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The Topos of *de se aegrótante*
in Humanistic Elegiac Autobiography
The Relation of Clemens Janitius' *Tristia*
to Petrus Lotichius Secundus' *Elegiarum Libri*

Introduction – Neo-Latin context for Janitius

Previous researches on Clemens Janitius' (1516–1543) *Tristia* hardly exceed the context of the ancient literature. It is not easy to find a study exploring Neo-Latin background of this book¹. Exceptional originality and the authenticity of *Tristia* is still written about². However, Janitius realizes the *topoi* known from the ancient and renaissance poetry very creatively.

The elegies of the Polish poet *Regrets* could be compared with many similar texts. But it is Petrus Lotichius Secundus' (1528–1560) *Elegiarum libri* which corresponds with them the most. In both cases, the cycles of elegiac humanistic autobiography derive their inspiration from Ovid's exile poetry. Both Janitius and Lotichius appeal to the same *topoi*: an incurable illness (*de*

¹ Indicating a gap in the studies on European humanistic tradition in comparison with Polish literature, I. Lewandowski wrote: "Unfortunately, I do not know any European poet, except Janitius, who created similar lamentable elegies' cycle, writing about himself". *Klemens Janicki – polski Owidiusz (1516–1543)*. In: *Elegia poprzez wieki. Konferencja naukowa 8–9 XI 1994*. Ed. I. Lewandowski. Poznań 1995, p. 138. Beside a Lotichius' book, Michael Marullus' exile poetry (although not all elegiac) could also dismiss a doubt mentioned above.

² Ibidem, p. 134: "Neither in *Tristia*, nor in *Variae elegiae* (...) did Janitius invent topics, but he took them merely from his own life (...). All that he described there was his own true feelings and experiences. It is rather hard to talk about literary fiction in these elegies. Sincerity and authenticity in describing his ego seem to come first".

se aegrotante); classical patography; creative incapacity caused by the weakness of the body and separation from a literary motherland (*patriae desiderium*), from *otium*; a journey to this dreamland (*hodoeporicon*); and a dying poet's appeal to posterity (*de se ipso ad posteritatem*).

It is hard to resist the temptation to compare quite similar biographies of both contemporary poets, which is not unsubstantial in the case of authors of humanistic autobiography. Even the ways of interpreting both cycles and their evaluation resemble one another.

Clemens Janitius' biography³

For both poets coming through the gate of the Muses' domain was a social advancement. Janitius was the son of a simple peasant, born in a little village of Januszkowo⁴ in the Wielkopolska province. Despite Clemens' poverty, his father took care of his education very attentively. The boy was taught first at a parish school in Żnin and then he had a chance to study at a famous Collegium Lubrancianum in Poznań. It was the centre of humanism, where the young poet's abilities and talent could be sufficiently appreciated. His later career and education depended on benefactors, which caused a lot of trouble.

Janitius' first protector was a well-known Latin poet, a primate, Bishop Andreas Critius, who could really provide the young adept of arts with sufficient financial care as well as literary and scientific tutelage. His unfortunate death in the first year of Janitius' stay at the bishop's court brought to an end this promising patronage. The second protector, Grand Crown Marshal Petrus Kmita engaged the young poet with the recent political affairs. Such a topic predominates in Janitius' poetry of that time. In 1538 Kmita sent his protégé to the desired study to Padova. However, he still demanded poetical service to his family. At the University of Padova, which was the most attractive one for Polish students in the sixteenth century, Clemens got a doctoral degree in *artes liberales* as well as in philosophy and in 1540 the title of *poeta laureatus* (thanks to the support of Lazzaro Bonamico and Pietro Bembo). Soon after that Janitius came to Kraków, where he probably got to the royal court.

³ The most abundant poet's biography was presented in L. Œwikliński's monograph *Klemens Janicki, poeta uwieńczyony (1516–1543)*. Kraków 1893.

⁴ From this name the poet created his "surname": Ianicius or Ianitius. In Polish literature the form Janicki has been the most popular, although linguists call it incorrect (it should be Janik, Janicz or Januszkowski).

It was a fatal illness, which vastly destroyed the life of the gifted poet. Despite attentive care given by the best medics both in Italy (Franciscus Cassanus and Joannes Baptista Montanus) and in Poland (Joannes Antoninus), Clemens Janitius died at the turn of 1542 and 1543, at the age of 27. The illness, referred to as *hydrops*⁵ in his elegies, was the main existential experience of the author of *Tristia*.

Petrus Lotichius' biography⁶

Petrus Lotichius Secundus was born in the village of Niedertal situated not far from Frankfurt am Main, as a son of a peasant. The beginning of his career was much easier, as the family of Lotz started his cultural advancement quite soon. From his earliest years, Petrus could enjoy the protection and instruction of his uncle, a remarkable humanist. The young nephew took from his tutor's not only literary politeness, but also a Latin form of the name, adding "Secundus" in order to distinguish himself from his uncle. Even the poet's brothers became humanists. Petrus Lotichius began the study of medicine at the University in Marburg, at the same time working for his increasing poetical fame. Compulsory military service during Schmalkaldian war interrupted his literary *otium*. He devoted the next years to study and work as a teacher in the centre of France and then Lotichius could begin his studies at the universities in Padova and Bologna (1554–1556). Finally, he got the chair of medicine in Marburg. The greatest Latin poet in Germany died there, aged 32, after a long-lasting illness.

