

JAN KOCHANOWSKI

TRIFLES (PART II)

APOTHEGMS

AND

CHESS

TRANSLATION, INTRODUCTION, AND NOTES

BY

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FOREWORD

This book constitutes the second part of *Jan Kochanowski. Trifles, Songs, and Saint John's Eve Songs*. Translation, notes, and introduction by Michael J. Mikoś, edited and with a foreword by Mirosława Hanusiewicz-Lavallee. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2018. It contains the remaining 192 new translations of Kochanowski's epigrams, thus presenting to the English-speaking readers for the first time ever the full selection of his 309 *Trifles*. For the description of Kochanowski's poetry and especially of his trifles, the reader is referred to the above foreword and introduction. In addition, this volume contains 23 apothegms, featuring playful maxims or stories about prominent people, and *Chess*, a mock-heroic poem, devoted to the popular pastime.

I am indebted to my colleagues Jim Shey (1935-2020), Alex Kurczaba, and Tom Wayne for reading parts of my translations and making many valuable suggestions.

The text of these translations is based on Jan Kochanowski. *Fraszki*. Ed. by Janusz Pelc. Wydanie II. Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1991, and Jan Kochanowski. *Szachy*, in: *Dzieła polskie*. Ed. by Julian Krzyżanowski. Warszawa: PIW, 1978, pp. 93-111.

My authority in matters of the 16th century language is *Słownik polszczyzny Jana Kochanowskiego*. 5 vols. Ed. by Marian Kucała. Kraków: Instytut Języka Polskiego Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1994, and *Słownik polszczyzny XVI wieku*. Ed. by Stanisław Bąk, et al. Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1966-.

INTRODUCTION

In 1584, a book of *Trifles* was published in the Officina Lazari in Cracow. Its author was Jan Kochanowski (1530-1584), already recognized as the greatest Slavic poet of the Renaissance. The ailing author was sending to the publisher his major works written during a career spanning thirty years. Born into a noble family of moderate means in Sycyna, in 1544 he had entered the Cracow Academy, now Jagiellonian University, the second oldest university in Central Europe (established in 1364) and alma mater of Nicholas Copernicus. In 1551 he moved to Królewiec (Königsberg in Ducal Prussia), a flourishing seat of Reformation movements. The Królewiec court of Prince Albrecht and his Royal Academy also served as an intellectual and publishing center, distributing Polish documents and books. In 1552 Kochanowski went to Italy, where he spent (with several interruptions) his formative years, studying classical philology at the University of Padua under the Humanist professors of rhetoric Francesco Robortello and Bernadino Tomitano. He also travelled throughout Italy. After visiting France, where he met Pierre Ronsard, a great Renaissance poet and champion of vernacular literature, he returned to Poland in 1559.

The Poland that Kochanowski returned to was a powerful and prosperous country. At the end of the 16th century the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania was the largest state in Europe, stretching from the Baltic Sea to the environs of the Black Sea. Its population of 10 million included 40% Poles, as well as Lithuanians, Ruthenians, Ukrainians, Germans, Jews, Italians, Scotsmen, Dutch, Armenians, Karaites, and Tartars. This multinational, multiethnic, and multilingual country was the only country in Europe where the three major

monotheistic faiths, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim, were freely practiced. Poland was home to the practitioners of the Catholic, Orthodox, Uniate or Greek Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Unitarian, Mennonite, Quaker, and Islamic faiths. During the dynamic Reformation movement that swept across many countries of Europe, Poland became a sanctuary for people who were persecuted elsewhere. Martin Luther's 1517 declaration in Wittenberg quickly reached Prussia and Silesia. The Anabaptists, who were mostly from Holland, the Bohemian Brethren who had been expelled from Prague, the Calvinists, and other dissenting groups, found shelter and support among the burghers, gentry, and magnates in various regions of Poland. In spite of the intellectual fervor brought on by the Reformation and the strong convictions of its adherents, the movement did not give rise to severe religious persecution. The royal court, the noblemen, and even the Church, liberal in their attitudes, did not feel threatened by the Protestant movement, since the new ideas did not appeal to the broad masses. Multireligious Poland was well prepared to accept and absorb new denominations and sects.

With no separation of state and church and with the rule *cuius regio eius religio* ('whose realm, his religion') causing persecution and bloodshed in England, France, and Spain, Polish kings maintained a balanced attitude towards religious differences. When asked by his subjects which side they should take in the religious dispute, King Zygmunt II August told them: "I am the king of the people, not of their consciences"¹ and refused to judge in matters of faith.

At the Warsaw Confederation on the 28th of January 1573, the deputies signed the first act of religious toleration in Europe that would go beyond the religiously divisive treaties, such as the Peace of Ausburg and the Edict of Nantes. The assembled secular and ecclesiastical Counselors of the Crown stated that "we promise to one another, for ourselves and for our descendants, for all time, pledging our faith, honor, and conscience, we swear, that we who are divided by faith, will keep peace among ourselves, and not shed blood on account of differences in faith or church, not will we allow punishment by the confiscation of goods, deprivation of honor, imprisonment or exile, not will we in any fashion aid any sovereign or agency in such undertakings."² From that time on the state was prohibited from assisting the church in the pursuit of dissidents. Consequently, no religious issue was allowed to take precedence over a legal one.

¹ Norman Davies, *God's Playground. A History of Poland*, vol. I. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982, p. 145.

² *Polish Democratic Thought from the Renaissance to the Great Emigration: Essays and Documents*, ed. by M.B. Biskupski and James S. Pula. New York: East European Monographs, 1990, p. 132.

The Warsaw Confederation only codified a legal norm for religious toleration that already prevailed in Poland. What is more important, the principles of religious toleration were incorporated into the Henrician Articles before the coronation of Henri Valois in 1573, ratified by the next king Stefan Batory in 1576, confirmed by the Coronation Sejm in 1576, embodied in the Constitution of the Third of May, 1791, and reaffirmed in the subsequent Constitutions of 1921 and 1952. As a result of this “Magna Carta of religious freedom,” the Poles tolerated various religions, refrained from persecution, and produced no martyrs. In the words of Janusz Tazbir, a historian, Poland was “a state without stakes.”³

Kochanowski’s education in Greek and Latin mythologies and literatures, as well as the nascent Italian and French literatures, was welcome in Poland. It secured him several positions at the courts of influential magnates and bishops between 1560 and 1575. His administrative career culminated in an appointment as secretary and courtier to King Zygmunt in 1563, when he joined the Renaissance elite at the Wawel court in Cracow. As a royal secretary, he participated in major political and intellectual debates, in King Zygmunt’s military manoeuvres in 1567, and, after Zygmunt’s death, in the election of the new king. Strongly influenced by the literary milieu of the Polish capital, he wrote several Latin panegyrics in 1575 to celebrate the election of Stefan Batory. Later, to commemorate the King’s victories, he composed a triumphal ode. His Latin elegies and epigrams appeared in the volumes *Elegiarum libri IV. Eiusdem Foricoenia siue Epigrammatum libellus*. But inspired by the advances of vernacular languages in Italy and France, as well as in Poland, he gradually resorted to the Polish idiom for his literary works. Aware of his talent and mission in formulating new forms of expression in native lyrical poetry, he declared his faith in the immortality of his work in *The Muse*, his literary manifesto inspired by Horace’s ode *Exegi monumentum*. In another poem, entitled *Concord* (1565), Kochanowski addressed public matters of the highest national importance, calling for a moral renewal of society that would result in harmony as well as in an enlightened unity. In *Satyr, or The Wild Man* (1564), he criticized the egotism of the nobility, shallow and fierce religious polemics, the dysfunctional Sejm, and poor education.

And yet Kochanowski, a poet par excellence, had not found satisfaction in royal service. In 1575 he settled on his hereditary country estate in Czarnolas

³ Janusz Tazbir, *A State Without Stakes. Polish Religious Toleration in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. New York: The Kościuszko Foundation, 1972.

(Black Forest), married Dorota Podlodowska, and devoted himself to poetry. The goals of enriching Polish literature with new genres inspired him to undertake several artistic challenges. A play in the classical mold, the *Dismissal of the Greek Envoys* (1578), was the first modern Polish drama, bringing to the stage pointed allusions to the political situation in the country. His poetic adaptation of *David's Psalter* (1579) gave to Polish literature an elevated language and diction, capable of expressing deep religious emotions.

Kochanowski also excelled in lyrical poetry. Throughout his life he wrote light poems called *Trifles*, in which he described his thoughts, impressions, and activities. In his *Songs* (1585), more profound and meditative, he borrowed some formal devices and general ideas from Horace to proclaim his moral philosophy and give artistic expression to feelings inspired by love, the beauty of nature, and patriotic exultation. This most happy and productive period of Kochanowski's life at Czarnolas was interrupted in 1579 by the death of his daughter Urszula and soon after of her sister Hanna. An artistic account of his moral crisis and the painful struggle to overcome it was immortalized in the *Laments* (1580), nineteen moving poems which described a great human drama. Five years later, at the age of fifty-four, Kochanowski died suddenly in Lublin and was buried in Zwoleń.

Zygmunt Kubiak, translator of Kochanowski's Latin epigrams into the Polish language, wrote that "if we compare the whole poetic work of Kochanowski to a large and noisy city, the *Trifles* knock about in the alleys, the *Songs* resound in court chambers to the accompaniment of a viol, and the hymns of the *Psalter* rise above the roofs, then the *Laments* make up a road of tombs that run outside the city walls, as peaceful as the road of tombs outside Pompeii."⁴

This book presents for the first time in English a large selection of the *Trifles* and all the *Songs* from the two books published in 1586. The Polish word 'fraszka' (trifle) comes from the Italian 'frasca' and some of its meanings denote a minor linguistic piece, a matter of small importance or a frail branch floating in the wind. In Kochanowski's writing, the trifle turned out to be a light poem, an epigram, but also a serious description of people, activities or matters, at times referring to lofty philosophical issues, at other times to trivial topics. His trifles derived also from the rich tradition of the *Greek Anthology*, a collection of mostly epigrams, featuring the lyrical poems of Anacreon, as well as from translations and paraphrases of the Roman poets, mainly Martial's *Epigrams* and Catullus's lyric

⁴ Zygmunt Kubiak, *Introduction*, in: Michael J. Mikoś. *Jan Kochanowski, Laments*, Warszawa: Constans, 1995, p. 7.

poems. Whatever their form, sublime and profound or frivolous and ribald, the trifles endure confident and natural in every word, befitting their provenience from the pen of a nobleman representing a powerful and cultivated Renaissance society.

Nothing escaped Kochanowski's keen eye. He found fault with another poet, wondered why a woman who claimed to be sinless would so often appear at confession, and noticed that some people were using lead combs to blacken their gray hair. He was disappointed that his host had served him a frugal meat dish. He mocked a man for "gobbling up all the pills from the pharmacy" to increase his sexual potency, but also complained about an "unresponsive Kate" and made fun of a court braggart who fell into a puddle.

Catholic in his outlook, Kochanowski scorned the heretics, but soon after mocked the papal nuncio and a libertine preacher. He talked with his companions and patrons, praising or criticizing them, wrote loving portraits of beautiful ladies, some in an elaborate sonnet form, or poked fun at less amicable women. He wrote many an epitaph eulogizing departed friends and commented on important events, e.g., the opening of the Warsaw bridge. He frequently mused over his own writing, especially his trifles, and wrote several times to his readers. He immortalized his house in Czarnolas and its Arcadian surroundings.

The *Trifles* bring to life a gallery of characters, including their author. They contain his camouflaged diary, incorporating autobiographical details, but mostly they provide an account of his encounters with other people. They come to life with anecdotes, funny incidents, short dialogues, and statements that reveal wisdom or folly, wit or stupidity, virtue or vice. At times they are serious, at other times humorous, at still other times charming or wicked. Even though Kochanowski looked at his protagonists with the friendly and bemused eye of a philosopher, he did not shy away from ridicule or scorn directed against their vices, such as pride, gluttony or drunkenness.

The *Trifles* provide a picture of the life and customs of "Merry Poland" during the reign of King Zygmunt II August. They are devoid of the imperial theme characteristic of Shakespeare's plays, which reflected political strife, treason, and sedition in Elizabethan England. Those issues would preoccupy future generations in Poland. But Kochanowski was too astute an observer of the political scene not to see cracks in the national edifice. He wrote about them in his *Songs*, published posthumously by the same publisher in Cracow.

Modelled on Horace's *Odes*, Kochanowski's *Songs* aspired to more elevated poetic spheres. Deeply concerned about Poland's well-being, Kochanowski evoked the heroic deeds of Polish kings, summoned his countrymen to serve the Commonwealth and donate generously to the state treasury, and called on them to fight the threatening Muscovites, Turks, and Tartars. He urged the powerful noblemen "sitting in the Lord's seat on this earth" to fulfill their obligation of ruling in justice. Assuming the role of a moralist, he extolled virtue as his compass and a clear conscience as the root of all happiness. He advocated the golden mean in human affairs and warned against capricious Fortune, ever ready to mock and tease us.

But the majority of Kochanowski's poems celebrated the glory of love, nature, and friendship. They portrayed the beauty of the Beloved, bemoaned her absence, declared the lover's faithfulness, and complained of the cruel power of a "golden arrow" that had struck his heart. The same heart "swells when we look at this season" of spring, at the birds that are "again fitting out their nests," and is soothed by the sweet music of the lute and a jug of wine in the joyous company of friends and household members.

The final chords of the *Songs* resound in a cycle entitled *Saint John's Eve Song*. Twelve country maidens, celebrating the religious feast of St. John, which was derived from an ancient pagan custom, play around a bonfire during the midsummer night, praising the eternal rhythm of country life, folk traditions, their chores, and merriments, especially singing and dancing. Before long the singers turn to the delights and sorrows of love, all the time extolling the pastoral scenery of their "peaceful village, joyful village," and the beauty of nature. The final poem in this collection, published in 1562, is a thanksgiving prayer, entitled *Song*. It expresses some of the most characteristic ideas of Renaissance philosophy: serene optimism and fascination with God's creation, the beauty and harmony of the world, and man's secure place in it.

BOOK I**[1. 5] On Hanna**

My heart ran away, the only explanation,
 Most likely to Hanna, its favored location.
 This I've forbidden, so she would not allow for
 This fugitive at home, but push it back from her door.
 5 I will go searching for it, but I truly fear
 Of staying there. Venus, put a word in my ear!

[1. 8] From Anacreon

In vain would I be denying,
 I see I must turn to loving.
 Love advised me some time ago,
 But I, like a foolish fellow,
 5 Did not want to heed her counsel,
 Until we got into a quarrel.
 For she grasped the quiver and bow,
 Challenging me to a duel row.
 And I, also, just like Hector,
 10 Putting on a suit of armor,
 A shield and sword like a razor,
 Contended with Love in a war.

[1.8] **From Anacreon** - a paraphrase of *Anacreontea* 14 (*Combat*), l. 9-12. Cf. "At once he seized his little bow/And golden quiver arrow-filled,/ Saying "Let us to battle go!" / I scorned without a blow to yield. [...]" *The Anacreontea. Principal Remains of Anacreon of Teos, in English Verse*, trans. by Judson France Davidson (London and Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd. – New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1915), pp. 74-75. All quotations according to this edition.

She is drawing her bow at me,
While I far away try to flee.

15 When she got rid of every arrow,
 She turned herself into a bolt
And struck me straight into my heart,
 All my strength did at once depart.

So I carry armor in vain,

20 In vain behind the shield remain:
For who would fight me from outside,
 When the foe is in your own hide?

[1. 10] **To Paweł**

Paweł, it is certain, at your neighbor's
 You may not expect long-lasting dinners,
For in my larder nothing but emptiness,
 The same in the cellar, no wine in excess.

5 Although bread and salt (as in the saying)
 I will put in front of you quite willing.
There will be music, also songs galore,
 And no need to pay for them furthermore.

For this small fry takes place so amply hereby

10 More often than barley, also than rye.
So sit at the table, my good neighbor,
 You haven't been for long at such a dinner,
 Where they offer more laughter than nourishment:
 But they forgive poets to the full extent.

[1. 11] **On the Wasteful**

On a steep mountain, where no man puts his foot,

A green fig tree is bearing sugar-sweet fruit;
 Which ravens and crows use to their benefit,
 While people get no advantage of it;
 5 I don't know with whom some will eat all away,
 While worthy people stay somewhere out of the way.

