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## **An Attempt to Assess Moral and Ethical Attitudes of Polish Political Elites in the Times of the Fall of the Polish Commonwealth:**

### **The Public Activity of the Chancellor Andrzej Zamoyski (1717–1792)**

In the history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the second half of 18<sup>th</sup> century, some individuals have escaped the attention of historians or did not become particularly prominent because their activity concentrated on apparently less important areas of daily and political life.

Though in particular moments of the history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth such persons were appreciated, the significance of their political attitude was not recognized from a broader temporal and historical perspective. One of these individuals was the royal chancellor Andrzej Zamoyski. Over the years, he became a model for a good magnate and citizen both to his contemporaries and his descendants, an example of how to combine one's own interests with devotion to the Commonwealth. Later, Andrzej Zamoyski was counted among the enlightened patriots as opposed to the group of ambitious, proud and selfish great lords whose activity was sometimes claimed to have brought about the fall of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Andrzej Zamoyski already began his public activity in Saxon times. Jerzy Michalski counted him among the typical magnate-politicians of his times, devoid of ideals, who, however, made a name for himself as an honest judge (Michalski 1974: 10). Then Andrzej Zamoyski's career developed

relatively fast: in 1761 he became the voivode of Inowrocław, then, in 1764, he became royal chancellor. His economic position also improved gradually: in 1777, after taking possession of the Zamoyski estate from his brother Jan, the voivode of Podolia, Andrzej Zamoyski was counted among the wealthiest magnates of the Commonwealth (Orłowski 1974: 207–211; Michalski 1974: 13 and 16).

In portraying Andrzej Zamoyski, historians have focused on three aspects of his activity: the so called Zamoyski Code, the question of “peasant reform” in his Biezuń estate, the system of administering his own estate as well as on his political attitude in the period of the Delegation Sejm of 1767–1768, when he resigned from his chancellorship in protest against Nicholas Repnin’s orders concerning dissident gentry (Tarnawski 1916; Adolphowa 1933: 156–188; Broda 1951; Kurdybacha 1951; Leśnodorski 1958: 383–397; Orłowski 1965 and 1974; Kasperek 1972; Michalski 1974: 5–18; Borkowska–Bagieńska 1986; Stroynowski 1989; Filipczak 2000). In more extensive studies Andrzej Zamoyski is merely mentioned in passing.

Synthetic approaches to the Stanislavian period of the Commonwealth – especially those that concentrate on its problems – usually indicate that the selfish attitude of the magnates was the principal cause of its downfall. Historians who have studied the epoch have, in fact, not differed from each other as far as this matter is concerned; they just differed in style and emphasized different facts. No doubt the indifference of the elite groups of nobles and magnates to the fate of their country was one of the most important factors that led to the fall of the Commonwealth. As for individuals, a number of culprits have been traditionally singled out. The – obviously incomplete – list usually includes Andrzej Młodziejowski – the royal chancellor, Adam Poniński – the president of the First Partition Sejm (1773-1755), sometimes the infighting leaders of the Confederation of Bar,

later the authors of the Confederation of Targowica: Szczęsny Potocki, Seweryn Rzewuski and Ksawery Branicki (Rolnik 2009: 193–387). Only authors who themselves descended from former magnate families wrote accounts which differed from the emphasis on magnates' self-interest. The problem with this approach is that in such a critical and simplified conception of the past there is no place for positive examples of magnates: they do not fit the narrative. Unfortunately, it is also easier to find negative examples among the group of magnates than those who were still prepared to sacrifice their lives and properties for the Commonwealth. Two magnates who are mentioned in a positive context are Stanisław Małachowski and Kazimierz Nestor Sapieha – the presidents of the Polish Great Sejm (1788–1792), and – with reference to the Polish–Russian War of 1792 – Prince Józef Poniatowski. However, these men also attracted criticism, most often for their exaggerated interest in fame and personal profit. Andrzej Zamoyski is also among this select group. Historians accuse him of a morally ambiguous attitude (Michalski 1974: 13 and 16; Orłowski 1974: 207–211), especially during the earlier period of his public and political activity.

If we turn to the analysis of the moral and ethical attitudes of the Polish political elites of the second part of 18<sup>th</sup> century, we find that, among the politicians under Stanisław August, Andrzej Zamoyski is one of the few magnates who can be spoken about in superlatives: his contemporaries did not notice his faults, nor did they minimize them. Moreover, in Stanisławian times there was no-one among the noblemen who enjoyed such moral authority among the whole nobility as Andrzej Zamoyski did. At the time of the Great Sejm, only Stanisław Małachowski could rival him in that respect.

The present study is based on memoirs dating from the period of Stanisław August's reign. They depict perfectly the stereotypes of individuals and social groups. The material is used with the perspective in

mind of the period of time in which the accounts were written. This way, it becomes possible to observe how contemporaries changed their attitudes towards such questions as civic duties toward the State and the idea of patriotism. Finally, the memoirs shed light on how the authors divided men into groups of “good” patriots and “bad” traitors who were blamed for the state’s downfall. Such a system of evaluation was also applied to Andrzej Zamoyski. Opinions on his attitude and achievements in Stanislavian times gradually improved with the passing of time. As the general assessment of the moral and ethical attitudes of the élites turned more severe over time, this elevated Andrzej Zamoyski even further above other individuals of the epoch.