⁵ Nowadays this Latin term is translated as hydroma (hygroma), i.e. the accumulation of fluids in a single organ, forming a small swelling. However, the symptoms described by the poet point to hydroperitoneum, abdominal dropsy, known today in medical literature as ascites, co-existing with disorders of liver, especially cirrhosis, although they may accompany cancer of the digestive system or circulatory insufficiency, if lower limbs are swollen as well. Clemens complains about the disorders of liver and spleen (VII, 153) and his general inclination to health problems, yet, he presents neither symptoms of any other illnesses, nor their probable reasons (except from drinking nearly only water from his early childhood). Hereditary inclination to ascites, which is suggested by the poet himself, can pose further problems. Clemens' father also died of hydrops, so there is a possibility of common infection of viral hepatitis, which both for the father and the son could have ended with cirrhosis. It could also be hereditary inclination to the digestive system neoplasm.

⁶ For the detailed account of the poet's life see: S.T. Zon: *Petrus Lotichius Secundus. Neo-Latin Poet*. Bern–Frankfurt am Main–New York 1983, and a monograph: K.A. O'Rourke Fraiman: *Petrus Lotichius Secundus. Elegiarum Liber Primus*, edited with an introduction, translation, and commentary. New York 1973.

Similarities of critical reception

Resemblance can also be found in the post-Romantic critical reception of both poets. Lotichius was said to be the best lyrical poet before great German-language poets like Martin Opitz and Friedrich G. Klopstock. However, such opinions used to be given without further analysis of the Latin poet's heritage⁷. It was not different in the case of the Polish poet. At the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth century we notice the zenith of interest concerning Janitius, manifesting itself mainly in comparisons with ancient literature and biographical researches. Statements given a hundred years ago are still obliging, as well as post-Romantic evaluation of *Tristia*. Similarly to a German elegist, it was originality and sincerity in the poet's presentation of his fortune and experiences, which were valued. Janitius' elegies used to be appreciated much more than Jan Kochanowski's (Joannes Cochranovius') *Elegiarum libri quattuor* created a little later⁸, although there were no studies comparing the two poets' works. The result was depreciation of Kochanowski's Latin output. Thus, *Tristia* are to be the best lyrical cycle before the monumental Polish work of Kochanowski.

Janitius' and Lotichius' elegies concentrated on the person of a poet, on his own experiences, sufferings, desires. The literary shape of their elegiac production is indebted to classical and modern erudition; yet, they belong to the trend of the sixteenth century humanistic autobiography. The main *topos* on which the Janitius' cycle is built seems to be *de se aegrotante*, whilst in Lotichius' elegiac books it is *patriae desiderium*.

Topoi of elegiac humanistic autobiography

Owing to Josef IJsewijn's⁹ and Ryszard Turzyński's¹⁰ articles devoted to humanistic autobiography, the literary sources and the form of the genre are

⁷ W. Ludwig: *Petrus Lotichius Secundus and the Roman Elegists: Prolegomena to a Study of Neo-Latin Elegy*. In: *Classical Influences on European Culture A.D. 1500–1700*. Ed. R.R. Bolgarr. Cambridge 1976, pp. 178–179.

⁸ *Tristia* were created in 1538–1542, whereas Kochanowski already wrote his first elegies in the 1550s (a saved manuscript of *Elegiarum libri duo* comes from before 1562). However, he published his elegiac tetralogium just before his death in 1584.

⁹ *Humanistic Autobiography*. In: *Studia Humanitatis. Ernesto Grassi zum 70. Geburtstag*. Hrsg. E. Mora, E. Kesslers. München 1973.

¹⁰ *Z problematyki polsko-lacińskiej autobiografii humanistycznej*. "Meander" 1974, R. 29, z. 3.

precisely worked out. In the sixteenth century, the preferred form of a poetical humanistic autobiography was elegy. The genre suited that aim, because it could freely combine descriptions with lyrical confessions. But it was Ovid's autobiographical elegies, especially his elegy *Ad posteritatem* from *Tristia* (IV 10), which formed a pattern for Renaissance poets' tales about themselves. Commonly used phraseology, *topoi*, the way of description that was typical for Ovid's exile poetry situate a Renaissance autobiographical poem in a group of lamentable elegies. Beside Ovid's Pontic works, the form of an autobiographic elegy was influenced by funeral genres, e.g. the epicedium, epitaph, *mandata morituri* and Christian tradition of *contemptus mundi*, as well as epistolography, enkomion, panegyric and mediaeval hagiography. Other important sources were St Augustine's *Confesiones*, Petrarc's *Secretum* and *Epistula ad posteritatem*.

That is why such a type of the elegy exploits the theme of homesickness (Joachim Du Bellay, *Patriae desiderium*¹¹), exile (Michael Marullo, *De exilio suo*), or a poet's illness (Marc-Antonio Flaminio, *De se aegrotante*). Another motif, the last appeal to posterity, aims at securing post-mortal fame (Clemens Janitius, *De se ipso ad posteritatem*¹²), but sometimes at giving didactic instructions (Joannes Dantiscus, *Vita Ioanni Dantisci*, *Ad Alliopagum carmen*, *Ad iuventutem*).

Hodoeporicon should not be omitted here, either. A journey had a very important role in humanists' life in the sixteenth century, as they travelled a lot seeking knowledge, employment or protection. Autobiographic elegies usually described a desired voyage to the land of a poet's childhood. A journey, that could only be dreamed about. Bitterness of alienation, distance, long struggle for existence in a foreign land inclined them to sum up their life in the spirit of Ovidian regrets.

¹¹ The titles of the above-mentioned poems are used here to call the most frequent *topoi* occurring in these types of an elegy.

¹² This motif in Janitius' poetry will not be developed here, as the seventh elegy, which is said to be the most important one in the cycle, has a great number of critical studies. The most interesting of them seems to be R. Turzyński's work mentioned above.