[1. 14] **Crawfish**

Let's indulge women not ourselves, my advice;
 Let's love them sincerely, they are without vice.
 Dignity is needed, not for naught goodness,
 They yearn for love, don't yearn for golden largesse.
 5 They love with their hearts, don't expect betrayal,
 They plight truth, don't lie of their own free will.
 On devoted trust, not gifts, they depend,
 From their purse just enough, not too much, they spend.
 I serve you ceaselessly, not for a moment,
 10 Trust me without fail, no deceit present.

[1. 14] **Crawfish (2)**

Let's indulge ourselves, not women, my advice;
 Let's not love them sincerely, they're full of vice.
 Dignity is for naught, no need for goodness,
 They don't yearn for love, yearn for golden largesse.
 5 They don't love with their hearts, expect betrayal,
 They do not plight truth, but they lie at will.
 Not on humble trust, but on gifts they depend,
 Not enough, but too much from their purse they spend.
 I won't serve you ceaselessly, but a moment,
 10 Don't trust me fully, deception my intent.

[1.14] **Crawfish** - the title refers to the construction of this trifle, popular in humanistic literature as *versus cancrini*, which can be read backwards. The original text praises women, but when read backwards, it criticizes them. See 1.14, **Crawfish (2)**.

[1. 15] **On the Cat**

Did anyone hear how to pull the cat?

Water is not always needed for that,
Some pull it nicely over the dry land,
Clothes don't get wet, yet it feels unpleasant.

[1. 17] **On Squeamish Landowners**

I'm angry with those squeamish landowners,

Who are apt to treat beer as something adverse.
Don't drink, until first you are ready for it,
Then each sip will seem to taste good indeed.

[1. 19] **To a Lady**

What your lips say, may your heart keep in thought,

This would, my Lady, encourage me a lot;
But when you address me as your most dear,
To your old conduct most likely you adhere.

[1. 23] **An Offering**

Keep your bow and quiver, Phoebus, but the arrows,

On the battle day were stuck in the hearts of your foes.

[1. 24] **About Myself**

I write funny stories only when

I lose money playing cards again;
Yet all the fun will soon disperse,
When there's no penny in your purse.

[1. 15] **On the Cat** - “To pull the cat” was a proverbial saying that described a game played to make fun of a youngster by telling him to pull a rope over a stream or a puddle, with a cat attached on the other end. All the other players pulled at the end with the cat, so the youngster usually would fall into the water.

[1. 23] **An Offering** – Phoebus (Apollo), was one of the important gods in Greco-Roman mythology. He killed Niobe’s sons with his poisonous arrows.

[1. 27] **On Pursuant and Fast**

Pursuant with Fast, my dear host,

If you don’t know of power they boast,

Just give thought to their names ahead

And if you’re wise—let your wife go to bed!

[1. 28] **On Andrew**

Listening to Andrew I laughed heartily,

When he came home complaining bitterly:

“The devil take her, if she cared for me,

This slut from under a guy has just got free.”

[1. 33] **On Jealousy**

Neither a friend nor gold in abundance,

Nor virtue will protect you from mischance;

Accursed Jealousy is by worry stricken,

When she senses something out of men’s ken.

5 So if she won’t ruin you, she will still growl,

And will always wait for your mishap foul.

A ruse against her: feel no obligation,

And bravely bear all in a dire situation.

[1. 34] **On a Good Master**

A good master, going once on his route,

Saw a girl in the field who was barefoot.

“Don’t walk—he said—without shoes, my suggestion,

For your pussy will lose its virgin attraction.”

5 “My noble sir, no harm to it a whit,

Unless you would feel like drinking from it.”

.....
 [1.27] **On Pursuant and Fast** - Kochanowski is making puns on the names of Łazicki (one who pursues somebody) and of Barzy (one who is fast or quick).

[1. 35] **On Kate**

Kate invites me to a bath to look at her,
 If I wished to paint her naked yonder;
 But I state: where the two of us sit down,
 There'll be bath for sure, I say, bath of renown.

[1. 37] **On Barbara**

Somehow your dance has lost its aim,
 Take it easy, dear Barbara, please.
 [Take it easy, my dear old dame.]
 Devil provoked this suitor to play,
 She cares for naught, though none has much ahead.
 [She cares for naught, though years passed away.]
 5 She's showing off her clever feats,
 Doesn't she know you have goods in Nuremberg?
 [Doesn't she know you have grandkids?]
 Yet don't be foolish anyway,
 Don't let strangers play any tricks on you.
 [Don't go with strangers all the way.]
 Do not confide in any goof,
 10 Don't let the monks inside a good lodging.
 [Don't let the monks under your roof.]
 Be also wary of clergymen,
 Always sing a litany by yourself!
 [Always lie down by yourself then!]
 If you wish to still listen to me,
 My Barbara, do not judge good people!
 [My Barbara, don't be love crazy!]

- 15 Better always to look for consent,
 Let him dance who handles a hammer well.
 [Let him dance who is young at present.]
 You may unstitch those fancy trappings,
 More apt for us a string of glass beads.
 [More apt for us the rosary strings.]
 And do not count on magic bran,
 20 An ancient cap is still ugly though hidden.
 [Still ugly though hid is an old man.]
 Be well aware what you must do,
 The fox's tail is not of much value.
 [The fox's tail trails behind you.]
 And scoundrels who see it beside,
 Are nice to your face, prepare their thugs aside.
 [Are nice to your face, sneer aside.]
 25 So envision the end ever,
 To your children you've given marzipan.
 [To your children you are mother.]

[1. 38] **To Walek**

My Walek, you will not irritate me,
 If my trifles will seem to you silly.
 Had I seen in them any seriousness,
 Trust me, their title wouldn't have this address.

[1. 39] **Epitaph on Krzysztof Sienieński**

As soon as blind fortune in this world did appear,
 It did not want, Krzysztof, to keep you longer here.
 Is it worse or better? You all see it well hence,
 Who pay attention to this and that world's essence.

[1. 42] **On the Angry**

Don't be cross with servants because they got drunken;
 The sober servants died with the sober gentlemen.

.....

[1. 37] **On Barbara** - Kochanowski makes fun of an older woman who seeks to attract men. The even lines of each stanza mask unspoken words of criticism, expressed in this translation in the ensuing rhymed lines, put between square brackets.

I. 22: A fox's tail was an attribute of the fool's outfit.

[1. 43] **On the Uncle**

Don't be my uncle, the Romans used to say,
 Challenging accusers to stop right away.
 Keep being my uncle just as before,
 But don't take anything from your nephew's store.

[1. 45] **To Mikołaj Mielecki**

Not a costly offering, but just what I may,
 I will give you, Mielecki, some lines for your way:
 God willing, you succeed in everything you do,
 And in good health you see what is pleasing to view.
 5 Be generous to me, as was always your bend;
 He was not generous who didn't love till the end.

[1. 46] **On the Greedy**

Real spiritual values arise from the mind;
 Under it gold, silver, and money are aligned;
 And the name of the rich will belong to the one,
 Who can use his fortune the way it should be done.
 5 But he who always concerns himself with tokens,
 Only searching into where land for sale extends,
 He places honey combs in a hive like a bee,
 While the other, without toil, eats ready honey.

.....

[1. 43] **On the Uncle** - the trifle is addressed to Filip Kochanowski, the poet's uncle. Kochanowski shared with him the Czarnolas property, but in 1562-1563 was involved in a lawsuit against him.

[1. 47] **On the Unreliable** - cf. Marcus Valerius Martialis, 12.12, l. 1-2: "You promise everything when you have drunk all night: in the morning you make good no promise." Martial, *Epigrams*, trans. by Walter C.A. Ker, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass. – London: Harvard University Press – William Heinemann Ltd., 1968), II, p. 367. All quotations from Martial according to this edition.

[1. 48] **To Little Paul** - according to Greek mythology, the Pygmies were a race of very small people, engaged in a constant war against the cranes. Cf. *The Greek Anthology*.

First of all they were kissing a young lass,
 10 Also were calling 'to the end you pass'.
 It happened not only once, but quite a few,
 And the prelate found it unpleasant to do.
 For any time the woman gave him a kiss,
 He kissed the monk, feeling sick about this.
 15 He had true purgatory, still under the sun,
 I wish the same to you, who don't have one.

[1. 59] **To Martin**

And so that you, Martin, would not fare in like wise
 He who sits like a sparrow, with the closed eyes,
 Let him praise small horses for being relentless,
 With the balls like his own, still quite small nonetheless.

[1. 62] **On Hanna**

Here is a mount with many a tree
 And just below a verdant lea;
 Here a spring of lucid water
 For cooling off a traveler;
 5 Here a west wind gently whispers,
 Here a nightingale sweetly twitters—
 But all of those are just small fry,
 When Hanna is not nearby.

[1. 63] **To Stanisław**

So then what is Sybil foretelling me today?

“It’s bad for three to share one eiderdown”—she’ll say.

You could clearly tell, my Stanisław, that this song,
Got into my companions’ heads right along.

[1. 58] **On a Prelate**

I. 16 - Protestants maintained that the Bible contained no explicit discussion of purgatory and therefore it should be rejected.

5 For I’m left alone from that company of yore,
Who pulled upon themselves that eiderdown before.
Now they are just sleeping in a pair together,
I, one of the three, still shiver till dawn’s glitter.

[1. 65] **Second Epitaph on Kryski**

Having been to Spain, Italy, and German nation,
And serving your king with noble dedication,
You departed this world and in this grave you rest;
Leaving me behind with great sadness in my breast.

5 And since lament and sorrow are in this case in vain,
The greater intensity lament and sorrow gain.

[1. 66] **On the Noblemen**

I’m sick at heart with present-day noblemen:

They don’t see themselves, but chastise courtiers then.

“Once—they say—there were many true wrestlers,
Nice to remember those fencers and riders.

5 Today what are the young men able to do?
They only gulp wine like a cask right through.”

It’s true, servants have changed in great measure,
But it’s also hard to find such a master,

Of whom the old people were talking afore;

10 They were enamored of prowess and valor,
They prefer a Jew with a sack of pepper today,
No wonder behind their shields rarely they sway.

[1. 67] To a Woman

You weren't begotten by a bad lioness
 In a vast rock cave, my dear governess,
 Nor with her milk breast-fed by a tigress;
 So where then did you grow so merciless
 5 That you don't want to care for my devotion
 Nor help me in my profound affliction?
 Which you yourself brought upon me earlier,
 Making me behave almost like a jester.
 True, it is no time to defend myself more;
 10 Willing or not I must love you as before.
 Yet consider if you want to possess me
 Of my good will or by your tyranny.

[1. 68] On Staszek

When my Staszek hears something that's senseless,
 He asks to add it to my trifles, no less.
 Brother, if I wished to write down all of it,
 I'd be out of paper long ago every bit.

[1. 69] To Kate

No doubt my mirror will bring you distress,
 Since in it, Kate, they see their own ugliness.

[1. 70] On a Letter

I don't know of any illness
 That would not come round to oppress.
 A lady wrote me yesterday
 That she couldn't sleep three nights straightway.
 5 So since then I don't feel joyful,
 I don't sleep myself, for I'm woeful.

[1.67] To a Woman

l. 1-6: cf. Gaius Valerius Catullus, *Poems* 60, l. 1-5: “Was it a lioness up in the Libyan foothills/ or Scylla barking from her nether groin who/ bore you with so tough and harsh a mind-set/ that you could scorn a suppliant’s desperate cry/ in his last, worst, crisis, ah too savage heart? *The Poems of Catullus. A Bilingual Edition*. Trans. with a commentary by Peter Green. Berkeley – Los Angeles – London: University of California Press, 2005, p. 99. All quotations from Catullus according to this edition.

[1. 71] Epitaph on Jędrzej Żeliszawski

In his own homestead after evensong

They killed Żeliszawski though he did no wrong,
Those depraved people; if you want to place
A kind word on his grave, curse those drunks apace!

[1. 74] On a Housewife

A starost told a woman of his command,

That a Roman legate in her house would stand.
“Well—she said—true legate that must stand ahead,
But in my house we do not give them bread.”

[1. 75] On the Proud

Don’t be proud, though you are a great nobleman,

I’m neither a starost nor a castellan,
But when I become merry after a few,
My head is full of noblemen like you.

[1. 78] To Jan

I advise you, Jan, of your intention let go,

Because sooner or later it will happen so
That man comes to his senses, and what he likes today
In some time will awaken in his mind dismay.

[1. 74] On a Housewife

I. 1: A starost was an officer holding power over a certain territory in the name of the king. This trifle makes a pun on the word 'legate', derived from the Latin 'lĕgātus', which the woman associates with the 16th c. Polish 'legać', 'to lie', sometimes 'to lie with somebody,' contrasted with 'to stand'.

[1. 75] **On the Proud**

I. 3-4: a paraphrase of *Anacreontea* 26: "With ivy crowned I languidly recline/Singing the praises of the god of wine [...], p. 92, and numerous other poems dedicated to wine, e.g., 25, 39, and 50.

5 That pleasure, which you value so highly of late,
 You'll soon let go cheap when you see the real state.
 So, what time tends to bring, do it rather today,
 Change your course, and trim the sails now the other way!
 Aware of generous words and attractive presence,
 10 You perceive treachery, so know your real friends!
 And you, sea-born Venus, strike this lady some more,
 In revenge for sighs and tears I shed for her before!

[1. 84] **On Death**

Deceitful world, you can see it somehow,
 I reached the port, deride the others now.

[1. 85] **On the Worried**

God allows two losses for one benefit,
 The fool doesn't grasp it, he blames Fortune for it;
 The wise places the good on view from all sides,
 But what doesn't suit him, he zealously hides.

[1. 86] **On Fortune**

There's no need to ask Fortune for advice then:
 Care well for your wealth, willed by God from heaven.
 And when gracious occasion will appear,
 Grab her from the front, no use from the rear.

[1. 89] **On Death**

A woman said something showing her wit,
 Listening to a song with these words in it:
 "I'd gladly meet death, if at last he came in,"
 Please, whoever is death, let me too know him.

.....
 [1. 86] **On Fortune** - cf. *The Greek Anthology*. Fortune, Latin Occasio, was presented as a woman, the back of her head bald, her long hair gathered in a forelock. One must seize it in order to prevail upon her, because when she turns away, one will not be able to catch her.

[1. 92] **On the Same Chmura**
 I am sure since the world's origin
 There were no years so dry herein;
 Our eyes have seen these wonders:
 The clouds were bathing in rivers.

[1. 93] **Epitaph on a Child**
 A father not long ago, I have no one today
 Who'd call me that name, I lost them in ruthless way.
 Death devoured them all; one of them fell down dead,
 When she swallowed a small wire hook that cut the life thread.

[1. 94] **To Paweł**
 Well, Paweł, it's good teaching (trust my appeals),
 Which counsels to heed the terminal wheels.
 Man, when he is doing extremely well,
 Imagines he simply on this earth doesn't dwell;
 5 But in this world brief is the feeling of pleasure,
 It ends like a flower cut by a scythe in summer.

[1. 95] **On Ślása**
 Turn to the sun, my Ślása, and open your mouth wide,
 And surely we won't strive to find a sundial aside;
 Because that nose, so close to the mouth in every way,
 Will show to us on your teeth the right time of day.

[1. 92] **On the Same Chmura** - Kochanowski makes a pun on the name Chmura, meaning 'a cloud.'

[1. 94] **To Paweł**

l. 2: *to heed the terminal wheels* is a version of the Polish proverb ("Watch the back wheels"), which warns about a danger threatening us from the back.

[1. 96] **Epitaph on Wysocki**

I was born in Prussia, called Wysocki throughout,
I died at young age and was buried hereabout.
To death, the young and the old have the same merit,
Once he appears, he won't let you reach the limit.

BOOK II

[2. 2] **To Jadwiga**

Give me back my heart, Jadwiga, give it back, by God,
 And don't be so ruthless, riding over me roughshod,
 Since truly, just the heart with no body on view,
 I do not think would be of any use to you;
 5 And I could barely stay alive, if I ever
 Had to lose my better part, and vital power.
 Hence do it just rightly: either return my heart,
 Or in its place give me yours as its counterpart!

[2. 9] **To a Lady**

Hear me, lady! These trifles you are reading now,
 If still worse than yours, you do not win anyhow.
 I've others, will gladly send them to square off with you,
 And mine will be on the top, you'll see it on cue.

[2. 10] **On the Gluttonous**

God provided for that person quite well, when He
 Not giving him rank and wealth, saved him from jealousy,
 But granted him the notion that he's pleased with his own,
 And squabbling for bigger fortune he will disown.
 5 The other in this sharing did poorly, I declare,
 He'll never have enough, though he scoops from everywhere.

