constantin (1841b), *Cabinets de tableaux et autres collections artistiques de la ville d'Aix (Premier article)*, "Le Mémorial d'Aix", 16.05.
- Kowalska Magdalena (2015), *Prowansja w pismach polskich romantyków*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń.
- Latreille Camille (1914), *Souvenirs d'étudiants lyonnais: Le romantisme en Provence, Aix en 1814*, A Rey, Lyon.
- Lyszczyna Jacek (2000), *Pielgrzym w kraju rozkoszy. O poezji Konstantego Gaszyńskiego*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice.
- Lyszczyna Jacek (2019), *Konstanty Gaszyński na Litwie*, "Tematy i Konteksty" no 9.
- Ziejka Franciszek (1977), *Studia polsko-prowansalskie*, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław.
- Ziejka Franciszek (1986), *Konstanty Gaszyński — pisarz prowansalski*, "Ruch Literacki" no 1.