When writing about the political attitudes of the citizens towards the end of the Commonwealth, memoirists often pondered upon the question of the purity of the intentions that motivated a person’s actions. These are evanescent matters, which escape univocal judgement. Yet, on the whole, no judgements that raised doubts about Andrzej Zamoyski’s attitude can be found in the material analyzed for this article. Andrzej Zamoyski’s “purity” seems almost incredible in those times. In the memoirs, it is difficult to find a statement impairing his reputation; almost all of those remembering him emphasized his noble-intentioned devotion to the best interest of the Commonwealth, which, combined with his modesty and dislike for the commotion and intrigue in Warsaw (Magier 1963: 187), obviously did not increase his popularity in political circles. No wonder he does not appear frequently in the memoirs.

In describing the times of Stanisław August’s reign, memoirists tend to mention two basic aspects of Andrzej Zamoyski’s political activity: his resignation from the chancellorship and the so-called “Zamoyski’s Code”. Both are essential, yet have slightly different connotations for the

assessment of the citizens' moral and ethical attitudes in the historical period under consideration. The title of royal chancellor was bestowed on Andrzej Zamoyski principally for his morally and ethically unblemished reputation, which only Marcin Matuszewicz seemed to doubt, who accused Andrzej Zamoyski of political profiteerism (Matuszewicz 1986, vol. 2: 65). The fact that Zamoyski later chose to resign from office further enhanced his status as a moral authority in the eye of the nobility. Even people of different political orientation than him and not necessarily of good reputation themselves appreciated the uprightness of that particular decision.

As already said, Andrzej Zamoyski became royal chancellor in 1764. Jędrzej Kitowicz wrote that Zamoyski obtained the office during the Coronation Sejm, adding that the honour was thus bestowed to a man who was "solemn, rationally thinking and thoroughly conscientious" (Kitowicz 1971: 156). That Zamoyski obtained this office is all the more important because he did not campaign for it. Moreover, everybody was glad about the nomination – quite a rarity in Polish politics. The new chancellor, as Józef Wybicki puts it, was "modest in contacts with others, hard-working, righteous, out-going, gentle", his house being "a sanctuary of justice, wide open for any supplicant"; he granted hearings even to "the most miserable [poor] people". Zamoyski allegedly said that "there is no other way to be happy in this world than by performing one's duties and bringing comfort to those who suffer" (Wybicki 1927: 326–327; Cracow, Jagiellonian Library, Ms. 5163: fol. 171). It can be assumed that he also fulfilled the office of chancellor according to these guidelines. He apparently approved of the reforms stipulated by the Czartoryski camp in the earlier period of their government, after the death of August III. Yet, this is only what is suggested by historians (Michalski 1974: 11–12; Orłowski 1974: 63–65). As for

memoirs, they are silent on this issue, and do not contain any references that would offer a broader view and an assessment of the question.

Andrzej Zamoyski cooperated with the Czartoryski Camp and with Stanisław August until the Sejm of 1767–1768, though not always without discord. Stanisław Lubomirski recalled that Andrzej Zamoyski warned Stanisław August loudly against the latter surrounding himself with individuals remunerated by foreign courts, and tried to make the king aware that his royal authority and prestige was being corrupted by the company he kept. Then, acting in opposition to the king, Andrzej Zamoyski defended the prerogatives of the Coinage Committee (Lubomirski 1971: 56, 72, 74, 76–97). The kidnapping of the Commonwealth's oppositional senators, ordered by Nicholas Repnin, brought the cooperation of the two politicians, though not entirely harmonious, to a breakdown. For some time at least the roads of Andrzej Zamoyski and the king diverged. To protest against the Russian ambassador's actions, Andrzej Zamoyski suggested that the issue be presented to the King during the assembly of the senators and ministers of the Commonwealth. Should the king not assure that the kidnapped men would be released, then he, Andrzej Zamoyski, would resign from the office of chancellor. As Tadeusz Konopka put it, as early as 1795, "all of them (*present at the assembly*) declared to do the same, however no one of them but Andrzej Zamoyski ventured to speak out: the senators' and ministers' hearts were so corrupted" (Konopka 1993: 79; Wybicki 1927: 37–38; Lubomirski 1971: 120–121, 143–144). Adam Moszczeński wrote that at that time everyone was so scared that not a single one of them spoke of the crime committed by Repnin (Moszczeński 1867: 95). In fact, only Andrzej Zamoyski gave up his office in October 1767, stating he could not perform his duties when the king did not want or could not take the adequate measures expected by the nation (Konopka 1993: 80; Wybicki

