Introduction

The Other Voice

In her never-finished *Account of My Life's Travels and Adventures*,[1] the Polish oculist Regina Salomea Pilsztynowa (1718–after 1763) plays a myriad of roles including child bride, wife, mother, lover, adventuress, slave trader, writer, and home-brewed physician.[2] Born in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (modern Belarus), part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth,[3] her peripatetic travels spanned central, eastern, and southeastern Europe from the Ottoman Empire (where she eventually settled) and the Balkans to the Holy Roman Empire, Poland-Lithuania, and Russia. Her very personal and idiosyncratic memoir,[4] written around 1760[5] on 388 manuscript pages, and heretofore unavailable in its entirety in English, explores from a distinctively female perspective the vivid, richly woven tapestry of eighteenth-century life, especially the social, professional, and religious interactions between Christians, Jews, and Muslims, and between men and women. Her work forms an invaluable repository of popular history, ethnographic, religious, and geographical observations, and a storehouse of fascinating vignettes of love, travel, romance, hatreds, and superstitions. Modern researchers, who only opened her memoir more than a century after her death, have been attracted

1. The full title may be translated *An Echo Spreading through the World of the Account of My Travels and Life's Adventures, in Praise and Honor of God in Holy Trinity, the Virgin Mary and All Saints*, from the original Polish, *Echo Na Swiat podane Procederu podróży y Życia mego Awantur: Na cześć y Chwałe P. Bogu w Swiętey Truycy jedynemu y Naswięszey Matce Chrystusa Pana mego y Wszystkim Swietym.*

2. Pilsztynowa's memoir is available in the authoritative modern edition: Regina Salomea z Rusieckich Pilsztynowa, *Proceder podrózy i życia mego awantur* [An Account of My Life's Travels and Adventures], ed. by Roman Pollak (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1957). Cited henceforth as Pilsztynowa, ed. Pollak. The English translation included in this volume and based on Pollak's edition will be cited as Pilsztynowa, *My Life's Travels and Adventures*, and in short-form, *Travels*.

3. A major power in central and eastern Europe, originating in a personal union between the rulers of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1386–1569) and then linked into a federated dual state (1569–1795) following the Union of Lublin. It fell after the Partitions of Poland (1772, 1793, 1795) divided it among its absolutist neighbors Austria, Prussia, and Russia. The current Polish III Republic and (to a lesser extent) modern Lithuania, consider themselves the successor states of the Commonwealth.

4. She signed her title page "Salomeja Regina de Pilsztynowa, Medycyny Doktorka i Okulistka w r. 1760 w Stambule," or, "Salomé Regina de Pilstein, Medical Doctor and Oculist, in Istanbul, 1760." Her dedication page to Ludwika Potocka, widow of Crown Grand Hetman Józef Potocki, on the other hand, bears the inscription "Regina Salomea Makowska, MD and Oculist."

5. That is the date Pilsztynowa provides on the title page, and again twice more in chapter four. Some textual clues could be interpreted to mean a few parts of the *Travels* were written in 1761.

to and repelled by this extraordinary author, who has been called, among other things, the "Polish She-Devil," an "adventuress," or "Poland's first female doctor."[6]

Pilsztynowa's *Travels* offers an intimate and exciting glimpse of a period and a society that are at once distant and yet near, still resonating in our contemporary world. In many ways her voice, so loud and clear in the pages of her memoir, is (or, perhaps, should be) the disregarded voice of the Other: a stranger in a foreign land, a female Catholic Pole in a Muslim male-dominated society, a practicing woman physician in a field reserved for men, an unattached woman (though she was married at least twice, she lived mostly separated from her husbands) in a world where women's roles, from birth to death, were stringently defined and controlled. That she managed successfully, contrary to every expectation, to carve out for herself a viable niche, an early "room of her own," and to become a highly sought-after and well-respected practitioner of the medical arts, testifies to her own refusal to accept for herself the identification with the Other, a helpless subaltern, with no power and no speech. Her speech, her *Travels*, are eloquent indeed.

Moreover, Pilsztynowa's memoir is a work by an unschooled member of the growing professional middle class, and therefore a rare gem in the available canon of eighteenth-century memoir literature. Unlike her contemporary, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu,[7] or her near-contemporary countrywoman Anna Stanisławska,[8] she did not hail from high aristocracy or magnate lineage, and unlike the earlier Anna Maria Marchocka[9] who had made her world in a cloister,

6. Conveniently, all three descriptions can be found in a single online source: Lidia Kawecka's popular write-up of Pilsztynowa's travels and adventures on a Polish travel site: Polska Diablica. Onet.pl., https://podroze.onet.pl/ciekawe/polska-diablica/l6ty8ng.

7. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762) began to write her famous *Turkish Embassy Letters,* which included her advocacy for smallpox inoculation, after she accompanied her husband, Edward Wortley Montagu (1678–1761), in his role as Great Britain's ambassador to the Porte (1716–1718). Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Turkish Embassy Letters,* ed. Teresa Heffernan and Daniel O'Quinn (Peterborough, Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press, 2013). Billie Melman calls Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters* the first of their kind, a first secular description of Ottoman life by a woman's hand. First published, yes, perhaps, but Pilsztynowa's account preceded Montagu's by three years. Billie Melman, *Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718–1918: Sexuality, Religion, and Work* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 1992), 78.

8. Anna Stanisławska (1651–1701), the daughter of a Polish magnate family, wrote an account of her life and her unhappy and happy marriages in verse around 1685, making her one of the first known Polish female authors. The first part of her verse epic, entitled *Transakcja albo opisanie całego życia jednej sieroty przez żałosne treny od tejże samej pisane roku 1685*, is now available in translation: Anna Stanisławska, *Orphan Girl: A Transaction, or an Account of the Entire Life of an Orphan Girl by way of Plentiful Threnodies in the Year 1685: The Aesop Episode*, trans. Barry Keane (Toronto: Iter Press; Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2016).