[2. 12] **From the Greek**

I don't acknowledge those spoils: who is he, so mindless,

Who in Mars's temple placed that loot so fortuneless?
 I see unscathed helmets, shields that are not bloodied,
 I see spears and arrowhead one and all undamaged.
 5 My face is flushed with shame and I also swelter.
 He should rather hang them in his rooms and bedchamber.
 And let him adorn my temple with blood-covered loot;
 Stern Mars will give in sooner to this kind of pursuit.

[2. 14] **On the Same Friend**

Either you mock us or act like a fool at that,
 You are scared of a cat, but you love a she-cat.
 You don't want the cat, but to attract the she-cat,
 No wonder people take you for a fickle brat.

[2. 15] **To Stanislaw Meglewski**

Meglewski, upon my soul,
 I always must laugh and droll,
 When I come to remember
 Our good lord of the manor.
 5 I'm plucking the strings along,
 Singing the following song:
 "Thanks to your neighborly way
 I've been here since Saturday."
 "Sir, don't wish me loss, I pray,
 10 You had been here since Wednesday."

[2. 18] **To Jan**

Jan, my dear namesake,
 If your job at stake
 Does not bring good pay,
 Virtue won't right away
 5 Squander its advance;
 But in abundance
 The Lord does reward
 Him who had abhorred
 To cheat anyone.
 10 Therefore though Fortune

Is merciless to you,
 You ought to stay true
 And all the fears mock,
 Endure like a rock,

.....
 [2. 15] **To Stanisław Meglewski** – Meglewski was a courtier of the Mikołaj Firlej family and Kochanowski's friend.

15 That's standing upright
 Against greatest fright
 Caused by the billows
 That one time arose
 In the mighty sea.
 20 Also in every
 Misfortune instant
 Be always constant,
 Firmness your master
 For not forever
 25 Fortune will attend
 The one she calls a friend
 Or will leave behind,
 The one in grief resigned.

[2. 20] **On Another Chaplain**

What do you think about the other?
 "Do not make this mass long, Father!"
 "Well, you will prevail with great ease,
 There will be none, if you so please."

[2. 21] **An Offering**

Mikołaj offers this net to the saints,
 For in his old age his strength daily faints,
 Fish, now in the water fearlessly surge,
 Mikołaj croaks, the net hangs in the church!

[2. 22] **To a Doctor**

I'm not sure if it's proper for one's reason ever

To send (and wrong to tell) trifles to a doctor,
 Because by displaying to him my way of reasoning,
 My reasoning will be truly worth a trifle therein.
 5 So let me not call you a doctor in vain for that,
 Free from this uncertainty my simpleminded head!

[2. 24] **From the Greek**

Not from Messina, Argos, a wrestler, here I stand,
 I regard famous Sparta as my native land.
 They are cunning; I, as befits my blood, most precious,
 Of the sons of Lacedaemon, win by prowess.

[2. 26] **To Piotr Kłoczowski**

I don't want, Piotr, to lead you to Italy once more.
 You can do it yourself; for me, time to look before,
 Will I rather a longcoat or a cassock wear,
 Will I dwell at a court or for my own field care?
 5 You'll do it at the right time, but as long as you're young,
 Enjoy life while you can and glorious freedom's bright sun!
 What harm, until the lumbering years come along,
 To see the sweeping Danube, the rugged Alps yon
 Or where a famous city is lying in the sea,
 10 Or where to the old wall the Tiber runs swiftly.
 Ride also to Parthenope to see those forests now,
 Where in the past Aeneas searched for the golden bough.
 There will be this entrance to hell and a huge rock,
 From which prophetic Sibyl gave her oracle talk.
 15 Have a good journey, see you in good health before long,
 And convey to my Jędrzej this message right along,
 That until I see him, to sorrow I must concede,
 So, if he's kind to me, let him come back with full speed!

.....
 [2. 24] **From the Greek**

l. 1: Messina in Sicily and Argos in southern Italy were Greek cities.

Lacedaemon was an ancient name of Sparta.

[2. 26] **To Piotr Kłoczowski** - Piotr Kłoczowski traveled with Kochanowski to Italy in 1556. He later served as Castellan of Zawichost.

l. 3: a longcoat was a characteristic outfit of Polish noblemen.

l. 9: *a famous city* was Venice.

l. 10: *Or where to the old wall the Tiber runs...* - Rome.

l. 11: Parthenope was an ancient settlement, refounded as Neapolis.

[2. 27] **Epitaph on Andrzej Bzicki, Castellan of Chelm**

We may complain about these times to a degree;

However, there is a reward for integrity.

Jędrzej Bzicki lies in this grave interred to rest;

Who, although born in a home with no rich bequest,

5 Still thanks to his mind, which the Lord generously

Awarded him, while he used it appropriately,

Was respected by all, he sat in the senate,

Which brought him more honor than gold in his cabinet.

He was an envoy to Turkey; labyrinth of law,

10 If only one in Poland, he knew, inspiring awe.

He died well-nigh in the arms of his loving wife

And he lies under this cold tombstone, locked in for life.

[2. 28] **Epitaph on His Wife**

Anna from Pilce, who buried her two renowned husbands

And well-nigh cried her eyes out for her two descendants,

Castellan by marriage and birth, in this sacred ground

She lies, which she built when her health had still been sound;

5 A virtuous woman of unmatched benevolence—

Would only cruel death ever show reverence!

.....
l. 12: In Book 6 of *The Aeneid*, Aeneas, after visiting Sibyl and finding the golden bough, travels to the underworld.

l. 16: Andrzej Nidecki (1522-1587), Kochanowski's friend and an accomplished philologist.

[2. 27] **Epitaph on Andrzej Bzicki, Castellan of Chelm.**

l. 9: In 1557, Bzicki represented Poland in Turkey.

[2.28] **Epitaph on His Wife**

l. 1: Anna Bzicka, the wife of Mikołaj Kobyliński, Castellan of Rozprza, and later of Andrzej Bzicki, died in 1576. Her son Krzysztof died in 1565 and another son Jan in 1568.

[2. 30] **An Offering**

Lais offered her mirror to Paphian Goddess,

She doesn't want to see what she is; can't see what she was.

[2. 31] **On the Same**

Beauty comes from you, Venus, but does not stay long,

Because what you offer, time slowly takes along.

So since I'm aware your goodwill is not endless,

Take also a witness of your gift, Paphian Goddess!

[2. 33] **To a Girl**

Give, what will not dwindle, even if you gave more;

Give, what in vain you will wish to give as before,

When wrinkles shrivel your face and a smooth mirror

Will clearly show forth that you became much older.

5 Those endearing words will be no more of use then:

“O, Stan my most dear!”, but more often: “Be chosen,
Hail Mary, full of grace”—and a rosary in hand,

Like a beggar near the church asking for a small grant.

Just now you may deck with a lily your comely hair,

10 Just now you may sing, you may leap at a dance fair:

Soon another girl will come, of not so ripe years,

Saying: “Take this distaff; more apt for me are suitors.”

.....
 [2. 30] **An Offering** – Lais of Corinth (fl. 425 BC) was a courtesan famed for her beauty. Aphrodite of Paphos was another name for Venus.

[2. 31] **On the Same**

l. 4: *a witness of your gift* – a mirror.

[2. 34] **To Jędrzej Patrycy**

It makes no sense, Jędrzej, that you are also found
 Sick with fever chills, while my pate is wrapped around;
 The Laconian brothers are known for a better ruse,
 Who lend to each other the same soul for joint use.

5 Why wouldn't God provide us with such a kindly strain,
 So that one would console the other, when he felt pain?

[2. 38] **From the Greek**

If all the stormy waves moved in the foaming brine,
 If German war and state might made a stand on the Rhine,
 Never would they be able to harm Roman power,
 While the armies are led by a brave emperor.

5 So the oaks hold close to the roots in order to stay,
 While the winds tear the sere, unsteady leaves away.

[2. 41] **On Due Relation**

So looking at my ballocks, quite prominent,
 I thought of the matters that are exigent:
 If Fate favors me in this deprivation,
 Let her give me the balls of right relation.

[2. 43] **On a Certain Fellow**

A man wrote on the wall he did it with a woman;
 Another one, after reading it wrong, blamed him then:
 “So just look—said he—do something good for one's own,
 And here it appears he **slammed** a housewife at home.”

5 A servant standing behind him: “Sir, look at it all!
 It seems that he **slam-bammed** her it says on the wall.”

.....
 [2. 34] **To Jędrzej Patrycy** - Andrzej Patrycy Nidecki, see 2. 26, l. 16.

l. 3: The twin brothers Castor and Pollux from Laconia were semi-divine figures in Greek and Roman mythology. They shared their immortality and switched daily between Mt. Olympus and Hades.

[2. 44] **On Trifles**

O, trifles, people consider you indecent

And that is why to geld you they likely intend.

Therefore I warn you: do not talk using vile language:

So that at the end you aren't gelded in pasturage;

5 But speak following the behavior of my Gregg's:

"What do you carry?"—"Ma'am, pardon my expression: eggs."

[2. 46] **To Anacreon**

Anacreon, well-known traitor,

In your vileness there's no measure.

You always drink, and make love, too,

I'll be corrupted next to you.

5 My lute knows you well after all

And sings of you at each banquet hall;

Good cheer is never without you then,

So if you hear it in heaven,

Rejoice: because your ancient name

10 Among all people lives now in fame.

[2. 47] **On the Portrait of Andrzej Patrycy**

This portrait shows Patrycy to a great extent,

Except it is silent, while he is eloquent.

.....
 [2. 44] **On Trifles**

l. 3-4: cf. Marcus Valerius Martialis, *Epigrams* 1 35, l. 10-12: “Wherefore lay aside your squeamishness, and spare my pleasantries and my jokes, I beg you, and do not seek to castrate my poems.” I, p. 51.

[2. 47] **On the Portrait of Andrzej Patrycy** - Andrzej Patrycy Nidecki; see 2. 26.

l. 16: Nidecki was an accomplished orator.

[2. 48] **On High Esteem**

So what is existence without friends? A prison,
 Which is distasteful in every situation.
 Because if something unintended will occur,
 In the end what you can do, you alone face it, sir.
 5 No one will advise you, no one will take pity,
 Also, if kind fate offers you prosperity,
 No friend will ever be with you to celebrate,
 All alone in your chamber you will relish that state.
 Whoever you see, all of them are untruthful,
 10 They praise you to your face, but aside are reproachful.
 You do not hear the truth, you do not hear a warning,
 Even if on your pate the horns begin growing.
 Deliver us, o Lord, from that kind of existence,
 Better give friendship, although less gold recompense.

[2. 49] **To a Doctor**

I don't need to inquire ever so,
 Where for your love affairs, doctor, you go,
 Since those who at night frolic with you and play,
 Each and every one smells of musk the next day.

[2. 50] **From the Greek**

Neither with the young nor with the old am I content;
 For this I just feel sorry, for that embarrassment.
 Harmful unripe grapes, harmful over-ripened beside,
 The best are the ripe; just as the wife by your side.

.....

[2. 49] **To a Doctor** - Jakub Montana (d. 1580) from Italy, doctor of medicine and philosophy, Cracow Canon and later Archdeacon of Lublin. Doctors prepared their own medications, using aromatic musk.

[2. 50] **From the Greek** – cf. Rufinus 21: “I neither wish to marry a young girl nor an old woman. The one I pity, the other I revere. Neither sour grapes nor raisin would I have, but a beauty ripe for the chamber of Love.” *The Greek Anthology* V, I, p. 139.

[2. 51] **An Offering**

This belt, when Greta grew a bit older,
 She offered to you, Venus of great power.
 My dear Tom, your purse knows it as it felt,
 From whom Greta has received this belt.

[2. 52] **On the Books of Lazarus**

What did those heretics invent perchance?
 (For that’s what a wise man calls Lutherans.)
 Lazarus, that saint, when he once revived,
 He wrote books, putting everything inside,
 5 Whatever he saw and whatever he heard
 In that afterlife, hid in the underworld.
 But he didn’t want to show them to anyone,
 Neither to strangers not to his own clan.
 But when he was to die, he called right there
 10 For the wise man and then made him aware
 Of those books, although they were tightly bound
 And in addition closed, with seals around.
 And he says to him: ”I feel my death is near,
 So I am offering you these books here,
 15 In which I put everything I saw and heard
 In that afterlife, hid in the underworld.
 But I’m asking don’t open them hereto,
 Until you yourself will be dying too.
 Because there’s nothing for the living men:
 20 All things written there touch somehow on heaven.
 Therefore now trace matters not nearly akin,

And read my books at the time of dying.
 After reading them, give them to another
 Just learned as you are /,/ philosopher.
 25 And so let them pass these books till the end,
 And only read them when shades of death descend.”

.....

[2. 51] **An Offering**

l. 1: *This belt* - the belt was a symbol of virginity.
 Then my philosopher, urged on to do it,
 Had taken his oath to fulfill every bit.
 Lazarus soon died; the wise man took the books,
 30 He would read them then, if not the oath’s rebukes;
 So he kept worrying, was unstable,
 Then he spread those books all over the table.
 He begins to leaf through, but pages are blank:
 “Well—says he—this writing isn’t of profound rank.”
 35 So just as he read it, he thought about it,
 And made known for other wise men’s benefit.

[2. 53] **To Jędrzej**

And what’s your advice, Jędrzej? (After all I may
 Entrust to your ear all things that bring my heart dismay.)
 And you can finally see that my love services
 Are meaningless to that lady, though known as ceaseless
 5 And constant, and trustworthy; and if she wished to tell
 The truth, she would rather in fame than in shame excel.
 What gifts have I offered? What love poems created?
 Today I am ashamed: I exaggerated.
 I oft compared her complexion to a ruddy dawn
 10 While she was putting market rouge on her face straight on.
 I also praised her unworthy of praise attitude,
 Now she too gives me back my untruth with falsehood.
 Therefore while newborn anger possesses my heart,
 While I suffer from rejection and inward smart,
 15 Help me, as you can, and free from this subservience!
 You don’t know how spurned love brings to heart despondence.

.....
 [2. 52] **On the Books of Lazarus** - according to a medieval legend, Lazarus, after being resurrected by Jesus Christ, described what happened when he was dead.

l. 2: *wise man* or *philosopher* refers to a Catholic theologian, unfriendly towards Lutherans.

l. 11: *Of those books ... tightly bound* - book boards in the 16th c. were often fitted with clasps and strings to keep the books tightly bound.

[2. 54] **From the Greek**

Do not take me for deceased, my dear wanderer,

Judging by this grave of the Mytilene singer.

This is the work of human hands, and such exertion

Readily turns into naught in a short duration.

5 But if you wish to find out about my poetry,

Which the goddesses adorned with their artistry,

Be assured I fled death, and as long as the lute

And smooth fiddle are famed, Sappho won't lose her repute.

\ [2. 55] **To Jost**

Jost, your brother is telling me that you

Are well-disposed towards me, which I wish too,

Because your friendship, whose disposition

Praised highly by many, yields an opinion

5 That I am a good man; for you assess

Only him you deem of virtue and staidness.

So in order you know of my feeling,

I send to you this sample of my writing,

Treat it as a reliable guaranty,

10 That I am, will be yours for eternity.

.....
 [2. 54] **From the Greek** - the poem is dedicated to Sappho (c. 630 - c. 570), a poet from Mytilene in the island of Lesbos. Her grave was apparently abandoned or ruined.

[2. 55] **To Jost** - this poem was probably dedicated to Jost Ludwik Decjusz (1520-1567), King's Secretary, responsible for royal finances.

[2. 56] **An Inscription for Paweł Chmielowski**

Winds and the North Sea allied against me,
 Just to kill me, though of guilt I was free,
 In the end they succeeded, because they tore
 The white sails and smashed the ship to the core,
 5 Pushed me to the empty shore on a plank;
 That's where I remained, no rescue on that bank.
 And you, sailing the deep waters this way,
 Know what to tell about Chmielowski's last day.

[2. 57] **To Stanisław Porębski**

If my opinion is of any repute,
 Dear Porębski, your *Skotopaski* lute
 I value so high that Theocritus
 Could claim as his own, for these are my views.

[2. 58] **From the Greek**

Alcon, when he saw that a terrible serpent
 Had entwined his son, drew his bow, though by fear rent,
 And did not miss; for the arrow was stuck just in
 The creature's throat, exactly next to his offspring;
 5 When he did what he planned, just by the oak nearby
 He hung his bow, a sign of Fortune and sharp eye.

.....
 [2. 57] **To Stanisław Porębski** - Porębski was Kochanowski's friend. He read law in Padua.