1927: 37–38). Portraying the scene of the chancellor’s resigning from his office in a slightly different manner, Stanisław Lubomirski stated that Andrzej Zamoyski’s heroism struck his contemporaries as “dumb”. Then, as he also noticed, some regretted that such an eminent man left the circle of ministers; others began to admire him for his courage and appreciated that he chose to resign from his office and become a private person rather than to put his seal under statutes harmful to his country (Lubomirski 1971: 144; Zaleski 1879: 20–21, 48–50). According to the testimony of Stanisław Staszic, in that state of affairs, as Andrzej Zamoyski supposedly said, the chancellor’s seal could only be a seal of slavery and disgrace for Poles, and for that reason he had chosen to resign from the office that set that seal (Staszic 1816: 13). As chancellor, Zamoyski acted according to his religious convictions, hence the issue of giving equal rights to people of various confessions was the source of conflict. In his speech of 28 July 1768, Andrzej Zamoyski defended the principles of the Catholic faith and wondered whether “we do not feel in our blood that we are the sons of liberty in our land, do we not feel in our minds that we are subject only to the laws that we take upon ourselves without pressure”. At the same time, Zamoyski confirmed his pro-reform attitude, perhaps to move the silent king into action and to convince the latter that his pronouncement was not pointed against him (Vilnius, The Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Ms. F 17/10: 467). Józef Wybicki seems to be right when he observes that Andrzej Zamoyski was not the king’s personal enemy but only aware of the King’s weaknesses of character (Wybicki 1927: 322).

Some memoirists conceived Zamoyski’s resignation from the chancellorship to be a protest against the first partition of Poland. Such an interpretation, however, seems to be wrong, since Zamoyski decided much earlier to resign from the chancellorship. This should not deflect from

assessing his decision positively, though. Kajetan Koźmian, writing after the fall of the Commonwealth in 1795, praised Andrzej Zamoyski for his resignation (Koźmian 1972, vol. 2: 157; Orłowski 1974: 112–115). Antoni Jabłonowski had similar problems with chronology. Extolling the chancellor's character, he claimed that Zamoyski disregarded Feliks Łojko's reports of plans concerning Poland's first partition (Jabłonowski 1875: 4 and 104). This is a serious charge against Andrzej Zamoyski, but one needs to remember that, at that time, he could not exert any influence on the course of events in the country, as Łojko's reports appeared already after Zamoyski had resigned from the chancellor's office. This was exactly what Michał Zaleski reproached Andrzej Zamoyski for, namely, that with the resignation he opened the door of a public career to people unworthy of credibility, such as Adam Poniński and Andrzej Młodziejowski (Zaleski 1879: 48–50).

Whatever the assessment of Andrzej Zamoyski's resignation from the chancellorship, he obviously gained the respect of his contemporaries through his resignation. This was even the case for his political opponents who were connected to the *Familia* of the Czartoryskis and the Poniatowskis: the Bar confederates (Michalski 1974: 12). Kajetan Koźmian observed that even Stanisław August was impressed by the greatness of Andrzej Zamoyski's heart and spirit and the service that he rendered to the country through his decision. According to Koźmian, when taking back the insignia of the chancellor's office, the king lavished praise on Andrzej Zamoyski and said: "Posterity will mistake Jędrzej [ie. Andrzej] for Jan [this is an allusion to chancellor Jan Zamoyski (1542-1605), one of the greatest Polish national heroes]" (Koźmian 1972, vol. 2: 157). The cooperation between the king and Zamoyski continued which proves that Stanisław

August recognized Zamoyski's virtues. It was at the king's request that Andrzej Zamoyski wrote what would later be called "the Zamoyski Code".

Through Koźmian's memoir, we can perceive criticism of the king's attitude during the Sejm of 1767–1768, while Józef Wybicki is critical of all political elites of the time. The latter quoted first the declarations made during the aforementioned assembly at the Chairman's of the Polish Sejm, where all its participants undertook to resign from their offices as a sign of protest if the kidnapped senators would not be released. Then, Józef Wybicki related the dialogue between Repnin, Katherine II's ambassador, and Stanisław August. When the king expressed his apprehension as to how the elites would react, Repnin allegedly replied: "As I see you hardly know your Poles", and that only Andrzej Zamoyski would keep his word and resign, while the others would do as they were ordered. Wybicki's commentary on that event was unequivocal: "What glory for Zamoyski, and what disgrace for all of them". Later Wybicki wrote in his memoirs that the Polish people despised the elites and that only Andrzej Zamoyski was generally respected (Wybicki 1972: 37–40). It seems essential here – taking into consideration political reasons only – that resignation from high offices was something very unusual during the period under discussion. After all, all of the senators kidnapped during the Delegation Sejm retained their offices.