Another well-known elegy of this type could be Helius Eobanus Hessus' *Epistola ad Posteritatem*. Although it is very characteristic and interesting in comparison with other autobiographies, it is out of place here, as the poem belonging to the elegiac type inspired by Ovide's *Heroidas*, not *Tristia*. *Epistola* was written from the position of a young poet who announced his beloved Posterity that he would create poetry which would immortalise him. See: A. Budzisz: *Ad posteritatem – adresat w autobiograficznych elegiach K. Janickiego, H.E. Hessusa i Owidiusza*. "Roczniki Humanistyczne" 1998, z. 3, pp. 134–135.

Roman elegiac patterns on the theme of illness

There is a considerable group of texts concerning the motif of self-illness among elegiac autobiographies. Illness as an elegiac topic appeared at the beginning of the Latin-language form of the genre. Roman elegy of love originated a number of poems describing a beloved's illness, e.g. Tibullus' I 5, elegy from *Corpus Tibullianum* IV 4 = III 10, Ovid's *Am.* II 13, Propertius' jocular elegy II 28. The stories about poet's own suffering (narrated in the first person singular) can be found in *Corpus Tibullianum* IV 11 = III 17 (Sulpicia about her illness; the return of her beloved Cerinthus will restore her to health). In Tibullus' poem I 3, we also find a vision of his own illness and death during military service in a foreign country. There is a funeral motif of Elisium derived from bucolic tradition in the elegy mentioned above, as well as in elegy III 5. His own death in a foreign land, far away from the beloved girl is what Propertius was scared of (I 17, II 13). In Ovid's exile poetry there are also two letters addressing his friends, where he mentions his sufferings and describes the symptoms – *Ex Ponto* I 10 and *Trist.* V 13 (in both there is the same introductory formula: "salutations are sent by the one who is not salubrious himself").

One of the elegies from *Tristia* (i.e. III 3) was the most significant for the future shape of the genre (it exerted strong impact on Janitius' autobiography, *Tr.* VII). It is a letter dedicated by the sick poet to his wife. Painful sufferings of the body increase because of the distance from his beloved spouse, an unfriendly strange land, where both climate and water are detrimental to the man's health; there is improper food and a shortage of physicians¹³. What depresses Ovid's hero the most is a vision of his own death far away from his motherland, home and wife, without a proper funeral or a grave. The delirious poet believes his wife is the only one who could be able to rescue him. She is the addressee of his last request to import the mortal remains of the loved husband and bury him near their suburban villa. The elegy ends with an epitaph saying that the poet's books will be longer-lasting and more significant than a tombstone¹⁴.

In this way Roman elegies, together with funeral poetry, influenced the *topoi* of the Renaissance *de se aegrotante*-poems. This type of elegy is usually connected with the topics of exile, longing and heading towards a motherland. They belong to a group of lament-poems (*querimonia de se ipso*). Similar elegiac descriptions of one's own illness were written before Janitius and Lotichius by Giovanni Pontano, *Parthenopeus* II 5 i II 8; Janus Panonius *El.* I 9, Jacopo

¹³ This motif was also used by Janitius in his *hodoeporikon* (*Trist.* V).

¹⁴ Compare the similar motif in Lotichius' I 6, 85 nn.

Sannazaro *El.* I 1, II 10, Francesco Maria Molza, *Leriche* f. 35, Marcantonio Flaminio, *Carm.* II 5, V 49 and others. But it is the autobiographical cycle that distinguished Polish and German poets' elegies *de se aegrotante*.

The character and topics of Lotichius' elegies

The topic of a fatal illness predominates in three Petrus Lotichius' elegies: I 6, II 5 and III 9. In one of the first elegies, I 6 *De se aegrotante*, an illness is interpreted as an ominous power interrupting a young poet's work which has just been begun. In fact, the indisposition described here was only an episode during the war, but the end of Petrus' life was marked with the relapsing infirmity, which finally conquered his own medical art. There is tragic irony in his illness. The poet, who rather avoided the topics of love (there are merely five love poems in the three books of *Elegiarum* and they seem to be written only because of the elegist's sense of duty), died from a blind Cupid's strike, since he had become a victim of someone else's unrequited love. Staying in Italy Lotichius ate a poisonous soup prepared for his neighbour who had rejected a mistress' love. The poison was slowly ruining the poet's body for the rest of his life.

The main literary experience in *Elegiarum Libri* seems to be homesickness, and the cycle of elegies becomes "a book of the way". Lotichius' poems describe a physical and spiritual distance from the desired aim and simultaneously the source. They show the lyrical hero's contradictory emotions and his attempt at coping with a compulsory separation from a place and occupation. War and a sickness make literary creativity impossible. The hero is separated from the dreamland by external conditions – the distance is hard to be covered and the wars interrupt the pilgrimage, which must be continuously undertaken. But there are also internal causes – the weakness of the body kills the hope for return, even after his decease (a death during a war many miles away from a family grave)¹⁵. "The poems of the way", belonging to a *hodoeporicon* tradition, try to cover the distance between a poet and his homeland, whereas the works presenting a hero's life as *tristia exilia* (el. I 1, 63–64) do not give any hope for the change of a current situation (mainly due to the Pontic *topoi* and phraseology).

The elegy *Ad Michaellem Beutherum de se aegrotante* (I 6) seems to be the most characteristic poem on the topic of illness. It is composed of a series of contrasting statements, which gives the effect of a pulsating restless rhythm.

¹⁵ Cf. *Elegy* I 6, 43–48.