1. 2: *Skotopaski*, the shepherds' songs, were made popular by a Greek bucolic poet Theocritus, who flourished c. 270 BC. His surviving work can mostly be found in the "Idylls of Theocritus."

[2. 58] **From the Greek** – a translation of the poem by Gaetulicus 331: “Alcon, seeing his child in the coils of a murderous serpent, bent his bow with trembling hand; yet he did not miss the monster, but the arrow pierced its jaws just a little above where the infant was. Relieved of his fear, he dedicated on this tree his quiver, the token of good luck and good aim.” *The Greek Anthology*, trans. by W.R. Paton, 5 vols. (London: William Heinemann Ltd. – Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1939), I, VI, p. 475. All quotations according to this edition.

[2. 59] **To Marcin**

The wise men, who are endowed with superior ears,
 Tell about most charming sounds of music of the spheres.
 In whom I, a simpleton, express full confidence,
 But am content, Marcin, with your music’s excellence.

[2. 60] **To a Stranger**

You don’t need to try to be named in my verses.
 For there’s not much gravity, it seems all fun stories,
 But if you can just bear when they make fun of you,
 Tell me fast your name, I want you in my retinue.

[2. 61] **To Jędrzej**

Which of my enemies and a man so virulent
 Would keep you away, dear Jędrzej, till the moment,
 When I needed you urgently, filled with sorrow,
 So that you would rescue me from my heartfelt woe?
 5 For unsubdued worries were gnawing at my heart,
 That cannot be divulged to just any counterpart.
 Had he at least sent you back unscathed at the end,
 My misfortune would not bring me so much torment;
 But he sent you for a bigger sorrow to me,
 10 Since both your heart and soul he had kept for company.
 I don’t know if you are aware: but it’s all in vain,
 When the heart and soul are far from the man’s domain.
 While I then expected consolation from you,
 Now I must console you, forgetting myself all through,
 15 And I do not know another cure for this plight,
 Than where you lost your goods, go for them to that site.

Also be wary that wishing to regain your heart,
 You would not ultimately remain there in part.

.....
 [2. 59] **To Marcin** - this trifle was probably addressed to Marcin from
 Jędrzejów, a royal court musician from 1555 to 1571.

[2. 64] **To Węda**

It's nice to look at meadows, when covered by flowers,
 It's nice to look at springs, when they cast forth waters;
 Cream is good in summer, ham is good in winter,
 When dried in the wind or in thick smoky vapor;

5 An ivy garland is good—the bagpipe above all,
 When you play in the woods, forgetting Hanka withal.

[2. 65] **On Alexanders**

Alexander brought to ruin famous Troy,
 Alexander contrived Persia to destroy,
 Alexander made schoolers worry and fret,
 Alexander made Poles at variance set.

[2. 67] **An Inscription for Mikołaj Trzebuchowski**

Your remains, Trzebuchowski, in this grave below
 Were enclosed by your wife, whom you left in deep sorrow;
 Your memory will always endure in her heart,
 Until her plaintive soul will her body depart.

.....
 [2. 65] **On Alexanders**

l. 1: Alexander—Paris of Troy.

l. 2: Alexander the Great (Alexander III of Macedon, 356-323 BC).

L 3: Alexander de Villa dei (Aleksander of Villedieu), a French author

of Latin grammar for schoolboys (*Doctrinale puerorum*, 1209), considered the most important textbook until 1514.

1. 4: Aleksander Jagiellończyk (1461-1506), king of Poland. The reference is most likely to the Sejm of 1505, during which the power of Polish magnates was reduced.

[2. 67] **An Inscription on Mikołaj Trzebuchowski** – Mikołaj Trzebuchowski, who died in 1563, was Castellan of Gniezno.

[2. 68] **To the Same**

If God wanted to take a soul for a soul from us,
 And man could redeem one's health for someone else's thus,
 All of my years here appointed for me in heaven,
 I would give completely, my husband, to you then.
 5 But since to such an exchange death will not agree,
 And wants to preserve its steadfast severity,
 I have to live in hurtful woe and in sorrow,
 As my joy entire ended in your grave below.

[2. 69] **To Doctor Montana**

The first, second, third, fourth village, also fifth one,
 Sixth, also seventh, eighth and ninth in a long run,
 I don't know, dear doctor, in what land they are in,
 I was only in Tenth, which is just near Lublin.

[2. 70] **An Inscription for a Drunk Old Woman**

“Whose grave is it?”-“Wish her good drink.”-“Whose is this mound?”
 “Just be fast, by now two glasses I would have downed.”
 “We don't see eye to eye.”-“Just fill up these tumblers!”
 “Venomous woman, I don't drink to you.”-“All the worse.”
 5 “All the best to you then!”-“How is that, without beer?”
 “Bad luck /Just deal/!” - “I was never sober I swear right here!”

[2. 74] **On the Trojan History**

They haven't learned it's pleasant to make love starting today.
 Paris was bold enough then to sail the seaway

For the beautiful Helen, who was promised to him
 For the golden apple, by lovely Venus's whim.
 5 He didn't care although they would be trailed by pursuers,
 Although he would pay for it with his own brothers,
 What's more, with his fall and the whole family's defeat.
 He savored love; I know not if the others did.

.....
 [2. 69] **To Doctor Montana** - see 2. 49.

l. 4: Tenth (Dziesiąta), a village near Lublin, now one of its districts. It was granted to Montana, when he became Lublin Canon in 1562.

[2. 76] **To My Poems**
 My trifling poems, poems imprudent,
 In which as in the mirror are evident
 My follies, you all go into the fire
 And extinguish my evil deed entire,
 5 For which I must bear shame in the long time's course.
 I won't oust from memory my heartfelt remorse,
 Because it is engraved in hard diamond,
 To last forever, making my heart despond.
 For the motive, by God, do not inquire
 10 Nor go backwards to that painful quagmire!
 Men's ingratitude reprimanded me,
 May it fail to gain profit presently.

[2. 77] **To Anna**
 Waiting for your promises yesterday
 And forgetting somewhat my dire dismay,
 I wrote to you without any special thought
 This plain poem, so you learned a weary lot
 5 Of my heart and my tormented spirit,
 Anna, with your words so disappointed,
 For I counted the hours night and day
 And tried to find a reason for your delay.
 When I wished to read, I understood nothing,
 10 When I wanted to play, I couldn't get going.
 At last, taking a quill in my feeble hand,
 I wrote: "Daughter of the man of /the/ noble stand,

You aren't trustworthy!"—I fell asleep then,
 My anger calmed down, my hope death-stricken.

[2. 78] **To a Friend**

To want and not to want the same is a proper bond;
 Where intentions are not alike, friendship goes wrong.
 Since you don't stoop to settle for my opinion,
 I'll settle for yours: perhaps you'll come to reason.

[2. 79] **To a Goddess**

O Goddess, who holds love in your power
 And to human hearts brings sadness or pleasure
 Just as you intend, if you do not care
 For ungratefulness in sincere love affair,
 5 Dull my pain somewhat, perhaps I'll be set free
 From that wracking bondage, which has made me
 So tortured that my health has now declined
 And I think it also affected my mind.
 Still don't take me to previous freedom thereof,
 10 For I know not if I could live without love.
 Only let not such master possess me,
 For this one, what kindness is, does not see.
 And I, when I am free from such great bane,
 As a sign of your goodness and my free rein,
 15 Will erect a golden palm in your shrine,
 Which will have in the front the following line:
 "To you, o mighty Venus, I'm an offer,
 You helped free me from unrequited master."

[2. 80] **To Jędrzej Trzeciecki**

God will repay, Jędrzej, for getting me drunk today,
 For all my fruitless worries you made go away,
 That gnawed at my heart, as it usually must be,
 When man is bedeviled by ungrateful fervency.
 5 I know well that my pleasure will last but a moment,
 Because soon sober thought will chase all contentment,

And yet welcome to this night free from suffering!
 Who knew that so much would arise out of drinking?

[2. 81] **On an Undeliberate Poem**

He who asks me to write a poem without much thought,
 Intends to accept it, though it will come to naught.

.....
 [2. 80] **To Jędrzej Trzeciecki** – Jędrzej Trzeciecki (1530-1584), a poet, courtier,
 and friend of Kochanowski.

[2. 82] **On Gaska**

Either Staś or Gaska, and yet someone not bright,
 Made love to a lady (don't know how to say it right).
 He was useful to a man, devoted to her,
 Who had not yet managed to make love earlier.
 5 When he saw it, he left. The fool to him from way down:
 "Do not be angry, next your turn, sir Italian!"

[2. 83] **On the Budziwizki Bees**

To His Highness the Voivode of Wilno

Behold how the unaccountable swarms of bees,
 Have plastered with honey, noble sir, your walls with ease.
 It's a good sign, when God gave someone prophetic power,
 Of wealth and long-lasting progeny in your manor.

[2. 84] **To a Stranger**

You're searching for a bird or a hare in this forest,
 Listen to my advice, come to the manor, my guest;
 Game is more likely here, inside the full cellars
 Or where bees bring in honey behind the shutters.

.....
 [2. 82] **On Gaska** - Gaska, better known as Stańczyk, was a famous jester at the court of Zygmunt I and his son, Zygmunt II August.

[2. 83] **On the Budziwizki Bees** - Mikołaj Radziwiłł (d. 1565), Voivode of Wilno, was the owner of Budziwizki. The bees described here may refer to writers and scholars working under the voivode's patronate.

[2. 90] **From Anacreon**

My foothill filly, why looking sullenly

You run away, prey to blind fear, from me?

You think I'm unskilled? I mean to put on you

The glorious trappings, a comely bit, too,

5 And then mount you and take a turn outside.

You graze, don't know where, in the woods you stride,

Skipping still unrestrained from place to place,

For on your back no horseman rides apace.

[2. 91] **To Anna**

Just like a king, and if it is befitting

To say more, even higher than a king,

O Anna, is he who sits facing you,

Catching sight of your figure in full view,

5 And listens to your laughter replete with cheer,

Which numbs all my senses, while my woe's still here.

For as soon as I look at you just a bit,

I cannot find a word that would be fit,

My tongue goes quiet, fire is creeping in,

10 My ears are ringing and my head is spinning,

I am sweating, trembling, and turning pale,

Well-nigh before you my last breath I'll exhale.

.....
 [2. 90] **From Anacreon** – a paraphrase of *Anacreontea* 4 (*Allegory*). p. 154:
 “Thracian filly, coyly looking/ At me with coquettish glances, Young and skittish
 flying from me,/ Thinkest thou I have no skill?/ Nay, but know the truth, untamed
 one, I could put the bridle on thee,/ And the reins with firm hands grasping/ Guide
 thee to the race’s goal./ But the flowering meads thou hauntest,/ Gambolling in
 frisky frolics,/ Since no skillful daring rider/ Yet to mount thee hast thou found./”

[2.91] **To Anna** – this is a paraphrase of Gaius Valerius Catullus, *Poems* 51,
 based on his free translation of a well-known Sappho poem, p. 99 and 228.

[2. 92] **On Pelops**

A legend tells that Pelops’s cruel father

Had him boiled and served to the gods as an offer.

And they, among themselves, had eaten his shoulder,

Of which, when he came to life, a trace was left over;

5 But Pindar doesn’t want to call the god a glutton,

Because harmful talk leads surely to perdition,

And says: “When Tantalus was entertaining the gods,

Then Neptune fell in love with his son, laid the odds,

And carried him off to heaven, where one more Trojan

10 Was carried over for the like subjection.”

I know what you call subjection; he didn’t like him boiled,

Therefore he wanted to try the taste of the broiled.

.....
 [2. 92] **On Pelops** - King Tantalus cut his son Pelops into pieces and served his stewed flesh as an offering to the gods. Demeter ate the left shoulder, while the other gods sensed the plot and abstained. Tantalus was banished to Tartarus and Pelops was brought back to life. According to Pindar (520-442 BC), whose patron claimed descent from Tantalus, the story was a malicious invention. He claimed that Poseidon (Neptune in Roman mythology), who loved Pelops, carried him up to heaven before the ghastly banquet. The other Trojan, Ganymede, the son of King Tros, was also abducted by Zeus, who fell in love with him. Kochanowski is making fun of the learned interpretations of the myths.

[2. 94] **On Love**

All could truly wonder and think it a clever ploy
 Of him who was the first to paint Love as a boy.
 He perceived that there are men almost quite possessed,
 Who suffer great loss of wealth in this trivial quest,
 5 He added wings to his shoulders not out of reason,
 Because of fickleness: now quarrels, then unison.
 The arrows mean that they will strike a man suddenly
 And from this wound no one recovers completely.
 The wings and this youthful god are now inside me,
 10 But probably all his wings have fallen out promptly,
 Because he won't be chased from my heart anywhere
 Nor will give me any rest from unpleasant affair.
 What pleasure do you get dwelling in my withered bones?
 Isn't it now time to move your arrows to other crones?
 15 Better try out your power on some other fool,
 Since not me, but just my shadow you make sorrowful,
 Which if you throw away, who will sing with such flair?
 From my comely poems you are famed everywhere,
 That won't fall silent about black eyes and ruddy-face
 20 Of the woman, who is strolling at a light pace.

[2. 94] **On Love**

l. 6: Cupid's wings were a symbol of inconstancy in love.

[2. 96] **To a Doctor**

I have nothing to thank you for, my dear doctor,
 As you left me alone with guests in the chamber,
 Because I could not wriggle out in any way,
 I had, like a beaver, with the balls made my pay.

[2. 97] **On Chmura**

You annoy Chmura in vain with my verses though,
 They said just about him: he has eaten a crow.

[2. 98] **An Inscription for Anna**

For your good will, which in your household nest
 You had always shown, Anna, to each guest,
 For good cheer and those lavish feasts served then
 You earned to outlive three-hundred-year-old men.
 5 Yet the ruthless death envied our joyance,
 Almost from our hands snatched you all at once.
 Now you walk the shore of oblivion waters,
 While we bewail hardships and sharp reverses.
 Throw flowers on this grave, young girls and lads,
 10 And adorn her revered bones with chaplets!

[2. 96] **To a Doctor** - Kochanowski alludes to a hunter's anecdote about a beaver that bit off his testicles when chased. They reportedly contained ingredients for precious medicaments. Kochanowski implies that he used his poems to pay a forfeit.

[2. 98] **On Chmura** - Kochanowski is making fun of Chmura, a court braggart (*Trifles*, Part I, 1. 91). According to a Polish saying, a person *karmiony wronami* (nourished with crows) is very clever. However, it was recounted in a court anecdote that Chmura, deceived by a cook, was served and ate a crow, instead of a capon.

[2. 99] **To Mikołaj Mielecki**

My dear starost, you made me drunk to your detriment,
 Since what you perhaps didn't know, I'll tell you at present.
 You assume I bow to you just for this reason
 That you're a voivode's son, I know not of what region,
 5 Or that you are prosperous and I see near you
 Lots of gold, as well as near those in your retinue.
 Trifles for me your emblems, hamlets full of tillers:
 Shame (Greeks say) on lowly sons of heroic fathers.
 And as for money, even the wicked have it,
 10 While it's hard to know how the others benefit.
 But do you know what holds me and attracts to you?
 Unequal to your forbears, you deem it shame and rue,
 While what God gave you in His grace, you manage with care,
 Serving your sovereign and Republic's welfare.
 15 You don't disdain the poor, but of those virtuous,
 In any kind of attire, you are conscientious.
 This is bedrock; other things, which common people may
 Benefit from, the winds blow just like smoke away.

.....
 [2. 99] **To Mikołaj Mielecki** - see 1. 45.

[2. 100] **To the Voivode**

These are not, noble Voivode, right times nor right day
 To follow the custom of the years gone away
 And entertain your ears with my lute and airs,
 Man must care for something more besides such affairs,
 5 Seeing what takes place. Strong winds arise from everywhere,
 From everywhere black clouds bring on people great scare,
 As they threaten them, heavy with hail and thunder;
 A plowman entrusts fields and vineyards to the Maker,
 While a shepherd, his bagpipe hid fast under his frock,
 10 From the deserted forest leads back home his flock;
 In hamlets they burn herbs, everyone is on his guard.
 And I, like the others, am fearful of hazard.
 Therefore it's no wonder that my loud strings fell silent,
 Seeing angered heaven and times terror-smitten.
 15 Yet it's harmful to completely abandon hope,
 Because all of this tends to the natural scope.
 At times clouds prevail and mighty thunder, while later
 God offers the world the golden sun and good weather.
 Therefore all will be well; and if an adverse event
 20 Befalls someone, then offer him good advisement.