9. Anna Maria Marchocka (1603–1652) was a discalced Carmelite nun who eventually rose to the position of a prioress of the Carmelite convent in Kraków. Her autobiography, started in 1647,

Pilsztynowa embraced her gentry[10] roots, and represents that most unusual combination of an early modern self-made woman who, among the travels and travails of her life-story, found time enough for literary self-fashioning and expression.

Her self-positioning has made her inclusion in the canon of Polish Baroque memoirs—and, by extension, in the genre of European Baroque literature in general—a point of scholarly contention that has refused to yield, so far, a general consensus. Some scholars see her *Travels* as something "unique and incomparable,"[11] a singular literary curiosity written by a singularly curious woman, and they attempt to unpack her work from the perspective of the contradictions it creates.[12] They

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circulated in manuscript shortly after her death and was finally published a century later to become an inspiration for Polish religious devotion. Anna Maria Marchocka, *Autobiografia mistyczna m. Teresy od Jezusa, karm. bosej (Anny Marii Marchockiej), 1603–1652* [The Mystical Autobiography of the Barefoot Carmelite Teresa of Jesus (Anna Maria Marchocka), 1603–1652], ed. Karol Górski (Poznań: Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza, 2009). Though the entirety of her autobiography is, as of yet, unavailable in English, some discussion is provided by Roland H. Bainton, *Women of the Reformation: From Spain to Scandinavia* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1977), 177–82; Ursula Phillips, "Polish Women Authors: From the Middle Ages until 1800," in *A History of Central European Women's Writing*, ed. Celia Hawkesworth (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 14–24; and Liliana Sikorska, "Between Autohagiography and Confession: Generic Concerns and the Question of Female Self-Representation in Anna Maria Marchocka's 'Mystical Autobiography,'" *Florilegium* 23.1 (2006), 85–96. For a Polish language attempt to fit Marchocka within the genre of mystical literature, see Katarzyna Kaczor-Scheitler, "Działalność pisarska polskich zakonów żeńskich w dobie baroku" [The Literary Activity of Polish Female Orders in the Baroque Period], *Litteraria* 13 (2010): 77–89, and Halina Popławska, "Autobiografia mistyczna" [Mistical Autobiography], in *Religijność literatury polskiego baroku* [Religiosity in the Literature of the Polish Baroque], ed. Czesław Hernas and Mirosława Hanusiewicz (Lublin: Tow. Nauk. Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1995).

10. The term "gentry" can have many definitions, depending on the place, time, and the social system. Though Pilsztynowa's family belonged to poor but still landed minor Polish-Lithuanian nobility, or *szlachta*, the fact her parents married her off to a non-noble professional speaks volumes.

11. This is discussed by Lynn Lubamersky in her article, "Unique and Incomparable: The Exceptional Life of the First Female Doctor in Poland, Regina Salomea Pilsztynowa," *The Polish Review*, 59.1 (2014): 87, 100; for a more general discussion also see Grażyna Borkowska, Małgorzata Czermińska, and Ursula Phillips, *Pisarki polskie od średniowiecza do współczesności: Przewodnik* [*Polish Women Writers from the Middle Ages to Modern Times: A Survey*] (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Słowo, 2000).

12. See, for instance, how Katarzyna Zielińska tries to deal with the inherent literary problem presented by Pilsztynowa and her work in her "Polka w osiemnastowiecznym Stambule: Rzecz o Reginie Pilsztynowej i jej postrzeganiu Imperium Osmańskiego" [A Female Pole in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul: About Regina Pilsztynowa and her Gaze on the Ottoman Empire], *Turystyka kulturowa* 6 (November–December, 2016): 113: "Regina posiadała status 'innego' zarówno w mentalności społeczeństwa polskiego, jak i tureckiego. To pozwoliło jej na egzystowanie według swoich własnych zasad, z dala od polskich i tureckich konwenansów" (Regina [Pilsztynowa] possessed the status of 'The Other,' in the minds of both Polish and Turkish societies. Such allowed her to exist according to her own rules, far from Polish and Turkish conventions). Zielińska's article is available in Polish online at http://turystykakulturowa.org/ojs/index.php/tk/article/view/779/706.

see her as a product of the geographically, politically, and socially amorphous hodgepodge that was the eastern and southeastern European periphery—called the "wild steppes" in nineteenth-century parlance or the "Bloodlands" in a more current rendition.[13] In that view, Pilsztynowa occupies the liminal, nearly metaphysical space between worlds, societies, and identities, herself alien and unidentifiable.

Others, with equal diligence, attempt to peg her to existing norms and show that no matter how unusual her *Travels* appears at first glance, upon a closer and more thorough inspection her work actually follows (or inelegantly tries to follow) well-established tropes and concerns present in the genre it emulates: the Old Polish Baroque memoir tradition. It plays with and adds to the preconceived notions and expectations of Polish Baroque memoir literature, a genre very much dominated in prose and in verse by offerings jotted in a male hand and in a male voice. For every Pilsztynowa, or, for that matter, every Stanisławska or Marchocka, there stand dozens of male memoirists, such as Pasek, Zawisza, Maskiewicz, Cedrowski, Niezabitowski, or Tyczyński.[14] It is precisely this imbalance that makes her gaze and her voice so invaluable.

The attempt to distill Polish Baroque memoirs into well-defined principles and commonalities has a long and illustrious history, especially in formulating the picture of a Sarmatian[15] version of a "Baroque Person or Man," or *Człowiek*

13. Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010). Magdalena Ożarska, for instance, sees her specifically as the product of that frontier region, and possessing traits and values necessary for success and survival: agency, independence, and aggressiveness. Magdalena Ożarska, "Beyond the Old Polish 'hic mulier': Regina Salomea nee Rusiecka secundo voto Pilsztynowa and her memoir," *Studia filologiczne Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego*, 29 (2016): 146.