Bucolic visions are contrasted with reality. A beautiful description of spring is used here to emphasize the image of war destruction, illness, sorrow, abandonment and death in a foreign land. A vision of the Muses running to the poet along the green banks of a native stream, carrying the bowls of herbal medicaments, is only a hallucination in fever. Only the last idyllic picture can be fulfilled, i.e. when the poet dreams about the Elysian meadows instead of a marble tomb. The symptoms described here indicate approaching death, yet, it is futile to seek a clinical diagnosis. It could be expected from a student and a future professor of medicine, though. But the following words do not come from medical books, but from a huge repertoire of Augustian poetry:

deficit et ducens uitales spiritus auras;
 oraque uix praestant arida uocis iter.
 scilicet haec mortis dantur mihi signa propinqua.
 uiximus exacto tempore fata uocant.

Lotichius I 6, 33–36¹⁶

A theme of helplessness in medical art is to be noticed here: “nil artes herbaeque ualent”, “succique potentes” (69). The suffering poet feels alienated from the world of people and nature. A nightingale (*Philomela*, *Daulias ales*) is the only companion to the poet’s sleeplessness. By singing, it appeases its own pain; however, the man cannot do the same. The saving power of poetry, so important in the whole cycle, is negated here: “Carminibus sua fata leuat felicior ales / Daulias; inualido nil opis illa ferunt” (67–68).

Nevertheless, Lotichius entrusts the art and the books (although not his own, but his friend’s ones¹⁷) with his mortal fame: “nec tibi apud superos sit uilis fama sepulti; / floreat in libris sed diuturna tuis” (89–90). An epitaph prepared for the poet’s tomb (appeared a few verses above) is surprisingly modest, not to say perverse, in the context of all of his anti-military writing: “Hic militis ossa secundi / Ipsaque, pro patria quae tulit, arma iacent” (85–86). It is to emphasize what really commemorates a man: not a tombstone, but one’s heritage. This motif is based on Ovid’s elegy from *Trist.* III 3: having formulated his own epitaph, the Pontic exile adds: “Hoc satis in titulo est; enim maiora libelli / Et diuturna magis sunt monumenta mihi” (77–78).

Both elegy collections discussed belong to a group of *querimonia de se ipso*. What differs them is size (the German poet’s three books containing 33 elegies compared with the Pole’s *Tristia* including only 10 poems), leitmotif (*patriae*

¹⁶ Quotation from: K.A. O’Rourke Fraiman: *Petrus Lotichius...*

¹⁷ The poem is dedicated *ad Michaellem Beutherum* – a humanist and the author of many works on poetry, linguistics, history and mathematics.

desiderium – *de se aegrotante*) and a way of realisation and interpreting humanistic autobiography *topoi*. Janitius' *Tristia* are more epic than Lotichius'; describing his fate, sicknesses and visited places he uses a restrained narration. There are not many mythological references or other digressions to vary the text. Janitius does not use so many metaphors in the description of his lot as Lotichius. Poetical imagery and the range of tropes used by him are also poorer. Janitius opposes the German humanist's finesse with his classical simplicity¹⁸ and neophytic sincerity of confession (even if it is only simulated). His stylistics is much closer to Ovid's.

Clemens Janitius' *Tristia* – leitmotifs

De se aegrotante topoi

The leitmotif forming the axis of the cycle is an illness. In elegy II it is fever, and in others (IV, V, VI, VII and X)¹⁹ it is ascites, called *hydrops*. In elegy V and X, *de se aegrotante topoi* is connected with the form of *itinerarium*. Elegy II has the form of prayer, IV – of thanksgiving for the medical care, VI – of a letter addressed to a protector, and VII – of an autobiography. Dissimilar to Lotichius and other poets of this topic, Janitius, beside classic patography like in the second elegy, describes the symptoms of his illness very realistically. This enables the reader to make a clinical diagnosis of his ailment, which is not tantamount to aesthetic satisfaction...

The topic of an illness predominates in two whole elegies: the second and the fourth ones. Both of them use a precative form. Elegy IV, dedicated *ad Ioannem Baptistam Montanum (...) medicum*, consists of requests to three addressees: Apollo-Thymbareus²⁰, books and the physician Montanus mentioned

¹⁸ His epitaph is worth mentioning: *Spe vacuus vacuusque metu cubo mole sub ista / Et vero vivo. Mortua vita, vale!* (Janitius. *Trist.* VII 89–90). A Christian idea is expressed with old-Roman simplicity. A play on words, sounds and meanings – the negation of mortality remind of a famous Ennius' *mandata morituri*: "Nemo me lacrimis decoret, nec funera fletu / faxit. Cur? Volito vivus per ora virum".

The quotations from Janitius are from: K. Janicki: *Carmina. Dzieła wszystkie*. Wydał i wstępem I poprzedził J. Krókowski. Wstęp II i oprac. J. Masdorf. Przeł. E. Jędrkiewicz. Wrocław 1966.

¹⁹ The other elegies are: a dedicatory poem (I), an excuse for a lack of laudatory poems to poet's protector caused by intense philosophical studies (III), a *querella* (VIII) and an epitaph (IX).

²⁰ It is the nickname of a god, the inventor of medicine, created from the name of a town in Troas (after: J. Masdorf: *Komentarz*. In: K. Janicki: *Carmina...*, p. 348) used here probably to show the poet's erudition.

above. The first of them is the Sun appointing time, the god of wisdom, science and poetry, simultaneously the inventor and patron of medical art. In a prayer to him, we can hear a reproach: here is his worshipper, who left his motherland to go to Padova seeking knowledge and literary politeness, and who had been suffering various experiences, misfortunes and illness already for a year:

At scis, quod patriam et carissima quaeque reliqui,
Cum mihi ad hanc urbem susciperetur iter,
Ut colerem melius tua sacre tuasque sorores;
In terra Marti cedit Apollo mea.