[2. 101] **To Montana**

Just like Lais gave back the mirror to Aphrodite,
 When in the course of years she lost her beauty outright,
 So Jan gives you back, Montana, every flacon,
 For he has no use for them, when musk is almost gone.

.....
 [2. 100] **To the Voivode**

l. 11: *they burn herbs* - people burned incense to prevent cataclysmic losses.

[2. 101] **To Montana** -see 2. 49 and 2. 30.

[2. 102] **An Inscription for Stanisław Zaklika from Czyżów**

Here Stanisław Zaklika put his body to rest,

Not only for his ancestors but also known best

For his skills, since spending in many foreign lands

His youth, and serving his kings and his commandants,

5 He devoted to the Republic his life's recess,

For which, without any regard for his losses,

He always served gladly without pay; since how to claim

Compensation, from whom comes all, for his lost gain?

Virtue is content with honor, Zaklika is known

10 For it, all else like smoke or mist away will be blown.

[2. 103] **For Dorota of Michów, His Wife**

I did not want, your wife, to outlive you, my husband,

And now I'm resting with you buried in the sand.

Never, never is the true love going to die,

Even if put in the fire, close to the bones it'll lie.

5 Children, be prosperous, with my dear husband e'er

I'm happy in every place, without him nowhere.

[2. 104] **To My Namesake**

Zariadres, a king's son, who didn't know fair Odatis,

Seeing her only once in a dream, I swear on this,

Loved her tenderly and did everything he could do,

Thus making certain she would at last be his wife, too.

5 This has happened, my good namesake, as well to me;

Not knowing you at all I was aye wishing to be

In your company; and do not remember at all
 Seeing you (and this was a big incentive withal)
 In my dream at any time; and yet your letter
 10 Announced you and showed for my eyes to linger,

.....
 [2. 102] **An Inscription for Stanisław Zaklika from Czyżów** - Stanisław Zaklika, Castellan of Połaniec, died c. 1564.

So that I remembered you in my head more clearly
 Than if you had been sent in your own person to me
 In a dream from the horn gate, when new daybreak glows,
 And Titan orders to catch his horses in meadows.
 15 Therefore be assured I count you among the highest,
 To whom I wish from my sincere heart all the best.
 And this is a strong bond, more than others fortified,
 Which the beautiful daughters of Memory tied.

[2. 105] **To Franciszek**

Neither Ulysses nor the young Jason,
 Though the ancients talked about them forever,
 Really visited every region,
 Just like you, who from the Tiber river
 5 Sailed, my Franciszek, to nations diverse,
 To where the summer hasn't ever been known
 And people did not stop making fires,
 Because of great frost, permanent ice zone.

.....
 [2. 104] **To My Namesake** - this trifle is probably directed to Jan Januszowski (1550-1613), Royal Secretary, printer, and publisher.

l. 1: According to the story recorded by Atheaneus (170-223) in his *Deinosophistae*, translated as *Sophists at Dinner*, Zariadres, the Armenian ruler of the territory above the Caspian Gates, dreamt of Odatis, the most beautiful woman in Asia, and fell in love with her. Odatis dreamt of Zariadres and she too loved him through dreams. Their love story led to marriage.

l. 13: The ancient Greeks and Romans believed that dreams leave the lower world through two gates, the windows of Hades: delusive dreams through the ivory gate and the dreams that tell the truth through the horn gate.

l. 14: Helios was the Titan god of the sun, who ran his horses and chariot across the sky.

l. 18 *the beautiful daughters of Memory* are the Muses.

So do not believe that in this confine

10 Some Medea and Circe would not stay,

Who would be transforming people into swine.

 But the other became so skilled in that play,

That she with ease transformed Circe divine

 And famed throughout into a bear straight away.

[2. 107] **On the Warsaw Bridge**

This is a favored river bank, where time without end

 Lithuania and Poland will hold their joint parliament.

And he who by his great efforts brought it about,

 So that no other impediment would turn out,

5 Tamed Vistula, rarely heeding a boatman's cry,

 With the bridge; the current deep, but the passage dry.

.....
[2. 105] **To Franciszek** - Franciszek Masłowski, Kochanowski's friend from Padua, was a diplomat, scholar, and traveler.

l. 1: Jason sailed to fetch the golden fleece to the land of Colchis. Ulysses (Odysseus) was a legendary Greek king and hero of Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey*.

l. 4: *from the Tiber river* in Italy.

1. 10: Medea was a sorceress, who possessed magical abilities. She was known for her murderous cruelty. Circe was a sorceress, known for her vast knowledge of potions and herbs. She was able to transform her enemies into wild beasts. In *The Odyssey* she turned Ulysses' men into pigs.

.....
 [2. 107] **On the Warsaw Bridge** - the bridge over the Vistula River was erected between 1568 and 1573, during the reign of Zygmunt II August.

1. 2: *Lithuania and Poland* - the Union of Lublin (1569) bound the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy Lithuania into a single state. Sessions of the Sejm (Parliament) were held in Warsaw.

[2. 108] **On the Same**

The boatman doesn't call any more: "Get in, one and all!

It's dangerous to cross, when dusk begins to fall."

Listen, I've a clock in my purse, as long as it strikes,

So long can its owner drink as much as he likes.

5 And you sleep, boatman, pay no regard to ferriage;

Even you took me free, I prefer across the bridge.

Book III

[3. 2] To the Lord

Only God can know human thoughts, no less,
 And He will lend His support to goodness;
 But anything opposed to His behest
 Will not come out well, even for the wisest.
 5 You know all, o Lord, destroy what's against You,
 And bless, as the Lord, what you cherished hereto.

[3. 3] To a Reader

Reader, you see the true face of fearless Dido,
 A splendid image, the image that shows me aglow.
 Such was I, but an unfavorable judgment
 Fell upon me for many a worthy achievement.
 5 As I had not met Aeneas, it's beyond question,
 Nor learned of Africa when Trojan wars went on,
 But shunning the bed of merciless Iarbas,
 I threw myself on the sharp, death-bringing cutlass.
 Who urged you against me, Maro most unfeeling,
 10 That with your lie you dared to scorn my proper living?

.....

[3. 3] **To a Reader**

l. 1: Dido was the founder and first queen of Carthage. Virgil (Publius Vergilius Maro), in his epic *Aeneid*, related that Dido fell in love with Aeneas when he landed in Africa, but when he left, she committed suicide. Kochanowski follows Timaeus (c. 356-260 BC), a Greek historian, who wrote that when the North African king Iarbas demanded Dido for his wife, she slew herself with her own sword.

[3. 5] **From Anacreon**

When I take in hand a goblet,
 Soon I chase worries from my head;
 And since I think they are plentiful,
 That's why it's easy to be joyful.
 5 A garland's place is on the head,
 Things of naught are nobles gathered.
 If you want to fight, put on armor,
 As for myself, I choose the beaker.
 Because I think it is better
 10 To lie down drunk than be killed ever.

[3. 6] **On the Linden Tree**

My learned guest! If by virtue of my shadow
 You avoid the rays of the summer days' scorching glow,
 If a lute on your knees and a jug in cold water
 More pleasing, since you sit near it in a cool shelter:
 5 Don't water me with wine or olive oil to sustain,
 Luxuriant trees live on thanks to heavenly rain;
 But rather offer me laudatory verses,
 That could bring envy not only upon fruitless
 But fertile trees, too; don't say: "What do the linden's ways
 10 Have to do with speech?" Forests dance, when Orpheus plays.

.....
 [3. 5] **From Anacreon** – a paraphrase of *Anacreontea* 26 (*The Joys of Wine*), p. 92, beginning with: “*When I drink wine my cares are lulled to rest/ No longer sorrow reigneth in my breast.*”

[3. 8] **On Mikosz**

Mikosz pulled the cat, Jan cut ropes in the basket,
 And the latter said: “Just tell me, Mikosz, as yet,
 While you pulled the cat or perhaps the cat pulled you,
 Where did you get the cords so fast this job to do?”
 5 Mikosz to that: “They’ll give me the ropes, when I ask them,
 Because, after drying, I take them back unbroken;
 But you, brother, deal with people in a different way,
 You borrow, cut them to pieces, do with them away”.

[3. 9] **On Love**

Prometheus is by now at peace, but in his stead
 I am bound to the Caucasus’ crag, snow-covered.
 The she-eagle devours my heart, which in its pain
 Grows back and feeds the voracious beast with no restraint.
 5 Andromeda at peace, but I, on the rock in chains,
 Owing to someone else’s sin, suffer fierce pains.
 Towards me swims a whale with the wide-open jaws.
 Where could I seek advice? To whom run for repose?
 Help, heroic Hercules, help Perseus, of great fame,
 10 And restore (but soon) the past measure to my name!

.....
 [3. 8] **On Mikosz** -see 1. 15. In this version of the game, Jan is punished by being placed in a basket hanging over the water. To free himself, he has to cut the rope and, subsequently, falls with the basket into the water.

[3. 9] **On Love**

l. 1: Prometheus was a Titan, who stole fire from the gods and gave it to humanity. Jove sentenced him to be bound to a rock in the Caucasus, where each day an eagle was sent to feed on his liver, which would then grow back overnight, and be eaten again the next day. Andromeda was the daughter of king Cepheus and his wife Cassiopeia. When Cassiopeia boasted that Andromeda is more beautiful than the Nereids, Poseidon sent Cetus, a sea monster (a whale) to ravage Andromeda. She was stripped and chained to a rock, but was saved by Perseus, who married her after killing the monster.

[3. 10] **To Love**

How long do you plan, Love, to keep my life in dismay?
 Perhaps you want to purge me from this world straightaway?
 My charming poetry didn't deserve this destiny,
 As it made famous your name from the frozen sea
 5 As far as the border of the Negro land's vastness,
 Where constant swelter reigns and constant sultriness.
 And you kill me for that, o cruel slayer at odds,
 So that not only Orpheus, who while praising gods
 Had been struck from above by a trident thunder,
 10 But also I was punished by you for my ardor.
 And yet: either your every blow doesn't cause bleeding
 Or slavery is bearable under a fair king.
 So just as you want, so let my fate play its part,
 I won't deny; I have something to please my sad heart.
 15 And you, by God, don't blame me; if I feel your anger
 Or your kindness, let me love this one forever.

[3. 11] **To Love**

Where is now that apple and that precious jewel,
 That could delay the eagle-winged feet for a spell
 Of swift Atalanta? Where's that girdle auspicious,
 That wins over hearts and thoughts of the most tenacious?
 5 I am calling on you for help, o Love, on you,
 Whose kindness the world has always cherished anew,
 Who bind the ire of rival elements with a chain,
 Span the sea bottom and the sky under your reign,

10 You take from lions and northern bison ruthlessness,
 You give to stout heroes the spirit of tenderness.

.....
 [3. 10] **To Love**

1. 4-5: *from the frozen sea/up to the border of the Negro land's vastness* - from the Arctic Sea to Africa.

1. 9: *Orpheus ... had been struck ... by a trident thunder* - according to one of Greek legends, Orpheus was killed by thunder for betraying the gods' secret.

Help me and with your arrow covered with gold, from hence
 Hit at my heart, and lessen the intransigence
 Of the passionate girl, who you cannot catch hereby
 Even if you run fast, and barely see with your eye.

[3. 12] **To Love**

O Mother of the winged Cupids,
 Dispenser of woes and good spirits,
 Sit in your chariot adorned with gold,
 Drawn by the white swans in rich fold!
 5 Glide from heaven at fleet pace afore,
 And come to the Vistula shore,
 Where a turf altar to honor you,
 With my own hands I'll build quite new.
 I won't give you bloody sacrifice,
 10 Since why would cruel gifts entice
 The goddess replete with goodness,
 Who also treats all with kindness?
 But I'll offer fragrant incense,
 Which people from the foreign lands
 15 Send us; I'll offer beautiful
 Plants too, of colors plentiful.
 Here are violets, take lilies few,
 Take marjoram, take salvia, too,

.....
 [3. 11] **To Love**

l. 1: *that precious jewel* personifies Love.

l. 3: Atalanta was a virgin huntress, known for her beauty and fast running. She agreed to marry only if her suitors could outrun her in a race. Many young men lost and were killed. But when she got ahead of Hippomenes, he rolled a golden apple away from her and she ran after it. Hippomenes won the footrace and married her.

l. 3: *that girdle* of Venus could arouse love and amorous desire.

Take your delightful rose flower,
 20 This white, that of light red color.
 With these I beseech you, o queen
 Of rich Cyprus, to choose between:
 Either you'll join the divergent hearts
 Or will free me from these hazards.
 25 It would be better if you spoke,
 Called us both under your golden yoke;
 And let us serve you without strife,
 Till I and she depart this life.
 Give your consent, o mother of Love,
 30 Dispenser of woes and joys from above;
 Thus in the world's every corner
 Your power will last forever.

.....
 [3. 12] **To Love** – this poem is a paraphrase of Horace, *Odes* I.19, e.g., l. 1 and 13-16. Horace, *Odes and Epodes*, ed. and trans. by Niall Rudd. Cambridge, Mass. – London: Harvard University Press, 2004, p. 63.

l. 4: *Drawn by the white swans...* - Venus was often depicted riding a chariot pulled by Cupids or swans or doves.

l. 19: *delightful rose flower* - Venus's signs included roses and myrtle.

l. 21-22: *queen/ Of rich Cyprus* - Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, was the queen of Cyprus.

[3. 13] **To a Girl**

If you are glad to see it and wish that I show,
 Just because of you, the never ending sorrow,
 What to tell you, ruthless girl? In reality I
 Am worthy of something else, and what I hereby
 5 Experience, goes contrary to my good services;
 Almost no one in the world is so fortuneless.
 What else do you want from me? Is it still doubtful
 That I feel love for you? The night of thoughts yearful
 And those fiery stars, scattered all over the sky,
 10 Witness I have nothing dearer than you nearby.
 Don't you want to have me as your servant ever?
 To tell the truth, if love and reason went together,
 Disdain would affect everyone and it would be
 Better to quit at once master and captivity,
 15 But what next? Love has had her well-established ways,
 She knows what is better, and yet in error stays.
 And you, if you want to extinguish this hope of mine
 Of winning your favor, then you've wished my death long time.

[3. 15] **To an Abbot**

Abbot, know how to play with bishops in the future:
 Because seeing that your winning pile grows smaller,
 You hid away small coins in your mouth, just pretending
 That you lost them, but a priest did his calculating.
 5 Does it pay to store away? So he hit your kisser,

And the coins fell out. Give thanks, not your teeth, rather!
/ever!/
.....

[3. 13] **To a Girl**

l. 14: *Better to quit at once master and captivity* - Love was presented as a master, keeping her partner in servility.

[3. 16] **On a Fur Collar**

Let's find someone who would judge this:

Does a fur collar go with a pelisse
Or a pelisse with a fur collar
On the back of a noble warrior?

[3. 18] **To a Neighbor**

Burst into laughter, good neighbor!

A fox-red-head at a dinner

Drank from a very big goblet,

So much that only his beard yet

5 Could be seen, of yellow and red,

When someone hastily blurted:

“Dear companions! Who did border
Our chalice with the fox fur?”

[3. 19] **To a Queen**

Dear princess (for they call you so as well),

Since I am not able for a good spell

To have a talk with you, willing or not then

I must trust it to this letter just written,

5 And cheer my spirit, with hope that in some way

My love for you will be welcomed to stay.

O you joyful poem—she will soon be

Caressing you with her hands lovingly,

She will look at you with her charming eyes,

10 Those eyes that others in vain claim as their prize,
 You may be so happy, since she will kiss you
 So gently with her lips of rosy hue.
 Where could man invent some magical shifts,
 So that he could turn into his own gifts?

.....
 [3. 16] **On a Fur Collar**

l. 2: *a pelisse* is an elegant fur-lined mantle or cloak, especially a waist-long one, forming a part of a knight's uniform.

[3. 20] **To Jan**

Jan, bear it as you can! This hour will come in,
 When wicked people will be paid for their wrongdoing,
 And God will punish bad deeds and insidious treason,
 You suffered for your kindness in recent goings-on.
 5 Did you not know people? Did you think, poor fellow,
 That blackthorn shrubs can bear anything but fruits of sloe?
 Or that the wolf will not assault a horned flock
 Or the serpent will in time forego its poisonous stock?
 You toiled in vain being kind to a bad person,
 10 Since he won't free himself from his inborn condition.
 And you blame yourself, because what pains you today
 Comes from your submission to the hypocrites' play,
 For whom what you did and what they paid you for it,
 Should all remain hidden from the world, every bit.
 15 You could forget it, perhaps it would be better,
 Since the heart steeped in own grief often comes to suffer.
 Besides, you have many ways to repay for wrong;
 I'd favor it, instead of being sad on and on.
 But one must be a man, pay no heed to what appears
 20 Just false laments, because they are crocodile tears.