14. All these named are members of the Polish nobility whose journals and memoirs concern themselves primarily with warfare or country living: Jan Chryzostom Pasek, *Pamiętniki* [Memoirs], ed. Władysław Czapliński, 2 vols. (Wrocław-Warsaw: Ossolineum, 2003); Krzysztof Zawisza, *Pamiętniki Krzysztofa Zawiszy, wojewody mińskiego, 1666–1721* [The Memoirs of Krzysztof Zawisza, the Voivode of Minsk, 1666–1721], ed. Julian Bartoszewicz (Warsaw: Jan Zawisza, 1862); Samuel Maskiewicz and Bogusław Kazimierz Maskiewicz, *Pamiętniki Samuela i Bogusława Kazimierza Maskiewiczów, wiek* xvii [Memoirs of Samuel and Bogusław Kazimierz Maskiewicz, Seventeenth Century], ed. Alojzy Sajkowski (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1961); Jan Cedrowski and Jan Florian Drobysz Turszyński, *Dwa pamiętniki z* xvii *wieku: Jana Cedrowskiego i Jana Floriana Drobysza Tyczyńskiego* [Two Seventeenth-Century Memoirs: Jan Cedrowski and Jan Florian Drobysz Tyczyński], ed. Adam Przyboś (Wrocław-Kraków: Ossolineum, 1954); and Stanisław Niezabitowski, Dzienniki, 1695–1700 [*Journals, 1695–1700*], ed. Alojzy Sajkowski (Poznań: Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza, 1998). Only one of these memoirs has been made available in English: Jan Chryzostom Pasek, *Memoirs of the Polish Baroque: The Writings of Jan Chryzostom Pasek, a Squire of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania*, trans. Catherine S. Leach (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

15. Sarmatian or Old Polish are cultural terms that delineate Polish noble society and its concerns from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment. The term Sarmatian or *Sarmatyzm*, in Polish, refers to the fictional belief that Polish nobility descended from this ancient tribe of free steppe warriors. Over

Baroku,[16] that emerges out of the written word. Many see in Pilsztynowa's *Travels* at least a rudimentary awareness of these conventions and an imperfect, if still an explicit, attempt at mimicry. Like the earlier Stanisławska and her verse, or Marchocka's autohagiography, Pilsztynowa's prose, they argue, can be made to fit established patterns and paradigms, thereby allowing for analysis and, in the end, judgment. Pilsztynowa's *Travels* can be subjected to examination in that it shares elements of travel narratives,[17] supernaturalism and sensualism,[18] and even religious quietism,[19] that all appear to be hallmarks of the genre.[20] She is

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time *Sarmatyzm* evolved to include distinct socio-political concepts that included notions of "Golden Liberty," or the extensive rights and privileges enjoyed by members of the Polish *szlachta*, or gentry, regardless of their actual wealth, and increased cultural affinity for the East, with Persian and Turkish styles and dresses eventually replacing those of the Latin West. For a short primer on Sarmatism, see Adam Zamoyski, *The Polish Way: A Thousand-Year History of the Poles and Their Culture* (London: John Murray, 1987), 107–8; and see 181 for its negative, regressive qualities in the eighteenth century that Zamoyski calls "bumpkin mentality."

16. Ewa Kaczyńska, "Wizerunek własny człowieka polskiego Baroku: Pamiętniki Krzysztofa Zawiszy" [Self-Portrait of a Polish Baroque Man: The Memoirs of Krzysztof Zawisza], *Litteraria* 39 (2012): 49–58; Zbigniew Kuchowicz, *Człowiek polskiego baroku* [The Polish Baroque Man] (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Lódzkie, 1992); and Rosario Villari, et al., *Człowiek Baroku* [The Baroque Man] (Warsaw: Volumen, 2001).

17. In many ways, Pilsztynowa's memoir is a travel narrative, though Roman Krzywy considers it a very imperfect one; see his "Pragnienie pamięci i 'białogłowski concept:' Kilka uwag o świadomości warsztatowej pierwszych polskich pamiętnikarek: Anna Zbąska, Regina Salomea Pilsztynowa" [The Need for Memory and the "Female Concept:" A Few Points about the Trade Awareness of the First Polish Female Memoir Writers: Anna Zbąska (Stanisławska) and Regina Salomea Pilsztynowa], *Śląskie studia polonistyczne* 2.4 (2013): 138: "The selection of information Pilsztynowa provides betrays the fact that she was an avid reader of travel literature, and a person well gifted with good observational skills. However the entirety of her offering presents no logical plan or concept but rather paints the picture of a collection of random facts and observations, and the wrong ones at that." A broader analysis of Old Polish travel literature is provided by Hanna Dziechcińska, *O staropolskich dziennikach podróży* [About Old-Polish Travel Journals] (Warsaw: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 1991).

18. This is supported by Dziechcińska, *Pamiętniki czasów saskich: Od sentymentalizmu do sensualizmu* [Saxon-Era Memoirs: From Sentimentalism to Sensualism] (Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo Uczelniane WSP, 1999), 49. For more on the magical and supernatural dimension in Old Polish memoirs, see Leszek Hensel, *Kultura szlachecka w Europie środkowo-wschodniej w I połowie XVIII wieku* [Noble Culture in East-Central Europe in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1986), 205; Czesław Hernas, *Barok* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2008), 585; and Kaczyńska, "Wizerunek własny człowieka polskiego Baroku," 52.

19. On quietism as a distinctive quality of Polish Baroque memoir literature, see Kaczyńska, "Wizerunek własny człowieka polskiego Baroku," 50–52.