Janitius, *Trist.* IV 7–10

The topos of creative inability

The prayer is ended with a call expressing powerlessness, hopelessness and sorrow: “Heu spes conceptae frustra! Proiecimus omne, / Ponendum in studiis quod mihi tempus erat” (11–12). This distich begins a *passus* elaborating on a motif of creative inability, which is so characteristic of humanistic poetry – the separation from the literary environment, study, books or a source of inspiration, i.e. poetical practice. A prototype of that topos can be found again in the Pontic exile creation.

What was worth complaining the most for Ovid was the separation from a cultural centre, a live language and contemporary thoughts, ideas. But above all, the poet was aware that poetry must be verified, needs the audience, especially in the time of oral literature. He emphasised that in the situation of exile and separation, poetry cannot be good. Those words²¹, unfortunately for Ovid himself, were read later literally as a proper estimation of the quality of Pontic distichs, without any honest analysis. Although the idea of “literature written to a drawer”²² was created by another tyranny, Ovid seems to be the pioneer also in this field.

The Renaissance took over the mediaeval cult of a book, the written word. It was reinforced by the authority of the Bible, which was strengthened by the Reformation Movement. At the same time, the position of the book got stronger owing to the appreciation of auto-thematic poetry, the awareness of literature’s creative power, and the belief in almost divine might of a poet, which were observed already in the classical literature. An inactive, “unemployed” poet resembled Samson with his cut hair – defenceless and helpless.

²¹ See: *Ex Ponto* I 5 and III 9.

²² During the years of Stalin’s rule, Polish writers who did not want to fulfil socrealism commands or who were openly persecuted, had to “write to a drawer” without a right and opportunity to have their works published, e.g. Zbigniew Herbert.

He was falling from the peak of the Parnas loosing his exceptionality, which differentiated him from a crowd of profanes.

In Lotichius' elegies wars and body weaknesses make it impossible for a poet to reach *otium*, a symbolic motherland (sometimes identified with literature), which is the source of creative power. One of the best neo-Latin French poets, Joachim Du Bellay, in his *Patriae desiderium* elegy written in Rome, complains that his Muses, not used to Latin, run away from a poem written in the strange language, and his lute falls out his hands as he is not able to sing in his mother tongue²³. For a representative of the next epoch, Jesuit Matias Casimirus Sarbiewski, Helicon's hills²⁴, Muses' gardens, a land of poetical unrestricted creativity – the lyrical *otium* was his desired aim, like *patria caelesta*. Sarbiewski's literary vocation was continually disturbed by excess duties, superiors' decisions to change his places of stay and imposing new obligations. In Janitius' elegies it was the illness which stood in his way to the Muses²⁵.

Janitius expresses his sorrow and disappointment in the apostrophes to his books (it is another popular topos in humanistic poetry, taking its origin from Catullus). The books, epitomizing the studies and the literary work, left to themselves, bitten by moths, criticize their ungrateful owner in the silence of non-cut sheets²⁶. Janitius tries to appeal to their compassion and asks them to endure all the misfortunes, like he does, as the joyful ones follow bad days.

A part about the consolation of the books includes one of the most lyrical pieces in *Tristia*: it is a description of the coming of spring, as a metaphor of a change of fortune (*Trist.* IV 17–34). Blossoming spring is also one of Lotichius' favourite topics, often used to sharpen the disharmony between the opposite spheres. In elegy I 6 analysed below the vitality of nature waking up is contrasted with a depressed man immobilised inside the defence walls of a fort. The spring does not bring any improvement in his lot or health, which depresses him even more. On the contrary, in *Tristia* winter solstice and the regeneration of nature bring hope for the reversal of fate: “Et mea cedet hiems adeo mihi dura dabitque / Tandem aliquem veri, credo, repulsa locum” (33–34).

²³ Ipsae etiam quae me primis docuere sub annis
Ad citharam patrio flectere uerba sono,
Heu fugiunt Musae, refugitque aversus Apollo,
Et fugiunt digitos mollia plectra meos.
Patriae desid. v. 57–60

See also v. 16–19. Quoted after: Joachim Du Bellay: *Poésies Françaises et Latines*. Notice et notes E. Vourbet. T. 1. Paris 1918.

²⁴ Even in its literary, geographical sense, when he mourned the Turkish occupation of the holy hills, just like in the Middle Ages the captivity of the land of Christ was mourned. Cf. *Lirycorum Libellus* II 9 i I 12.

²⁵ Differently in *Elegy* III, see below.

²⁶ “Arrodi a tineis nostros deploro libellos / Et de me tacitos audio paene queri” (*Trist.* IV 13–14).

Janitius finds an alternative for this topos, too. An *incipit* of elegy II repeats Ovid's rhetorical question expressing the dislike of and incapacity to write in exile:

Quid mihi nunc vestris, Musae, cum cantibus?²⁷ Haec sunt
Tempora laetitiae scilicet apta meae,
Dum crucior rapidoque miser comburor ab igni (...).

Janitius, *Trist.* II 1–3

A religious perspective of his prayer to Holy Virgin for courage to endure fever lets Clemens reinterpret his situation and a classical motif. If a handicapped beggar can sing asking for mercy, a poet will do the same:

Sed tamen ille etiam cantat, qui parva superbas
Ante fores tremula flagitat aera manu.
Et mea par causa est; cantu implorabo supernam,
Vis nihil humanae cum iuvat artis, opem.

Ibidem, 7–8

Imagining himself as a pauper begging with his songs is in concord with the interpretation of an illness as a punishment for sins, which is expressed 50 verses below.

The topos of the helplessness of medical art

The topos of the helplessness of medical art is not realised typically by Janitius. It appears in elegies II, IV and VII, just to be denied.