.....
 [3.20] **To Jan** – cf. Gaius Valerius Catullus, *Poems* 73, l. 1-4: “Stop trying to earn the goodwill of any person, or supposing/ there has to be someone, somewhere, who keeps faith./ Ingratitude’s universal. Past acts of kindness bring you/nothing, are rather a bore and an obstacle -/”, p. 183.

[3. 21] **To Someone**

After all, since you are well and drink to me,
 Perhaps I also can drink quite modestly.
 But when you draw your blood, why in my cups I float?
 I did not care at all, until I filled my throat.

[3. 23] **To Paweł**

Paweł, don’t be such a big lord till your final date,
 As if you once hadn’t known me, though in that low state,
 Because I gladly served you when I was still lower.
 And though it will amuse those of refined order,
 5 I prize good weal so much that to noble principles
 I offer more honor than to precious jewels.
 And why? Because money goes to bad people too,
 While only the good bond together with virtue.
 And if we just were to bow down to money thus,
 10 Perhaps the Jews also would expect it from us.

[3. 24] **To Stanisław Wapowski**

Not through flattery or golden donation,
 Just like the present years are accustomed to,
 But you, Wapowski, aspire through your virtue
 To a higher rank, as in the mores now gone.
 5 Happy were the times when a gray greatcoat
 Was just as respected as these present
 Silk trimmings, more and more costly ornament;

True, no expense for a fine court redingote,
 But there was always a strong horse in the stall,
 10 A spear, solid shield, and armor on the wall,

.....
 [3. 21] **To Someone**

1. 3: *But when you draw your blood* - phlebotomy or drawing blood, was a popular medical method until the 19th century. It was performed to reduce blood pressure, remove toxins or balance the humours. Incisions were made usually in the arms and neck.

A sword by his side, a sober servant.

He didn't seek fine downs, straw-beds were quite pleasant,
 And he fought with skill. If hapless Poland now
 Could be so threatening to the pagans somehow.

[3. 27] **On Hector**

Hector offered Ajax his own sword,

Ajax offered Hector his girdle to ward—

Hector, tied up with the girdle drawn tight,

Was dragged around by the steeds in their flight;

5 Ajax moreover, most impetuous,

Killed himself with the sword inauspicious.

And so it comes that among the foemen,

A mere gift brings about ill fortune.

[3. 28] **To Magdalena**

Show yourself to me, Magdalena, show your face,

The face truly like a rose of white and red grace.

Show your whisper-soft golden hair and show your eyes,

Equal to the stars, moved through the swift vault of the skies.

.....
 [3. 24] **To Stanisław Wapowski** - Stanisław Wapowski (d. ca. 1564), was Chamberlain of Sanok, courtier, and diplomat.

1. 8: A redingote was a double-breasted coat with a large collar and a short cape, worn by courtiers. It is contrasted here with a gray greatcoat, popular among common people.

[3. 27] **On Hector** -before the battle, Hector gave Ajax his sword, with which Ajax later killed himself. Ajax gave Hector his girdle that Achilles attached to his chariot in order to drag Hector's body around the walls of Troy.

5 Show your charming lips, those lips of rosy color,
 Full of pearls, show your breasts of the size just proper
 And your alabaster hand, in which is imprisoned
 My heart. O, you imprudent thoughts, so unsettled!
 What do I want? What do I, miserable, wish for?
 10 When I look at you, my self-constraint is no more;
 I lose my power of speech, inward flames arise,
 Buzzing in my ears, while dim twilight veils my eyes.

[3. 30] **To Jan**

If an honest man gets any joy from a notion,
 When he recalls his past years of great devotion,
 That neither he broke religious rules nor ever
 Perjured himself in God's name to make someone suffer:
 5 You gained for yourself, Jan, a lot of happiness
 For the future from this unthankful love excess;
 Because it does not matter if you know how to
 Praise someone or do good things, for both of these you
 Accomplished in full, though the ungrateful heart could not
 10 Safeguard them. Then why would you still remain distraught?
 Elsewise, steel your soul, free yourself from your affection.
 And to spite fate don't stay longer in that submission.
 It's hard to abandon at once the long-standing love,
 It's hard, but now strive for it with your will and above.
 15 This is your only cure, all things depend on you:
 Possible or not, overcome that heartfelt rue.

O Lord, if You deign to manifest Your mercy,
 And can offer help in the final despondency,
 Then look upon me, sorrowful, and if my life
 20 Was virtuous, take away from me this sore, most rife,
 That stealing, like indolence, upon my hidden bones,
 Chased away from my heart almost all joyful tones.

.....
 [3. 28] **To Magdalena** – a paraphrase of Gaius Valerius Catullus, *Poems* 51, p. 99.

Finally, I do not want for her to love me,
 Or, what's unlikely, ever virtuous to be,
 25 I just wish to be healthy and this painful sore,
 O Lord, for my piety, as my credit store!

[3. 31] **On Love**

Hunger and work do harm to love,
 Time will chase what is left therof; /above/
 So if this isn't useful to you,
 Then you might have a noose in view.

[3. 32] **On the Same**

Just as fire and water don't exist together,
 So love and staidness will not agree ever.
 It would be useful not to bow down to a foe,
 But with this snare Love lurks for precious goods high and low.
 5 The more bravely one wants to show off in these matters,
 The more sneers and ridicule he takes on his shoulders.
 And yet either we have to reject moderation
 Or we'll (it's sure) lose our minds at destination.
 I praise Telephus' prudence and will still submit:
 10 Whatever had struck him, he cured his wound with it.

.....

[3. 30] **To Jan** – a paraphrase of Gaius Valerius Catullus, *Poems* 76, l. 1-6: “*If a man derives pleasure from recalling his acts of kindness,/ from the thought that he’s kept good faith,/ never broken his sworn word, nor in any agreement/ exploited the gods’ favor to deceive/mortals, then many delights still wait for you, Catullus/ through the long years, from the most thankless love; [...].*” p. 185.

[3. 31] **On Love** – a poem from *The Greek Anthology*.

[3. 32] **On the Same**

l. 9: *I praise Telephus’ prudence* - Telephus, when wounded in the thigh by Achilles’ spear, cured the wound by using rust from the same spear.

[3. 33] **To Love**

I have lost, I, o Love! You stand as a victor,

You have almost driven me to the Stygian shore.

I clearly see my error and vain expectation,

Because of shame and grief my heart suffers prostration.

5 You have led me to such limit with your flattery,

So as to, at the right time, hurt me cruelly.

You hurt me to the quick and your blow so oppressive

Will be stamped upon my mind as long as I live.

Since my life is in your hand, if there isn’t enough

10 Your compassion towards me, I am lost, o Love!

I am lost and my tears are overcoming me,

For they will be flowing from my eyes constantly.

Erect a marble monument, your victory’s sign.

Hang up the dead body of your slave on that shrine,

15 The dead body you see and the spoils frivolous,

Because in your bondage lovers can’t get prosperous.

Whatever there is, it’s your loot, first, take from my head

A violet garland, by now halfway withered.

And then the lute, with many a sorrowful song,

20 With which the distressed heart managed to carry on;

Also a night guide, a candle halfway burnt-out,

And a weapon oft used in many a nighttime bout.

Something more? A handkerchief soaked with tears of lament,

A gold ring inside it, a profitless present.

25 Lastly, my purse is empty; that is my whole pay,

And from me came the spoils, o Love, that you hold today,
 So don't demand more, please, and let me, miserable,
 Go home with my ears, as if from a wretched struggle.

.....
 [3. 33] **To Love**

1. 27-28: ... *and let me, miserable,/ Go home with my ears, ...* - an old Polish proverb, "From a bad quarrel—with the ears home", implies that it is good to get home after a bad squabble with your ears not damaged.

[3. 35] **To Graces**

To you my woeful work, to you my weary writing,
 I offer, harmonious Graces, subdued by pining.
 Love created such tribulation in my heart,
 That only its trace is left, while I feel woe and smart.

[3. 36] **To a Doctor**

A trifle and a doctor—two different issues;
 That's why for me, doctor, your demand is curious,
 As you write to me for trifles, from a far off land,
 And yet I make sure to satisfy your demand.
 5 Maintain your dignity, with trifles do not play,
 But send them back to me as quickly as you may,
 And do not wonder why I assess them so high;
 Though they are just trifles, I sense doctors thereby.

[3. 42] **To Paweł**

I wanted several times to say "God help you",
 But when to see you, Paweł, is hard to construe;
 So if I don't learn it before the end of day,
 Instead of "God help you", "God will be with you" I'll say.

[3. 43] **To the Voivode**

I neglected, Voivode, to eat in your household,
 From this immediately my loss became twofold:
 First, I ate at home, second, I fear and quiver

That you might say I scorned your good will and supper.

.....

[3. 35] **To Graces** - Graces were three (or more) minor goddesses of charm, beauty, nature, human creativity, and fertility. They served Venus and Apollo.

[3. 45] **To Stanisław**

Whoever drinks till midnight, brother Stanisław,
 If it is the right time, one may not ask him now
 At all; if he had valued his restful recess,
 Probably he'd go to bed earlier or play less.

[3. 46] **To Pryska**

You bathe in a hot tub, old Pryska, for a long time,
 Do you wish boiling, like Pelias, to regain your prime?

[3. 47] **To Zofia**

It is not you, o Zofia, not you, to my mind,
 Whom my heart's memory for seven years enshrined.
 It's true, she was beautiful, it's true, her charm showed through,
 Everything was appropriate, whatever she would do,
 5 Her each story was funny, while her every request,
 Was always met by everyone with proper zest:
 I don't know what to call you: what you do is inane,
 The /Those/ looks of a softhead, the voice rarely humane;
 None laughs at your stories, won't care about your anger,
 10 And if you say a word, will scold you instanter.

.....
 [3. 46] **To Pryska** – the name Pryska may be derived from the Latin ‘prisca’, meaning ‘old’. *The Greek Anthology*.

1. 2: like Pelias - Pelias, a king of Iolcus in Thessaly, sent Jason on the quest for the Golden Fleece. On Jason’s return with the fleece, his wife Medea, known for her magic powers, took revenge on Pelias. She convinced his daughters to cut their father into pieces and boil him, promising that this procedure would make the old man young again.

What’s more, save your name, you hold nothing from the past;
 Get confirmed, I ask you, by God, get rid of it fast!
 O you envious years, you snatch everything away;
 Zofia is not Zofia, when you rise into sway.

[3. 48] **Epitaph on Erazm Kroczewski, Royal Chef**
 This pennant hanging over a cold earthy pit
 Testifies that Kroczewski is buried under it,
 Suddenly deceased. By God! What can we here ward?
 All human matters hang upon a threadbare cord.

.....

[3. 47] **To Zofia**

l. 12: *Get confirmed* - a sacrament of confirmation, following the first communion, is connected with taking another Christian name. Kochanowski's suggestion is facetious here.

[3. 48] **Epitaph on Erazm Kroczewski, Royal Chef**

l. 1: In the 16th and 17th centuries an ornamental pennant was often displayed over the grave instead of a grave stone. It included the first and last name, a coat of arms, and sometimes a funeral portrait of the deceased.

[3. 49] **An Inscription for Stanisław Struś**

It's not uncommon for the Strusies in any fright
 To stop with their bodies wicked pagans in fight;
 So fell grandfather, so father, so uncles of mine;
 The same death in a battle the Lord did assign,
 5 For I fell in pagan's blood, and he who grieves for me
 Shows he knows not the worth of noble death's destiny.
 Stanisław Struś, I rest here, don't come close, pagan,
 A rightful struggle even after death goes on.

[3. 51] **To Lubimir**

Walking nearby a printer's rooms,
 Where they publish learned volumes,
 Lubimir, on the titles' listing
 Read: *Battle of Uła* coming.
 5 He took fright and fell down. "Hey, men there,
 Muscovite heroes everywhere!
 For heaven's sake, do not kill me,
 Better alive in captivity!"

.....
 [3. 49] **An Inscription for Stanisław Struś** - Stanisław Struś died for his country in a battle against Tartars at Rastawica in 1571.

3. 51] **To Lubimir** - Kochanowski is making fun of a coward who likes peace (in Polish: *lubi mir*) The title of the forthcoming publication refers most likely to a song about the battle of Uła (1564), where Mikołaj Radziwiłł defeated Muscovy forces.

[3. 52] **An Inscription for a Cat**

As long as you, dark gray cat, were satisfied with mice,
 And hunting with the hawks was not at all your vice,
 You were in people's good graces and they stroked your fur,
 While you would put your rigid tail upright and purr.
 5 Now, who knows why, besides mice you wanted dainty fare,
 Stealing to catch birds into a pigeon loft up there,
 You paid with your head and hang in an oak tree, poor thing,
 And both mice and pigeons rejoice at your passing.

[3. 56] **On a Clergyman**

It is law, the clergyman should not get married;
 Yet he ought not to be in any member damaged.
 If he could not have a wife, they might as of yet
 Leave his ears, and rather deprive him of his basket.

[3. 57] **An Inscription for Piotr**

A memorial of your hunting, Piotr, most dear,
 I stand, a stone column, firmly put in just here.
 Near your grave you have all the hunting-gear on the ground:
 Your horse, arrows, hounds, poles, nets fully stretched around.
 5 All these, woe is me, stone; and the game now fearless creep
 Almost to you, while you sleep an eternal sleep.

[3. 58] **On a Jester**

Little fleas, you make me rise (says the jester with glee),
 But I'll put out the candle and you won't see me.

[3. 57] **An Inscription for Piotr** – a poem from *The Greek Anthology*.

[3. 58] **On a Jester** – a poem from *The Greek Anthology*.

[3. 60] **To a Starost**

You are weary of my trifles, my dear starost,
 But I am giving you a following riposte:
 Whoever is in my trifles, shouldn't envy at all
 The bishops whose portraits hang in Saint Francis' hall.

[3. 61] **To a Preacher**

Following your lengthy sermon, holy preacher,
 A host wished to have a wedding feast, but thereafter
 His hope was dashed, because dinner didn't marry supper;
 So in the end supper was consumed, also dinner.

[3. 62] **To a Host**

Don't be a guest in your home, know well your potations;
 In this way measure your actions and expectations!

.....

[3. 60] **To a Starost**

l. 4: Kochanowski refers to the gallery of bishops located in the cloisters adjacent to the Church of Saint Francis of Assisi in Cracow, popularly known as the Franciscan Church

[3. 63] **Epitaph on Grzegorz Podlowski, Starost of Radom**

If just by virtues and offices

They'd bury the people's corpses,

You would without doubt lie today,

Podlowski, in golden array.

5 At present a pitiful mound,

Shelters a /the/ great man underground,

But your good name reaches the sky;

You shouldn't be judged by this grave hereby.

[3. 64] **To Wacław Ostroróg**

In vain to deny: I got drunk; with wine or poems?

If with wine, this wine emitted discerning fumes.

Do you know what seems to me, good Wacław, as of yet?

It seems I am creating my faithful portrait,

5 Which I'll hang among the bishops of high dignity,

World-known not for villages, but for my poetry.

All the world is drunk, also drunk am I, I can see,

Some with success, I with wine. Adrasteia, forgive me!

.....

[3. 63] **Epitaph on Grzegorz Podlodoski, Starost of Radom** - Grzegorz Podlodoski (d. ca. 1581) was Kochanowski's brother-in-law.

[3. 64] **To Waclaw Ostroróg** - Waclaw Ostroróg (d. 1574), Castellan of Kalisz and protector of the Czech Brethren, a Protestant movement founded in the 15th century.

1. 4: Kochanowski writes about his own image as a poet, stating his claim to fame.

1. 5: See footnote 3. 60.

1. 6: *World-known not for villages* - Kochanowski owned several villages.

1. 8: Adrasteia (Nemesis) was a goddess of retribution, personification of human fate, destiny.

[3. 65] **To Little Radziwill of Great Hope**

Grow in such a way, little Michnik, so that you could

Equal your ancestors, those famed Radziwill's manhood;

So that you would receive from them not just their name

And wealth, but inherit bravery and always be game.

5 Afterwards you'd hand down all this to your descendant,

What your parents gave you, and he to his son then grant;

So that with your kin you'd be gracious and fair in peace,

But dread and harsh with the pagans in hostilities.