20. Paulina D. Dominik, *The Istanbul Memories in Salomea Pilsztynowa's Diary "Echo of the Journey and Adventures of my Life," 1760* (Bonn: Orient-Institut Istanbul. Max Weber Stiftung—Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland, 2017), 14: "The *Diary of Salomea Pilsztynowa* should

seen as continuing the tradition of Polish Baroque *silva rerum* style of writing,[21] and, in a more modern sense, constructing one of the clearest examples of an ego-document.[22]

Just as an attempt has been made to locate Pilsztynowa's work within existing norms, so too her brand, her identity and name, have invited scrutiny. Regina Salomea z Rusieckich Pilsztynowa—Regina Salomé née Rusiecki Pilstein for Anglophone ears—is how Polish historiography presents the writer's full name. But is it her name? Shouldn't it be Pichelstein?[23] Or perhaps Regina Halpir[24] or Halpirowa, after her first husband? Or Makowska, after the possible third husband, to go along with the surname she signed on the dedication page of her memoir? "A rose by any other name" is an old saying, but here there are so many roses to choose from.

Perhaps this problem of naming the chief protagonist of the *Travels*, the writer herself, has always been the first major hurdle. Regina Salomea Pilsztynowa is the generally accepted form of her name in Polish scholarship, the surname Pilsztynowa being the Polish feminine version of Pilsztyn, which itself is the Polish spelling of the German Pilstein, a simplified version of Pichelstein (Polish Pichelsztyn). She never used Pichelstein or Pichelsztyn, and although some scholars were drawn to it when her memoir was discovered,[25] it would seem strange to call her by a name she herself did not employ.

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be read as a typical work of the epoch consisting of various literary conventions and 'prefabricated components.'"

21. *Silva rerum*, or "The forest of things," was a literary genre, popular in Old Polish noble society of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, used to preserve familiar identity and memories. Usually written by the head of the family, it passed down through generations and became filled with a variety of genre- and style-bending personal observations, proclamations, and annotations. For a quick treatment of Pilsztynowa's *Travels* as a *silva rerum* see Dominik, *The Istanbul Memories*, 14.

22. A very personal style of writing that shines more light on the author's identity, experience, and emotions than on the matters actually written about. Krzywy, "Pragnienie pamięci," 140: "Of primary importance in the works of Zbąska (Stanisławska) and Pilsztynowa is the sphere of individual experiences;" Dominik, *The Istanbul Memories*,14: "For the author it was much more important to consolidate memories than to exhibit stylistic and literary perfection.… The form and style became secondary objectives, while the major aim was to save what she heard and saw from oblivion."

23. Both Pichlstein and Pichelstein appeared side by side in her second husband's family's genealogy, with Pichelstein probably being the earlier and more correct form, with the simplified Pichlstein, or Pilstein, slowly emerging later on.

24. This is, for instance, the name she appears under in the art installation by Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party*; see note 88.

25. Such is the case with Barbara Grosfeld: "Pichelsteinowa (Pilsztynowa) z Rusieckich, primo voto Halpirowa Salomea Regina (1718–1760)," in *Polski słownik biograficzny* [Polish Biographical Dictionary], vol. 26 (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1981), 30–31.

This, then, has become the first rule: that whenever possible or applicable, her lead, her voice, and her will, are to be heeded. The later surname Makowska is of some interest as well. Still, it was not a name she acknowledged within her work's pages or in the title. Makowska remains a name that, so far, stands strangely exterior to her written story, even though we have an idea who this Makowski, possibly her third husband, was. In the end the preferred name she used within her manuscript's pages should be preferred by us as well. The strange marriage of convention and her own usage has given us, her readers and interpreters, what we already knew: Regina Salomea Pilsztynowa stands as the author, and the heroine, of her own story.

Her Life, Her Book, and Her Times

Regina Salomea Pilsztynowa was born in 1718 in the Novahrudak province of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, present-day Belarus, to gentry parents; Joachim Rusiecki is the name of her father, but she is silent about the name of her mother, just as she is silent about the names of many women she meets on her journeys. This is pretty much all that is currently known about her family and her childhood,[26] except that her upbringing must have been an eventful one, as she fondly recalls always traveling with a loaded set of pistols in her calash.[27] What her education consisted of, if any, or how extensive it was, is a matter of conjecture, though it is certain she valued schooling enough to think of it in serious terms when it came to the future careers of her sons (though not when it came to her daughter, Constance, for whom she chose a traditional convent education).

She was born and raised during the so-called Saxon Era of Polish history, when two Saxon monarchs of the Wettin family, Augustus II the Strong (r. 1697–1706, 1709–1733) and his son Augustus III (r. 1734–1763) occupied the

26. There was an early mention by Stanisław Załęski, a fin-de-siècle historian of Jesuits and other religious orders in Poland, that Pilsztynowa herself was a new convert from Judaism to Catholicism; see his *Jezuici w Polsce* [Jesuits in Poland], vol. 3 (Kraków: W. L. Anczyc i Spólka, 1902), 845: "W ciężką bowiem chorobę piersiową, zapadł O. Ręgarski, nie pomagały leki hospodarskiego lekarza Bartin'a; uratowała go ziołami i maściami sławna z Ruszczuku lekarka, 1° voto Heber, 2° voto Pilstein, neofitka w Barze przez Jezuitów ochrzczona" (Father Ręgarski fell seriously ill with a sickness of the chest; the medications given by Bertin, the Moldavian prince's physician, were of no use; he was only saved by the herbs and balms of the famous lady doctor of Russe, primo voto Heber, secundo voto Pilstein, a neophyte once christened by the Jesuits in Bar). The point is briefly mentioned by Roman Pollak (Pollak ed., 12), and also by Pollak's contemporary Jan Reychman, who noted that rumors of Jewish descent even followed her son, Stanisław Kostka; see his *Życie Polskie w Stambule w XVIII wieku* [Polish Life in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century] (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1959), 161. Some more recent writers also chose to bring this up, as did Krzywy in his "Pragnienie pamięci," 134. In the end, efforts to unpack Załęski's singular comment have so far led nowhere.