The third part of elegy IV analysed above turns to Joannes Baptista Montanus, who becomes the addressee of sequenced prayer-like requests and panegyric laudations. The art practised by the pope's physician is contrasted with ominous death. *Mors violenta* has no power, her actions are deceitful and primitive. It is presented here in accordance with popular mediaeval images of death, i.e. armed with a scythe keeping vigil at a victim's door, ready to strike at a moment of weakness. That was how she conquered Pope Clemens, when his defender, Montanus, was absent. In contrast to death, the Padevian professor has real power (*potestas*) – “feres certam tu mihi solus opem” (*Trist.* IV 38). Janitius glorifies medicine, the divine and sacred art, as well as the wisdom of Padevian senators, who brought the famous Veronian man to their university.

²⁷ Cf. Ovid. *Trist.* II 1: “Quid mihi vobiscum est, infelix cura, libelli?”

The denial of the topos appears in the panegyric, a form making use of hyperbola and *superlatio*. Janitius proves that a glorified man can do what is thought to be impossible; he has a greater power than Esculap himself, who would not have been able to treat a disease as Montanus did.

The same comparison is used in *De se ipso ad posteritatem* VII, the elegy addressing Joannes Antonin, king Sigismundus' Hungarian doctor, who took care of Janitius in Kraków. The poet presents him as a constant victor of Janitius' death, whereas the Apolinian son turned Hipolitus back from Hades only once: "Me tumulo toties extulit iste meo / Imperiumque diu Parcarum elusit et iras" (*Trist.* VII 160–161). Antonin did not manage to conquer the illness after all, because it was only Christ who could do that.

Elegy II realises this topos in a different way. The description of illness is based on classical elements: a weak and emaciated body (like phantoms of the deceased), paleness, the loss of beauty, sunken eyes, blunt sight, "disintegrated" body – a neck unable to raise the head, numb limbs. The illness dehumanises the poet, and deprives him of his identity: "Me (...) vis morbi non sinit esse meum" (*Trist.* II 36). Bedridden, suffering and as helpless as an infant, the poet compares himself to Prometheus. But, in contrast to the titan – the oppressor of Janitius' hero cannot be frightened away:

Verum aliquo potuit volucris terrore fugari
 Illa, potest pestem nemo fugare meam.
 Defessi torpent medici nec, quid sit agendum
 Amplius, expediunt, quodve sequantur iter.

Janitius, *Trist.* II 41–44

Just after these words, medical work, which was already planned in the act of Creation, is being praised. Medical art is a result of human craft and experience, an achievement of civilisation. It had triumphed many times, but in the case of that fever it was conquered and made helpless. The disbelief in the power of science, imposed by literary tradition, is non-existent in the views of the young admirer of wisdom and the arts of a luminous god. Concluding the hymn in honour of medicine in such a way, Janitius feels guilty of blasphemy: "Febre tamen nunc victa mea est, ignoscat Apollo, / Atque in me robur perdidit omne suum" (*Trist.* II 59–62). In elegy III, which is a praise of philosophy, Janitius ascribes the act of ruling over the human lot and treating human distresses and fears to Wisdom²⁸.

²⁸ Hanc tanto maiore sequar conamine, quanto est [Sophia]
 Fortior humanis illa medela malis.
 Hacc est fortunæ domina imperiosa malignæ,
 Sub magnum rapiens illius arma iugum;
 Iura dat aerumnis, victo dat iura timori
 Nec scit ob adversas vertere terga vices.

Janitius, *Trist.* III 51–55

Janitius has two parallel perspectives, which are incompatible for him: the pagan (ancient) and the Christian ones. Apparently, the recognition of the helplessness of science is possible only when the poet changes the context to Christian. This lets him interpret his illness as a justified punishment for his sins. Even the heaviest penalty is not able to compensate the misdeeds. But over his sin there is merciful God and the help of Holy Virgin, who is the addressee of the elegy.

Hodoeporicon

Both poets use the form of *itinerarium*. Almost all the third book of Lotichius' *Elegiarum* prepares the return from "exile" to a native land – starting with elegy III 1 to a contrastive last one (III 10). In the former the news of a war interrupts a hopeful journey from France to Germany, depressing the hero. The latter contains a laudation for peace, which can finally let him come back home described in idyllic colours. Both elegies surrounding the third book have a *hodoeporicon* structure, although – as Walther Ludwig²⁹ perceives – elegy III 1 is an unusual, so to speak, incomplete *itinerarium*. The hero does not reach his aim. There are no descriptions of landscapes or adventures on his way, which is typical of the genre. Lotichius focuses on his inner emotions, which determine where and which phenomena a pilgrim should observe. It is a kind of "sentimental journey" and the poet gives it symbolic meanings. There is a movement from wintry coldness to the warmth of spring, symbolic of his way homewards and his increasing joy of anticipation, which culminates in an implicit comparison with homecoming Ulysses.

The cheerful mood is destroyed by *Fama volans* (49) announcing a new war, which distances him from the homeland. Joy transforms into despair. *Exul inops erro* (57) says Lotichius summing up his travel with words from *Ibis*.

Janitius' *itineraria* are also unlike classical *hodoeporicon*. Although elegy V describes the difficulties of travel through the Alps, it is rather a guide through the hero's ailments on the route of Padova-Kraków, showing places and situations causing pain. Janitius starts his poem with a Homeric metaphor of a body as a ship on the rough sea, but unlike the other authors of *hodoeporicons*, he does not compare his fate with Ulysses'. Instead, he refers to Ovid's narration about his exile. The Polish poet considers Ovid's lot of a man banished to the Scythes³⁰ land to be happier than his when travelling through barbarian Alps' tribes: "Barbarius nihil est Alpina gente ferumque / Nil magis

²⁹ W. Ludwig: *Petrus Lotichius...*, pp. 185–187.

