

Polish Catholicism and the Polish way of being, the latter seen by her as a set of Polish stereotypes. However, this does not deny the importance and accuracy of many insights that can be found in her book. Δ

Selected Drama And Verse by Franciszka Urszula Radziwiłłowa

Edited by Patrick John Corness and Barbara Judkowiak. Translated by Patrick John Corness. Introduction by Barbara Judkowiak. The Toronto Series 37 (The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe). Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, vol. 478. Toronto, Ontario and Tempe, Arizona: Iter Academic Press (Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies), 2015. xv + 395 pages. Illustrations, bibliography, index. ISBN 978-0-86698-532-1. Softcover. \$45.00 from Amazon.com.

Barry Keane

Franciszka Urszula Radziwiłłowa (1705–1753) is a remarkable historical figure of the late Baroque era, whose life and considerable literary achievements have been explored, presented, and celebrated in this major work of scholarship and translational endeavor. Barely known to Polish letters, although nominally occupying the title of Poland's first woman dramatist, Radziwiłłowa brought to her plays and poetry the worldview of aristocratic women, which proffered cautionary advice to young ladies on matrimonial issues whilst also providing a confessional perspective, in particular about the challenging position of marital life for a woman surrounded by the "spying" eyes of court.

Franciszka Urszula née Wiśniowiecka was born into an influential noble family with historically royal links, and who possessed vast tracts of land in Ukraine. Indeed, many of the male members of her family occupied the highest positions in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, while the females were charismatic and powerful members of the royal

court. Franciszka's education was overseen by her father Janusz Wiśniowiecki, governor of Kraków who in his youth had undertaken the European tour and who himself had harbored literary ambitions with a penchant for writing frivolities. Janusz would engender in his daughter an understanding of literature that was seen as the possession of powers that were both formative but also self-creating; a perception that "the treasure must be there" (195).

Perhaps because of her close relations with her enlightened parents, Franciszka was able to spurn suitors and choose a husband who would make an "impetuous advance." The fortunate individual was Michał Radziwiłł (1702–1762), who was both governor of Vilnius and Field Commander of Lithuania, and whose residence was in Nieśwież located in today's Belarus. Their marriage was a tender affair, and founded on strong emotions and mutual regard, although Franciszka would in time come to harbor warranted suspicions about her husband's fidelity, and conveyed to him in her letters and poetry complaints of his neglect and indiscretions:

Men often break faith, so I have heard tell.
Deceive your eyes, they're good at that as well.
Though onto his checks no cheat rouge applies,
The virtuous face mask conjugal lies. ("Response to her husband," p. 357)

Franciszka experienced some twenty-nine pregnancies, although she succeeded in raising only three children to maturity. She undertook to take a direct hand in the raising of her children and the orphans of her close relations, and following her father's example she engendered in her charges the importance of artistic achievement and self-fulfillment in respective fields. To this end, she established a theater at her residential court, which relied principally on the participation of family and friends. Needless to say, it came to be "a unique kind of school for young actors and audiences." As Barbara Judkowiak writes, "these short plays, thanks to their clear, concentrated dramatic structure, were eminently suited to the formation of the theatrical taste of an unsophisticated audience. Their compactness was also better suited to the

abilities of the youthful performers and audience including Radziwiłłowa's children." The plays performed were often her own, some of which were idiosyncratic reworkings of Moliere's farces and comedies. Radziwiłłowa also attempted mystery plays which incorporated folkloric and classical motifs, indicating the extent to which literary traditions inhabited the spaces of the imagination and religious practices, and transacted with life's realities. The plays themselves represent a fascinating window into courtly entertainment taking place in the furthest reaches of Europe in the early eighteenth century.

Seven plays are included in the publication and each and every one is an intriguing piece. They are also eminently readable and performable thanks in no small part to the considerable achievements of the translator Patrick Corness. The play *An Act of Divine Providence* is a dramatization of the Snow White theme, whereas *Gold in the Fire* is a version of the Griselda story, which first appeared in Boccaccio's *Decameron*. The literary merits and importance of the plays are wonderfully set out by Barbara Judkowiak, who in an extensive historical-biographical introduction not only incorporates interpretations of Radziwiłłowa's works but stakes a claim for their pioneering aspects. The accounts, arguments, and interpretations here are both insightful and perceptive, allowing the reader to understand the extent and context of Radziwiłłowa's creative achievements. The editor also convinces us that a historical neglect has taken place and that it is time to reassess the importance of "female voices" at the beginnings of the Polish theater.

Patrick Corness's translations of Radziwiłłowa's dramas and plays should delight and intrigue Baroque scholars, who will appreciate the extent to which the translator has looked to explore and elucidate the various literary traditions and sources present in the works. General readers in turn will admire the strength and beauty of dramatic lines made for an actor's delivery, lines such as

I'll see my realm is searched, the coast as well.

We'll gather news and runners will be placed
in all our forests and fields; we'll ride
meanwhile together through the dark forest. (*Love is Born in the Eyes*, p. 225)

What is most deserving of praise when it comes to the translations is the degree to which they seek to accentuate the authentic voice and idiom of Radziwiłłowa. The language of the poetry is quaint in places and perhaps of its time, but the intimations of disappointment with the present and unyielding hope reveal what true-to-life experiences and perceptions really meant for a woman of Franciszka Radziwiłłowa's ilk and stature:

If you can read the characters of people
Their eyes will tell you straight away
that world matters are quite different now. ("If you know how to read people's character," p. 354)

Altogether, a remarkable tome.

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Year Zero A History of 1945

By Ian Buruma. New York: The Penguin Press, 2013. 368 pages. ISBN 978-1-59420-436-4. Hardcover.

James Edward Reid

In *Year Zero: A History of 1945*, Ian Buruma surveys much of the history that unfolded in Europe and Southeast Asia after the Second World War concluded in 1945. He has also made occasional forays into the history of the years immediately before and after 1945. His survey is a challenging task, with notable gaps concerning the war and postwar history of countries such as Poland and Ukraine. While reading *Year Zero*, I accessed some of this missing history for Poland in recent works such as Tony Judt's *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* and for Ukraine in *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*, (reviewed here in 2012) and *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* (2015), both by Judt's colleague and good friend Timothy Snyder.