So you grow, graceful Michnik, and mature faster

10 So that you bring joy to the eyes of your grandfather,

Sitting on a fiery steed and handling a bow

Or with a fine spear hitting a ring in one throw,

Afterwards also a valiant Tartar bowman,

Which is nothing new to your brave Radziwill's clan.

15 Such life, o dispensers of human existence,

Friendly Parcae, keep spinning for this child's guidance!

.....
 [3. 65] **To Little Radziwiłł of Great Hope** - this trifle was addressed to Mikołaj Radziwiłł, who died in his childhood (1574-1577), a son of Hetman Krzysztof Piorun Radziwiłł and Katarzyna Anna Sobkówna and grandson of Mikołaj Radziwiłł, Voivode of Wilno.

l. 1: Michnik is diminutive of Mikołaj.

l. 16: *Friendly Parcae* - the Parcae (the Fates) were three goddesses who spun the threads of human destiny.

[3. 66] **An Inscription for Her Highness Zofia Firlej, Wife of Jan Firlej, Voivode of Lublin**

Here throw violets, here lilies, here roses!

This sacred marble over Zofia closes,

Zofia Boner, whose virtuous existence,

Is worthy to serve all women as evidence.

[3. 67] **On the Same**

My husband, o my husband, death so pitiless

Disjoins me, woeful, from you and summons to Hades,

To dread Proserpine's somber land of the dead shores.

God be with you, alive or deceased I am yours!

.....
 [3. 66] **An Inscription for Her Highness Zofia Firlej, Wife of Jan Firlej, Voivode of Lublin** - Zofia Firlej, née Boner, died in 1565. She was the wife of Jan Firlej, Voivode of Lublin. Kochanowski was a courtier of the Firlejs.

[3. 69] **To Adam Konarski, Bishop of Poznań**

For you, noble bishop, for you, not another,
 This fine crest is vested in the famed Habdank manor,
 Because you, serving your homeland in every instance,
 Not just a ring, but offered all your opulence
 5 For the fame of your house, for the good of Republic,
 For which you have cared in your heart, always patriotic.
 The papal palaces as an envoy have seen you,
 German realm council and Sovereign listened to your view.
 Recently you brought us the famed French king, from whose land
 10 He came as a monarch to the cold northern strand.
 So accept thanks, famous bishop, also today
 For serving the Republic in such a willing way.
 Thus you grace your house more than buying hamlets untold,
 For who that was good didn't rate honor over gold?

.....
 [3. 69] **To Adam Konarski, Bishop of Poznań** - Adam Konarski (d. 1574), bishop and humanist, travelled on diplomatic missions to many countries.

l. 2: *the famed Habdank manor* - this is an allusion to a legend about the origin of the 'precious jewel', i.e., the Habdank coat of arms. Jan of Góra served as envoy of King Bolesław Krzywousty (the Wrymouth) of Poland to Heinrich V, King of Germany and Holy Roman Emperor. When the emperor was bragging about his treasures, Jan tossed in his own ring, saying that the Poles trusted in iron. The name Habdank originated from the emperor's answer *Hab Dank*, meaning 'Thank you'.

l. 7: *The papal palaces as an envoy have seen you* - Konarski was sent as envoy to Pope Paul IV in 1561.

l. 10: *the cold northern strand* - in 1573 Konarski was a member of the delegation that accompanied King Henri Valois from France to Poland ('the cold northern strand').

[3. 71] **An Inscription for Anna Spinkowa by Her Husband**

If a person after death can hear or can feel,

Hanna, o my Hanna, your husband makes an appeal.

As long as you lived, as long as you took advantage

Of blissful heavenly gifts, I trust you had knowledge

5 Of my kindness and of my true love for you;

Now when you are laid in that cold grave hitherto,

How have I to honor you—but with my lament,

Which I owe to your splendid virtues without end.

[3. 73] **To Mikołaj Firlej**

It's not enough that you have my trifles on paper,

But you want them, Mikołaj, published by a printer;

For my fame or reproof? Well, don't you trust one whit

That you are in them? Yes, you are, take my word for it

5 And think about it if it won't be humorous,

When the castellan in printed trifles finds recess?

I'll bear it, though they'll call me a trifle scribbler,

Since I couldn't brave combat nor the strong men ever.

.....
 [3. 71] **An Inscription for Anna Spinkowa by Her Husband** – Anna was a daughter of Anna Bzicka; see 2. 28.

[3. 71] **To Mikołaj Firlej** – see 1. 26. Mikołaj Firlej, son of Jan and Zofia, was a Starost of Kazimierz and Castellan of Biecz.

l. 1-2: cf. Marcus Valerius Martialis, *Epigrams* XI CVIII: “Although with so long a book you may well be sated, reader, you still ask for a few distichs from me.” II, p. 313.

[3. 74] **To the Muszyna Starost**

O, Muszyna starost of mine,

 You know a great deal about wine;

You know and use it, since just from high

 Your cart goes straight to Hungary nearby,

5 Display your taste so long-present,

 Muszyna starost eminent,

And let me sample it as well,

 Since I smell /the/ flavor from /the/ /a/barrel!

I don't feel bad being a poet;

10 It's something to know the alphabet.

Those people, you, dear Stanisław,

 If you wish to act rightly enough,

Host not with ruby, not with sapphire,

 But with the wine of their desire;

15 From that profit will come your way,

 Close to the clouds you'll get that day,

So with the drunken poems hereby

 We will conduct you to the sky.

.....
 [3. 74] **To the Muszyna Starost** - this trifle was most likely addressed to Stanisław Kępiński, Starost of Muszyna from 1579 to 1589. Muszyna is located near Nowy Sącz, on a mountainous trade route leading to Hungary.

l. 9-10: *I don't feel bad being a poet;/ It's something to know the alphabet.* - Kochanowski implies here that the poet is a learned man and knows the Greek language.

[3. 75] **An Inscription for a Steed**

With this marble your grieved master paid tribute to you
 Remembering your true mettle, Glinka of white-maned hue!
 And you were most deserving, and truly flawless,
 To shine on the vast expanse near the winged Pegasus.
 5 Oh, poor thing, you could vie with the winds in racing,
 But were unable to escape wretched death's sting.

[3. 77] **To Mikołaj Wolski**

So you're going away from us, dear sword-bearer!
 If I could just be favored by the kind gods ever,
 So that I would be able to dwell close to you;
 Together even to Colchis I'd bravely pursue,
 5 Sailing through the sea-deep Symplegades, where fearless
 Jason managed to pass in his ship, almost scatheless.
 Together with you, good starost, I also can
 Sail far where Leartes's son voyaged in his span,
 To the land of Thrace, the Lotus Eaters, the one-eyed
 10 Cyclops, splendid mansions of Aeolus of great might,
 To Antiphates, and to the stark witch who could even
 Turn people with her herbs into dogs or oxen;
 Hades entrance, Sirens, Scylla, Charybdis ruthless,
 Also Apollo's cattle, their price in excess.
 15 Sea Nymphs, tyrants reigning as far as the eye can see,
 All these are easy to bear in your company.

However (and I can't make it a secret at all),
 My anxious wife stops me when I begin to extol
 A journey; soon her face turns white, she cries her eyes out,
 20 When I see it, my heart and limbs tremble throughout,

.....

[3.75] **An inscription for a Stead**

l. 4: Pegasus is a constellation in the northern sky, named after the winged horse Pegasus.

So I don't plan to duel in the dark with sharp knives
 Nor to play chess with the Sibyls for any price.
 And so go happily alone, leaving me behind,
 And then, having seen the world as you planned in your mind,
 25 Come back in glory and in good health to Poland,
 Kind-hearted Wolski, noble fathers' descendant!

[3. 78] **A Riddle**

It is an object that's one-eyed,
 Which is always standing astride.
 They shoot into it with a blunt ball,
 And hit their mark straight therewithal.
 5 It sounds throughout like a thunder
 And smells truly unwholesome yonder.

.....

[3. 77] **To Mikołaj Wolski** - Mikołaj Wolski (1550-1530) was the Crown Sword-bearer and Grand Marshall, also lover of arts and literature. He travelled extensively in Europe and served as envoy to Pope Clement VIII. There is some similarity to Gaius Valerius Catullus *Poems* 11, l. 1-12.

l. 5: To reach Colchis, Jason and his Argonauts had to sail through the Sypmlegades, a pair of rocks at the Bosphorus.

l. 8: *Leartes's son* - Kochanowski recalls here Odysseus's adventures, e.g., his encounters with the Lotus Eaters, the single-eyed Cyclops, King Antiphates of the powerful giants Laistrygones, and Circe, the beautiful sorceress. He also mentions Aeolus, the god of winds, a probable entrance to Hades, the Sirens, the sea monsters Scylla and Charybdis, and Apollo's cattle, killed by Odysseus's men.

l. 21: *to duel in the dark with sharp knives* - Kochanowski alludes to an Italian custom of dueling in darkness, during which opponents used sharp knives.

[3. 78] **A Riddle** - this mysterious object may be either the human bottom or some kind of fire-arms, e.g., musket, a gun with a long barrel, firing a large ball, usually aimed from the shoulder or mounted on a forked stand or a cannon.

[3. 80] **To the Same Gaska**

Eighty years (and that's the right span of man's existence)

Death was waiting for Gaska so that he would talk sense.

He couldn't wait longer, so he snatched him still a jester

And in this way took him away with the wise yonder.

5 Gaska, keep fooling around; none will forget your name,

As long as in the world a wild and home goose bring fame.

[3. 81] **On Wisdom**

It's not wisdom to be wise or with your mind wish to grasp

The entire world; man's years are passing too fast.

To chase grand matters therefore, yet allowing to flee

What's in your hand, befits those stooping to folly.

[3. 83] **An Inscription for Two Brothers**

Jadam and Mikołaj Czerny, brother and brother,

Are buried here to rest in the same sepulcher.

One perished in combat, the other one in peace:

We are always at war with death, there's no armistice.

[3. 84] **On a Headstone**

There's something in the world (if you wish to fathom fate),

Which the man's inmost mind can't ever penetrate.

What is more suitable to the reason, please tell,

Than for the bad to fail, for the good to do well?

5 In this lies frequent error, since this God's judgment
 Will scare conscience and heart of many a habitant.
 And yet let's live piously just for virtue's sake,
 Whose worth is the same in happiness and heartbreak.

.....
 [3. 83] **An Inscription for Two Brothers**

1. 3: *One perished in combat* - Mikołaj Czerny lost his life at Psków in 1581.

[3. 85] **Marcin's Tale**

Please, once more, Marcin! Well, I'll tell what took place therein:
 Several men got together in one lodging.
 Each with his wife. Their evening repast now over,
 They went to sleep. They just lay down, when one lover
 5 Calls to the others: "Gentlemen, time for a ride!"
 And they did (but one shouldn't mention it outside).
 After a short break, the same man gives voice again,
 The one who didn't sleep before: "Time to ride, gentlemen!"
 So the men saddle up. After riding a mile
 10 They gave heed to his words: "Rest your horses a while!"
 But one fell asleep just then. The same said: "Gentlemen,
 Time to ride!" All the others responded again,
 So his wife wakes him up: "My dear, don't you hear it?
 The others are riding, quite, you sleep too soon indeed!"
 15 And he snores, though not asleep. "Please dear, pay attention,
 The others are riding. Hey, right on, ride along,
 Till the devils take you!" But the others: "It's not right
 To leave our companion, this is a serious plight!
 Let's help him in this sore trouble, let's harness our own."
 20 "Let the devil take you, no way, I will pull on."
 "My dear wife, don't say no! Having fed our horses,
 When we rise tomorrow, we'll be where they are like this."

[3. 86] **On a Raftsman**

On his way from Gdańsk, a raftsman, tired of walking,
Just to refresh himself, stopped at a village inn.
But instead of cooling off, he got even hotter,
Since Cupid spurred him towards a young innkeeper.
5 So he keeps ordering beer, while the host sees afore
That the raftsman deigns to lure his wife with his oar.
He keeps off; it's nice to tipple on the strangers' bread,
He tells his wife to stay far away from the bed.
The raftsman looks for his gain, while the host no less.
10 Just see who in this subtle art shows more finesse.
When the host couldn't any more outlast the raftsman:
"No wiles"—he raised her gown, put his hand on her oven.
He dozed off by the wall. The raftsman comes close to her.
She doesn't mind either, but the hand does hinder.
15 "It's naught"—quoth the raftsman, and between the host's fingers
He struck her muff, his rod out from his long trousers.

ADDED TRIFLES

On the Tarnowski's Coat of Arms

Arise successfully, o you, the new Moon,
 In such fine weather and for men opportune
 As the past one, after whom you rise on,
 And let's rejoice that you won't set before long.

On Mączyński's Dictionary

In case you didn't learn everything at school,
 And at times could be to others helpful,
 You will find great help in these books, reader,
 When you sit down to learn Latin better.
 5 Masters, don't treat your pupils with conceit,
 What you have in your heads one finds here complete.

An Inscription for Stanisław Grzepski

This site, in which your body has been put to rest,
 Is worthy, Grzepski, to be washed with tears unsuppressed.
 Knowledge, virtue, reason, and righteous accomplishments
 Were taken from us to this grave in a few moments.
 5 The world, had it recognized those attributes in you,

Could have worn black in mourning not a year or two

On the Tarnowski's Coat of Arms – the Tarnowski's family coat of arms (*Leliwa*) features a star over a crescent. Kochanowski's hope came to naught, because the young Tarnowski, addressed in this trifle, died soon after his famous father.

On Mączyński's Dictionary – this trifle was published in the dictionary by Jan Mączyński (1516-1587). The dictionary, entitled *Lexicon Latino-Polonicum*, was published in Królewiec in 1564.

After your passing. But as long as it stands firm there,
Let your name be famous always and everywhere.

It's Bad to Gain Friends While Drinking

If you wish to listen, I'll tell you my opinion,
What a proper comportment should depend upon.
But first just know I do not keep up with those men,
Who are looking for friends with full glasses then.
5 It wouldn't be likely for friendship to have its birthplace,
Where quarrel and contention made their nest apace.
It is not likely to grow what once without care
And without much thinking the drunk head would prepare.
Virtue counts above all, and you cannot commend
10 Any greater treasure than an obliging friend;
He who obtains this treasure in a rightful way,
Cannot suffer poverty until his dying day.
But from the beginning of the world's creation
Until our years that have reached their destination
15 No more than few pairs were described in history,
That were regarded as friends more than ordinary.
And we wish, while drinking beer, to achieve this effect?
Truthfully, we show friendship a profound disrespect.

Your Health with Full Glass

The host now drinks the health of someone,
 Rise up, guest! For whom is it done?
 It is king's health. Let us all rise
 And also drink it in this wise!
 5 It is queen's health. To rise is right
 And drink it up, one more tonight.
 It's princess's health. I'm up thus,
 Please give me right away my glass.
 It's bishop's health. Let us all rise
 10 Or better not sit at all likewise.
 This is for marshal's health to drain,
 Come on, my guest, rise up again!
 It's count's health. Let us rise therefore!
 When do we rest our feet some more?
 15 The host is holding his glass in hand,
 Let us all follow his command!
 Boy, pull out now my bench yonder,
 I'll stand till dinner is over.

A Peasant's Reproof

"Have a drink, bailiff!" – "Sir, I've already had a few."
 "Keep on deinking!" – "I thank, my good master, to you;
 I don't have much of my own and I have the fear
 Of saying something wrong, which come oft from that bear."
 5 "Just drink, bailiff, and say what you feel like telling me,
 Straightforward, as our fathers used to do freely."
 "That's how it used to be, Sir, we oft drank together,
 Master would never look with contempt at his tiller;
 Today it's quite different, everything got serious,
 10 As they are saying: plenty of warp, of woof much less."

.....
An Inscription for Stanisław Grzepski – Stanisław Grzepski (1524-1570) was a professor philosophy and author of the first Polish textbook on geometry.

A Peasant's Reproof

l. 4: a Polish proverb says that “A word comes out like a sparrow, but comes back like a bull.”

l. 10: another proverb: “Plenty of form, not much content.”

TRIFLES FROM FRAGMENTS

1. On XII Tablets of Human Life

I

It's known man is not born for happiness,
 For he comes to this world crying in distress.

II

Children, your game will not go on and on,
 Someone will do other things before long.

III

5 What the pot will absorb when it is on,
 Will persist in its smell for very long.

IV

They might as well want a year without spring season,
 If they expect the youth to act within reason.

.....

Trifles from “Fragments” - *Fragmenta albo pozostałe pisma Jana Kochanowskiego*, published in Kraków in 1590, were those literary works that were not published during Kochanowski’s life.