27. A calash is a small carriage with a folding top.

throne of the dual Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This period, very negatively remembered in Polish historiography, was marked by both a moral and political decay. The power of the great nobility, the magnates, reached its apogee, while the peasants toiled under the ever increasing demands of institutionalized serfdom. The *Liberum Veto*, the right of the nobility to freely veto any parliamentary decision, was the highest political expression of noble power and its "Golden Liberty"; though it was only sparingly used in the previous century, now it repeatedly exploded *Sejms* and *sejmiks*,[28] and any attempts at reform. Wars, civil wars and rebellions (called "confederations"), such as the Great Northern War (1700–1721), the War of the Polish Succession (1733–1735), and the Bar Confederation (1768–1772) weakened the economic, military, and political position of the Commonwealth by bringing ruin to the cities and the countryside. The parallel march and triumph of the Counter-Reformation solidified the Catholic identity of the Polish noble classes and reversed the past centuries of enshrined religious liberty and toleration.[29] This, then, was the state of the homeland in which Pilsztynowa was brought up—but not for long, since she left it as a teenager.

As Pilsztynowa recounts in Chapter One, her journeys began in 1732, when, at the age of fourteen, her father gave her in marriage to a much older physician of German extraction, Jacob Halpir, a Lutheran. Her husband took her to Istanbul (then still known to Western Europeans as Constantinople), where he established a successful practice and where, at his side, his much younger and very curious wife took her first steps to learning medicine. Their marriage, however, did not succeed, and, following several professional misadventures and Pilsztynowa's serious illness (her description of it suggests both a physical and a psychological collapse), her husband abandoned her and their newborn daughter Constance, and went off on his own. Pilsztynowa left Istanbul to try her luck in the Balkans, first in Edirne and then Sofia, where she started her own, at first tentative, attempts to treat the sick and the blind. Following an adventure with

28. The *Sejm* was the name for the Polish Diet or Parliament; *Sejmik* or *sejmiki* (plural) were local diets or dietines. For their role in Poland-Lithuania's political life, see Jerzy Michalski, "Les diétines polonaises au XVIIIe siècle," *Acta poloniae historica* 12 (1965): 87–107.

29. For a general introduction to the history of the period, see Paweł Jasienica, *A Tale of Agony: The Commonwealth of Both Nations* III (Miami: The American Institute of Polish Culture, 1992). For another English-language treatment of Poland's political decline, see Jerzy Lukowski, *Liberty's Folly: The Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Eighteenth Century, 1697–1795* (London: Routledge, 1991). For the attempts to strengthen it during this period, see Józef Andzej Gierowski, *The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Eighteenth Century: From Anarchy to Well-Organised State* (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1996). A discussion of the period's economic decline is included in Jerzy Topolski, "La regression économique en Pologne du XVIe au XVIIIe siècles," *Acta poloniae historica* 7 (1962), 28–49, while cultural decline is treated in Jędrzej Kitowicz, *Opis obyczajów za panowania Augusta III* [Description of Norms and Customs during the Reign of Augustus III] (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1985).

a local bandit lord in Kàrlovo, and a last poignant reunion with her sick husband back in Sofia, the Austro-Russian-Turkish War (1735–39) found her there. Thereupon, after witnessing a massacre of Christians, Pilsztynowa moved again, to Vidin, where she became the physician to the exiled Hungarian Prince Joseph Rakoczi (1700–1738). When the prince expressed an interest in making her his mistress, she fled by river boat on the Danube to the town of Ruse, where she was arrested as a spy. After convincing the Turkish authorities otherwise, the young female doctor decided to make some money by engaging in the slave trade. She bought several officers, Austrian prisoners of war, to sell them back to their families for profit, one of them being a officer from Carniola, Joseph von Pilstein. Her promise to friends in Ruse to buy back some of their prisoners-of-war from the Russians eventually led her to travel back to Poland, in late 1738 or early 1739, accompanied by her personal slave Joseph von Pilstein, to prepare for a trip to St. Petersburg.

Answering a few looming questions might illuminate the adventures that constitute the first chapter of Pilsztynowa's *Travels*. Why Istanbul, for instance? The choice was not her own, of course, and we do not know if there existed a previous connection between Pilsztynowa's first husband and the city on the Bosporus, but eighteenth-century Istanbul was rightly known for its cosmopolitan nature and as a site for a growing Polish community. Likewise, following the conclusion of the War of the Holy League (or the Great Turkish War) in 1699, it was a time of peace and developing friendly relations between the Porte (the Turkish government in Istanbul) and the Commonwealth, with both states slowly being drawn towards each other geopolitically in the presence of growing Russian power.[30]

Chapter Two of her *Travels* begins in 1739 with Pilsztynowa in Poland, marrying Joseph. She quickly placed him in the employ of Prince Radziwiłł, a major Polish-Lithuanian magnate, and then left on her planned journey. She traveled to Russia through Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia (the modern Baltic States), and after a few adventures on the road arrived in St. Petersburg, the imperial capital. She managed to present herself to the Russian Empress Anna (r. 1730–1740), and gained a position at the court. At this point, pausing in her story, she recounts at length for her readers the popular stories and histories she had heard while in Russia. Eventually, having received permission from the empress to take four Turks back with her, and after some adventures, including a bandit attack on an inn where she stayed, she returned to Poland—where her Turks were taken from her by Prince Radziwiłł. Her reunion with her second husband was unfortunate as well, as he had been unfaithful to her in her absence, and lost the small fortune she had left him with to boot. Understandably chagrined, she opted to travel to the

30. See Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, ed., *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations, Fifteenth to Eighteenth Century: An Annotated Edition of "Ahdnames" and Other Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), and Reychman, *Życie Polskie w Stambule w XVIII wieku*.

Holy Roman Empire, to Ljubljana (she calls it by the German name of Laibach), to visit her new in-laws and to recoup some of the money she had invested in her husband.