³⁰ As a matter of fact, Ovid says about Goth and Sarmatas.

est, ipsi sint nisi forte lupi" (*Trist.* V 27–28). Founding his report on the poet's from Tomi (*Trist.* III 3, 2–14), Janitius describes all the inconveniences of his journey, inhospitality and wild habits of the nations met on his way, hindered communication with them, the necessity to have meals and drinks, which are poisonous for the sick organism. In the whole poem we can feel the mood of nostalgia and regret over the deserted domain of the Muses and all the sciences.

However, elegy X is a *propempticon* for Rafał Wargawski, who sets out on a journey to their common homeland. The ill poet regrets he cannot travel to the dearest places to see his mother, brother and the grave of his father. So he covers the distance in a "mental space" with his thoughts and memories. What is interesting, the motif of a way is also included in the epitaph, which Janitius wants to engrave on his dearest father's tomb: "Hic tegor agricola obscurus, sed laude poete, / Quem genui, per tot compita clarus eo" (59–60). It is a reference to the topos of a winged word, used in a panegyric function, as in the famous fragment of the elegy written by Teognis for Kyrnos (verses 237–254).

Patriae desiderium

Like in the elegy analysed above, as well in other fragments of Janitius' poems homesickness is often manifested: a longing for the beloved father or even for finishing his life in the native land. In spite of this, the motif of yearning for an abandoned realm of the Muses³¹ is equally conspicuous. It is Italy, where the young poet spent a short time attaining his desired knowledge. He left a receptive literary environment, where his talent was appreciated and honoured by a laurel wreath.

At the end of elegy V, Janitius addresses his friend Piotr Myszkowski, who is staying in Padova: "At tu, cui placidi faverunt omnia divi, / In Musis istic vive valeque tuis" (*Trist.* V 55–56). His description of the journey from Padova to Kraków ends with the words of regret that fate did not let him stay there longer. A hope that native aura could cure the ill man is his only consolation. Anyway, he will not die in a foreign land. In elegy VII we read:

Invidit fortuna mihi morboque gravatum
Compulit ad patrios me remeare focos,
Quam volui citius (...)

Janitius, *Trist.* VII 79–81

³¹ Ending elegy V, the poet addresses Piotr Myszkowski, staying in Padova: "At tu, cui placidi faverunt omnia divi, / In Musis istic vive valeque tuis" (Janitius, *Trist.* V 55–56).

Lotichius identifies the literary homeland with his native land – he seeks there inspiration. For Polish neo-Latin poets *locus poeticus* is placed mainly in Italy. Janitius and Sarbiewski longed for that place. Both were obliged to halt their study and leave the literary centre, where they could bring their talent to perfection.

Such a feature is not to be found in Latin elegies of another Polish author – Jan Kochanowski. He praises his *otium*, his *patria rura*, where his Muses live. Following the example of Petrarca, Kochanowski plants there laurels for Apollo's sisters³². Kochanowski is a man of the world, whose place in the world is a native cottage. He is a proud and stately Sarmata, too calm for melancholic sorrow and longing. But his tragedy is shown in a philosophic treaty *Treny* (a threnodic cycle for a little daughter). This book is not filled with idle sorrow but with a pre-baroque battle with God and stoicism. It is a struggle for the humanist's own philosophical identity, for a vision of the world, where Renaissance optimism is revalued. And his struggle is victorious.

Literary Arcadia

Kochanowski, both in his Latin and Polish (mainly) poetry, takes over a bucolic tradition, which is transformed here in a specific way. Like for many neo-Latin poets (including Lotichius), for him as well, the place where poetry is born is *locus amoenus* – an idyllic meadow of Muses. It is situated in his dearest place, which is his Czarnolas cottage. He usually connects meta-literary topics with this stylistics, which is typical of ancient and humanistic poetry.

Janitius does not do that. In the only auto-thematic poem from *Tristia*, which is not concerned with the topic of illness, he describes the sufferings in the act of creating poetry. Elegy III, addressing his protector Piotr Kmita, contains an excuse for a nine-month long break in sending him new poems. The neglect is already justified in the title with assiduous philosophy studies. Before the poet sings a hymn for the divine Wisdom, he describes his torment and anxiety, which shattered his lute, Apollo's gift (*Trist.* III 31–34). There is no precise explanation of the causes of such painful worries, but the context lets us suppose stagnation, creative inability, probably no confidence in his talent and anxiety over the future. A confrontation of the poet's spiritual situation, a creative suffering, with the poetical image of an idyllic seat of inspiration-donors causes a discord:

³² *Elegy* III 13 28–29. Meta-literary bucolic motifs are to be found in elegies 11, 13 and 15 of Book III.

Hinc etiam lucos et prata et amoena poetae
 Flumina Musarum constituere domos
 Illarumque comas laetis cinxere coronis
 Et cantum et dulces attribuere modos.
 Hic habitus felix (quota pars tamen huius in isto est?)
 Pompaque temporibus dissonat ista meis.

Janitius, *Trist.* III 19–24

The image above negates a literary Arcadia myth. Poetry is born in the pain of existence.

The cycle of Janitius' *Tristia* strictly belongs to the Renaissance tradition of elegiac humanistic autobiography. The Polish Latinist uses contemporary common topoi and themes. Undoubtedly, he can turn them into a vivid, moving poetry, attractive in its credibility and charm. Reading the elegiac book, we see a man who, despite his sufferings and reverses of fortune, is always serene, friendly, trusting in God, mighty knowledge and art – in its immortalising power.