1. On XII Tablets of Human Life - the poems were inspired by *The Tablet of Cebes*. Cebes of Thebes (469-390 BC) was a disciple of Socrates. *The Tablet*, made popular in the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance, describes a panoramic painting depicting in allegorical terms the journey of human life.

l. 5-6: Another version of a popular proverb; in English: “As the twig is bent, so grows the tree” or “As the child, so the man” or “What’s bred in the bone will become flesh.”

l. 8: cf. *Trifles*, l. 82.

V

In this base world there are only hunters,
10 The stronger always oppress lower orders.

VI

Wouldn’t it be better to enhance your good name,
 Than to spend your years in hiding with no strain?

VII

The laws are simply like a spider’s net,
 A sparrow breaks through, while a midge is charged yet.

VIII

15 When fate does not wish to and judgment goes wrong,
 Fortune governs the world, not our reason.

IX

Not rich is he who has robes, gold, precious stones,
 But he who is satisfied with what he owns.

X

20 When the lips are going to proclaim the Lord,
 Let He and our problems be not ignored.

XI

O poor old age, all of us desire you,
 But when you arrive, we soon after rue.

XII

Fallible world, you can see it somehow,
 I reached the port, mock the others now.

.....
 1. 19-20: cf. *Trifles*, I. 83.

2. On the Image of Lucretia

I was called Lucretia, Rome had been my birthplace,
 And since my virtue was taken by the deed most base,
 By you, evil prince, so what I did not much prize,
 My very own blood I spilled without compromise.

3. On the Image of Cloelia

This is I, Cloelia, swimming across the Tiber,
 Leading a group of hostage maidens through the water,
 But since the cruel king ordered I return outright,
 I was sent back so as to allay people's fright.
 5 Yet there, instead of punishment I was praised withal
 And with ample gifts returned to my native hall.

.....
 2. **On the Image of Lucretia** - The emblem poems contained a symbolic picture called an icon or image (*in imaginem*), often with allegorical meaning, presenting the distinctive features of a person, family or nation.

According to Livy, Lucretia (ca. 500 BC), the wife of Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus, was raped by Sextus Tarquinius, the son of the tyrannical king of Rome. She told her family what happened and then committed suicide. The ensuing revolt led by her father, her husband, and their friends led to the overthrow of the monarchy and the creation of the Roman Republic.

3. On the Image of Cloelia - Cloelia (ca. 508 BC) was a maiden who with other virgins was given to the Etruscan king Porsena as a hostage. She escaped, swimming across the River Tiber to the Romans, but when Porsena demanded that she be returned, the Romans consented. Porsena, impressed by her bravery, freed her and other hostages. The Romans honored her by erecting an equestrian statue on the Via Sacra.

4. On the Brave Telesilla

You are famed not only for your poetic art,
 But we stand in awe at your deeds and your heart,
 Noble Telesilla; for when you heard alarms
 Of a great defeat of your men, you took up arms,
 5 And seeing this gallant example all women
 Fell upon behind you and did not allow then
 The ruthless foes to enter the city, though worsted;
 Therefore your name will be forever remembered.

5. On the Warsaw Bridge

May God reward you for building this bridge, o King,
 In the past I usually kept change for safekeeping,
 But now I drank it through, for when returning
 At night, I pay nothing at all for the crossing.

6. Epitaph on Kasper Kochanowski, Sandomierz District Secretary

Kasper Kochanowski's body is buried hither,
 A man of great honesty and good character.
 Lament lonely widows and orphans suffering woes,
 He died who drove away your deep-rooted sorrows.

.....
4. On the Brave Telesilla - Telesilla (fl. 510 BC) was a lyric poet of Argos. When King Cleomenes's Spartan troops defeated the Argive men and attacked the city, Telesilla armed the women, slaves, old men, and youngsters. They stood the ground, fought, and forced the Spartans to withdraw.

5. On the Warsaw Bridge - see *Trifles* 2, 106, 107, 108.

6. Epitaph on Kasper Kochanowski, Sandomierz District Secretary - Kasper Kochanowski (d. 1577) was Jan's oldest brother. After death of their father Piotr (d. 1547) and mother Anna (d. 1577), Kasper was recognized as the head of the family. Competent and engaged, he attended to numerous legal matters.

7. Epitaph on Tęczyński

It's an old but vain grievance of death to complain.

For it's not his custom to let men free from their bane:

He takes the old and young, whoever comes his way,

First one, then another, yet none is let to stay.

5 And even if one lived as long as aged Nestor,

What is it at all compared to the evermore?

For when the end comes, whatever has gone its way,

In one word: there's nothing, all things have passed away.

We must measure comportment by probity, not age,

10 By it we know those noble men even at this stage,

Whose bodies /deep/ in dust haven't been seen a long time,

But their fame flourishes and will flourish sublime.

Hence, o Tęczyński, your long years won't come amiss,

Even though suddenly, in spite of your services,

15 Ruthless, unrelenting death apprehended you,

And the course of your youth enviously overthrew.

.....

7. Epitaph on Tęczyński - Jan Tęczyński(1540-15630, Voivode of Bełz and diplomat, was sent by King Zygmunt II August as an envoy to Sweden in 1561. He fell in love with King Gustav I Vasa's daughter Cecilia and asked for her hand. After receiving the king's permission, he returned to Poland, raised funds, and sailed back to Sweden. He was imprisoned by the Danes and died in Copenhagen in December of 1563.

1. 5: Nestor was the oldest warrior during the Trojan War.

8. On My Books to Łaski

I send *Psalms* when I learn of someone religious,
 Then I write *Trifles* for my worthy companions.
St John's Eve Song is for ladies; to players I give
Chess, and for the joyful *Songs* will be attractive.

5 To you, Łaski, what is truly your vocation,
 I offer works of war and ruthless aggression.

.....

8. On My Books to Łaski - Olbracht Łaski (1536-1605), Voivode of Sieradz, senator, and courtier during the reigns of Stefan Batory and Zygmunt III Waza. In

1568, when attacked by the Tatars, he led his private army to victory at Oczaków. He visited Kochanowski in Czarnolas, probably in 1575.

l. 6: It might have been Kochanowski's translation of Book III of *The Iliad* or *The Pennon or the Prussian Homage*.

APOTHEGMS

It is not good to jest with a dunce

Czarnkowski, bishop of Poznań, plagued by podagra, when suffering great pain, would often utter these words: “By God, kill me someone, I will absolve him.” It happened that while he was laid sick with this illness, there was nobody near him except Kamarady, his Tartar servant. He, having paid attention to what his superior was saying, offered his services: “Reverend Bishop—says he—you just give me a Tartar horse and let me go freely to my horde, and I will cut your throat, the way you are asking.” The bishop realized that it was not good to jest with him: “Well, Kamarady—says he—but first tell someone to come to me, so I can order that after my death you are well provided and let free.” The Tartar walked out and called several servants to come in. The reverend bishop, having seen the servants, became frightened, came to his senses, and ordered to put the Tartar in a tower, while from that time on, he became more cautious.

It is not good to put two cats in one sack

A crown chancellor would often say: “I will agree with everyone, except with the greedy, because he wants something that I want as well.”

.....

It's not good to jest with a dunce – according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, an apothegm is “a terse, pointed saying, embodying an important truth in few words; a pithy or sententious maxim.” In Poland, according to Mączyński's dictionary, an apothegm was a subtle and very playful maxim or story about prominent people. In the 16th century, apothegms were as witty anecdotes or funny stories. Kochanowski was obtaining those stories from his friends, who were bringing them from the royal or bishop courts. He used them in his trifles, leaving some of them in a separate miscellany, published later by Januszowski. Kochanowski's apothegms are characteristic of their local provenance and color.

1. 1: Andrzej Czarnkowski (1507-1562).

An untimely joke

The same chancellor, after getting a Sandomierz canon drunk with malmsey, when told the next day that the canon died, did not say anything about it except that he had not drunk one more toast to him.

A grand title, small profit

Spytek Jordan, Cracow castellan, talking about troubles associated with high offices, said this: “Whatever Spytek prepares, the Cracow superior will eat up.”

A quick change of mind

Father Siemikowski, who held a *beneficium* that was *controversum*, which Gamrat, archbishop of Gniezno, took issue with, considered a proposal and accepted a position in the archbishop's service. He judged that the archbishop would not want to stand in the way of his servant and just the day when he was recommended and they shook hands, he mentioned the *beneficium*. Gamrat declared at once that he had the right to grant this *beneficium* and would not consider anyone, but a person he wished to appoint. However Siemikowski asked Gamrat to be so kind as to show him such consideration as he would show his own servant (which he now was) and grant him it. But when Gamrat became annoyed, Siemikowski realized it and said: “Well, Reverend Father, I accepted a position in Your Majesty's service so that I could get support from Your Majesty, but since I see it is in vain, I quit.” And after shaking his hand, he walked away.

.....

A grand title, small profit

l. 1: Spytek Jordan, Castellan of Cracow (“superior”), died in 1568.

A quick change of mind

l. 1: *beneficium* (Latin), was a grant of property for clergy, attached usually to their parish, granted by a village owner, in this case by the archbishop; *controversum* (Latin) – contested.

l. 2: Piotr Gamrat (1487-1545), Bishop of Cracow, from 1541 Archbishop of Gniezno and Primate of Poland. He was known for his profligate life.

l. 5: A nobleman engaging into service another nobleman would shake hands with him.

Service commensurate with pay

Father Trąbski, in Szydłowiecki’s service, was not too diligent in performing his duties; so when some visitors admonished him to be more diligent: “Ah—he said—I know how to serve for pittance.”

Incidental reconciliation

Archbishop Gamrat was at odds with Father Krupski. It happened that the archbishop was riding from the Cracow castle, while Father Krupski was on his way to the castle, and they just passed each other almost in front of the archbishop’s house. Father Krupski’s horse had that habit of not allowing itself to be readily pulled away from other horses, so it often happened that when it came upon another horse, it would gladly turn back with it. So it did then, while Father Krupski wanted to go quickly by the archbishop, its nag stopped and rubbed his side against the archbishop’s horse, so that there was no way to pull it away. Finally, they rode together to the house yard, with great fear and worry of Father Krupski. The archbishop was at first angry, but when he saw what was happening, he laughed outright, invited Father Krupski to dinner, and then made peace with him.

.....

Service commensurate with pay

l. 1: Probably Krzysztof Szydłowiecki (1467-1532), Crown Chancellor and Castellan of Cracow.

Unnecessary ceremonies

Father Myszkowski, Bishop of Płock, when it happened that someone drank somebody else's health at his table, would ask that it be done while sitting, and if standing, then at least only those be standing who raised the toast and whose health he drank, because they to some degree had a reason to stand up. "But—says he—if two drink one's health and the third one will stand up, it is as if he is saying: 'Drink also to me'."

A great lord doesn't need to attend to everything

Ocieski, crown chancellor, would get much annoyed, whenever anyone, eating at his table, soiled the tablecloth. It happened to Sir Wolski, castellan of Czersk, who eating there, stained it. The host, as usual, showed his dissatisfaction. When Sir Wolski saw it, he told his young servant to put a small coin on the table, saying: "Let them give it to the washwoman to have this cloth washed."

Unnatural dishes

Barańczuch, a Tartar, whose master gave him to a cardinal in Rome, was asked by an acquaintance, who arrived in Rome several years later, how he was doing. He answered: "Not good, you eat grass like sheep," showing that he was not fond of Italian salad.

.....

Unnecessary ceremonies

1.1: Father Myszkowski (1505-1591), Bishop of Płock, and after 1577 of Cracow, Deputy Chancellor of the Crown and Royal Secretary, was a patron and friend of Kochanowski.

On should not overlook everything a great lord does

1. 1: Jan Ocieski (1501-1563), Grand Chancellor.

1. 2: Zygmunt Wolski, Castellan of Czersk, Starost of Warsaw and Lanckorona.

On the same

A Pole went to study in Rome, but did not stay there more than one summer and in winter he returned home. When his father asked him why he had come back so soon, he said: “Since they were feeding me grass all summer long, I was afraid they would give me hay in winter.”

Long-lasting memory

King Zygmunt had this habit that whenever he washed his hands he would give his rings to one of the courtiers so that he could hold them during that time. It happened once that while he was already sitting down at the table, he forgot who he had given them to and that courtier did not remind him about it either. A year later, when the king was taking off his rings before washing, the courtier who had received them before, reached out for them. The king pulled back his hand, saying: “First, give me back those that I had handed you to keep in this way for a year.”

Not to mingle too much with noblemen

Since the same king Zygmunt would never sit down at a table alone, but always invited one or several noblemen, Father Naropiński knew it very well and almost always sat at the royal table, although he was not invited. The king, wishing to discourage him from it, asked him before dinner, just when he was about to sit

down: “Father Naropiński, did you wash your hands?” “I did, Your Majesty!”
 “Then go home to eat!”

The king’s play of wit

The same king Zygmunt, playing cards, when he got two kings, said that he had three kings. When other players asked him: “And where is the third?,” he said: “I am the third”—and won the game.

An unreliable debtor

Archbishop Gamrat, because he was a generous nobleman, was also, what often follows, in debt. When he was reminded to whom, so that he would think how to pay the creditor, he said: “I thought hard enough from where to get money; now let him think from where I will pay him.”

On the same

The same archbishop owed a certain amount of money to X. Although X had almost lost hope in getting it back, yet he went every day to eat at the archbishop’s table. When anyone asked him: “Where are you going?,” he would say: “I am going to the archbishop to eat back my five hundred zloty.”

The Liars

Stańczyk said that there were no bigger liars than archbishop Gamrat and Maciejowski, bishop of Cracow, because the second one said: “I know everything,” while he knew nothing and the first one eagerly said: “Truly, I don’t know,” while he knew everything.

An unexpected reply

A landowner in Poland got married and several weeks later he saw that his wife was lying in confinement. He began to pull down the window cover and vent his anger. And his wife said: “Don’t get angry, it’s not yours.”

[Haraburda with Wojna]

During the Union of Lublin in 1569, when the Lithuanian noblemen secretly left, among numerous little witticism, two little poems were written on the wall:

Lithuania made with us a glorious Union,
They ran away, Haraburda with Wojna stayed on.

There were then two Lithuanian secretaries, who remained in the chancellery,
allegedly representing the Union—brawl and war.

.....
The Liars

l. 1: Stańczyk was a famous jester at the court of Zygmunt I and his son,
Zygmunt II August.

l.2: Samuel Maciejowski (1498-1550), Bishop of Cracow, since 1547,
Chancellor of the Crown.

[Haraburda with Wojna] – an untranslatable pun on the two names: ‘burda’ in
Haraburda means ‘brawl’, while Wojna means ‘war.’

[Acolytes]

A landowner was walking in the church, where at that time a bishop was
conferring holy orders upon quite a few acolytes. He asked what rites were taking
place. Someone answered that these were the acolytes receiving holy orders from
the bishop. “I know—he said—these are the sparrows for our wheat.”

Jesus betrayed Judas

Ciecierski, a landowner from the Radom region, heard a student singing under
his window, who carelessly changed the word order and sang: “Jesus betrayed
Judas, etc.” “That’s right—he said—because he had also betrayed Him before.”

The monks and a wife

Siemieński, from the region of Radom, lived over four miles away or closer to
the Sieciechów monastery. Since people were aware that he was somewhat jealous
of his wife, they made mention on purpose during a dinner in his house of an attack
of the Tatars. When everyone expressed his opinion where he would go with his
wife and children, they asked Siemieński: “And where would you go with yours?”
Someone sitting next to him: “I don’t know where else, if not to the monastery.”
Then Siemieński: “The devil only knows who should be kept away first; the
Tatars from the wall or the monks from my wife.”

.....
Acolytes – acolytes attended priests and performed subordinate church duties.

l. 4: *sparrows for our wheat* – the clergy were supported by the tithes. Wheat was most valuable, because it was easy to sell it.

Jesus betrayed Judas – an old song from the 15th century was entitled “Judas betrayed Jesus”, but the student thoughtlessly changed the word order.

Till Judgment Day

Sir Dębieński, chancellor of the crown, upon receiving an order from the king to adjourn a case heard then by the king till a later day, announced it in the following words: “In such and such case, His Majesty the King decrees etc., and the other case he adjourns till judgment day,” instead of what he was supposed to say: “till judging day.” But he probably wanted to make an allusion to stalling, which was excessive.

.....

Till Judgment Day – King Zygmunt August II was known for postponing matters he was bound to decide.

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