Wybicki stated that after Adam Poniński's 'Partition Sejm', there were few "Poles" in Warsaw. In a sense he was right. Many other memoirists suggested the same, especially those writing after the fall of the First Polish Commonwealth. Wybicki was not consistent in his statements, though. He mentioned that Zamoyski did not take up any office after having resigned his chancellorship; on the other hand, however, he remarks that Zamoyski became a commissioner of the Commission for National

Education, participated in its activity and was the first to suggest that service for the Commission should not be remunerated (Wybicki 1972: 311 and 316; Michalski 1974: 13; about the importance of education in Andrzej Zamoyski's life, see Staszic 1816: 2). Warsaw was, therefore, not at all the town devoid of "Poles". Despite the disaster of the First Partition a lot of citizens did not stop working for the benefit of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, among others Ignacy Potocki, who, apparently, retained the "nobleness" of his character "despite the common vileness of the Polish magnates" (Zajączek 1882: 90). Zamoyski's later involvement in drawing up the code of laws testifies to this statement being true. Stanisław Staszic is right to say that retreating from political issues and political life was considered a virtue in the times of the First Partition (Staszic 1816: 13). Later, though, things changed somewhat.

Zamoyski's attitude in the years 1764–1772 reinforced his authority in the view of those Poles who cared for the welfare of the Polish Commonwealth, especially those who wrote down their memories after 1795, but generally also within noble society as a whole. Jabłonowski writes that Andrzej Zamoyski was a man "more fit to be a king than chancellor" (Jabłonowski 1875: 104). For Michał Czacki, Zamoyski became an example of an enlightened citizen, zealous "about his country's welfare" (Czacki 1862: 18; see also Cracow, Jagiellonian Library, Ms. 5163: fol. 171). Such opinions and judgements about other Polish politicians in the year of the First Partition were extremely rare. An anonymous author of the unpublished chronicle "History of Poland", probably written during the 1780s, defines the period as "the most fatal epoch" for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: the pursuit of private interests, ambition and the desire to "oust" the king were "the mainsprings of domestic discord which ruined the country" which led to the First Partition (Vilnius, The Wroblewski Library of

the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Ms. F 17/4, vol. 3: 59). To sum up, Koźmian sadly concludes that during the “corrupt” epoch Zamoyski was the most virtuous and courageous citizen who did not flee in the face of oppression (Koźmian 1972, vol. 3: 192).

The last words used by Koźmian in the preceding paragraph refer to the next period of Zamoyski’s life and activity. They are sad as they suggest that Zamoyski failed in his attempt to create a code of law for the Polish Commonwealth, yet they are not entirely true. Strangely enough, despite appearances, his new undertaking only strengthened his authority. Although Zamoyski’s involvement with the conception of the code of law during the Sejm of 1780 ended in failure, it actually contributed to Zamoyski’s esteem. He was now seen to be even more courageous than after his resignation from the chancellorship: he had risked more. Then he could have been taken away into the depths of Russia, now he was brave enough to put his well-earned and deserved authority to test by preparing the codification of laws. Wybicki recalls that Zamoyski was elected for this task unanimously and adds: “The horrible monster: I do not permit [to call it by its name (*liberum veto*)], the mother of our numerous failures, fell silent hearing his name” (Wybicki 1927: 301). Observing the event, Joachim Chreptowicz allegedly said that the Polish nation was not that bad after all when they unanimously entrusted Andrzej Zamoyski with the task of elaborating its national laws (Wybicki 1927: 142; Staszic 1816: 23; Michalski 1974: 13).

The question why the Sejm of 1780 blocked the “Zamoyski Code” is not the most essential for this paper. Rather, from the point of view of moral and ethical attitudes, Zamoyski’s reaction is the focus of the present consideration. At that time the issue that caused the most debate was how to alter the legal basis underlying the economic system. According to the

memoirists, Zamoyski thought that the issue would resolve itself if the peasantry were granted the liberty to move. As Wybicki puts it, Andrzej Zamoyski was convinced that improving the legal status of the peasantry would stimulate the development of the country. He supported this claim by referring to his own prospering villages where he had already introduced these changes without experiencing any negative consequences (Wybicki 1927: 313–314; Lubowiecki 1997: 8; Cracow, Jagiellonian Library Ms. 5163: fol. 171; Cracow, Jagiellonian Library, Ms. 6755, vol. 1: 14–17; Michalski 1974: 9). At the same time, as Wybicki states, Zamoyski knew that it was impossible to abolish serfdom outright and he did not exhort such a radical solution; he knew how much tradition was valued among the nobility (Wybicki 1927: 319; Staszic 1816: 25). Stanisław Staszic described Zamoyski's guiding principle well, by saying that he wanted to “make a human out of a serf” (Staszic 1816: 16). Stanisław Poniatowski, the king's nephew, wrote that the fact that Zamoyski included merely “a few liberal and simply just ideas in favour of peasantry” was enough to “enrage” the nobility who wanted to burn the code (Poniatowski 1979: 54; Cracow, Jagiellonian Library Ms. 5163: fol. 32 and 171–172).