Grażyna Urban-Godziek

Topika *de se aegrotante* w elegijnej autobiografii humanistycznej
Tristia Klemensa Janickiego na tle *Elegiarium Libri* Petrusa Lotichiusa Secundusa

Streszczenie

Klemens Janicki należy do wielkich poetów, których geniusz jeszcze dziś „podaje się do wierzenia” na podstawie nieweryfikowanych ustaleń dosyć starej daty. Wywodzące się z poetyki postromantycznej kryterium oryginalności każe wysoko cenić *Tristia* głównie ze względu na ich niepowtarzalność, szczerość poety w kształtowaniu swojego portretu, autentyczność opisywanych przeżyć. W epoce rozwiniętych badań neolatynistycznych i komparatystycznych takie opinie na temat szesnastowiecznego elegika łacińskiego, uwieńczonego laurem poetyckim w Padwie, muszą wzbudzić podejrliwość.

I rzeczywiście, osadzenie dzieła Janiciusza w kontekście elegijnej twórczości jego czasów pozwala umieścić *Tristia* w nurcie autobiografii humanistycznej. Bogata jest reprezentacja renesansowych poetów gatunku, którego źródła i postać opisał J. IJsewijn, a w Polsce – R. Turzyński. Cyklowi lamentacyjnych elegii autotematycznych Janickiego zdaje się najbardziej odpowiadać dzieło (*Elegiarium libri*) młodszego od Polaka o dwanaście lat niemieckiego poety Petrusa Lotichiusa Secundusa (co ciekawe, zbieżnościom w tematyce towarzyszą podobieństwa biografii i recepcji poetów).

Oba cykle inspirowane wygnanią poezją Owidiusza odwołują się do tej samej topiki (znanej i z innych szesnastowiecznych elegijnych autobiografii humanistycznych). Owe miejsca wspólne to: choroba (*de se aegrotante*), której nie podoła sztuka lekarska (topos bezradności medycyny); klasyczna patografia; niemoc twórcza spowodowana zarówno słabością ciała, jak i odcięciem od

ojczyzny literackiej (topos *patriae desiderium*); opisy podróży do owego wyśnionego miejsca (*hodoeporicon*); sformułowane przez umierającego poetę przesłanie do potomności (*de se ipso ad posteritatem*).

Analiza porównawcza dzieła Janickiego oraz poetów antycznych i współczesnych poruszających podobną problematykę pozwala stwierdzić, że zbiór jego *Tristiów* wpisuje się jak najściślej w tradycję renesansowej autobiografii elegijnej. Polski łacinnik operował stosowaną powszechnie topiką, tematami. Niewątpliwie jednak potrafił stworzyć w tych ramach poezję żywą, poruszającą wrażliwość czytelnika, ujmującą swą wiarygodnością i wdziękiem.

Grażyna Urban-Godziek

Der Topos *de se aegrotante* in elegischen humanistischen Autobiografien *Tristia* von Klemens Janicki contra *Elegiarum Libri* von Petrus Lotichius Secundus

Zusammenfassung

Klemens Janicki gehört zu großen Dichtern, deren Genie noch heute anhand von ziemlich alten, nicht verifizierten Bestimmungen „zum Glauben gebracht wird“. Der postromantischen Poetik entnommenes Originalitätskriterium ließ *Tristia* vor allem wegen der Einzigartigkeit des Werkes, der Ehrlichkeit des Dichters bei Erschaffung seines Abbildes und der Echtheit von beschriebenen Erlebnissen hoch einschätzen. In der neolatinischen und komparatistischen Forschungsepoche müssen solche Meinungen zum Thema des lateinischen Elegiker, der im 16. Jahrhundert geschaffen hat und der in Padua von dem poetischen Lorbeer gekrönt wurde, Verdacht erwecken.

Die Ansiedlung des Werkes von Janicki im Kontext elegischer Werke zu seiner Zeit lässt *Tristia* der Strömung der humanistischen Autobiografie zuordnen. Es gibt zahlreiche Renaissancedichter, die diese literarische Gattung, deren Quelle und Wesen von J. IIsevijs und in Polen von R. Turzyński beschrieben wurden, gepflegt haben. Dem Zyklus von Janickis autothematischen Lamentationselegien entspricht wohl am besten das Werk *Elegiarum Libri* von dem, 12 Jahre von dem Polen jüngeren deutschen Dichter, Petrus Lotichius Secundus. Es ist beachtenswert, dass mit der ähnlichen Thematik die ähnliche Biografie der beiden Dichter und deren ähnliche Rezeption einhergeht.

Die beiden Zyklen wurden von Exilpoesie des Ovidius inspiriert; sie berufen sich auf dieselbe Topik (die durch elegische und humanistische Autobiographien, die im 16. Jahrhundert geschrieben wurden, bekannt ist). Zu gemeinsamen Bereichen gehören: Krankheit (*de se aegrotante*), der keine Heilkunst gewachsen ist (Topos der Hilflosigkeit der Medizin); klassische Pathografie; schöpferische Leere, die sowohl durch körperliche Schwäche, wie auch durch abgesperrte literarische Heimat verursacht wird (Topos *patriae desiderium*); Beschreibungen der Reise zu diesem erträumten Ort (*hodoeporicon*); die vom sterbenden Dichter in Worte gefasste Übermittlung an die Nachwelt (*de se ipso ad posteritatem*).

Die vergleichende Analyse des Werkes von Janicki mit der Schaffen von altertümlichen und zeitgenössischen Dichtern, die das ähnliche Thema berührt haben, zeigt, dass *Tristia* zu der Tradition der Renaissance, elegische Autobiographie gehören. Der polnische Lateiner hat die häufige Topik und Themen benutzt. Er konnte eine rührende aber auch glaubwürdige Poesie schaffen.