Following that visit, Pilsztynowa traveled back through Vienna, where she stayed as a physician to the Turkish ambassador, and where, in 1740, she gave birth to her first son by Pilstein, Francis Xavier. Satisfied somewhat with her accomplishments, she rode back to Poland through Silesia, at the moment it was invaded by the Prussians at the beginning of the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–1748). She personally met the Prussian King Frederick II, called "The Great," in Wrocław, receiving from him a passport that allowed her to continue her journey. Arriving in Poland, matters came to a head when her husband tried to poison her. They briefly reconciled, resulting in another pregnancy. Convinced that life with her husband was impossible, however, Pilsztynowa traveled once again to the Ottoman Empire, to recover money from the four Turks whose release she had obtained in Russia. After further adventures, including a revolt of the Turkish elite corps of janissaries, she befriended an ailing Turkish pasha, and, in 1742, gave birth to her second son by Pilstein, Stanisław Kostka, in Bucharest. She successfully collected the debts owed her by the Turks whom she had brought out of Russian prisons, then settled in Ruse to practice her trade. A couple of misadventures with escaped slaves and religious converts followed. The chapter ends with her return, by 1744, to Kamyanets, then in Poland.

Once again in the country of her birth, in Chapter Three, Pilsztynowa was cheated and imprisoned by General Bekierski, the commander of Kamyanets, who stole her entire fortune in order to avoid paying the many debts that he owed her, and prepared to eliminate her in one of the prison-fortresses under his command. Forewarned of the danger by a friendly soldier, she sought shelter in a monastery, where, due to stress, she suffered another psychotic episode. Only the intercession of a bishop and a hetman[31] restored her freedom. The final separation from Pilstein—her now completely estranged second husband—followed.

The rest of Chapter Three introduces, and immediately condemns, the new man in Pilsztynowa's life, an irresolute nobleman, seven years her junior, her lover and bane, known in her words only by the mysterious acronym of I.M.C.Z.[32] The

31. In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth the rank denoted high military command. There were four hetmans, two Field Hetmans (one for Poland, called the Crown Hetman and one for Lithuania) and two Grand Hetmans (again for Poland and Lithuania) with the Crown Grand Hetman exercising supreme military authority.

32. The mystery of the acronym has been seemingly solved recently by Dariusz Champerek, whose analysis points to Józef Makowski, a nobleman from the area of Zhytomyr (Polish Żytomierz). I.M.C.Z. would then presumably stand for Józef (since Latin doesn't have a J) Makowski, Cześnikowicz Żytomierski, or, in English, Józef Makowski, son of the Cup Bearer of Zhytomyr. A Cup Bearer (Cześnik in Polish) was an honorary regional title based on an old, thirteenth-century position at the royal court. Dariusz Chemperek, "Echo na świat podane procederu podróży i życia mego awantur

story with her "cavalier," as she consistently calls him, is a sad one that brings to the fore all of Pilsztynowa's character weaknesses. The man is a cad, yet she allows him his peccadillos and expends on him vast amounts of time and wealth; she is both attracted to and repelled by him. Not even the death of her elder son, Francis Xavier, in 1749, to which the man contributed in his drunkenness, manages to separate them, and she eventually comes to think of him as a shadow haunting her every step.[33] After a sad farewell to her young daughter Constance, she abandons her cavalier and flees to Kiev, then in Russia, where she arrives successfully after a few adventures along the way.

Following a year-long sojourn in Kiev in 1751, Pilsztynowa finally receives an invitation from the Russian Empress to come and resume her place in St. Petersburg. Happy, she prepares for the journey north, but, as chance would have it, her cavalier shows up at the most inopportune moment to rob her once again. This time Pilsztynowa chases after him at the head of a troop of Russian soldiers but her lover makes it across the Polish frontier. With a contingent of Polish troops, she continues the search, but without success. Eventually he shows up in church, begging for her forgiveness. She grants it, withdrawing the legal charges against him. Most of the remaining pages of the chapter she spends regaling the readers with more stories of this strange man and his influence over her. Finally she decides to move again, to Moldavia, at the behest of a prince, and though the invitation is eventually rescinded, she moves there anyway and reopens her medical practice. Misadventures with Jews and converts land her in jail, but the troubles eventually end with an invitation to Istanbul to treat a high-born lady. She sets out for the journey in 1757, experiencing more complications on the way to the capital, as a rebel Tatar[34] army was on the prowl, but she eventually makes it to the city unscathed by 1759.

Chapter Four is the story of Pilsztynowa's final professional triumph and of her failure as a mother. Her stay in Istanbul is propitious, culminating in the fame of her cures spreading far and wide, and her appointment as the court physician to the harem of Sultan Mustafa III (r. 1757–1773). She describes the city, its rich and the powerful personages, and the celebrations of the birth of the Sultan's daughter. Eventually the Commonwealth's new envoy arrived in Istanbul, with Pilsztynowa's son Stanisław in tow. Though he came to Istanbul without his

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Salomei Pilsztynowej w świetle geopoetyki. Miejsce autobiograficzne" [Salomea Pilsztynowa's "An Account of my Life's Travels and Adventures" in a Geopoetic Light: An Autobiographical Placement], in *Memuarystyka w dawnej Polsce* [Memoir Writing in Old Poland], ed. Piotr Borek, Dariusz Chemperek, and Anna Nowicka-Struska (Kraków: Collegium Columbinum, 2016), 188.

33. Yet it is with his surname of Makowski (or rather its feminine version) she signs a part of her work.

34. Turkic-speaking nomads who arrived in Europe from Asia in the thirteenth century with the Mongol troops of Genghis Khan and his sons. Here Pilsztynowa means Tatars of the Crimean Khanate (1441–1783), a Muslim Tatar fiefdom of the Ottoman Empire. The Tatars had a reputation for being unruly but fierce light cavalrymen and served in Ottoman and Polish-Lithuanian armies.

mother's permission (once again her "cavalier" was responsible for that), she welcomes him, offering him good prospects at the imperial court and an excellent education in preparation for a future diplomatic career. An issue with a serving boy sours the relationship between Pilsztynowa and the Polish envoy, negatively impacting her relatinship with her son. Though she now wants him to remain in Istanbul, her son rebels, refuses to stay with her, and heads back to Poland, leaving his mother despondent and heartbroken. A few more stories of her time in Istanbul round the chapter out.