The ex-chancellor knew his countrymen well and foresaw difficulties in the introduction of the code. In his description of the process of drawing up the code, Wybicki mentioned that Zamoyski, who invited citizens to send him their various proposals of laws and bills, was able to guess who signed these proposals, what were the intentions of the authors and the reasons behind them. Though he often disagreed with them and eventually did not include them in his code, Andrzej Zamoyski never offended the authors. Later, after he had finished the final version, he printed the whole code at his own cost so that each deputy could read it (Wybicki 1927: 157 and 307; Michalski 1974: 4). Zamoyski, however, left

the capital when he became aware of the intrigues of the clergy who did not like the idea of papal bulls being validated by the lay authorities of the Commonwealth and the aversion which the foreign ministers who resided in Warsaw had to the code which would have strengthened the Commonwealth (Wybicki 1927: 315–319). Wybicki wrote that Zamoyski “drank calmly from the cup of bitterness”. On the eve of his departure he handed the code over to Stanisław August and left the decision about its future to the Sejm. When bidding farewell, he turned to the king with the words: “my intentions were pure” (Wybicki 1927: 156; see Koźmian 1972, vol. 2: 158). Stanisław August did not want Zamoyski to leave since he believed that Zamoyski’s presence would silence the adversaries of the code. The ex-chancellor responded that he did not want to interfere with the will of the nation in this way; besides, such an act could be interpreted as intrigue on the part of the king (Wybicki 1927: 321–322). In the end, Zamoyski did not personally witness the rejection of his code. When finishing the “history of the code”, Wybicki sadly concluded that those who declared themselves against it “did not read the draft”, a fact they even admitted (Wybicki 1927: 154). Kajetan Koźmian described the failure of the code in even more bitter words, stating that they did not allow discussing the code, and that “some even clamoured for naming Zamoyski *pro hoste patriae*”. Still others wanted to burn the code publicly in the marketplace (Koźmian 1972, vol. 2: 158; Staszic 1816: 43; Łubieński 1876: 113; Kossakowski 1895: 234; Poniatowski 1979: 54; Kurdybacha 1951: 130–159). Later, after many years, Staszic wrote that “the friend of the people was named the enemy of Poles” (Koźmian 1972, vol. 2: 159).

Wybicki accused the Polish political élites of causing the failure of the code. He even wondered why Zamoyski agreed to work on the legal code for the country “which had already lost all his national dignity, which

did not have any of the attributes of autocracy and sovereignty characteristic for independent nations” (Wybicki 1927: 141)\*. Then he continued his account by sadly noting that if everyone was like Zamoyski, then “a very limited set of regulations would do: manners would replace lengthy statutes” (Wybicki 1927: 312). Other memoirists chimed in with Józef Wybicki in his severe criticism of the political elites. Kajetan Koźmian described the attitude of the deputies towards the code as “madness” and “stupidity” (Koźmian 1972, vol. 2: 158). Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz used slightly milder yet also negative epithets, stating that the Sejm blocking of Zamoyski’s legal code was a “disgrace to the whole nation” (Niemcewicz 1957, vol. 1: 79–80, 136). In this context, the memoirists’ remarks on the attitude of the contemporary elites towards the author of the code are slightly surprising. It turned out that the vehemence in the opposition to the code, apart from a short moment in the Sejm, was not directed against Andrzej Zamoyski. Eventually, the same Sejm thanked him for the work he had done (Wybicki 1927: 325). The noblemen seemed to understand that in drawing up the code Zamoyski had only intended to make people happier and to benefit the country and all of its citizens (Staszic 1816: 36 and 39; Cracow, Jagiellonian Library, Ms. 5163, fol. 32, 171–172; Ms. 6755, vol. 1: 14–17). In his account Kajetan Koźmian added that “the nobility immediately realized their mistake and, therefore, treated him with reverence and respect” (Koźmian 1972, vol. 1: 96). These observations show the two-sided nature of the Polish nobility which was typical during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time they reveal a deeply-rooted sense of justice, which might suggest one could still hope for the revival of the nation. The Great Sejm was approaching, which the memoirists commonly described as a moment of national resuscitation after

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\* Later he foresaw the second sejm of Adam Poniński and utter disintegration of the state due to the moral decline (Wybicki 1927: 322–323).

the First Partition. In the year 1780, the code seemed too radical to the whole nobility; some of the contemporaries were aware of the fact. More enlightened nobles hoped that the highly esteemed Zamoyski might accelerate the adjustment of the nation to the new times and to new laws. Stanisław August was right to observe that Zamoyski's project was beneficial for the country, but that it was submitted too early (Kozmian 1972, vol. 2: 158)\*.

It is symptomatic that all the memoirists quoted in the present study who touched upon the issue proclaimed themselves in favour of the points in the code relating to the peasantry. Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz could not quite understand why such a positive solution as the code was rejected only because "the peasantry were given the protection of the law" (Niemcewicz 1957, vol. 1: 79–80 and 136). Michał Czacki (1862: 18) and Mikołaj Malinowski (1907: 18) expressed the same opinion. The memoirists felt strongly about the positive implication of Zamoyski's work as a whole. Czacki commended Zamoyski's code and regretted that the document was blocked: "this time again the pursuit of private interests prevailed" (Czacki 1862: 18–19). Wirydianna Fiszerowa expressed similar thoughts. She tried to comprehend the situation as a whole, stating that in 1780 Zamoyski was a "real liberal", but that, unfortunately, Poles at that time did not yet understand the concept. She accentuated the fact that the work of the ex-chancellor did him credit (Fiszerowa 1998: 149). Recognizing the value of Andrzej Zamoyski's work, Niemcewicz believed that 8 years later the code would have been endorsed (Niemcewicz 1957, vol. 1: 136). Such opinions appear also in Kozmian's (1972, vol. 2: 158), Malinowski's (1907: 18),

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\* Jerzy Michalski considers it as the most far gone in the social area in the times of the Commonwealth (1974: 15). See also about the causes of the failure of the code: Smoleński (1901: 371–377) and Hejnosz (1961: 3–10).