Chapter Four ends Pilsztynowa's autobiographical account. The remaining pages are spent on travel literature and more anecdotes and stories, and with her reflections on Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. In Chapter Five she tries to explain the Muslim faith, as it was presented to her. She makes many interesting points, and recounts popular beliefs—as, for instance, why Muslim women cover their faces, why Muslims pray five times a day, and how the Prophet Mohammed will marry the Virgin Mary in heaven, as well as Turkish beliefs about the Last Judgment. She explains other local social customs, such as marriage and war. Finally, she depicts the road to Mecca, discusses Mohammed's tomb, and describes Jerusalem, to which she wants to make a pilgrimage. She talks about the legend of Prester John[35] and recounts her experiences with Ethiopians. She mentions the interminable war between the Kurds and the Turks, talks about various churches and saints, and tells some legends about the city of Istanbul. She ends the chapter with a plea for more Polish pilgrims to visit the Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

Chaper Six opens with Pilsztynowa's lengthy description of an overland pilgrimage route from Poland to Jerusalem, followed by more legends and stories recounted to her from Christian and Muslim sacred texts. There are stories about magical paintings and mirrors, and finally a section about her religious disputations with learned Jews and her upholding the essentials of her faith. She shows a marked dislike for the Talmud, and considers it the primary cause of the Jews being led, in her view, astray. She exhibits a talent for abstract spiritual conceptualization and for the logical consideration of the beliefs of other peoples, but not her own. She concludes the chapter with a critique of Judaism and a discussion of the inadequacies in the Greek Orthodox faith, arguing that the Orthodox interpretations of the Holy Ghost, purgatory, and papal primacy are profoundly and fundamentally wrong.

Chapter Seven is only a few pages long, and unfinished. She retells some Christian legends and explains a few traditions, like, interestingly, fasting on Saturdays. She affirms her Catholic faith in a few, triumphalist paragraphs. What appears to be the beginning of a section dedicated to the discussion of the occult ends abruptly, and here her memoir finishes.

35. A legendary ruler of a mythical and wondrous Christian nation variously placed in India or Ethiopia.

For more than two centuries, Pilsztynowa remained a literary product, the construct of her own quill, her memoir being the only source placing her within the historical and social events she described. New research has slowly begun to change this situation. The fascinating work of Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, in particular, is to date the first to remove Pilsztynowa from the context of her memoir, as a real historical figure, working in 1763 as a physician for the Crimean Khans and as an informant for Russian agents, events three years subsequent to the conclusion of her self-constructed story.[36]

The entirety of her original manuscript of 388 pages written in quill and pencil resides in the Czartoryski Museum archives in Kraków, Poland. It is well-preserved, with Turkish-style ornamentations and a cover of Moroccan leather.[37] The manuscript is written in an unschooled hand—or perhaps better, self-taught—in eighteenth-century Polish (in the dialect of the southeastern *Kresy*, or Frontier, region of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth). In these pages Pilsztynowa uses, sometimes in a very rudimentary way, phrases or even complete sentences borrowed from a multitude of other tongues, especially German, Russian, and Turkish. On the other hand, her writing exhibits a general lack of Latinisms, usually a major feature of eighteenth-century Polish journals and memoirs. The pages of her manuscript are consecutively numbered from 1 to 367. The memoir stops mid-thought on page 311, in the unfinished seventh chapter. A series of blank pages follows, ending on page 367 with an end note. This is followed, however, by a carefully crafted table of contents and a Rococo-stylized end page that brings the total to 388 pages.

The history of the manuscript itself, its journey from 1760 Istanbul to the archives of the Princes Czartoryski, located first in Puławy, and then in Kraków, is itself a minor mystery, though a few clues provide possibilities for future research. The manuscript's title page bears an additional mark in a different and later hand than Pilsztynowa's: Ex Cathalogo Librorum Joannis de Witte Colonelli Art. Reg. Luckily, we know something about this Jan de Witte, Colonel of Royal Artillery. Usually considered to have been born in the Russian encampment on the day of

36. Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania: International Diplomacy on the European Periphery, Fifteenth to Eighteenth Century: A Study of Peace Treaties Followed by Annotated Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Kołodziejczyk, "Na tropach Salomei Reginy Pilsztynowej" [On the Trail of Regina Salomea Pilsztynowa], in *W cieniu wojen i rozbiorów: Studia z dziejów Rzeczypospolitej XVIII i początków XIX wieku* [In the Shadow of Wars and Partitions: Studies of the Polish Commonwealth in the Eighteenth and the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century], ed. Urszula Kosińka, Dorota Dukwicz, and Adam Danilczyk (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Neriton, Instytut Historyczny Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2014), 215–29; and Kołodziejczyk, "Permeable Frontiers: Contacts Between Polish and Turkish-Tatar Elites in the Early Modern Era," in *Foreign Drums Beating: Transnational Experiences in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Björn Forsén, and Mika Hakkarainen (Helsinki: Finnish Society for Byzantine Studies, 2017), 165–66.