Staszic's (1816: 44–45) and Wybicki's memoirs; Stanisław Poniąkowski, frequently quoted in this study, also spoke well of the code.

During the Great Sejm, Poniąkowski rose to speak out for the first time. In his speech he tried to convince the listeners that they might reject the code yet "they must not discredit the respectable man", thereby at least managing to dissuade the deputies from burning the code. Zamoyski was grateful to him for the defence. Poniąkowski adds that he also contemplated leaving the Polish Commonwealth for good, but that Andrzej Zamoyski's attitude convinced him that one ought to serve one's own country and increase its prosperity (Poniąkowski 1979: 54). It is worth mentioning here that all the accounts referred to in this paper which relate the history of the code and which both laud Zamoyski's work while criticizing the attitude of his contemporaries appeared after the fall of the First Polish Commonwealth. Those written earlier do not contain judgments on Zamoyski's code.

It seems that Zamoyski's consistent conduct described above did not quite conform to his looks: the portrait of his physical appearance in the memoirs was heterogeneous and sometimes internally inconsistent. According to Koźmian, Zamoyski was "of a rather short stature, of average but strong build and had a solemn and apparently hard face" (Koźmian 1972, vol. 1: 97). Wybicki, on the other hand, writes that he attracted attention with his noble figure and serene face, that he was calm, never gloomy, and endured even his son's death with dignity while others sank into despair (Wybicki 1927: 332). There are fewer inconsistencies in the memoirists' descriptions of Zamoyski's personality. He was serene-natured, good-humoured, jocular yet at the same time polite, with a sort of inborn gentleness, and would not offend even "the most common man". As Wybicki

put it: “an angel of peace” (Kozmian 1972, vol. 1, p. 97; Wybicki 1927: 303 and 307; Staszic 1816: 14).

The sketchy and general portrait of Zamoyski, of his body and soul, offered by the memoirists is one of beauty – no memoirist account portrayed the ex-chancellor differently. The memoirists additionally magnified some of his virtues and particularize them so that they cover the full range of possible positive human traits. Wybicki noted that when he received complements, Zamoyski would blush. In Wybicki’s view, Zamoyski was a simple philosopher, strict to himself, always sincere and open-minded. He could also boast significant mental skills. Wybicki considered Zamoyski to be intelligent, and observed that, even if he did not have the rhetorical skill of Cicero, he did not prepare his performances on paper. He always spoke from his heart and mind, was open to rational argumentation and had the ability to listen and draw conclusions. This way he got to know people’s hearts (Wybicki 1927: 305–308; Zaleski 1879: 48; Cracow, Jagiellonian Library, Ms. 5163, fol. 171).

The memoirists remember Zamoyski as the embodiment of kind-heartedness. Wybicki could not recall Andrzej Zamoyski having a single lawsuit. He always endeavoured to settle all property-related disputes in his family out of court. He was even reproached for not taking enough care of his own estate, which Wybicki claimed occurred because Andrzej Zamoyski was simply afraid of hurting anyone (Wybicki 1927: 333; Staszic 1816: 14–15). For this reason, people trusted him without reservation. One day, when Zamoyski had a lawsuit concerning the boundaries of his land which necessitated, according to the law, that he take an oath while marking out the new boundaries, the members of the nobility who were present cried in unison: “There is no need” (Kozmian 1972, vol. 1: 96; Zaleski 1879: 48). To those who reproached Andrzej Zamoyski for not caring enough for

his own estate, he replied that his children would nevertheless inherit a large estate as he did not squander any of it. Further, Wybicki continues to add that Zamoyski was a “frugal, hard-working, just, out-going, gentle” man whose home was “a sanctuary of justice” (Wybicki 1927: 334 and 327). Koźmian thought the same. He considered kindness to have dwelled in Andrzej Zamoyski’s heart, who used to address people thus: “My dear Sir”, revealing his attitude toward them. His proverbial kind-heartedness was revealed especially in his later years, after the rejection of the code. During those years, he “chose a peaceful, untroubled life and remained faithful to one occupation only: doing good to the people”. Koźmian wrote that Zamoyski was a man adored by his own father (Koźmian 1972, vol. 1: 97–98, 95). Zamoyski’s children obviously felt the same since he was an exemplary father who visited his off-spring and played with them twice a day (Wybicki 1927: 336). Such an approach to bringing up children was extremely rare in those times.

Andrzej Zamoyski’s manor house was depicted with the same high esteem as its owner. In Koźmian’s view, Zamoyski was “handsome yet unpretentious” who, during his day-to-day life as an ex-chancellor, wore frugal clothes, usually “a grey dress”; his only adornment was a “curly wig”. Although Zamoyski was wealthy and although his villages prospered and were well developed (Wybicki 1927: 313–314), a “reasonable thriftiness” prevailed in his house (Koźmian 1972, vol. 1: 95 and 97). This was both Zamoyski’s and his wife Konstancja’s – who looked after the estate with her watchful eye and cared for its development – achievement (Koźmian 1972, vol. 1: 95; Michalski 1974: 13). She was also criticised for “being eager to hoard riches”. However, Wybicki maintained that Konstancja lived a frugal life, as the whole Zamoyski household did. However, when the need arose, as it did after her husband’s death in 1794 during the Kościuszko Uprising,

she did not spare money for the country (Wybicki 1927: 336; Niemcewicz 1957, vol. 2: 111). Anyway, as for donations for the Commonwealth, it seems that Konstancja followed the example of her husband who was free with money if the good of the country was concerned. Along with others, he resigned from his salary as the commissioner of the Commission for National Education, as already mentioned, and then, at the beginning of the Sejm of 1788, he endowed his country with the sum of 200 thousand zlotys. Essentially, he did so on no conditions whatsoever. It was the largest amount of money offered by any citizen for their country during the Great Sejm and the war in support of the 3<sup>rd</sup>-May Constitution (Koźmian 1972, vol. 2: 161; Staszic 1816: 19; Rolnik 2000b; Korzon 1897). Wybicki's view that Andrzej Zamoyski sacrificed everything for public interest seems unquestionable (Wybicki 1927: 308). Also Michał Zaleski, the defender of the nobility's liberties during the Great Sejm and marshal of the Targowica Confederation of the voivodship of Brest-Litowsk, confirmed this judgement. This is all the more significant, as Zaleski was not particularly liberal as far as social issues were concerned (Zaleski 1879: 48; Rolnik 2003).

In assessing the political élites of the last decades of the Polish Commonwealth, their contemporaries attributed numerous faults to them. Stanisław Staszic went the furthest in his criticism. The fact that he was a clergyman of middle-class descent explains the severity of his judgements, but the remarks on that subject which can be found in noblemen's memoirs are equally unfavourable (Rolnik 2009: 193-387). Staszic expressed his judgement on the past in *The Eulogy to Andrzej Zamoyski*. The author criticized the functioning of all possible state institutions in the Polish Commonwealth and accused the magnates of being at fault: the magnates ridiculed the law at the tribunals and used violence to achieve their private

interests, they became members of the Senate though they were unqualified, and thus titles of the assembly and the senate “were most often the attributes of the unworthy”. The magnates treated the regional councils and the Sejm as “an opportunity to show their force”. According to Staszic, the dominant features of the group were ambition, egotism and false pride. Driven by those faults the magnates ruined the country and spoilt the good qualities of the nobility, their courage being the primary victim (Staszic 1816: 4 and 7). Against this background Staszic presented Andrzej Zamoyski in a very favourable light: he did not get corrupt since, in his view, as a young man could not even suppose he would become an “heir-in-tail”, so he was not born “wealthy and powerful”, which protected him from becoming cruel, stubborn and “craving his own greed” (Staszic 1816: 2). It seems that Zamoyski was free of such defects of character and had a dislike for them, especially in the people of his order. He considered these qualities to be guilty for the fall of the Polish Commonwealth, and debased those nobles who possessed these qualities (Wybicki 1927: 309–310; Lubomirski 1971: 144; Vilnius, The Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Ms. F 17/4, vol. 3: 62). That conviction may have helped Zamoyski to be a dignified magnate, citizen and a great Polish patriot.

The last commendatory remarks about Zamoyski were made by Staszic, who seems completely uncritical towards Zamoyski, a person clearly close to his heart. He slightly exaggerated the picture of Zamoyski just like the portraits of other magnates: certainly not all the wealthy and powerful match his description. Sometimes circumstances caused attitudes, ones which were actually quite similar, to be assessed differently. The fact that Zamoyski’s resigned his post in 1767 was generally lauded as well as the fact that Andrzej Zamoyski left Warsaw when the code was being debated. Nevertheless, there were some doubts as to the rightness of that

decision. Józeg Wybicki mentioned that Andrzej Zamoyski was blamed for retreating and abandoning the sinking ship; nonetheless, he also admits that in that period “[he] was not the man at the wheel but he only held the remains of a battered paddle” (Wybicki 1927: 330). Later, he was also reproached for not having attended the Sejm of 1780: he was accused of being afraid of the nobility and of responsibility. It needs to be remembered that such voices accompanied all the ambiguous situations in which the well-known political actors were engaged; they afflicted Prince Józef Poniatowski when he got incensed at the officers resigning their posts during the war in 1792 and later in 1812; they also afflicted Tadeusz Kościuszko when he rejected the arguments of Stanisław August who persuaded him to stay in the army of the Commonwealth after the victory of Targowica Confederation. Eventually, both leaders were declared to be in the right (Rolnik 2000a: 61–78; Askenazy 1910: 156–157; Jackowski 1893: 318). It is worth noticing though that sometimes the judgements of the same decisions can differ, depending on circumstances and context. In retrospect, it is always easier to make the right choice. Memoirists were aware of this. Despite doubts, they agreed with Poniatowski, Kościuszko and Zamoyski, that is with men who, in a given moment, could take pertinent decisions often against the majority and in an uncomfortable situation.