37. Dominik, *The Istanbul Memories*, 9; Pilsztynowa, ed. Pollak, 25.

the Battle of Poltava (July 8, 1709) to a Protestant Dutch expatriate officer (Jan de Witte the Elder) fighting for the Russians, young de Witte later settled with his father in the Podolian[38] fortress of Kamyanets-Podilskyi. Young de Witte followed his father's profession, joining the Commonwealth army and its artillery corps. After a thorough Jesuit education, conversion to Catholicism, and marriage to a local noblewoman, de Witte advanced through the military ranks, becoming a colonel of the royal artillery in 1762, and a general in 1767. The next year he was named the commander of the Kamyanets fortress, the most powerful fortification in the entire Commonwealth. He died in 1785. Besides his military career, Jan de Witte carefully nursed two additional avocations: that of architect and accomplished orientalist. The first brought him everlasting fame as the architect of several major complexes, including the beautiful and imposing *Corpus Christi* Dominican Church in Lviv, today's Ukraine.[39] Yet it must have been his second pursuit that won for his library Pilsztynowa's recently written manuscript. As an officer stationed on the Commonwealth's Podolian frontier lands, de Witte must have developed numerous contacts with the Turkish pashas just across the border. As a booklover and a patron of the arts (many of which he himself created in his role as a military engineer and an architect), de Witte's collections came to include numerous editions and manuscripts. How he managed to acquire Pilsztynowa's unpublished manuscript is currently unknown, but he most likely did so between 1762 and 1767, during the time he held the rank of colonel, as attested by the memoir's title page.

The second part of the manuscript's journey, from the colonel's private library to the archives of the Princes Czartoryski, begs as well for explanation. It is possible the manuscript entered circulation among the premier Polish magnate clans through Jan de Witte's son Józef (1739–1815), or, more likely, though Józef's wife, Zofia "Dudu" Glavani, or Clavone (1760–1822)—the famous Greek beauty of Istanbul—who, after becoming as a teenager the mistress of the Commonwealth's special envoy to the Porte, Karol Boscamp-Lasopolski, married Józef de Witte in 1779. She later divorced him and, in 1798, married the Polish magnate Stanisław Szczęsny Potocki, the marshal of the infamous Targowica Confederation.[40] Her own travels and romantic adventures (with Prince Grigori Petemkin as well as

38. Podolia (Polish Podole) is a historic region, now in southern Ukraine, that was a battleground for Poland-Lithuania, the Cossacks, Tatars, and the Ottoman Empire.

39. Zbigniew Hornung, *Jan de Witte: Architekt kościoła Dominikanów we Lwowie* [Jan de Witte: Architect of the Dominican Church in Lvov] (Warsaw: Zakład Poligraficzny Piotra Włodarskiego, 1995). In discussing the manuscript's history in his introduction, Roman Pollak apparently mistook him for his grandson, also named Jan de Witte (1781–1840): Pilsztynowa, ed. Pollak, 25.

40. The Targowica Confederation (1792) was the magnate opposition to the changes initiated by the Third of May Constitution (1791) to reform the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The confederates allied themselves with Russia which led directly to the Second (1793), and the Third Partition of Poland (1795).

the Counts of Provence and Artois, the future kings of France Louis XVIII and Charles X) belong, however, to other accounts.[41] The de Witte manuscript, eventually, having circulated in this way in aristocratic circles, arrived in the collection of the Princes Czartoryski. There, in 1896, it attracted the attention of Ludwik Glatman, physician and scholar, as he rummaged through its archives.

The Emancipate's Journey

"Looking through the Princes Czartoryski library catalogue a few months back I noticed the title of a manuscript (nr. 1482) which very much stoked my interest. The title exclaims 'An Echo Spreading through the World, or An Account of My Travels and Life's Adventures, in Praise and Honor of God in Holy Trinity, the Virgin Mary and All Saints,' written by 'Salomea Regina de Pilsztynowa, doctor of medicine and oculist in Istanbul, 1760.'"[42] With these words and with this paragraph, included in the pages of the 1896 volume of the Polish-language scholarly journal *Przewordnik naukowy i literacki* (*Scientific and Literary Guide*), Ludwik Glatman announced to the world his discovery of this very particular memoir, written by a Polish Catholic female physician living and working in the Ottoman Empire. That the existence of such a manuscript, written by a woman of such a particular vocation in such a particular geographical location become, for Glatman, both a cause of personal astonishment and reason enough to announce his discovery to the wider scholarly world should come as no surprise. Even at the time of his discovery, in the middle of the last decade of the nineteenth century, the presence of a female physician in a workspace traditionally dominated by men, and deemed to be the province of men, could be expected to lead to uncommon levels of interest. It would do so even more given that this woman had lived

41. Jerzy Łojek, *Dzieje pięknej Bitynki* [The History of a Beautiful Bithynian] (Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1972).

42. Ludwik Glatman, "Doktorka medycyny i okulistka polska w XVIII wieku w Stambule" [A Polish Woman Doctor and Ophthalmologist in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul] *Przewodnik naukowy i literacki* 24 (1896), 856: "Echo na świat podane czyli procedura podróży y życia mego awantur, na cześć y chwałę P. Bogu w Trójcy św. Jedynemu y Najświętszey Matce Chrystusa Pana mego y wszystkim Świętym, napisała Salomeja Regina de Pilsztynowa, Medycyny Doktorka i Okulistka w r. 1760 w Stambule." In his article, Glatman brings the title up to end-of-nineteenth-century standards by modernizing Pilsztynowa's Polish spelling a bit and reversing just slightly the sequence of words. As seen in note 1 of this introduction, the original reads "Echo Na Swiat podane Procederu podróży y Życia mego Awantur. Na cześć y Chwałe P. Bogu w Swiętey Truycy jedynemu y Naswięszey Matce Chrystusa Pana mego y Wszystkim Swietym." The biggest change, however, occurs in the signature line of the title which, in English, should read, "This book was self-published by Salomea Regina de Pilsztynowa, doctor of medicine and oculist, in Istanbul in the year 1760." Since the manuscript was never actually published, Glatman might have chosen to ignore the original and simply substituted "written," for "published." In any case, the original here should read "Przezemnie Same Wydana ta Książka Salomei Reginy de Pilsztynowey Medycyny Doktorki y Okuliski W Roku 1760 W Stambule."