As a magnate in the Polish Commonwealth at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Andrzej Zamoyski was an extraordinary case. He had money which, quite contrary to appearances, not every “magnate” in that epoch could boast of. Being modest himself, he dispensed his money to the country and to the poor when necessary. He felt the moment to resign from the splendour, he knew in principle how to save face in every situation he found himself in. Till the end of his days he maintained the dignity which

characterized the senators of the once “great Commonwealth”, who used to give priority to their country’s well-being over their own benefits. In the memoirs it is difficult to find a more positive portrait of a magnate; they rather abounded in negative ones. This is especially true for the accounts written after the fall of the First Polish Commonwealth by the people who were already adults during Stanislavian times. The fall of their country was too recent for them, and they were too conscious of the fact to be able to forgive the Targowica confederates. At the same time the authors of the memoirs created, to a great extent unintentionally, positive characters, which, to their minds, became examples worth following, which could raise the morale of all the citizens and at least increase the value of the national history, which in turn could somehow protect the nation from the politics of the country’s partitioners. That is why some positive traits of the decried people were magnified. Andrzej Zamoyski perfectly suited that purpose. His “substance” was already very good, which his contemporaries were aware of. In the next generation of the memoirists, this tendency increased among those who knew the Stanislavian epoch from stories only or recollected it hazily; in their accounts, there is more attachment to the past and the old Polish virtues (see for example: Kicka 1972). They also magnified what is positive about the protagonists of Stanislavian times, even the magnates, in order to prove that a good coexistence of all social classes was possible and that the idea of social solidarity was feasible. Zamoyski appears much less frequently in these memoirs, which is not surprising as he was replaced by other celebrated figures connected with Napoleonic times.

In the memoirs written up to 1795, the figure of Zamoyski went completely unnoticed. His resignation from the chancellorship and the question of his code was not even mentioned by Józef Kossakowski, someone who was himself very much engaged in politics. Within this group

of memoirists, only Stanisław Lubomirski and Marcin Matuszewicz pondered over Zamoyski and his actions. It is within their accounts that we find the only criticisms of Zamoyski's attitude. The memoirists' reports drawn up before 1795 do not usually contain didacticism and they most often mirror the undertakings of their authors and the circumstances accompanying them. The majority of them follow a clear pattern of qualifying some attitudes as positive and patriotic; those were often unnoticed or even rebuked (for example: Lipski 1854, vol. 2; Kossakowski 1891). In that context, the memoirists writing their reports after 1795 did not generally notice Zamoyski's involvement in public life; nor was their assessment of his actions unanimous.

It was the same in case of other magnates of Stanislavian times: the descriptions of their characters – negative as well as positive – were already constructed after the fall of the Polish–Lithuanian State, on the basis of their achievements during the Stanislavian period. It seems that up to the Great Sejm, Zamoyski was not commonly known to his contemporaries and that his name had not become a synonym for a patriot among the whole nobility. The change came about due to the ferment produced by the events of 1788–1792, as well as by the accounts of the memoirists who personally experienced the tragedy of losing their own country, most importantly Staszic, Koźmian and Wybicki. They were all somehow connected to Zamoyski, so that the veracity of their judgements may be doubted. However, other memoirists confirmed their positive opinions about Andrzej Zamoyski in briefer descriptions of the ex-chancellor. Their predecessors, writing their memoirs before 1795, though looking at Andrzej Zamoyski with a critical eye, also underlined the positive aspects of his conduct during difficult times in the history of the Polish Commonwealth.

Zamoyski, therefore, appears as a model to be followed and one that his contemporaries need to be compared to, as an example of both a good citizen of and a good magnate of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Among those of Zamoyski's status, the memoirists of the Stanislavian epoch did not point out many who could match him. The negative image of a conceited magnate, indifferent to his country's fate, dominated the pages of their memoirs, especially those written down after 1795.

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F 17/4, vol. 3: Dzieje polskie czyli przypadki znaczniejsze od czasu Interregnum po śmierci Augusta III króla Polskiego za panowania Najjaśniejszego Stanisława Augusta Króla Polskiego Wielkiego Xięcia Litew: w Kraju Polskim zdarzone.

F 17/10: Zbiór co Rocznej pracy, y przepis różnych wiadomości z różnych excerptów, y listów; różnych wierszów własnych, y cudzych mów y statystów, przeze Mnie Ignacego Celestyna Świącickiego koniuszego, sędziego grodowego wdztwa mińskiego wykonotowany y wypisany od roku 1758 mca marca 16 Dnia aż do daty niniejszej roku 1766.

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